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INTEGRATED STRATEGY FOR MARKETING AND PROMOTION OF A COMMON CULTURAL HERITAGE TOURISM PRODUCT: ROUTE „ROMAN FRONTIER WITHIN THE CROSS-BORDER REGION ROMANIA-BULGARIA”



Project “Development and promotion of an integrated cultural heritage tourism product: Route “Roman frontier within the cross-border region Romania-Bulgaria”,
15.2.1.067

2017



I. INTRODUCTION

1.1. General overview

Drafting a Strategy for marketing and promotion of a cultural heritage product: Route "Roman Frontier within the Cross-Border Region Romania-Bulgaria" represents a part of the package of documents created under the Project "Development and Promotion of an Integrated Cultural Heritage Product: Route "Roman Frontier within the Cross-Border Region Romania-Bulgaria", with registration No. 15.2.1.067.

The Project is carried out by the Association of Danube River Municipalities "Danube" (Bulgaria) in partnership with the Chamber of Commerce, Industry, Navigation and Agriculture of Constantia (Romania). It is funded under the Interreg V-4 Program Romania-Bulgaria 2014-2020, Priority Axis 2 "A Green Region".

The prime objective is to enhance the sustained utilization of the common cultural heritage within the Cross-Border region by the development of an integrated tourist product on the cultural heritage: Route "Roman Frontier within the Cross-Border Region Romania-Bulgaria"

Tourism and in particular the cultural and historic tourism is a key factor for the development of the Cross-Border region as indicated in the program documents at different management levels. The region is rich with cultural locations and sites; one of the cultural values of the target region is the shared Roman heritage; there are Roman archaeological sites and rich museum collections. The aspects of this tourist scheme are being developed and investments in the infrastructure have been made, including also investments with funds from the European Union.

However, this potential has not been fully utilized: a common tourist product featuring the Roman heritage or representing the assets of real Cross-Border magnitude is non-existent. Something more, these values in their majority remain unknown outside the local communities.

The project enhances the potential of the cultural tourism within the Romania-Bulgaria Cross-Border region, filling the gap and developing and promoting an integrated tourist route via the shared Roman heritage in the region. A joint strategic approach resting upon expertise and innovation and including all stakeholders is needed.

These actions reflect the most significant potential of the Romania-Bulgaria Cross-Border region for the development of cultural tourism and the anticipated result: a common tourist product of the Roman heritage as the best instrument for full realization of the cultural assets in the region. This will improve its utilization in the region at the required quality level, and will orient the target community



towards economic growth, better coherence, stable cooperation meeting in this way the objectives of the Program.

The strategy was developed on the basis of documents prepared within the Project “Development and Promotion of an Integrated Cultural Heritage Product: Route “Roman Frontier within the Cross-Border Region Romania-Bulgaria” as follows:

- Feasibility Study of the territory of the Bulgarian part of the Romania-Bulgaria Cross-Border region, and integrating the ready Study with the study of the Romanian part of the Romania-Bulgaria Cross-Border region by the partner organization: as submitted by the Employer,
- A development strategy that was developed parallel with the present document under running coordination between the two teams.

This Marketing and Promotion Strategy represents an integrated document of the work of both teams, the Romanian and the Bulgarian teams.

This Marketing and Promotion Strategy has been drafted in accordance with the scope and the technical specification and the technical proposal by “SUNNY CITY” Ltd. (Bulgaria) in accordance with Contract No. 031/17.11.2016.

1.2. Objectives and scope

Objectives of the preparation of the Strategy for promotion of the tourist route

Drafting of a Marketing and Promotion Strategy will contribute to the implementation of the Project “Development and Promotion of an Integrated Cultural Heritage Product: Route “Roman Frontier within the Cross-Border Region Romania-Bulgaria”.

The objective of the Marketing and Promotion Strategy has been defined in the Technical Specifications: creation of conditions for realization of the potential for development of the cultural and historic tourism within the Romania-Bulgaria Cross-Border region, and its sustainable development.

By developing a Marketing and Promotion Strategy will be created:

- A string of instruments for the promotion of the new tourist product, the route “Roman Frontier within the Cross-Border Region Romania-Bulgaria”.



- An opportunity for a together-bringing and cooperation between the local authorities, the tourist business, the cultural and research institutes, the NGOs, etc., from the Romania-Bulgaria Cross-Border region.
- Timing of priorities, measures and activities for a sustainable positioning of the tourist product of the Roman heritage and achievement of a cross-border magnitude for preservation of cultural and historical sites.

Scope

The Marketing and Promotion Strategy conforms with the territorial range of the route "Roman Frontier within the Cross-Border Region Romania-Bulgaria", outlined during the feasibility study.

The route follows the boundaries of the Roman Empire, currently known as the Lower Danube Limes, where the elements of which it is comprised represent past cultural and historic sites of the Roman heritage within the Romania-Bulgaria Cross-Border region.

Diagram 1. Route "Roman Frontier within the Cross-Border Region Romania-Bulgaria",



A large portion of the Roman empire frontier passes along the Danube river, which forms a natural boundary between Bulgaria and Romania. Along the entire stretch of the Danube river, the right bank is higher than the left bank, which is predominantly plain and open, often with swamps and lagoons, all this contributing to its fortification character. The Roman frontier represents a system of fortresses, roads, settlements and auxiliary sites along the southern bank of the



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Danube river, which was used as additional protection, a basic communication thoroughfare and a commercial and supply road.¹

The Danube Limes in Romania is 1,075 km long and includes fortification systems of brickwork masonry or earthen walls, fortresses, towns, settlements, structural members of bridges and ports, in a word all elements which had been built by the Roman world. The Limes spreads over eight districts of which seven are located within the Romania-Bulgaria Cross-Border region (e.g. Mehedinti, Dolj, Olt, Teleorman, Giurgiu, Calarasi, Constantia). Among the most representative sites of the Roman heritage are: Drobeta, Sucidava, Hinova, Capidava, Carsium, Troesmis, Dinogetia.

The Roman Limes on Bulgarian soil is 471 km long, the westernmost point being the mouthing of the Timok river, and the easternmost is the town of Silistra. Within the Bulgarian part the Limes crosses seven regions (Vidin, Montana, Vratsa, Pleven, Veliko Tarnovo, Ruse and Silistra). They all fall within the Romania-Bulgaria Cross-Border region. Among the most representative sites are the antique towns of: Oescus (the village of Gigen, Pleven); Nicopolis ad Istrum (the village of Nikyup, Veliko Tarnovo); Novae (Svishtov); Dorostorum (Silistra); Transmariska (Tutrakan); Dimum (Belene); Sexaginta Prista (Ruse); Iatrus (village of Krivina); Augusta (village of Harlets); Bononia (Vidin), etc.

1.3. Place and role of the Strategy for promotion of the tourist route

The Marketing and Promotion Strategy has been developed in the form of a programming document, which should assist planning of the next activities by the partners to the Project: the Association of Danube River Municipalities “Danube” (Bulgaria) in partnership with the Chamber of Commerce, Industry, Navigation and Agriculture of Constantia (Romania), oriented at the development and establishment of the joint cultural and historical route.

The Strategy should find its place within the hierarchy of programming documents of both organizations with a view to its realization and provision of resources. Implementation of the Strategy can only be successful if the stakeholders recognize the benefits of the route realization and by the development of tourism within the Cross-Border region.

In conformity with the chosen approach, promoting the route is envisaged to take place during three phases in time:

¹“Feasibility Study of a Joint Cultural and Historical Tourist Product: “Roman Frontier within the Cross-Border Region Romania-Bulgaria”, 2017



- 2018-2020 (short-term)
- 2021-2025 (medium-term)
- 2026-2030 (long-term)

II. MARKETING PROFILE OF THE TOURIST ROUTE “ROMAN FRONTIER ON THE TERRITORY OF THE ROMANIA-BULGARIA CROSS-BORDER REGION”

2.1. Location: general information

Geographic location of the tourist route

The route “Roman Frontier within the Cross-Border Region Romania-Bulgaria” is located within the terminal eastern parts of the European continent. The “backbone” of the route winds along the lower course of the Danube river, which is a natural barrier between Romania and Bulgaria.

Diagram 2. The course of the Danube river



Nowadays the river connects ten countries along its way of 2,852 km. It starts at the springs in the Schwarzwald mountains in Germany, crosses Austria, Slovakia, Hungary, Croatia, Serbia, Bulgaria, Romania, Moldova and the Ukraine to mouth into the Black Sea.

The Danube river is the only large river in Europe that flows in west-east direction. It has always been an important connection between the West and the East.

The river called in Latin “Danubius” is the northern frontier of the Roman Empire: a mighty natural protective obstacle and a convenient commercial path for



provision of the legions. The Roman frontier represents a system of impressive fortresses, roads, settlements and auxiliary sites. Included in the route are 62 sites of the Roman heritage of high cultural and historic value, which from part of the Roman frontier also known as the “Lower Danube Limes”.

The Danube Limes in Romania is 1,075 km long. It includes fortification systems of brickwork masonry or earthen walls, fortresses, towns, settlements, structural members of bridges and ports, in a word all elements which had been built by the Roman world. The Limes spreads over eight districts of which seven are located within the Romania-Bulgaria Cross-Border region (e.g. Mehedinti, Dolj, Olt, Teleorman, Giurgiu, Calarasi, Constantia). Among the most representative sites of the Roman heritage are: Drobeta (Mehedinti district); Sucidava (Olt district), Hinova (Mehedinti district); Capidava, Carsium, Troesmis, Dinogetia (Constantia district).

The Roman Limes on Bulgarian lands is 471 km long, the westernmost point being the mouthing of the Timok river, and the easternmost is the town of Silistra. Within the Bulgarian part the Limes crosses seven regions (Vidin, Montana, Vratsa, Pleven, Veliko Tarnovo, Ruse and Silistra). They all fall within the Romania-Bulgaria Cross-Border region. Among the most representative sites are the antique towns of: Oescus and Durum (region of Pleven); Nicopolis ad Istrum and Novae (region of Veliko Tarnovo); Dorostorum (Silistra); Transmariska (Tutrakan); Dimum (Belene); Sexaginta Prista and Iatrus (region of Ruse); Bononia (region of Vidin), Dorostorum and Transmariska (region of Silistra).

The route lies in the moderate climatic belt, with 4 clearly differentiated seasons and a comparatively milder climate than the climate in Central, Eastern and Northern Europe. This is a precondition for the development of the Cross-Border region as a all-year tourist destination.

The region is inhabited by more than 4.7 million inhabitants. The urbanization level within the Cross-Border region is 52.67%, an index below the average levels for Romania (54.9%), Bulgaria (71%) and the European Union (67%). This determines the lower mobility of the population in the region with tourism as a goal, as well as the more restricted scale of the tourist flows in comparison with those in Western, Southern and Central Europe.

The official languages are Romanian and Bulgarian.

The route is located within one of the most attractive regions in Europe, characterized by a multitude of natural and cultural and historic resources, which guarantees a potential for development of diverse forms of tourism.

The principle subject of the route, the Roman cultural and historic heritage, contributes to the development and establishment of the



specialization of the Danube region.

2.2. Basic characteristics of the tourist route

Basic characteristic

The leading subject around which the route "Roman Frontier within the Cross-Border Region Romania-Bulgaria" is built is the Roman heritage. The subject represents a all-Europe value typical for a few European countries.

The route "Roman Frontier within the Cross-Border Region Romania-Bulgaria" is a symbiosis of a cultural and historic and a tourist route.

By designing the route using cultural and historic sites of the Roman heritage that form part of the Roman frontier, the route **goes beyond the territorial frame** of the Bulgaria-Romania Cross-Border region. The Roman Empire frontier is the largest archaeological monument in the European Union and is among the largest monuments in the world. It is included in the World Heritage List of UNESCO.

The route is of **high cultural and historic value** because it embraces sites of the Danube Roman Limes, which bear this value and are well-provided-for in terms of infrastructure and tourism opportunities such that the route can already be offered as a ready-to-use product. However an objective for the longer term has also been formulated: the inclusion of elements possessing the potential for development and positioning within the focus of tourism.

The authenticity of the route is yet another well pronounced feature. By its elements and interrelations as a cultural route it completely fits in the context of the Nara Documents in respect of the world heritage authenticity.² The elements reflect different aspects of authenticity (authenticity of the substance, traditions and techniques, location, effect; continuity of a specific typical function or tradition, which, although altering its physical measures and methods of practicing is preserved as a sense). The authenticity is typical for the entire system of the route, which follows its vitality, also including the authenticity of the regularities according to which the integral system continues its existence today.

² Note: The Nara Document on Authenticity (Japan) was drafted in 1994 by 45 participants at the Conference on Authenticity in connection with the World Heritage Convention, organized by the Agency on Cultural Issues (at the Government of Japan), UNESCO, the Roman Center and Icomos.



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An important characteristic of the route is its strong **integrity**, and this is of exceptional importance for the viability of a cultural route. On one hand, the route has the potential to fit well in the network of well functioning routes related to the subjects on the Roman heritage, e.g. “The German Limes”, “The Road of the Roman Emperors”, etc. At a site level, the route realizes its integrity with sites - remnants of the northern frontier of the Roman Empire (i.e. the Danube Limes), spread over the upper course of the Danube river in modern Austria, Hungary, Slovakia and Serbia (or the so-called “Upper Danube Limes”) and along the lower course of the Danube river in modern Bulgaria and Romania (or the so-called “Lower Danube Limes”). On the other hand the route possesses the ability to maintain and express different types of interrelations between the various elements, reflecting its importance as a cultural value: material and non-material traces; cultural (anthropogenic) signs and natural landmarks; elements from different periods, etc.

The route **conforms to UNESCO Directions** for exposure and preservation of the authenticity and integrity of the elements of the cultural route and their multi-dimensional characteristics. According to data from the Feasibility Study nearly 200 sites of the Roman immovable cultural heritage within the scope of the Cross-Border region have been identified, whereas 62 of these (24 in Romania and 38 in Bulgaria) have been included in the Route “Roman Frontier within the Cross-Border Region Romania-Bulgaria”. They represent synchronous and connected elements primordially belonging to the route subject and having preserved their original structure. They possess a well preserved individual authenticity and an original structure that has been preserved to a maximal degree.

The route possesses the potential to turn into an **innovative** route. Innovative methods pertaining to the modern policy for preservation of the cultural and historic heritage can effectively be applied to the sites included in the route.

Maximal inclusion of innovative trends is necessary for the search, documenting and preservation of the cultural and historic heritage, by which non-invasive archaeology is practiced (by the technologies “lidar” and “penetrating radar”, geophysics, etc.), as well as digital reconstruction (for added virtual or mixed reality), not destructing the authentic structure and creating an exceptionally interesting and attractive product.

The route is **viable and stable**. It is a reflection of the historic memory, and not incidental manifestation in time. Its continuity and the importance for the people living along the route have been found expression over the centuries by a cultural interaction and dialog. The inclusion of elements, which have a clearly distinguishable potential to be promoted to the level of basic elements of the cultural and historic tourist product will guarantee the viability of the product and



its constant development thus providing diversity and novelties during the various periods of its functioning.

In its contemporary dimension the route possess the power to act as a **catalyst of the development of tourism and of the cultural industries**. It has been synchronized with the modern tendencies in tourism development: seeking a broader and more diversified tourist supply, authenticity of the offered services and active participation of the local communities, and increase of the share of individual and youth travels.

The route has **educational and inspirational functions**. A possibility for an educational and cultural exchange are the long-term multidisciplinary international/interregional projects for exploration of undeveloped secondary elements having a potential, continuing projects for exploration of the sites, etc. The realization of joint educational projects among museums and schools provides an opportunity to enhance the interest for youth journeys and exchange, and simultaneously therewith for improvement of the educational process at school. The development of a niche tourism (e.g. participation of volunteers in archaeological excavations), taking part in festivals and reenactment groups contribute to the attractiveness of the route.

The route contributes to the highest possible degree in the implementation of a policy for **responsible and sustainable development** of tourism in less popular regions by encouraging the local small and medium size business. It also offers a diversification of the tourist product, direction of the attention also beyond the development of popular tourist “kernels” and maximal inclusion of the local communities, all this ensuring diversity and stability of the route. The route possess the potential to turn into a peculiar springboard for a stronger development of the local and regional economy and the presence thereof on the foreign markets, including also by an intensified exchange and mobility, and improving the economic and social development of the region.

The route is a bridge between the cultural identity, diversity, cultural identity, tolerance and understanding in the contemporary globalizing world.

Sites included in the route

Romania

No.	Designation	District	Site type
	Mehedinti district		
1	Roman camp Drobeta, town of Drobeta-Turnu Severin	Mehedinti	basic
2	Ruins of the Trayan Bridge, town		basic



	of Drobeta-Turnu Severin		
3	Regional museum Porțile de Fier	Mehedinti	movable cultural heritage
4	Roman camp Hinova the town of Hinova	Mehedinti	secondary element
	Dolj district		
5	Roman camp Choroyu Nou, the town of Choroyu Nou	Dolj	secondary element
6	Roman camp Racari de Jos, the town of Racari de Jos	Dolj	secondary element
7	Oltenia Museum, Archaeological section, the town of Craiova	Dolj	movable cultural heritage
	Olt district		
8	Roman fortress Sucidava, the town of Corabia	Olt	basic
9	Roman bridge at Corabia, the town of Corabia	Olt	secondary element
10	Antique town Romula, the town of Resca	Olt	secondary element
11	Roman museum at Caracal, the town of Caracal	Olt	movable cultural heritage
	Teleorman district		movable cultural heritage
12	Regional museum Teleorman, the town of Alexandria	Teleorman	movable cultural heritage
	Giurgiu district		movable cultural heritage
13	Regional museum Teohari Antonescu, the town of Giurgiu	Giurgiu	movable cultural heritage
	Calarasi district		movable cultural heritage
14	Museum “Lower Danube”, the town of Calarasi	Calarasi	movable cultural heritage
	Constantia district		movable cultural heritage
15	National historic and archaeological museum at Constantia	Constantia	movable cultural heritage
16	Antique town Tomis	Constantia	basic
17	Roman building with mosaic, the town of Constantia	Constantia	basic
18	Museum complex Tropeum Trayani, the village of Adamclisi	Constantia	basic
19	Roman fortress Capidava, the town of Capidava	Constantia	basic
20	Roman fortress Carsium, the town of Hârșova	Constantia	basic
21	Museum Carsium, the town of Hârșova	Constantia	movable cultural heritage
22	Museum complex Histria, the town of Histria	Constantia	basic
23	Archaeological museum Calatis, the town of Mangalia	Constantia	movable cultural heritage



24	Archaeological museum Calatis, the town of Mangalia	Constantia	basic
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Bulgaria

No.	Designation	Municipality	Site type
Region of Vidin			
1	Antique fortress Bononia, the town of Vidin	Vidin municipality	basic
2	Mediaeval and Ottoman fortress Bdin, the town of Vidin	Vidin municipality	advanced tourist destination
3	Regional historic museum, the town of Vidin	Vidin municipality	movable cultural heritage
4	Antique town Ratiaria (Colonia Ulpia Traiana Ratiaria), the village of Archar	Dimovo municipality	secondary element
5	Roman fortress Kaleto (Fortress Belogradchik), the town of Belogradchik	Belogradchik municipality	secondary element, determining the secondary area
6	Historic museum, the town of Belogradchik		movable cultural heritage
7	Antique castle Castra Martis, the town of Kula	Kula municipality	secondary element, determining the secondary area
Region of Montana			
8	Regional historic museum of the town of Montana		movable cultural heritage
9	Antique town Almus, the town of Lom	Lom municipality	secondary element
10	Historic museum, the town of Lom		movable cultural heritage
Region of Vratsa			
11	Regional historic museum, the town of Vratsa	Vratsa municipality	movable cultural heritage
12	Antique fortress Augustae, the village of Harletz, Kozloduj	Kozloduj municipality	secondary element
13	Kamaka fortress, the town of Oryahovo	Oryahovo municipality	secondary element - advance tourist destination
14	Historic museum, the town of Oryahovo	Oryahovo municipality	movable cultural heritage
Region of Pleven			
15	Roman town Ulpia Oescensium (Colonia Ulpia Oescensium), the village of Gigen	Gulyantsi municipality	basic site
16	Road station and antique castle Dimum, the town of Belene	Belene municipality	basic site
17	Antique fortress Storgozia, the town of Pleven	Pleven municipality	secondary element, determining the secondary area



18	Regional historic museum, the town of Pleven	Pleven municipality	movable cultural heritage
19	Fortress Nikopol, the town of Nikopol	Nikopol municipality	secondary element - advance tourist destination
Region of Veliko Tarnovo			
20	Antique town Novae, the town of Svishtov	Svishtov municipality	basic site
21	Historic museum, the town of Svishtov	Svishtov municipality	movable cultural heritage
22	Roman town Nicopolis Ad Istrum), the village of Nikyup	Veliko Tarnovo municipality	secondary element, determining the secondary area
23	Regional historic museum, the town of Veliko Tarnovo	Veliko Tarnovo municipality	movable cultural heritage
Region of Ruse			
24	Antique fortress Sexaginta Prista, the town of Ruse	Ruse municipality	basic site
25	Regional historic museum, the town of Ruse	Ruse municipality	movable cultural heritage
26	Antique and mediaeval settlement Iatrus, the village of Krivina	Tsenovo municipality	basic site
27	Fortress Cherven, the village of Cherven	Ivanovo municipality	secondary element - advance tourist destination
Region of Silistra			
28	Antique town Transmariska, the town of Tutrakan	Tutrakan municipality	basic site
29	Historic museum in the town of Tutrakan	Tutrakan municipality	movable cultural heritage
30	Antique town Dorostorum, the town of Silistra	Silistra municipality	basic site
31	Regional historic museum in the town of Silistra	Silistra municipality	movable cultural heritage
32	Roman tomb in the town of Silistra	Silistra municipality	basic site
33	Roman villa, the town of Silistra	Silistra municipality	secondary element

See Appendix 1. Presentation of the promotion ready sites

2.3. Accessibility by transport

The existence of a developed transport scheme is of crucial importance for the development of tourism. That is why the accessibility by transport of the sites



included Route "Roman Frontier within the Cross-Border Region Romania-Bulgaria" is determinant for the complex positioning of the product on the tourist market.

The Romania-Bulgaria Cross-Border region is accessible thanks to the navigable river, the Danube as part of the All-European Transport Corridor No. VII, which connects the Port of Constantia with the industrial centers in Western Europe and the Port of Rotterdam via the Black Sea canal. Corridor VII is crossed in turn by two TEN-T corridors, which connect Central and Northern Europe with the southeastern part of the continent and the Near East.

On the other hand the Danube river represents a tight frontier between two countries due to the lack of river crossing infrastructure; this impedes the cross-border cooperation and the social and economic integration of the territory. There exist three types of border crossing infrastructure: fluvial, terrestrial and aerial.

A serious barrier to cooperation represents the absence of border crossing stations. Along the 470 km of the length of the Danube river course there are only two bridges (for road and rail transport) and several ferryboat river-crossing locations.

The data related to passenger motion and the frequency of check point crossing indicate moderate levels, whereas less than 61% of those having crossed the border are of Romanian and Bulgarian descent. The exceptions are the Ruse-Giurgiu bridge and the Vidin-Calafat bridge over the Danube river, which are the most used border crossing points by the Romanian, Bulgarian and the international traffic.

The ground transport (road and rail transport) holds the greatest share in the two countries, both within the Cross-Border region and at national level. The series of joint indices with regard to the transport infrastructure reflects the fact that both countries put a priority on the modernization of the transportation sector.

Table 1. Ground infrastructure for crossing the Bulgarian-Romanian border

Connection	Type of transport
Vidin - Calafat	bridge (road and rail transport)
Ruse - Giurgiu	bridge (road and rail transport)
Kardam - Negru voda	The ground border crossing points are located along the Black Sea coast
Durankulak - Vama Vece, as well as to the south of the Danube river, between Silistra and Ostrov.	

The river ports of national importance dispose over sufficient capacity for attendance of passengers. Established have been connections between the public transport ports of national importance and the national road and rail network, and



through the Danube river there is access to the European system of canals for inland water transport.

Table 2. River infrastructure for crossing the Bulgarian- Romanian border

Connection	Type of transport
Lom - Rast	ferryboat
Oryahovo - Bechet	ferryboat
Nikopol/Somovit - Turnu Magureli	ferryboat
Svishtov - Zimnicea	ferryboat
Tutrakan - Oltenia	ferryboat
Silistra - Calarasi	ferryboat

However, the condition of a large part of the assets of the transport network as a whole is unsatisfactory, and this inserts a negative effect on the admissible maximal speeds, the trip durations, the comfort and the operational costs.

Taking into consideration the active usage of the road network by Bulgarian, Romanian and foreign tourists is necessary to search a urgent solution of the following problems in this regard: irregular coverage and insufficient saturation with motorways and Class One roads; a large part of roads are in poor state (in particular the municipal roads); insufficiently developed road network to serve tourist attractions; existence of a large number of road sections with traffic intensity approaching the maximal throughput; low safety indices of automobile traffic in comparison with the average indices for the EU.

A study and an analysis of the currently available accessibility has been conducted by discussing the opportunities for an access via the public transport. A good degree of accessibility has been provided for sites located in the larger towns; the accessibility of archaeological sites located in smaller towns is satisfactory. Individual transport is required for the remaining sites, mostly crossover vehicles.

Road transport

The roads of the national road network falling within the Romania-Bulgaria Cross-Border region are insufficiently developed. A motorway and high speed 4-lane roads are lacking. Actually only one motorway, the Bucharest - Constantia Highway (220 km) passes through the Cross-Border region.

In general terms the quality of the roads is not satisfactory, and a significant imbalance of their state by regions can be observed. The density of the roads along the Danube river is far below the national level. The road network of Class Two and Class Three roads is lagging behind along its entire stretch and is maintained in a



poor manner, with a high risk of accidents. Moreover, specific roads are susceptible to floods - mostly those located in the Romanian part of the Danube river. Many of the roads have insufficient capacity, which leads to overload and increases the travel time, the vehicle operation costs, and the risk of emergencies and environmental damage, respectively.

The vehicle traffic shows a sustained trend towards increase, and by the year 2020 the road traffic will be the most used traffic within the Cross-Border region. The poor state of the road network and the vehicle traffic increase give rise to serious difficulties for the tourist flows.

In the sense of this analysis, and for the improvement of the transport accessibility to tourist sites is of crucial importance to construct the “Danube Panorama Road”, i.e. rehabilitation and repair of the road section parallel to the river, because the best communication to the prevalent part of the sites of the Lower Danube Limes can be achieved via this road.

The opportunity for a rent-a-car service in the settlements, where or in the vicinity of which are localized the tourist sites is tiny.

The existence of an infrastructure for use by the public transport is of importance for the tourist trips. The provision of bus stations and bus stops within the Bulgarian part of the Cross-Border region is at a high level. In the case of individual trips an obstacle for the access to the sites represent the worn-out bus stops or the lack of sheds or other structures, and the less frequent bus schedule (twice daily in the small settlements).

Rail transport

The density of the operational railroad network is approximately 46.1 km per 1,000 square kilometers in Romania and 38.9 km per 1,000 square kilometers in Bulgaria, and this is below the average for the EU countries (65 km/1,000 square kilometers), thus positioning these country on the last two places among the EU railroad networks. The main railway connection between the networks of Romania and Bulgaria crosses the Danube river at the Giurgiu-Ruse bridge. The other railway crossing the river is between Negru Voda and Kardam, and it accounts for a reduced traffic (only goods and passenger trains).

From the analysis of the quality of the road and railway infrastructure of both country is evident that they occupy remote positions in the European classification, regardless of the fact that both in Romania and in Bulgaria as well, the ground transport takes the largest share.



The Bulgarian part of the Romania-Bulgaria Cross-Border region is characterized by relatively high figures for the density of the railway network in comparison with the average value for Bulgaria. The region of Silistra is an exception to this, showing the lowest figures of the railway network density. The highest average figure for the railway network density belongs to the region of Ruse, followed by the regions of Veliko Tarnovo and Pleven. By the index of density of the passenger stations according to the territory, the leading position among the studied regions is occupied by the region of Ruse.

By data from the National Statistical Institute, a mere 6.3% of the persons having traveled for personal reasons including tourism have used the rail transport. Also the international traffic has not shown a serious variation during recent years. There is an increase of the transportation by interregional (fast) trains during the past three years, as well as of the regional transport serving small settlements via major lines. This helps for rendering a higher quality services to passengers traveling on different occasions. Regardless of the registered drop in the demand of transportation services by rail, the future development of the passenger transport by rail is of substantial importance.

Water (river) transport

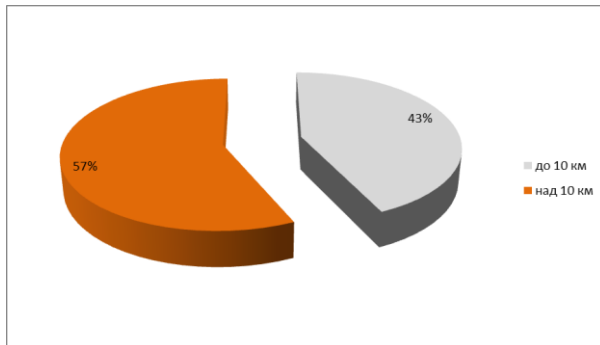
The major Danube ports at the Romania-Bulgarian border are: Calafat, Turnu Magurele, Giurgiu, Oltenia and Calarasi in Romania and Vidin, Lom, Oryahovo, Svishtov, Ruse and Silistra in Bulgaria. They are important for both the goods transport and for the tourists, arriving in Giurgiu and Oltenia (for one-day trips to Bucharest, Ruse, Svishtov, Veliko Tarnovo, etc.); however the exiting port infrastructure requires improvements.

On a global scale, the market for cruise trips demonstrates a rapid growth, at an average annual rate of 6.5%. The market for river cruises in Europe has grown by 10% over the last 5 years. The most popular river cruise destinations are the rivers Rhein, Main and Danube due to the large number of attractive and easily accessible locations at the riverside.

River cruises have already generated a large number of passengers for the river ports. These are tourist groups from the USA, Japan and Western Europe. At present there is a good river connection with the river cruises to Bulgaria, including with the largest operator, Viking River Cruises. The income of the population in Southeastern Europe can go up, and this will increase the domestic cruise trip market.



Figure 1. Proximity of the ports to sites included in the route



In proximity of 43% of the sites in the Bulgarian section of the routes there is a passenger river port. However the existing practice is that the settlements, where the vessels berth, are not the subject of attention on the part of the tourists.

So for example the tourists of the cruise ships do not visit the town of Vidin; by organized bus transport they set off directly for an one-day visit to the rocks at Belogradchik. The situation with the towns Svishtov and Ruse is similar. For the present moment, the main destination for these tourists is the town of Veliko Tarnovo, and only a small part of them remain in the town of Ruse, for not more than half a day. Tourists pass Svishtov in transit.

The advantage of the tourist site is the existence of a bridge or a ferryboat to cross the Danube river. There are operational ferryboat connections at: Lom - Rast; Oryahovo - Bechet; Nikopol/Somovity- Turnu Magureli; Svishtov - Zimnicea; Tutrakan - Oltenia and Silistra - Calarasi. This improves the accessibility by transport to 39% of the sites located in the respective municipalities.

Air transport

The access to tourist sites included in the route is largely restricted as air transport is concerned.

The region is served by 3 international airports in Romania: Constantia (important during the summer season, by accepting flights from Paris, Strasbourg, Luxemburg, Bergamo, Pizza); Craiova (flights from London, Cologne/Bonn, Bergamo); and Bucharest-Otopeni, which is located closest to the border. The nearest airports in Bulgaria are in located Sofia and Varna; however the majority of the population from the Cross-Border region regularly uses the airport at Bucharest.

The only functioning international airport on the territory of the Bulgarian part of the region is the Gorna Oryahovitsa Airport in the region of Veliko Tarnovo.

The passenger terminal is in a good state; it is, however, erected and equipped for the domestic airline service.



The airport of Ruse, 100% owned by the Ruse Municipality, has been in operation since the end of 2016. The airport offers a good opportunity for raising the tourist flows by: servicing the passenger ships along the Danube river; servicing low-tariff airlines; restoring the direct flight from Ruse to Sofia; using of the airport own private planes; charter flights for events on the territory of the town of Ruse; tourist visitors.

Bicycle access

The Romania-Bulgaria Cross-Border region has a great potential to develop bicycle tourism, which ensures an alternative method of access to the major part of the sites located along the Danube river. Two Euro-cycling routes pass through the region: 6 and 13.

The EuroVelo is a transcontinental system of bicycle routes created for the development of a network of sustainable transport.

EuroVelo 6 is one of the most popular route connecting the Atlantic Ocean with the Black Sea. The route follows the course of the rivers Loire, Rhein and Danube. EuroVelo passes in immediate proximity of 29 of the sites in the Bulgarian part, and this represents a 57% coverage of all sites along this bicycle route. The complete construction of the infrastructure of the bicycle route will result in increase of the number of tourists.

Diagram 3. Diagram of the EuroVelo route³



So far twelve routes with a total length of 66,000 km (of which 45,000 marked kilometers) have been established within the network. The network is developed by the European Cyclists' Federation after a package of criteria for establishing a high standard of design, services, marking and routes promoting. The greater part of the route has been constructed; only within the Romania and Bulgarian sections, the route is still in its design phase, due to the very few locations allowing for cycling.

³ Source: <https://www.francevelotourisme.com/en/contents/france-by-bike/eurovelo-routes-in-france>



EuroVelo 13. A route along the “Iron Curtain”. This European route has a tentative length of 6,800 km and provides connection between the Barents Sea in the north to the Black Sea in the south. The route passes through the border regions of the Balkan countries Serbia, Romania, Bulgaria, Macedonia, Greece and Turkey.

There are also other bicycle routes in the region, elaborated mainly by NGOs, which also offer an opportunity to access the sites of the route.

The access by bicycle to all sites included in the route: “Roman frontier on the territory of the Cross-Border region Romania-Bulgaria” is possible without specially constructed bicycle alleys.

2.4. Location from the prospective of tourist flows

Approximately 200,000 tourists visited the Romania-Bulgaria Cross-Border region during 2016. The principle tourist flows have been concentrated in direction of the established tourist destination Constantia (Romania) and Veliko Tarnovo (Bulgaria)

The analysis of the location of the tourist route from the prospective of the tourist flows and the review of the tourist flows by types of tourism within the Cross-Border region have been based on the data contained in the Feasibility Study, in the analytical part of the Development Strategy, as well as on own research and expert evaluation.

The tourist flow directions occur at two major levels: international and domestic. The relevant conclusions are made after two major indices: **quantity of the realized accommodations** at the shelters and accommodation locations; and the **average duration** of the overnight stay in the destination of the tourists, which have stayed at the accommodation locations.

When measured by these indices, several significant tourist flows are not included in the real picture: tourists visiting the respective site for only one day or part of the day without a stay; tourists who stay with relatives and friends; tourists staying in private lodgings against payment (with no accounting on the part of the hosts); tourists coming during the day within a specific time span, but preferring to stay for the night outside the destination (especially popular during festivals and holidays in the region).

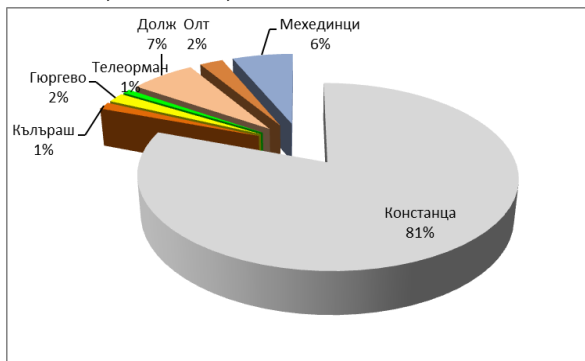


Romania

The analysis of the statistical data obtained from the NSI database indicates that the number of the tourists at the accommodation locations within the Romania-Bulgaria Cross-Border region has registered a moderate increase. Thus for the whole region the annual number of arriving tourists has increased from approximately 1.1 million in 2007 to approximately 1.4 million in 2016. The development of the arriving tourists was not without fluctuations: there have been two periods with a negative movement or stagnation (2009-2010) (against the background of the economic crisis), and 2013-2014.

The growth is primarily due to the increase of the tourist visits to the Constantia district, which forms more than 80% of the total number of arrivals in the region. Significant increases have been registered also in the districts Dolj, Olt and Mehedinți. The only district with a decrease of the number of arriving tourists is Teleorman.

Figure 2. Distribution of the number of arriving tourists at the accommodation locations, by districts, Romania, 2016



The distribution of the number of the arrivals by districts is similar to that of the accommodation capacity. Thus more than 80% of the total number of the arrivals of tourists in the region during 2016 were registered in the Constantia district, since this district possesses the greater part of the resources related to maritime tourism.

The districts of Dolj and Mehedinți have registered 7% and 6%, respectively, of the total number of arrivals at the accommodation locations, and the remaining districts show a relatively insignificant shares (1-2%).

Similar to the number of arriving tourists, the number of the overnight stays at the accommodation locations, registered during 2016, was higher than the number of registrations made at the beginning of the analyzed period. Thus the total number of the overnight stays in the region shows a positive development, increasing from approx. 4.9 million during 2007 to more than 5 million in 2016, following a series of fluctuations during 2009-2010 and 2013-2014. Similar to the number of arrivals, the increase in comparison with the beginning of the reference

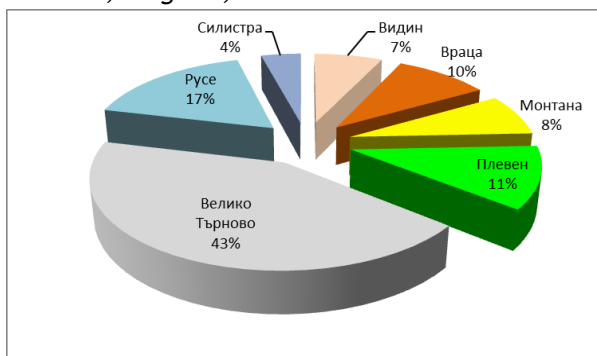


period is mainly due to the increase of the number of overnight stays in the Constantia district, which accounts for over 80% of the total number of overnight stays at the accommodation locations in the region. A positive development, even though showing more modest absolute values, has been registered in the district of Dolj, Olt and Mehedinti. On the other hand, the districts of Calarasi, Giurgiu and Teleorman have marked a negative trend.

Bulgaria

The largest flow of tourists is concentrated in the towns of Veliko Tarnovo, Ruse and Vratsa: both as Bulgarian tourists and foreigner as well. The largest overnight stays was registered in the Region of Vratsa (2.5 overnight stays per tourist), which represents one point above the average for Bulgaria (1.9).

Figure 3 Distribution of the number of arriving tourists at the accommodation locations, by districts, Bulgaria, 2016.



The next place is taken by the towns by Veliko Tarnovo, Ruse and Montana. The shortest tourist stay is registered in Vidin. Foreign tourists stays are the longest in the towns of Vratsa and Pleven; the indices (2.3) are higher than the average index for Bulgaria.

The conclusion that can be made is that the location of the route from the prospective of the tourist flows has an index of 1.7, which is below the average index value for Bulgaria (1.9). The longest average stay observed of foreign tourists is 2, and this indicates interest for the resources of the region.

2.5. Conditions for tourists visits: tourist infrastructure

2.5.1. Elements of the technical infrastructure

The route disposes over a relatively well developed infrastructure to meet the needs of the tourist sites.

A large part of the sites located in large settlements are electrified and



water supplied. Technical infrastructure is completely missing at all secondary sites with a potential, and this seems absolutely reasonable from the viewpoint of identifying these as tourist sites.

The degree of completed sewerage is significantly lower. The infrastructure in small settlements is outdated, and a large number of the population is not connected to wastewater treatment plants and potable water treatment plants.

The sites, including the historic museums located in urban environment, are provided with video surveillance systems, e.g. the antique fortresses Bononia (the town of Vidin) and Sexaginta (the town Ruse); the antique castle Dimum (the town of Belene); the Roman town Nicopolis ad Istrum (the village of Nikyup, Veliko Tarnovo municipality); the antique towns Novae (the town of Svishtov) and Dorostorum (the town of Silistra); the Roman tomb (the town of Silistra) in Bulgaria, as well as the Regional museum Porțile de Fier (the town of Drobeta-Turnu Severin) and the Oltenia museum, the Section of Archaeology (the town of Craiova) in Romania.

The communication network is well developed, including the access to internet. However only one of the sites of the route is equipped with free access to internet (WiFi): the antique fortress Sexaginta Prista at the town of Ruse.

2.5.2. Elements of the tourist infrastructure

Information support

The information infrastructure plays an essential role for the conversion of an archaeological site to a tourist site. Provision of easily accessible information on archaeological sites from the Roman period is important for the proper exposition and understanding.

In the course of the study of the sites of the Roman heritage within the Bulgaria-Romania Cross-Border region was found that information support was lacking for the prevalent part of the sites; this is very easy to explain, since as of the present moment these sites have not been developed as tourist products.

The information infrastructure within the Cross-Border region is directly dependent on the rationalization of the function of the archaeological heritage as part of the system of cultural tourism. That is why this system is well developed mainly in the towns having archaeological museums. The provisions of easily accessible information on the archaeological sites from the Roman period is important for the proper exposure and understanding.



The information system is properly developed mainly in the towns having archaeological museums. A substantial downside of the information boards is that the information contained therein is only in Bulgarian language, and this precludes their use as official channel of information. In most of the cases the boards are compromised (fainted, rust covered, broken), leaving unpleasant feelings with visitors.

The information boards are also a serious deficiency within the range of the route.

The tourist information centers are the principle starting point for the majority of the visitors. Part of these are included in the National network of the tourist information centers at the Ministry of Tourism and are located in the municipalities of Belogradchik, Veliko Tarnovo, Vidin, Vratsa, Ivanovo, Kula, Oryahovo, Pleven and Ruse. The tourist information centers in the towns Silistra and Tutrakan also function successfully.

With the exception of the districts of Constantia and Mehedinti, the rest of the districts within the Romania-Bulgaria Cross-Border region are seldom regarded as tourist destinations, even by those who live and work there. For this reason, the tourist information centers do not represent an investment priority for the local authorities or the private entities. Even in the district of Constantia, where the number of tourist information centers has increased during the period 2007-2013, the provision of information services is largely insufficient. For this reasons, the town of Constantia, which concentrates almost half of the sites and museums of the Roman cultural heritage, does not have a center accredited by the Ministry of Tourism. The town of Mangalia suffers the same problems.

Tourist information centers are missing in Dolj, Calarasi and Teleorman; however there exist information centers in the towns of Giurgiu and Olt. In the town of Mehedinti there are two information centers located at Orsova and Baia de Arama. This explains the lack of such center in Drobeta-Turnu Severin despite the large number of cultural heritage sites.

To this end is necessary to establish tourist information centers and accredit the latter in accordance with the standards issued by the Ministry of Tourism in Romania, as a minimum in the following city centers: Constantia (Constantia district); Mangalia (Constantia district); Craiova (Dolj district); Drobeta-Turnu Severin (Mehedinti district). They will assume the functions of regional information knots providing information of interest for the tourists not only about the attractions and structures in the territory where they are located, but also about the landmarks in the region.

Besides it is necessary to create information stations, which could consist of a desk at the major railway stations and airports (e.g. Constantia, Craiova)



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attended by one person, as well as at the landmarks representing Roman site of significant importance (e.g. the Museum of National History and Archaeology in Constantia, the Archaeological complex Adamclisi, the Iron Gate Museum at Mehedinti).

Close to the sites located in urban environment are located other types of museums, galleries, cultural institutions, all of which contribute not only to the complex development of tourism, but also serve as effective channel of communication to enhance information on the Roman heritage sites located nearby. Similar examples are: The Eco-museum with Aquarium at the Regional Historic Museum in the town of Ruse; the “Crossed Barracks” in the town of Vidin; the Visitor Center of the natural park Persina in Belene, etc.

An element of the tourist information infrastructure, characteristic solely for Bulgaria, are the community cultural centers, unique cultural institutes in Europe. In proximity of 100% of the sites there is a functional community cultural center, which holds intangible cultural heritage of the region.

For the sites having cultural functions there exist printed publicity materials (brochures, fliers, etc.), and part of these sites have been included in the publicity and information materials at national level.

Auxiliary sites: parking lots

Parking lots: Existing at a very limited portion of the sites and established with a view to back up the tourist flows. For the sites located within the city limits there exist possibilities to park in the adjacent streets.

Shopping sites: Existent at the sites located within the towns.

Catering establishments: The tourist sites located in the towns are best backed-up.

Attractions (in the open and indoors): In proximity of the sites or at the sites themselves (where the sites are located in urban environments) are held different events of the cultural calendar of the municipalities. There exist opportunities for recreation in park environments. For those sites, which are located outside urbanized territories, their adjacent attractions are connected with the natural heritage.

Lavatories: Sites located in the towns use public lavatories, which are extremely insufficient to serve the tourist flows. Generally, the findings indicate that where lavatories are available the facilities are in a very bad shape, not to the required hygienic standards, all this leaving the tourist with rather unpleasant impressions.



A common practice is to use the lavatories at tank stations, and these are often too remote from the sites.

Conclusions: It is necessary to plan the activities aimed at improvement of the information infrastructure of the sites, which offer a high degree of readiness to accommodate tourists. For the goal of popularizing the Route "Roman Frontier within the Cross-Border Region Romania-Bulgaria" is necessary to fabricate and install information boards having unified vision, both in Bulgarian, Romanian and English languages.

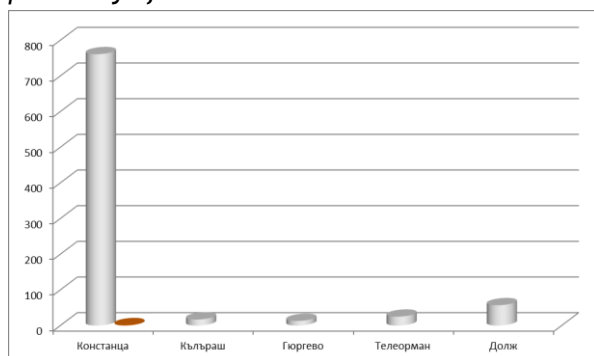
2.6. Accommodation facilities in the region of the route

The availability of places for accommodation, which are suitable both as numbers as well as in terms of quality is a fundamental element for the development of tourism. They serve to establish the connection between tourist resources and the tourists as users of such resources.

Romania

Currently there are 950 accommodation structures within the districts of the Romania-Bulgaria Cross-Border region. Dominant is the Constantia district, where more than 760 accommodation facilities are functional due to the presence of seaside resorts. Besides Constantia the other districts with more than 50 accommodation facilities are: Dolj (tourist activities concentrated in the town of Craiova); and Mehedinti (higher density in the area of Orsova-Drobeta-Turnu Severin).

Figure 4. Offered accommodation facilities in proximity of the sites included in the route



The total number of the accommodation facilities within the Romania-Bulgaria Cross-Border region has decreased by 12% during the period 2007-2016, from approximately 1,081 in 2007 to 951 in 2016. The accommodation locations in the Constantia district showed a sharp decrease by more than 200 over the period 2007-2016.



Among the remaining districts of the Cross-Border region, a more significant increase has been registered in the districts of Dolj and Mehedinti, while the districts of Calarasi, Giurgiu, Teleorman and Olt are characterized by a relative stagnation.

At the level of the Romania-Bulgaria Cross-Border region the hotels are dominant among the accommodations facilities, taking 50% of the total number of the accommodations, followed by tourist villas and bungalows, both with 20% each.

The average daily occupancy by tourists is concentrated mainly in Constantia, whereas of a total of 12.84 accommodations per day within the Romania-Bulgaria Cross-Border region, in excess of 10 million accommodations per day have been utilized in the Constantia district, i.e. approximately 79% of the total accommodation capacity during 2016 was allotted to the Constantia district, followed by the district of Dolj forming 7% and the district of Mehedinti with near 6% of the average daily occupancy of the existing accommodation facilities. The districts of Calarasi, Giurgiu, Teleorman and Olt take a modest share of the accommodation capacity, and each one of them forms approximately 2% of the total average daily occupancy for the region. In the course of the past 10 years the tourist flow has doubled also in the district of Olt, while the increase for the remaining districts is more modest - under 30%.

Bulgaria

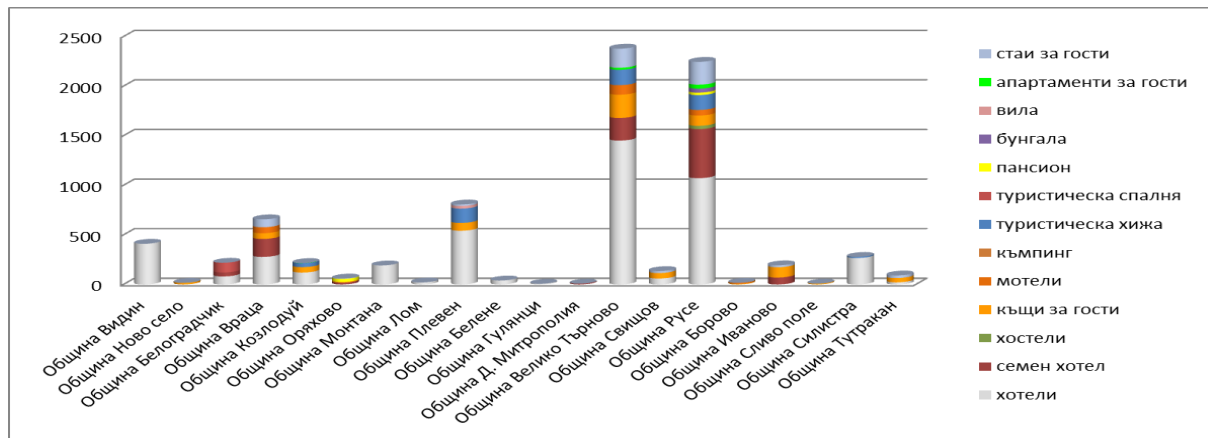
By data by the National Statistical Institute, **3,331** accommodation facilities with more than 10 beds, including hotels, motels, camping sites, huts, etc. were functional in 2016. In the regions where the sites of the route are located, have been registered 289 accommodation locations with more than 10 beds. The volume of the accommodation capacity within the Bulgarian part of the Cross-Border region **accounts for 9% of the accommodation locations in Bulgaria.**

During recent years (2010-2016), there is a trend towards decrease of the accommodation locations observed in Bulgaria. The data on the variation of the number of the accommodation locations in Bulgaria indicate a sharp drop after 2012, and an increase occurring anew during 2014. **In contrast to the nation-wide trend, the number of the accommodation locations remains relatively stable, showing slight downward oriented fluctuations.**

A firm disproportion in respect of the territorial distribution of the number of beds is observed, where the beds are concentrated mainly in the central part of the studied area: the regions of Ruse and Veliko Tarnovo. This intensifies the territorial disproportions and imbalance of the tourist offerings.



Figure 5. Offered accommodations by the numbers of beds, located in proximity of the sites of the route



The data plainly indicate a quantitative concentration of tourist bed numbers in the regional centers, the towns of Veliko Tarnovo, Ruse, Plevен, Vratsa and Silistra. An exception to this are the municipalities of Belogradchik, Kozloduj and Ivanovo offering good accommodation options. The irregular distribution of the bed numbers inserts a negative effect on the balanced development of the region.

An important feature of the accommodation locations is their categorization. This reflects the offered conditions: structure, equipment, facilities, offered services, etc. The availability of a relatively higher share of places to stay of higher class is a precondition for a higher quality of the offered tourist product.

A favorable condition for the development of tourism in the region is the availability of high class accommodation facilities. The availability of a better material basis is a presumes solvent tourist and the realization of a better economic effect. There are only two hotels of the highest categorization (5 stars) in the investigated area. These form a mere 1% of the total number of the accommodation facilities.

The search for accommodations shows a stable upward trend. In 2016 the total number of realized overnight stays at the accommodation facilities within the studied area was 788,583.

The number of realized overnight stays during the period 2010-2016 has indicated a stable increase. An increase of overnight stays by foreigners is also observed.

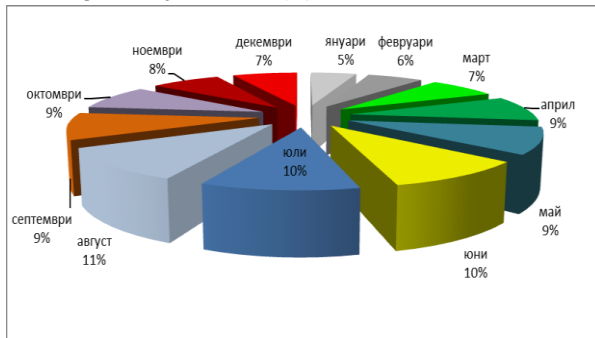
Foreigners prefer to stay at higher class hotels. The efforts to attract foreigners by the Bulgarian accommodation facilities is economically better justified. The costs incurred for accommodation and consumption of goods and



services typical for tourism exceed several times the amount of similar expenditure by Bulgarian citizens.

The average annual occupancy of the numbers of beds within the Cross-Border region shows low figures of 20%, which is significantly lower than the occupancy for the country, which is 34%. One of the reasons is the lack of complex vision on the development of the tourist destinations and an adequate policy, adjusted to the tourist requirements, as well as a competitive environment in the region. There is a multitude of weaknesses in the manner of managing the accommodation facilities like service, content and distribution of the product and so forth. An effect on the objective character of the statistical data is also inserted by the grey sector, a factor commented by the round table participants, too.

Figure 6. Seasonal distribution of the realized overnight stays, 2016, (%), 2016, NSI



As the Bulgarian part of the Cross-Border region is concerned, the seasonal character of the tourist visits is not so clearly expressed as in other parts of the country. The most overnight stays are usually realized in the month of August, and the least-during January.

This situation determines the studied region as a destination for all-year vacation tourism, which will allow for efficient utilization of the hotel superstructure. The largest income from overnight stays has been realized in the towns of Veliko Tarnovo and Ruse. Nearly 71% of the income from overnight stays comes from Bulgarian tourists, with a mere 29% from foreigners.

Provision degree of the sites with accommodations facilities

From the conducted analysis is evident that this type of tourist infrastructure is best provided for in the towns of Veliko Tarnovo, Ruse, Pleven, Silistra and Vidin. There are predominantly small family type hotels in the towns of Lom, Kozloduj, Svishtov and Tutrakan, and the material basis is insufficient to meet the requirements of larger groups of tourists.

Ruse and Veliko Tarnovo are developed tourist destinations, where the offered numbers of beds of all categories is the greatest (the 5-star accommodation not included). This renders the sites with accommodations



facilities, which are located in or in proximity of the regional centers as best provided for.

Conclusions: It is necessary to increase the occupancy of the accommodations. Close to some of the sites there are accommodation options; however these accommodation options represent part of the grey sector, do not officially possess the required category and have not been entered in the National Tourist Register. They often provide tourists with incorrect information on the category, invoices for the costs of the stay are often not issued, etc. One of the methods to enhance the usability of the existing accommodation base is engaging the owners in the role of partners for the establishment and development of the new tourist product: Route “Roman frontiers on the territory of the Cross-Border region Romania-Bulgaria”.

2.7. Attendance of the tourist route

In general terms, as the sites of the Danube Limes within the boundaries of Bulgaria is concerned, the attendance is unsatisfactorily low, however with an upward trend. The data from the conducted research have indicated that among the most frequently stated reasons for the tourists' displeasure are: poor conditions of the access roads; lack of qualified personnel to offer assistance and directions/translations to tourists; inadequate organization at the archaeological sites with a view to the tourist traffic; insufficient knowledge of the historic context on the part of the visitors; lack of documents and information materials.

The majority of the reasons listed above (lack of qualified personnel; inadequate planning of the archaeological sites; lack of information materials) depend on the methods applied to the organization and management of the attractions on the part of the entities that own or manage such sites (local public bodies, institutions, etc.), and who are directly responsible for the valorization of these sites through tourism. Another reason for dissatisfaction is due to the infrastructure the provides the access, which in most of the cases is the responsibility of the central or local public agencies.

Tourism valorization could be enhanced by a series of specific measures, such as:

- Improvement of the existing infrastructure by construction of parking lots, lavatories, access roads, information spots/centers
- Information campaigns on the goals, related with the Roman heritage



- Hiring and provision of qualified personnel for tourist attendance, services and cultural interpretation
 - Signaling and balancing the sites by placing traffic signs and information boards
 - Provision of public catering establishments
 - Organizing of space for events (e.g. film projections, theater and historic reconstructions, summer schools, seminars, etc.)
 - Organizing thematic cultural events, mainly festivals with historic reconstructions.

A determinant factor to enhance the attendance degree is the experience to sustain a high level of satisfaction with the tourists. Cultural and historic sites are predominantly visited by tourists seeking authenticity, new knowledge, impressions and experience worth remembering.

Tourist types

Segmenting the tourists in four classes (types of tourists) is proposed based on the expert evaluation of the conducted studies of existing documents and on information analysis as follows:

A. Local tourists: Tourists coming from places located not more than 50 km away. No need for accommodation. Travel time to destination is up to one hour using private or public transport.

B. Tourists from the country: Tourists coming from places, which are up to 400 km away. Travel time is up to 5 hours by own or public transport. Needed accommodation at the destination in hotels, lodgings or brooding-houses.

C. Foreign tourists. They use international transport [air transport, passenger ships (cruises), tourist busses, own transport (cars)]. The travel duration between several hours and several days. May need accommodation at the destination in hotels, lodgings, boarding houses. Cruise tourists may not require accommodation.

D. Cycling tourists, tourists participating rowing tours and tourists with yachts: The travel duration may be several hours to several days. May require accommodation at the destination in hotels, lodgings, boarding-houses. In the case of camping tourists there may be no need of accommodation.

Such segmentation will facilitate the process of developing a marketing mix, which will further facilitate a clear identification of the communication channels,



the product, price and publicity strategy of the joint cultural and historic product: Route "Roman Frontier within the Cross-Border Region Romania-Bulgaria".

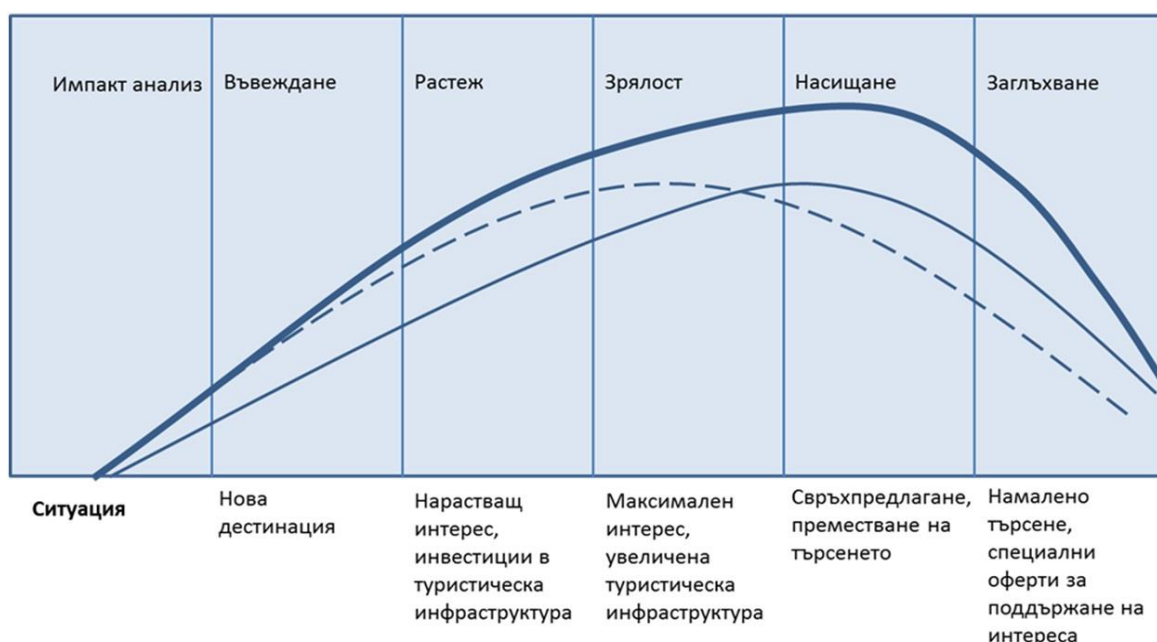
Stages to increase attendance according to the route life cycle

The life cycle of a route is subordinated to the established model of any one destination:

- Introduction: new route (destination)
- Growth: increasing interest, investment in the tourist infrastructure
- Maturity: maximal interest, enhanced tourist infrastructure
- Saturation: oversupply, shifting of demand
- Decay: decreased demand, special offers to maintain interest.

The specificity of the considered tourist product is that during the "introduction" phase individual elements (sites) of the product are well positioned from a marketing prospective and show a high attendance degree. However, the popularity of these sites is related to the Roman heritage to a very limited degree. They have been acknowledged for years as ancient, mediaeval, etc. On the other hand, a very large number of the sites are on the opposite pole of popularity and there is a full lack of attendance, but they bear a very high degree of cultural-historic and archaeological value.

Figure 7. The route life cycle





At the same time the route bears the clearly expressed characteristics of a cultural route: large potential to develop and become one of its kind, reflecting the ideas of the European Community for a common shared heritage; dialog between various cultures; manifestation of the linkages that unite these cultures; through preservation of the heritage as a resource for an economic and a cultural development; sustained development of cultural tourism.

The serious challenge facing marketing and promoting is related to the first level of public positioning: presenting information on the existence of the new route, as part of the frontier of the Roman Empire, which is the largest archaeological monument in the European Union and among the largest in the world, also included the World Heritage List of UNESCO. The perception of the route as a system of cultural and historic sites of the Roman heritage, forming the Roman frontier and falling within the Romania-Bulgaria Cross-Border region, also known as the Lower Danube Limes, is of significant importance.

The attendance enhancement is largely dependent on a series of factors, which can guarantee the route viability: intentional intervention on the part of all stakeholders; purposeful regional and governmental policy in order to ensure broad participation and guarantee a real consensus; financial support to the implementation of archaeological studies, conservation and restoration of the sites having a potential; provision of financial resources for the construction of priority infrastructure (The Danube Panorama Road and the European Bicycle Route EuroVelo 6); socialization and auxiliary tourist infrastructure; qualitative improvement of the tourist supply (accommodation facilities, catering establishments, etc.) and so forth.

The challenges at the beginning of the route life cycle are a lot. According to our expert evaluation during the timing of this strategy the route development will take place in two stages as below:

- Introduction: until 2020 (gaining popularity)
- Growth: until 2030, with a probable delay rate resulting from the need of serious investments in the research work on part of the sites; construction of tourist infrastructure and qualitative improvement of the superstructure (growing interest).

As of this moment it is rather risky to draft any forecasts on the maturity period, and the period of saturation and decay. However, at this stage the ambition of the project team is to work within a maximally broad range with the stakeholders in order to achieve sustainability over a very long period. Because the viability of the cultural routes is not comparable with the viability of the tourist routes. It is much broader and possess an immense potential to develop continuously. The first European cultural route “The paths of Santiago de



Compostela: World heritage (since 1998 and a cultural route of the Council of Europe can serve as an example.

At this stage our route should be promoted actively only using the established tourist destinations in order to achieve the required quantity of the product positioning.

Potential to attract foreign tourists

In the context of a long-term development of the cultural route and the medium-term promotion of the tourist sites of the route, we are of the opinion that the efforts should be oriented in the direction as outlined below, in accordance with the types of tourists and their manner of traveling. Considered have been the two major types of foreign tourists, for whom there is a real potential to be attracted to attend the route.

A. Potential to attract foreign tourists (Danube cruises)

The river cruises in Europe along the Danube river, which also include Bulgaria, reveal a rapid growth rate, with increase of passenger at the age of 50 and above. The major cities to board/get off the ship are: Budapest, Vienna, Prague, Passau, Nürnberg, Basel, Paris and Amsterdam, whereas the last tour includes three European rivers: Danube, Main and Rhein.

Most of the Danube cruises have a duration between 9 and 25 days, and the passenger number is ca. 200. The peak season starts in June and ends about September; however cruise trips during the transition seasons (April-Mai and from the end of September to the end of October) are also popular because of the lower price. The price of the river cruises along the Danube river includes all accommodation location on solid ground and during navigation in the river as listed in the offer, as well as the prevalent number of meals, attractions, landmark visits, etc.

Riverside excursions on the banks are most often included in the price of the package. The choice of such excursions, included in the cruise program, depends on the following criteria:

- Availability of tourist attractions: interesting and preserved natural and cultural spots, local events, etc.
- Availability of tourist infrastructure: variety of catering and entertainment establishments, additional service, trained personnel, good quality services and



price level, etc.

- Accessibility: transportation network in proper condition.

Some of the sites included in the route have met these criteria by the time the present Strategy was drafted. A real barrier represents the low quality of the attendance infrastructure (lack of establishments, souvenir shops, the language barriers, lack of guide, etc.).

B. Potential to attract cycling tourists

The Route "Roman Frontier within the Cross-Border Region Romania-Bulgaria" has the advantage to be accessible by bicycle transport. Two of the bicycle routes of the trans-continental system for development of a network of sustainable transport pass in immediate proximity of the sites:

EuroVelo 6, "The Way of the Rivers", one of the most popular routes for bikers connecting the Atlantic Ocean and the Black Sea, and following the course of the Rivers Loire, Rhein and Danube. Within the Bulgarian section, the route passes along the Danube Bike Lane, which is parallel of the river flow.

EuroVelo13. A route along the "Iron Curtain".

The bicycle tourism gains growing popularity, especially among adventure seeking tourists. There is a huge biker community, whose efforts are oriented towards the environmentally friendly tourism development. This manner of traveling generates zero hazardous emissions and improves the status of the environment. Construction of a bike line for routes of this type should, however, not be considered compulsory. The experience at European level has indicated that a series of adapting measures are applicable with a view to planning high quality routes with the use of a minimum of public investments and a short returnability period in the form of revenue for the local economy.

2.8. Market positions and market potential of the tourist route

The study is based on the analytical part of the Development Strategy and on an analysis of data from various sources. For the objective of the study of the market potential has been used information from various sources, including the official NSI statistics and studies of the tourist flow, conducted by the Ministry of Tourism, sector studies, etc. By the study of the trends at macro level and at national level has been taken into account the research work on the part of the World Tourism Organization of the United Nations (UNWTO), the European Travel



Commission (ETC), the National Strategy for Sustainable Development of Tourism in Bulgaria, expert evaluations, etc. For the purposes of the Report have been used results from an inquiry held with the aim at complementing the information.

Market potential of the tourist route

According to data from the Development Strategy, the Romania-Bulgaria Cross-Border region possesses a yet unfolded tourist potential, which requires serious investments, attractive marketing and efficient management. The major preconditions for the transfer of the tourist route into a demanded route are: authenticity, attractiveness, staggering experience, all of which allows for making a tourist package. The proposed approach to developing the route consist in planning of an analogous prospective: *conditions - demand - supply*.

In this regard, the principle elements of the tourist marketing concept should unfold over the following stages: acquaintance, prognostication, actions.

Stages of the tourist route market potential research:

Getting to know the tourist market as a marketing starting point. The Development Strategy discusses in detail the external environment of the tourist entities in their dynamics and development trends. The conditions at the tourist market have also been discussed in the analytical part of this document.

The marketing prognosis is an instrument to expose the conditions under which the tourist will operate. Pursuant to a UNWTO position, the route will position itself in a very competitive environment, but will show a clearly expressed trend towards interest for unknown and new tourist destinations. Part of the sites included in the tourist route have been on the tourist “scene” for a long time already, and numerous tour operators and tourist agencies offer these in different tourist products. A characteristic mark of the region is the economic backwardness as a whole, the poor state of the access infrastructure and a superstructure deficiency.

While “getting to know” and “forecasting” are activities related to external factors, “action” is related to the tourist entity’s activity. Thus “action” determines the sense of a deliberate, objective and necessary process, by which the product becomes adapted to the requirements on the market. Of course, the process of adaptation is aimed at the realization of profitable economic activities in order to guarantee that the anticipated profit will be realized.



Effect on the internal environment of the tourist route. This stage determines the solutions that will be passed in order to deliver what the tourist market requires to receive.

The tourist market has the meaning of “a policy implemented by the tourist entity, which - through investigation - determines the demands of the tourist usage in their progress and follows, by the aid of specific methods and techniques, the constant adaptation of its offers to these requirements with a view to their optimal satisfaction and the realization of a profitable economic activity under the existent market conditions“.⁴

The complexity of tourist motivations determines a broad spectrum of activities, designated to satisfy these motivations. Tourism consists as a rule of a well-arranged set of components, each one of which has a clearly defined role. When inserting an effect on the internal environment, the collaboration of the efforts of all stakeholders is important, because the successful market positioning is the result of cooperation and coordinated actions. The lack of such cooperation would lead to a “breakage” of the tourist usage with unfavorable practical consequences on the entire development of the tourist activity.

The market potential of the Route “Roman Frontier within the Cross-Border Region Romania-Bulgaria” can be successfully developed by an **integrated marketing**. The development of the tourist activities under highly efficient conditions presumes activities on the part of all economic agents synchronized at both a micro and a macro level. Otherwise the efforts of one or more of the links within the chain will be annulled by the others.

The market potential of the tourist route is formed by the symbiosis of the following interconnected elements:

- **Authenticity.** The route possesses a strong cultural and historic value and a reserved authenticity of the included sites. The route has a defined territorial concentration of the tourist wealth and the tourist offer as a whole. By these properties the route attracts the attention of tourist having expressed affinity for cultural and historic heritage. Fitting in the recognizable Roman heritage as a whole, and bearing the specificity and unpopular part of the heritage of the Lower Danube Limes represents a strong market feature.

- **Attractiveness.** The route is territorially differentiated as part of the Romania-Bulgaria Cross-Border region, the latter being characterized by an abundant tourist potential. Despite the weak economic development and the non-recognisability as a tourist destination by both foreign and domestic tourists, the variety of natural and anthropogenic resources is a precondition for the

⁴UNWTO perspectives in connection with the sustainable tourism development



development of all-year tourism. The selected thematic line of the route - the Roman heritage “cohabits” with other elements of the cultural environment of global, international and national importance: Paleolithic and Neolithic artifacts; archaeological, architectural, ethnographic and religious sites; sites from the World Cultural Heritage list of UNESCO. The route traces unique components of the environment of tourist attractiveness: rock phenomena, canyon-like valleys, karst shapes of the relief, water reservoirs, mineral waters, unique ecosystems and attractive landscapes. Within its range fall: the natural parks, protected territories, ontologically important locations on the riverside of the Danube river.

- **Opportunities for staggering experience.** The route possesses the potential to meet the user demand. The cultural tourism in Europe increases, and the “motor” of this development is the educational level. Against a background like this, history, culture and art will play an increasingly important role for formation of tourist motivation, as well as for organizing and giving sense to the trips. With cultural tourism, motivation slowly shifts from very specific cultural interests towards more general and common ones. This will reflect the design of the products, by imposing the necessity to combine culture and amusement. The opportunity to combine the natural resources, which have a complex effect in the region as a recreational landscape, and the attractiveness of the landscape will raise the market potential. On the basis of the natural resources there exist excellent preconditions for the development of adventure and extreme tourism, and the access to the route by water (cruise, boat, canoe) or by bike create conditions for attraction of representatives of different types of tourists in different age groups. As added value to the potential of the route are both the thematic festivals, which supplement the Roman heritage thematic line and the local customs, holidays and festivals.

The following trends of the user demand should be incorporated in the basis of the market positioning of the tourist route:

- Directing the users to activities offering a higher experimental value, with an enhanced intensity of the gained experience
- Increase of the demand for “spiritual” products to be combined with the existing riverside tourism and eco-tourism in the region, the rural, wine and culinary tourism, as well as with the forthcoming growth of the urban entertainment and shopping tourism
- Internet will be determinant for the distribution of the next generation of tourist products. At the time being internet is still regarded as a source of free publicity rather than a medium, which should be creatively and strategically used in a competitive environment.



- The awareness of the motivation and the interests of the user segments, with a view to attracting their attention to the submitted information demonstrate an increasing interest. This places the emphasis on the product segmenting and positioning.
- The marketing messages based on experience and feelings will gain importance when passing decisions to travel. A far more focused and positioned products will be generated.
- The smaller financial resources of specific groups of the population will require the formation of budget products and the need of “reliable measures”.
- Tour operators and tourist agents will play a new role in the manner by which value is added to the product

The market potential will be influenced by the constantly increasing globalization, which will affect the trip numbers and trip expectations for young people, for whom the information is accessible via internet or communication channels. The globalization will also increase the role of the “global nomads” and the temporary migration, which will in turn increase the numbers of trips for visits of friends and relatives. Example: the foreign students in Europe, whose number increases by 5% annually.

According to a study by the European Travel Commission (ETC), the European market will be increasingly affected by the aging of the population, by the development of the youth sector, which generates 20% of the tourism worldwide, the competition of the other continents and the strive towards stability. The increasingly growing middle age of the population predetermines the demand for cultural tourism and programs for older tourists. On the other hand, the young market will search for more active products, including various forms of adventure tourism. These common trends give an advance of the individual vacation over the traditional packages, hence the individual tourist destinations will develop more intensely.

The climatic changes are among the most important factors, which will shape the development of tourism on the long term. Changes of the tourist flows can be anticipated, e.g. increase of the tips beyond the tourist seasons and an increasing popularity of summer destinations during wintertime. Submission of information on the sustainability of a product will increase the demand for this product, and the mass consumer will be influenced by the image of the stable product.

The partnerships that will be formed are of exceptional importance for unfolding the market potential. Offering a complete joint tourist product on the market will increase the competitiveness of each one of the stakeholders from the



respective market niche. An overall visibility and identification ability on the international market will be achieved. Linking the sites of the Roman cultural heritage to a common route will ensure a supplement to the tourist supply on one hand, and an opportunity to make combinations with other types of tourism, which will facilitate an adequate emotional linkage, on the other hand.

Priority markets

The knowledge of the tourist market as a marketing starting point allows for the knowledge of the external environment of the tourist entities. According to the World Tourist Organization, the market segment of cultural tourism is distinguished by a large and growing potential. The Development Strategy identifies the target markets for the Route "Roman Frontier within the Cross-Border Region Romania-Bulgaria", which are described below.

Prime priority markets

- 1.) Germany, Austria, Slovakia, Hungary, Croatia, Serbia, Moldova, the Ukraine as countries through which the Danube river passes.
- 2.) The Czech Republic and Poland (traditional markets for the Bulgarian tourism), and France, Spain and Italy (traditional markets for the Romanian tourism).
- 3.) Israel (increasing number of tourist visits to Romania and Bulgaria).

In a geographic aspect, it is the principle market "emitting" cultural-cognizable tourism in Europe. The sympathy for the common past of the continent, the search of connection with history, especially with countries through which the Danube river passes, would motivate the interest for tourist trips.

Major markets of medium priority

- 1.) The USA and the Netherlands (increasing number of realized overnight stays)
- 2.) Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia (increasing outgoing tourist flow and interest for the study of new cultures)
- 3.) Great Britain (a large outgoing tourist flow with a target group 66+)
- 4.) China (increasing number of tourist visits to Romania and Bulgaria).

On the remote "emitting" markets of the USA and China, the cultural-cognitive tourism finds its place by offering a contact with other cultures. The route offers visits to more than one country, which would render it sufficiently attractive. Decisive for entering these markets would be the possibility to integrate



the route “Roman Frontier within the Cross-Border Region Romania-Bulgaria” with the existing routes of the Danube Limes.

The tourists from Great Britain are in their middle age and above, with medium and high income, so the suitable product accents for them are the cultural and historic routes, and the culinary and the wine tours as well.

Low priority markets

- 1.) The Russian Federation (a traditional market for the Bulgarian tourism, mainly maritime tourism) and the Scandinavian countries (showing growing interest for river cruises)
- 2.) Portugal, Malta, Cyprus, Ireland (a diversification opportunity of the forms of tourism with river cruises practiced by them).

Suitable product accents for the selected low priority markets are: a cultural and historic route; culinary and wine tours.

Limited priority markets

- 1.) Switzerland and Luxemburg (preferences for destinations of a higher and more expensive class)
- 2.) The Countries of Middle Asia, the Far East, Latin America, Africa, Australia, New Zealand and Canada

Vacation models for tourists visiting Europe

According to a study by the European Tourist Commission on the preferences and motives for tourist trips of tourists from 9 markets visiting Europe have been formulated some of the specificities and characteristics of the individual segments of visitors. The study embraces 9 markets: Europe, the USA, Canada, Brazil, Russia, India, Southeastern Asia, Japan and Korea (as a common market)

Six types of specialized tourism have been studied: cultural, eco, shopping, amusement, sports and business tourism, whereas for each market have been differentiated the leading motivation clusters representing the preferred tourism types. Two clearly outlined trends can be seen as the result: the visitors from North America (the United States and Canada) come to Europe lead primarily by the motive to learn to know and view the cultural heritage, and this desire is the lowest on markets like Brazil, China and especially India.



The study includes a comparative examination of the motivation factors having an effect on the choice of vacation and on tourists practices among the tourists from Europe and the tourists from Northern America. The results have indicated that European tourists in America are interested mainly in amusement, visits to thematic and amusement parks, shopping, beach entertainment, rest and night life, while American tourists in Europe show interest for cultural landmarks, city tourism, visits to natural parks, etc.

The results of the study further indicate that European tourists vacating in countries in Europe practice as a form of accompanying tourism mostly cultural and sports tourism (39%), followed by eco tourism (25%) and entertainments (19%). Furthermore they are interest in local cuisine, shopping, night life. Attractive for them are also cruises, visits to amusement centers and thematic parks.

Russian tourists visiting Europe combine vacation with visits of sports events or sports tourism practices (63%), as well as visits to cultural sites (45%), as well as with eco tourism (33% and amusement (28%). They tend to consume more; accompanying activities for them are: shopping, gastronomy; concerts; spa and a very broad spectrum of supplemental activities. This also refers to tourists to the seaside, whose interest occupy very varied niches of services and entertainments.

The Canadian tourists visiting Europe are interested in cultural sites (60%), nature (34%) and active/sports tourism (29%). They combine the types of tourism with shopping and visits to amusement parks. The activities in the open and in the nature are very attractive for these tourists.

Tourists from China who visit Europe are attracted by the opportunity to view the nature (41%), to do shopping (39%), as well as to practice sports activities (38%). They are attracted by the night life, as well as by the visits to amusement parks.

The tourists from Japan and Korea, who visit Europe, practice eco tourism (47%) and cultural tourism (34%). Parallel therewith they are interested in shopping and in the local cuisine.

2.9. SWOT analysis

The SWOT analysis is used for drafting strategic documents. The following strategic connections are investigated based on a SWOT analysis:

- How to make use of the strengths such as not to miss the existing opportunities



- How can opportunities help overcome weaknesses
- How to use the strength to reduce threats
- Which weaknesses should be removed in order to decrease threats.⁵

The produced Strategy for marketing and promotion of a cultural heritage product: Route "Roman Frontier within the Cross-Border Region Romania-Bulgaria" is based on a SWOT analysis, where principle proposals for a development are submitted. The analysis is synthesized and purposive, and all conclusions in it take into consideration the following steps for the development of the Strategy, more precisely definition of the vision, priorities and strategic goals.

Table 3. SWOT analysis of the route "Roman Frontier within the Cross-Border Region Romania-Bulgaria"

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
Existence of sites of high cultural and historic value of the Roman heritage uniting common European values typical for several EU countries	Some of the sites possess a potential to be exposed as tourist sites; a significant part are sites with a potential, but cannot be offered for tourist visits
Possibility for integration of the sites by various types of interrelations: basic; basic and secondary, etc., after administrative principles; at cross-border level, etc.	Unbalanced development of the potential of the sites, which hampers their integration in a medium-term plan
Existence of conditions to expand product supply by other types of tourism: cultural, eco, rural, wine, culinary, etc., developed on the basis of the existing resources in the region	Clearly differentiated internal poles of concentration of tourist resources and impossibility in medium-term plan to achieve quality of the offered service within the range of the whole route
The geographic range of the route included in marketed tourist regions in Bulgaria and Romania	Inadequately prioritized development of the cultural and historic tourism by the national, regional and local authorities
Created and already traditional accompanying tourist products: festivals and festive occasions at some of the sites	Sporadic character of some of the events related to the subject of the Roman heritage and unsatisfactory quality of the experience, not suitable to be offered internationally
Existing conditions of access by transport via the priority transportation types: water transport (cruises) along the Danube river and biking following the European trans-national route (EuroVelo 6); two bridges (Vidin-Calarasi, Ruse-Giurgiu); ferryboat connections	Partially constructed transport infrastructure to connect the sites; poor condition at the river ports; lack or marking and information boards
Demonstrated willingness on the part of the municipal authorities to develop the route and the tourism in the region	Non-attractive exposure of the major sites along the route; worn out tourist infrastructure at the sites (lacking parking lots, lavatories, service

⁵Methodology for Strategic Planning of the Republic of Bulgaria



	establishments, access for disabled people, etc.)
A proper degree of discernability of individual elements of the route: major sites, developed tourist destinations	Lack of popularity of the tourist route: a new product for tourist and travel agencies
	Lack of discernable image of the Romania-Bulgaria Cross-Border region as a cultural-tourist destination
	Poor and loosely populated region seriously affected by the economic crisis and lack of investment activities to develop tourism
	Inadequately qualified personnel to serve the tourists (e.g. language abilities) in all units of the tourist service chain (information centers, museums, accommodation facilities, catering establishments, etc.)
	Individual interpretation of the information on the cultural and historic heritage (the Roman heritage is almost absent as a subject) by the stakeholders; Incorrectness of the presentation of facts, etc.
	Lack of linkage between the numerous created websites and tourism projects in different parts of the region, which do not correspond with each other
	Sporadic attempts to unite tourist resources among several municipalities, which does not currently result in an economic recovery of the region
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
Effective cooperation between the stakeholders to implement an integrated marketing and promote the tourist route	The route is not discerned by the stakeholders as a product with potential, and non-realization of partnerships for product marketing and promotion
Enrichment of the product palette with secondary sites with a potential and by developing new forms of integration with other types of tourism in a long-term prospective (until 2030)	Institutional indolence to carry out the required activities for research, conservation and restoration of the sites having a potential and their terminal destruction by treasure hunters.
Application of flexible mechanisms to price formation of complete or segmented tourist packages, as well as provision of preferential prices for visitors of the route	Decrease of the quality of the services on the part of the local suppliers; price/quality discrepancy and disappointed tourists. A growing trend towards lack of qualified personnel to



	attend the sites
Use of suitable combination of instruments and communication channels to advertise the route according to the specificity of the demand for cultural tourism including market positioning technologies	Inadequacy of the publicity representation, incorrect information and oversaturation of the market with advertisements of settlements of a low degree of readiness to accept tourist flows
Stage-wise popularization of the route on a short-term scale and within the framework of the project (prime accent: establishment of a new cultural route with specific elements of tourist visit); on medium-term scale (prime accent: popularization of sub-routes binding tourist sites that can guarantee quality); on long-term scale (prime accent: possibility to be supplemented with the prepared secondary tourist sites).	Lack of flexibility by the development of sub-routes and misleading presentation in publicity materials. Delay in time of the preparation of the secondary sites for supply to tourists
Integration of the route with existing similar routes of the Danube Limes, and creation of preconditions for entering remote tourist markets	Ineffective interaction with partner organizations and countries of the Danube Limes, and passiveness by the generation of new ideas of common initiatives
Provision of funding of upgrading activities and achievement of sustainability of the results of the present project by applying for funding from the EU, establishment of public-private partnerships, etc.	Worsening of the shortage of funds for investments in the technical and tourist infrastructure, and in the development of sites having a potential
Turning the intangible cultural heritage, the local events and festivals in a products for the goals of tourism.	



III. STRATEGY TO PROMOTE THE TOURIST ROUTE

3.1. Stakeholders

Stakeholders play an important role for the implementation of the Marketing and Promotion Strategy since a development and establishment of a tourist route is only possible through achieving an active interaction between them. Three major sectors (public, private and non-governmental) should unite efforts and terms of reference in order to achieve effective and sustainable results.

The development of the tourist sector, the protection and the stable development of the cultural and historic sector within the Cross-Border region specifically focused on the Roman heritage and providing conditions for development of the local and regional economy are of mutual interest.

Table 4. Analysis of the stakeholders playing a role for the implementation of the Marketing and Promotion Strategy

Group	Representatives of the central power at national and regional level			
Stakeholder	Representatives	Role in the strategy implementation process	Interest for partnership	Consulting/interaction mechanisms
Bodies of the central state administration and cultural organizations at national level	<p>Romania Ministry of Culture; National Heritage Institute; Ministry of Tourism; Romanian Cultural Institute; National Museum Network</p> <p>Bulgaria Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works; Ministry of Tourism; Ministry of Environment and Waters; Ministry of Education; Ministry of</p>	Support to the process of financial back-up of the planned activities with funds from the national budget and European resources; Popularizing the route	Implementation of the national policies for regional and local development of the tourist sphere	Participation in work (focus) groups; national forums; consulting committees



	Economy; Ministry of Agriculture and Foods			
Regional authorities	Romania Regional development agencies	Popularization of the route and rendering assistance for policy formation	Facilitating the achievement of strategic directions at regional and district level	
	Bulgaria Regional development councils; Regional coordination councils; Regional managers			
Group	Representatives of the local authorities			
Bodies of the local administration where there are sites related to the Roman cultural heritage, namely archaeological sites and/or museums and museum collections	Romania Regional councils in Mehedinti, Dolj, Olt, Teleorman, Giurgiu, Calarasi and Constantia	Development of joint policies and designs of the product; provision of funding through the municipal budget and from European funds; elaboration and maintenance of an events calendar by sites from the route; assistance to distribute information on the route	Development of the local economy and regional development; Positive effect on the valorization of the local cultural heritage	Setting up stable interrelations among the administrations with a view to the generation of ideas and common initiatives for the development of the new tourist product
	Town councils of the settlements in Romania and Bulgaria			
	Bulgaria Municipal administrations; Municipal councils (Vidin, Montana, Vratsa, Pleven, Veliko Tarnovo, Ruse, Silistra)			
Group	Representatives of the business			
	Tour operators, travel agencies	inclusion of the route or of sites thereof in the proposed packages; Popularization of the attraction; Increase of the tourist flow	Variation of the offered tourist attractions	Establishment of contacts and stable interrelations for the tourist product promotion
	Danube cruise operators		Variation of the offered opportunities for actions during the stay in the port towns	
	Certified guides	Organizing	Employment	



		(either individually or through travel agencies) of round trips/cultural routes or thematic excursions to the sites	provisions and raising the tourist service quality	
	Hotel and restaurant keepers	Offering the tourist sites and popularizing them among the guests; assistance to the organization of thematic events	Cost reduction and stimulation programs; employment and income increase	Establishment of partnerships through branch organizations and/or individually
Group	Representatives of the civil society structures			
	Public benefit unions; Public benefit associations; Local initiative groups; Branch associations in business; Employers' organizations; Chambers of commerce and industry; Tourist associations	Popularization of the attraction; implementation of joint initiatives and events; development of joint projects	Popularization of local suppliers of tourist services; possibilities to work in a network	Establishment of contacts and stable interrelations with a view to development and promotion of the tourist product
Group	Representatives of scientific organizations and educational institutions			
	Scientific research organizations; Universities; Secondary schools; Professional gymnasia	Contribute to the popularization of the product; Apply scientific expertise to the route development; Organize training visits to the sites for students; Product popularizing; organization of	Opportunities to provide scientific expert appraisal and elaboration of joint design ideas to obtain funding from EU funds etc. sources; Organization of training courses, etc.	Establishment of contacts for stable partnerships



Group	Representatives of regional and local museums and cultural institutions			
	Romania Regional directorates of culture at the districts; Museums and cultural institutions	joint events Popularizing the cultural and historic heritage; Organizing thematic events; Increase the degree of awareness of the tourists of the Roman heritage; Realization of joint initiative and their high quality expert appraisal	Conducting a sustainable policy for preservation of the cultural and historic heritage; Development of the tangible and intangible heritage and exposure of new archaeological monuments; Facilitating the provision of funds	Partnership for production of materials and drafting projects related to the route
	Bulgaria Regional historic museums; Local museums; Community libraries; Cultural institutes			

The conclusions from the accomplished analyses determine the necessity of stimulating a partnership between the stakeholders, who are interested in the formation, development and management of the joint cultural and historic product: Route "Roman Frontier within the Cross-Border Region Romania-Bulgaria".

The municipalities in the area demonstrate a different degree of readiness to develop the tourist product.

- **Differences of the tourist infrastructure.** Observed are different problems of the tourist development, related to tourist resources and the degree of their utilization, the blemishes and the specificity of the hotel keeper sector and the tour operator sector, the place of tourism in the municipal economies and the priority as alternative of a future development and so forth. A common vision for the establishment of the tourist product can provide the opportunity for finding joint solutions in respect of infrastructure, exposure and valorization of the resources, marketing, human resources.

- **Differences in the offered tourist product.** The municipalities generate a totally different demand and utilize their resources in a totally different manner, respectively. But in the field of cultural tourism they can develop the created joint product, which will combine the resources for the round tour cultural-cognitive trips, the family vacations in natural environment, the pedestrian biking, the cruise and events tourism.

- **The degree of discernability and the different target groups.** The municipalities demonstrate a different level of discernability on the Bulgarian market; however despite certain individual characteristics their products are aimed at different segments. The common feature in the case of the product positioning of the elaborated tourist route is the attraction of a larger number of tourists.



The cooperation between the stakeholders as a factor of an enhanced competitiveness

By stepping on the markets as a region offering a joint product, each of the municipalities enhances the competitiveness of its tourist sector by:

- **Improved visibility and discernability on the market.** The bond between the territorial range of the destination and the remoteness of the generating market is proven, i.e. the union of the municipalities in a common destination is a compulsory prerequisite for their visibility and discernability on the international market, and for attraction of a larger number of tourists from such market, respectively.
- **Ability to supplement the tourist supply.** In addition to the joint supply, each municipality possesses an own specificity (or a specific resource), which could supplement and diversify the joint tourist product. By the union, each municipality will use a specific tourist flow generated by other municipalities and parallel therewith will offer the guests an experience of a higher value, which is included in its product/services/attractions, resources, coming from other municipalities.

The joint tourist product and the implementation of a regional marketing and publicity expand the possibilities for developing tourism on a common territory by:

- supplementing the supply in the region by new opportunities
- creating good conditions for expansion and development of tourism and the benefits from tourism.

3.2. A vision for the development of the Route "Roman Frontier within the Cross-Border Region Romania-Bulgaria"

The vision for the development of the Route "Roman Frontier within the Cross-Border Region Romania-Bulgaria" is attainable and real, precisely reflecting the actual needs to promote the joint cultural and historic product and its role to contribute to the economic and social development of the Cross-Border region. The main emphases when defining the vision are placed on the sustainability and the innovativeness.

The vision outlines the strategic expectations of the Marketing and Promotion Strategy of the tourist product and its development until 2030. The vision provides a short formulation of the development trend of the basic processes related to the public positioning of the new joint tourist product within the Cross-Border region. The vision



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GOVERNMENT OF BULGARIA



about the route as a marketing product reflects the long-term goals of the development of the complex product.

The vision itself comes close to the desired status and is not limited by the available resources (prime sites, developed tourist destinations, secondary area sites); it however relies on the necessity of development of the secondary elements with a view to attain sustainability of the entire route. It contains the basic structural and defining components by directing the attention to the innovativeness of the route, which presupposes the use of both innovative communication technologies, and innovations of the management and marketing of the route through motivated participation of the stakeholders.

In the vision so defined is reached a balance between realism and ambition, between short-term and long-term viability, between possibilities and desires. The vision is realistic and is based on the available resources in the Cross-Border region taking account of its strengths and weaknesses, potential and challenges.

**Sustainable and innovative positioning
of the joint cultural and historic tourist product:**

**Route "Roman Frontier within the Cross-Border Region Romania-Bulgaria"
on the national and international markets
to attain an economic and social development.**

3.3. Marketing objectives

3.3.1. General goals

The vision outlined above will be achieved through the realization of the following general goals:

General goal 1: Development of a tourist product on the Roman heritage as a method of utilization and capitalization of the cultural resources of the Cross-Border region

General goal 2: Enhancement of the usage and capitalization of the cultural heritage oriented towards economic growth and development of the community in the Region

General goal 3: Development and popularization of the tourist activities within the Romania-Bulgaria Cross-Border region.

The Strategy is aimed in a long-term prospective at responsible valorization of the archaeological heritage and the museum expositions within Romania-Bulgaria Cross-Border region by developing the tourist activity.



3.3.2. Specific goals

General goal	Specific goals	Time horizon
1: Development of a tourist product on the Roman heritage as a method of utilization and capitalization of the cultural resources in the Cross-Border region	1.1. Creation of a consistent image of the tourist product	2018-2020
	1.2. Organization of a minimum of 5 cultural events to the subject of the Roman cultural heritage on an annual basis	2018-2020
	1.3. Presentation of a minimum of 5 new archaeological sites of the Cross-Border region in a tourist chain	2021-2025
2: Improvement of the utilization and capitalization of the cultural heritage oriented towards economic growth and development of the community in the region	2.1. Valorization of the local gastronomy and the vineyard-winery facts through events and thematic schemes	2018-2020
	2.2. Raising the visibility of the intangible heritage through production and marketing of souvenirs	2021-2025
	2.3. Improving the interpretation of the heritage at the level of attractions for the tourist product "Roman frontier on the territory of the Cross-Border region Romania-Bulgaria"	2026-2030
	2.4. Marking and establishment of a biking route "Roman frontier on the territory of the Cross-Border region Romania-Bulgaria"	2026-2030
3: Development and popularization of the tourist activities within the Romania-Bulgaria Cross-Border region	3.1. Organizing by tour operators of a minimum of 10 thematic cultural subjects to the topic "Cultural tourism product "Roman frontier on the territory of the Cross-Border region Romania-Bulgaria"	2018-2020
	3.2. Integration of museums and sites representative for the Roman heritage in the routes of cruise ships	2021-2025
	3.3. Development of a system for access to tourist sites, which are part of the tourist product	2021-2025
	3.4. Organizing of information and promotion campaigns in online environment	2018-2020
	3.5. Establishment of a minimum of 2 new tourist information centers in each of the 4 segments of the tourist cultural product "Roman frontier on the territory	2021-2025



	of the Cross-Border region Romania-Bulgaria”	
	3.6. Marketing of round trips with a guide/thematic circles at a minimum of 10 accommodation locations or tourist information centers within the Romania-Bulgaria Cross-Border region	2018-2020

3.3.3. Time frames of the strategy implementation

Achievement of the goals has been structured in three time frames in accordance with the time necessary for accomplishment of the proposed measures and activities:

- 2018-2020 (short-term plan): immediate integration of the sites from the route, which dispose over possibilities for access, reception of tourists and existent infrastructure, in the tourist network.
- 2021-2025 (medium-term plan): Planning and implementing of archaeological sites, restoration and conservation works, modernization of the access infrastructure, tourist reception, information on/interpretation of the heritage (including by means of public-private partnerships).
- 2026-2030 (long-term plan): Capitalization of the tourist route as a source of a community renewal and development; creation of workplaces in tourism and the related industries; generation of opportunities to bring young people in power and stimulate talented people; enhancement of the motivation with local people to maintain their tradition and customs.

In practical terms the marketing strategy presumes stimulation of the social and economic development in the seven districts in Romania (the districts of Mehedinti, Dolj, Olt, Teleorman, Giurgiu, Calarasi and Constantia) and the regions in Bulgaria (the regions of Vidin, Montana, Vratsa, Pleven, Veliko Tarnovo, Ruse and Silistra), which fall within the Romania-Bulgaria Cross-Border region, by valorization of the cultural and historic heritage through cultural tourism.

3.4. Marketing mix-strategies

The marketing mix is a strong tool for the management of specific elements of the marketing plan in a tourist system of a particular tourist destination. This mix analyses everything, which is offered by the destination and is the basis for drafting a marketing plan.

The marketing mix contains four basic elements: 1. Product; 2. Price; 3. Location ; 4. Publicity, to which the market activity should be oriented by combining these elements in one with a view to meet the objectives defined in the strategic part.

Figure 8. Visualization of the marketing mix



Competitive advantages of the tourist product

Integration possibility with other types of tourism

According to the results from the conducted inquiry in the course of elaboration of the Development Strategy (114 participants), 75% of the respondents have indicated “favorable conditions for integration of the route with other types of tourism (eco, rural, wine, pedestrian, biking, river, maritime, etc.)” as its maximal strength.

Potential of inclusion of a larger international tourist product: the Danube Limes (7 countries)

On the second place (46%) in terms of competitiveness, the respondents have placed the potential of the route for inclusions in a larger international product: The



Danube Limes. The economic accessibility of the route received a lesser mark and was given a lower priority.

Natural and cultural heritage of the target region

The Romania-Bulgaria Cross-Border region is characterized by a high tourist potential. Regardless of the weak economic development and its non-discernability as a tourist destination by both foreign and domestic tourists, the varied natural and anthropogenic resources are a prerequisite for the popularization of the region and for a development of an all-year tourism.

Cheap destination

Irrespective of the fact that tourist products are regarded “cheap”, not only within the Bulgarian part of the Cross-Border region but in Bulgaria as a whole, and the country has gained the image of a cheap destination, we are of the opinion that by positioning of the new tourist product related to the Roman heritage there exist objective circumstances, which will change the existing attitude at the level of the Romania-Bulgaria Cross-Border region. The expert position is presented in the following paragraphs.

The competitive advantages related to the marketing mix have been reviewed also from the viewpoint of: product, price, location and publicity.

Product

The substantial competitive advantage of the generated product is the possibility for segmenting: independent establishment of sub-routes at the region/district level; at cross-border level, by making a connection of two or more municipalities (both on Bulgarian, or Romanian, or Bulgarian-Romanian part); at the level of site types: only major sites; major and secondary sites, etc. On the other hand, the product has the capability to support and express different types of interrelations among the various elements reflecting its importance as cultural value: tangible and intangible traces; cultural (anthropogenic) and natural landmarks; elements from different periods, etc.

Such flexibility, when constructing the secondary products, ensures to a high degree the possibility for a product positioning and guarantees the freedom of choice by different types of tourists.



Price

A competitive advantage of the tourist product is the possibility to use flexible mechanisms in the course of price formation, which depends on a lot of factors. Due to the necessity for the innovative joint (Bulgarian-Romanian) tourist product to invade the tourist market, the most successful strategy is the price penetration. It allows for the implementation of a dynamic model with segmenting the types of tourists by categories depending on the volume and quality of the used services.

Location

A strong competitive advantage of the tourist product is its location along the Danube river, which provides an opportunity to strengthen one of the new tourist travel models: the cruises. Cruise trips have a constantly growing effect on tourist trips and turn into the most practiced type of tourism.

In addition to its accessibility from the river, the route has a competitive advantage to generate added value for the tourists. Such added value is expressed in the additional services on the riverbank: sites having a high cultural and historic value as is the Roman Empire frontier, the intangible heritage, visits to antique festivals, performances, etc.

The location of the tourist route of the Roman heritage tangents to the European route EuroVelo 6 along the Danube river, which is in the process of construction within its Bulgarian section.

Publicity

An advantage of the product is the possibility to use a broad set of marketing techniques and advertisement tools for its public positioning. The existing popularity of some of the sites contributes to the discernability of the route; however the specificity consists in its advertising as a system of cultural and historic sites of the Roman heritage forming the Roman frontier and falling within the Romania-Bulgaria Cross-Border region, also known as the Lower Danube Limes.

Publicity should comply with the specificity of the types of tourists on one hand, their profile (foreign or domestic tourists), the manner of provision of information, the age, etc.



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3.5. Product strategy

From a marketing point of view, the product is above all "intangible". The difference between two resources of comparable quality are the "intangible" aspects that give uniqueness and competitiveness. In this sense, the main products that tourism offers are a **specific experience and hospitality**.

The integrated tourist product - route "Roman frontier within the cross-border region Romania-Bulgaria" has the competitive advantage of creating multiple combinations of options and the possibility of forming tourist sub-products at different levels. This versatility in the design of sub-products provides a high degree of product positioning.

At the destination level, the tourist product encompasses the overall supply of the defined territory - the Romania-Bulgaria cross-border region; the counties in Romania (Mehedinti, Dolj, Olt, Teleorman, Giurgiu, Calarasi, Constanta) and the districts in Bulgaria (Vidin, Montana, Vratsa, Pleven, Veliko Tarnovo, Ruse and Silistra); municipalities and settlements where there are sites of the route.

The emphasis is put on the diversity, the quality of individual sites and components, the links between them, their overall promotion as an integrated tourist product or individual local tourist routes (sub-routes on the Roman frontier).

Route "Roman frontier within the cross-border region Romania-Bulgaria" is considered as a separate tourist product and opportunities for its development and validation are proposed.

The product strategy is aimed at creating a consistent image by creating a unique product identity (brand); a cultural (event) calendar and the development of tourist products to improve tourist experience by developing tourist attractions related to the Roman heritage and promoting product development and enriching the product palette, including the development of sub-products.

Creating a unique visual identity of the developed tourist product (brand)

In order to build the image of the tourist product it is necessary to develop a unique visual identity based on the project theme (the Roman heritage along the Danube River).

One of the important elements of the brand are the visual (logo - symbol, inscription, combination, colors - primary and secondary palette, font, graphic symbols, shapes and motives - primary and secondary, pictures, illustrations, images).



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For the purpose of the promotional materials intended to be issued within the framework of the project, visual elements have been created forming the single brand: logo, slogan, font. For others, recommendations are given.

Logo

To promote the project “Development and promotion of an integrated cultural tourism product: Route “Roman frontier within the cross-border region Romania-Bulgaria” a logo has been developed by a Romanian contractor. It should be published on all materials issued under the project.



The project logo is in the form of a coin. In the Roman Empire, coins are used as the primary means of exchanging goods and their circulation is enhanced. At sites related to the Roman cultural and historical heritage are some of the most valuable finds are the coins, allowing them to be dated or clarifying historical facts. The coin is a tool that “travels” without borders and is supposed to have a strong inspirational impact on the tourist product. The Indirect Message is: „Travel and enjoy the new discoveries!“

The coin depicts the image of the Roman Emperor Trajan (98-117), with the Roman Empire reaching a length of more than 5,000 km. Many new territories have been captured in today's Europe, Asia and North Africa. A significant part of the sites included in the itinerary, especially in Romania, are related to Emperor Trajan. His image is accepted as a symbol of the Roman heritage.

The color of the coin is inspired by the most used coin material in the Roman Empire - copper. The copper color strengthens the sense of antiquity and heritage.

A product logo (route) has been developed along the lines of the results of the stakeholder survey. At the discretion of the Contracting Authority, it may be positioned in the promotional materials to be issued under the project.



The product logo (route) follows the form of the project logo, also representing a side of a coin. It depicts the silhouette of the Danube river, which is the natural border between the two countries forming the cross-border Romania-Bulgaria region.

A stylized tower is depicted, symbolizing the main security function at the Roman Empire's border. The tower depicts a direct link to the objects on the route.

The logo is consistent with the results of the survey and the symbols that received the highest number of votes.



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A study of historical sources containing images of Roman towers, as well as the description of towers from the ancient objects of the route, was made. They are all in rectangular or square form. At the same time, archaeological excavations in the region have revealed that round towers have been built near the Danube, from which there are preserved remains, e.g. Tower 7 in Bononia, the town of Vidin; round corner tower in Almus, town of Lom; "Castra Martis", the city of Kula. To highlight the specificity of Roman architecture, the tower was chosen to have a circular shape that corresponds to historical credibility and contributes to harmonizing the logo design.

Slogan

According to the results of the survey, the keyword is "limes", and for the easier identification and identification of the location is mentioned: The lower Danube Limes Bulgaria-Romania. The slogan presented has the ability to adapt to different languages, and for universal purposes it can be used in English.

The lime is the main positioning line of the brand, and the clear identification with its territorial location - Romania and Bulgaria, is an opportunity for accurate targeting of target audiences. This element is very important, especially in the initial stage of product promotion.

In the long run, after achieving a good degree of brand recognition, different messages (slogans) can be developed to be used in communication campaigns.

Font

The appropriate font contributes to good visual perception. Currently, the selected Celtic Hand font is used only in the logo. It has a modern silhouette combining details that correspond to antiquity. Designed for titles and short text blocks. The font provides good reading hygiene in different sizes.

The font is developed in English only, but may be developed in other languages if needed in the long run to be used for advertising purposes.

Color ranges/ Color code

The development of color ranges should be the subject of subsequent brand-related work.

For the purpose of developing the promotional materials in the initial stage of the Marketing and Promotion Strategy, the selection of color codes by area is recommended. The reason is that the route is still unrecognizable, and the color positioning of the

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individual areas will make it easier for consumers to find and associate with other familiar sites in their territory.

It is recommended that the development of color identity be tailored to new trends in visual communication - using many bright colors. Regardless of the generally accepted and established conservative approach, all materials related to the cultural and historical heritage, and the Roman one, to be depicted in pastel tones - beige, brown, burgundy, the proposal is to use an innovative approach. It combines the modern forms of integration of the possible advertising forms and the unused bright colors of the ancient culture and especially the visual elements of the Roman Empire. According to Mark Bradley, author of the Color and Meaning study in Ancient Rome, Cambridge University, Classical Studies, in the Roman Empire, vital vivid colors are used in clothing, architecture, interior, exterior and the arts.

Graphic elements

Tonal in tone patterns and full-color patterns can be used decorative anywhere where image application is unjustified (for technical or logical reasons). Graphics elements should only use color codes to ensure a strong visual presence.

Pictograms

It is recommended to use pictograms when developing the promotional materials. Thus, through the sign language, showing the main recognizable traits in schematic form, better readability of the materials and easier user orientation will be achieved.

Photo style

Art photography is fundamental in the production of advertising and information materials. It is necessary to provide quality photographs.

Music

The music that is used in the brand's communication should bring a sense of personal adventure. As a next step, a basic "musical phrase" of the route can be created, to be interpreted in different communication campaigns.

Basic guidelines for developing a product brand

The brand is creating a clear identity, an attractive, authentic look. It is a promise, a request for something of value, memorable, recognizable, distinct from others.



The development of the brand is not the subject of the current contract, but the main guidelines for its development are outlined in this document.

It is clear from the results of the preliminary study that the tourism resources of the Bulgaria-Romania cross-border region are a good basis for the creation and management of a regional brand.

In order to consistently communicate the image of the tourist product, it is necessary to develop a unique visual identity based on the theme of the project (the Roman heritage along the Danube River).

It is advisable to affirm a trademark of the route as a trademark of the project partners. The trademark is one of the most valuable assets of the new tourism product, which is the exclusive right to use it for products and services.

For this purpose, the following visual identity actions need to be taken:

- Developing a Visual Identity Guide, briefly outlining the basic rules for the use of visual signatures (sizes, fonts, page layouts);
- Establishing an own trademark of the route.

This will contribute to the comprehensive management of the tourist route to achieve a higher market value and maintain a high level of competitiveness. The brand has a strong influence on consumers and reflects what we create as an image. In order to achieve effective interaction, apart from the cultural and historical regional characteristics, the political and economic characteristics of the region must be considered.

When developing a regional brand based on tourist resources of the cross-border region Bulgaria-Romania, it is important to work on identifying names, related terms, trademarks, symbols, designs or in combination that aim to be recognizable and distinguishable from these to other countries. It is necessary to define the exact name for its future development because the route includes objects that are popular as sites of the Lower Danube Limes and at the same time the scope of the project uses the terminology: “a joint cultural and historical tourist product: Route “Roman border on the territory of Romania-Bulgaria cross-border region”, which seriously impedes the way of perception of a functioning and vital route. Easier to communicate and position is a product that a user can associate with familiar or similar products (e.g. “limes”).

The specific design of a brand that includes parts of two countries united in a cross-border region should be strongly market and consumer oriented.

Cultural (event) calendar



The creation of a cultural (event) calendar will improve the possibility of informing about upcoming events related to the tourist route of the stakeholders and the target groups.

In order to ensure the inclusion of events that would be of interest to tourists and which contribute to the image of the tourist product, criteria for their inclusion should be developed. Applying criteria will prevent the mechanical coverage of any kind of events organized by the municipalities. Events organized by private service providers thematically related to the product can also be promoted in the calendar.

The event calendar will include at least the following information: the name of the event and its theme; date of organization and venue; program of events; main elements of the event (eg re-installs, festivals, demonstrations, etc.); organizers and contact persons. It is necessary to plan and develop an on-line cultural calendar in the architecture of the website created under the project.

The calendar should be updated periodically. It is appropriate to be distributed annually among tour operators, travel agents, so that they can plan their travel programs more than a year before the events are held. Determining dates and themes of different cultural events will allow tour operators to include these events in their offers and create the opportunity to generate tourist flows. Current information is also very important from the point of view of planning individual trips.

Development of tourist attractions related to Roman heritage

The tourist attractions for the purposes of this strategy are divided into two groups: cultural events and antique festivals.

Cultural events "give life" to destinations, enrich the tourist supply and diversify it, highlight the assets of the cultural heritage and give them authenticity. At present, the supply of events in the Romania-Bulgaria cross-border region is comparatively modest. Cultural events can be: film festivals; theater plays; open-air opera; educational events organized by local cultural institutions for children and young people; exhibitions; planers and more. It is planned to develop innovative cultural events. It is necessary to organize cultural events on the theme of the Roman heritage.

In the cross-border region, thematic festivals are organized on different aspects of the Roman heritage. Good examples are the festivals in Constanta (Romania); Svishtov, Ruse, Tutrakan, Nikyup, Veliko Tarnovo and others. New festivals can contribute to the development of the tourist product and can be organized directly by local public administrations or private organizations.

Festivals can support the creation and development of groups for historical reenactments. The practice is to be formed by volunteers (e.g. students or students,

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members of cultural associations), amateurs or even professional actors. The advantages of setting up permanent groups for historic reconstruction reenactment (active and non-festival periods) include: possibility to include the members of the group in other events other than local festivals and events such as fairs, exchanges, etc. all year; possibility to organize competitions between groups for historical reenactments in different towns of the region or in events organized in other regions of the countries or even abroad. Organizations implementing the Strategy can ensure the exchange of good practices and the sharing of experience.

Product development and enrichment of the product palette

An important competitive advantage of the created product is the possibility of its segmentation: self-building of sub-routes at the district/county level; on a cross-border level by connecting two or more municipalities, either from the Bulgarian, Romanian or Bulgarian-Romanian side; at object level: basic only; primary and secondary, etc. On the other hand, the product has the ability to maintain and display the different types of relationships between the various elements reflecting the importance of cultural value: tangible and intangible traces; cultural (anthropogenic) and natural landmarks; elements of different periods, etc.

This flexibility in designing sub-products provides a high degree of product positioning and ensures freedom of choice among different types of tourists.

Creating conditions for integration with other types of tourism. According to the results of a survey conducted in developing the Development Strategy (114 participants), 75% of the respondents indicated the “favorable conditions for the integration of the route with other types of tourism (eco, rural, wine, pedestrian, bicycle, wine, river, etc.)” as its strongest side.

Potential for inclusion in a larger international tourist product - Danube Limes (7 countries). Secondly (46%), by level of competition, the respondents put the potential of the route for inclusion in a larger international tourist product - the Danube Lime. Less well-rated and with lower priority is the economic accessibility of the route.

Utilization and capitalization of available resources in the region: natural and cultural heritage. The cross-border region Romania-Bulgaria is characterized by rich tourist potential. Despite the poor economic development and its unrecognizability as a tourist destination for both foreign and domestic tourists, the diverse natural and anthropogenic resources are a prerequisite for promoting the region and developing four season tourism.

The joint cultural and historical tourist product: Route “Roman frontier within the cross-border region Romania-Bulgaria” is formed by sub-products in the field of cultural

tourism, in particular the Roman heritage with the supportive importance of pilgrim tourism, rural tourism, festivals and events, business tourism.

Each of the sub-products is built on a specific resource and includes specific objects, attractions, services and animation, and at the same time develops in the context of the others - in a territorial, resource and functional way, having a diversifying role by providing additional services and attractions.

The development of sub-products on the tourist route is included in the Development Strategy as A 3.1.2.1.2. Development of local tourist routes (sub-routes on the Roman frontier), integrated with other forms of tourism.

To enrich the product palette, it is necessary to create bicycle routes and develop bicycle infrastructure and services. Satisfying this need requires the realization of projects related to the study of possible bicycle routes; their infrastructure building and putting road markings; development of cycling services, etc.

In order to initiate different projects and to create partnerships for their implementation, all necessary actions for the development of the bicycle infrastructure in the region are identified: Identification and mapping of the Danube routes, which are suitable for tourist cycling (to optimize investments, existing forest roads, routes, etc.); Undertaking measures to ensure the safety of cyclists, especially on uneven or sloping terrains, such as stoning, stamping, etc.; Completing bicycle paths along their entire length by placing signs, information panels and markings with specific colors and symbols (e.g. trees, terminals); Establishing bicycle rental centers, repair shops and bicycle parks, etc.; Creating bicycle maps available both in printed form at tourist information points and on cycling parks on terrain as well as electronically in the form of applications for mobile devices; Organizing and conducting bicycle tours for youth communities, students, students to raise awareness of the cultural heritage of the region, with the support of local NGOs.

Long-term tourism cycling infrastructure can also support the development of a specific tourist infrastructure, stimulating the creation of small accommodation, catering facilities, craft shops. Furthermore, routes can form the basis for organizing a variety of cultural and sports events that engage local stakeholders and provide the basis for establishing cooperation between them.

It is possible for partners implementing this Strategy to help dynamize this process by developing a Bicycle Network Development Concept to the sites of the route.

Part of the cultural tourism product is wine and culinary tourism. In recent years, the region has become an attractive destination for wine tourism, not only because of the wine-making and wine culture tradition, but also because of the many successful wineries, some of which are already well-established tourist attractions. Culinary tourism is a growing phenomenon that has developed in the past two decades as a tourist product. Nearly 1/3 of the cost of tourists is food. Valorization of culinary

traditions and wine tourism through tourism implies a number of efforts both from local public administrations and from the non-governmental sector and economic operators.

In this context, the following can be envisaged: an inventory of cooking techniques and recipes specific to local cuisine that can be offered as a culinary product; economic operators (small establishments, restaurants, organizers of culinary events) to offer typical culinary products can be identified; good practices and their multiplication along the tourist route (e.g. traveling wine and culinary festival) can be identified; culinary or wine competitions between local producers from different areas of the Romania-Bulgaria cross-border region can be organized, others. It can be combined with various events related to wine - holidays, fairs, wineries, wine festivals and others, as well as celebrations, customs.

An important element of product enrichment is the individual product lines of local producers of souvenirs, food products, etc., and the project partners can support the process of their development.

In the border region of Romania-Bulgaria sold souvenirs (postcards, magnets, ceramic ornaments) are not related to the local heritage, much less to the Roman cultural heritage. Since souvenirs can be an excellent promoter of local culture in tourist areas or even in their respective countries, their marketing through information centers or specialist stores can become a marketing tool for the entire tourist destination.

In this regard, the current Strategy proposes the following actions: Creating themes for souvenirs related to the themes of the tourist product (Roman cultural heritage), which may include: Roman culture figures; forms of ancient plastic art (Roman mosaics); traditions in gastronomy and viticulture (wine bottles in style inspired by the Roman theme, various durable foods inspired by Roman gastronomy); military art (e.g. miniature weapons specific to legions located in the border area).

Product quality standards for materials used, color palette, safety rules, etc. can be developed. Support can also be directed to partnerships between museum administrators, archaeological sites and tourist information centers in border areas, and local craft and craft associations to sell souvenirs made.



Source: Personal archive

3.6. Pricing strategy

For the development of the tourism product "Roman frontier on the territory of the Romania-Bulgaria cross-border region", the choice of pricing strategy is extremely important. Since the route is located in economically underdeveloped areas in Bulgaria and Romania, the most successful pricing strategy is this of price-penetration in the target markets. With it, the tourist destination offers lower prices to targeted markets than most competitors, thus attracting more and more tourists, who contribute to the popularity and image of the destination and bring money to the economy.

This strategy is the most logical choice possible and in terms of the time needed for image branding of a brand new product - cultural route.

The price is the only element of the marketing mix that makes a profit while all other elements spend. The price is also one of the most flexible elements of this mix because it can be quickly changed, unlike product features or obligations to distribution channels.

Pricing in the tourist destination

Pricing the destination and identifying the individual elements of the local tourism product is a complex process. Tourist companies tend to have their own price combinations and policies.

Although the implementation of pricing policies is extremely difficult, destination managers need to form partnerships with the businesses in tourism and educate them about the importance of maintaining a relatively standardized pricing structure and policy. At several leisure venues, tour operators also play a crucial role in determining the price consumers pay for products locally. This has significant consequences for destinations that depend on tour operators for consumers, especially for destinations with oversupply of facilities. **The higher the cost of tourists at a local level, the better it is for destinations as it increases the profitability of local businesses and increases the economic benefits.**

Consumers take into account the total travel costs, i.e. before, during and after their visit. **Destinations can charge premium rates only if they offer unique experience.**

It is important for consumers to perceive prices as fair and good value for money, because frustration is detrimental to the competitiveness of the destination.

Considering the fragility of the tourist resources and the initial phase of development of the Danube destination, the dynamic pricing is the suitable pricing method.

Recommended pricing model

The life cycle of the tourist product is envisaged to coincide with three phases in the marketing strategy's timing: "Entry", "Growth", "Maturity".

In the "Entering" phase (2018 - 2020) the number of tourists is small and prices have to be set with a serious discount to attract visitors and create interest in the destination. The challenge is to convince service providers that they can rely on very low returns for the introduction period and that they will gain returns on investment in the next phases. The accommodation capacity is very low, the employment rate is low. Image and attractions are unsatisfactory.

Table 5. Pricing in the "Entry" phase

Type of tourism	Type of tourist	Basic Package
Riverside and Ecotourism	Tourist-type „A“	Basic package -50% discount
	Tourist-type „B“	Basic package -20% discount
	Tourist-type „C“	Basic package -10% discount
	Tourist-type „D“	Basic package -20% discount
Urban tourism	Tourist-type „B“	Basic package -10% discount

	Tourist-type „C“	Basic package
Cultural and historical tourism	Tourist-type „A“	Basic package -30% discount
	Tourist-type „B“	Basic package -20% discount
	Tourist-type „C“	Basic package
	Tourist-type „D“	Basic package -10% discount
Rural tourism	Tourist-type „B“	Basic package -10% discount
	Tourist-type „C“	Basic package

In "Growth" phase (2021-2025) the number of tourists is already high and the prices are high and adequate to the great interest. The accommodation capacity is increasing, but still insufficient, the level of employment is very high. The image and attractions are excellent.

Table 6. Pricing in the "Growth" phase

Type of tourism	Type of tourist	Basic Package
Riverside and Ecotourism	Tourist-type „A“	Basic package -10% discount
	Tourist-type „B“	Basic package
	Tourist-type „C“	Basic package +20% premium
	Tourist-type „D“	Basic package
Urban tourism	Tourist-type „B“	Basic package
	Tourist-type „C“	Basic package +20% premium
Cultural and historical tourism	Tourist-type „A“	Basic package -10% discount
	Tourist-type „B“	Basic package
	Tourist-type „C“	Basic package +20% premium
	Tourist-type „D“	Basic package
Rural tourism	Tourist-type „B“	Basic package -10% discount
	Tourist-type „C“	Basic package

In the "Maturity" phase (2026-2030 and beyond) the number of tourists is high, at peak times too high, the prices are high and adequate to the great interest in obtaining the required profitability from the investors. The accommodation capacity is large and sufficient, the employment rate is very high. The image and attractions are very good. Price premiums are at the expense of higher billing, which can be identified by surveys across segments, and by raising the prices of non-fixed pricing package components (such as excursions, shows or ancillary services) through the buffer.

Table 7. Pricing in the "Maturity" phase

Type of tourism	Type of tourist	Basic Package
	Tourist-type „A“	Basic package



Riverside and Ecotourism	Tourist-type „B“	Basic package +10% premium
	Tourist-type „C“	Basic package +20% premium
	Tourist-type „D“	Basic package +10% premium
Urban tourism	Tourist-type „B“	Basic package
	Tourist-type „C“	Basic package +20% premium
Cultural and historical tourism	Tourist-type „A“	Basic package
	Tourist-type „B“	Basic package +10% premium
	Tourist-type „C“	Basic package +20% premium
	Tourist-type „D“	Basic package +10% premium
Rural tourism	Tourist-type „B“	Basic package
	Tourist-type „C“	Basic package +20% premium

Thus, the proposed pricing strategy can be applied in the subsequent preparation of tourist packages for different seasons, with different discounts or preferences to attract customers.

It is particularly important to offer a unique experience of the cultural and historical sites that are included in the itinerary and to sell quality cultural products: festivals, outdoor scenes, concerts, etc.



Danube River
Source: Valeri Nedyalkov

3.7 Advertising strategy

The advertising strategy is aimed at promoting the created tourism product by defining the main means of advertising.

Internet advertising



The developed website of the tourism product has the potential to contribute to the promotion of the route. In addition, a mobile app has been created, which also needs to be promoted to become an effective advertising tool for the product.

In the short term, it is advisable to use ad banners in leading news sites, specialized tourist sites, etc. in order to reach a large number of potential users and support the process of product branding.

Where possible and when funding is available, Internet search engines should be used. Surfing for pleasure on the Internet takes the lead in the Internet. Therefore, an important part of the positioning of advertising text links in the internet search engines, local Bulgarian networks and social networks / media should be realized through the web address of the product.

Attention should be directed to the following Internet search engines:

- **GOOGLE** - *the world's largest search engine*. In Bulgaria, England, Germany and Romania, it is used by 100% of Internet users. There is no other local analogue that can get close to 1/3 of the usability of the global search engine. It is used to satisfy any need of any type of information. This makes other search engine analogues insufficiently effective in terms of coverage of the on-line audience in these countries.
- **EASYADS** - *the most popular local area network in Bulgaria*, which is a web-based platform for managing and reporting on-line advertising campaigns on a "click-to-buy" site network that allows to buy on-line advertising in a large number Bulgarian web sites at the same time. The platform is a complex technology, developed according to modern standards and conducting precise optimization of the displayed ads. It's a great way to target traffic to a particular site. The EasyAds network has over 250 sites, delivers over 1 billion ad impressions a month and has over 95% coverage of the Internet audience in Bulgaria. The ad presence is provided through text links as well as standard formats standard banners that rotate randomly on all sites that enter the local network until the requested clicks are reached.

Promotional video and promotional film

Formats developed in the scope of the project should be used as part of targeted advertising. In addition to distributing them, they can be used at events, expos and exhibitions, local / regional television channels, as well as distributed on the Internet.

Printed promotional materials

For the initial stage of realization of the advertising strategy, catalog and brochure in Bulgarian, Romanian and English, developed in the scope of the project, are



available. In the medium and long term, it is necessary to plan the issue of printed materials, incl. and such to be used by tourists during their stay in the destination (tourist maps, guides, etc.). It is recommended to publish advertising materials aimed at domestic tourists, cruise tourists, cyclists, etc., and the overall concept is to provoke their interests and provide information that may "inspire" them to make the tourist trip. At the time of developing this strategy, planning for specific promotional activities is not envisaged, but it is advisable to develop, publish and distribute them wherever possible. Particular attention should be paid to the preparatory stage of developing printed advertising materials - provision of artistic photographs, thematically conceived and "brought to life"; the development of texts in different languages, according to target markets not only to overcome the language barrier, but also to emphasize respect for the respective tourists. Good form is bilingual printed materials - in the language of the country to visit and the language of the tourist. This facilitates communication during the trip.

In the case of established sustainable partnerships, opportunities for print advertising can be sought in information catalogs, professional directories; timetables for transport; programs for cultural events. The tourist product can also be advertised by printing the logo on cash vouchers (from local service providers); invoices; forms for correspondence and others.

Outdoor advertising

Outdoor advertising is very important for interpreting the message of the route - the Roman heritage, as well as for targeting the tourist flow. The visual elements of the brand can be successfully established through it.

Possible forms of outdoor advertising are:

- billboards, signs, urban furniture items (bus stops, benches, etc.)
- advertising on public transport vehicles;
- "Live" advertising - organizing actions or events or demonstrations / flashmobs in lively places in the generating markets;
- Outdoor exhibitions (especially during the summer months in busy places in city centers, etc.)

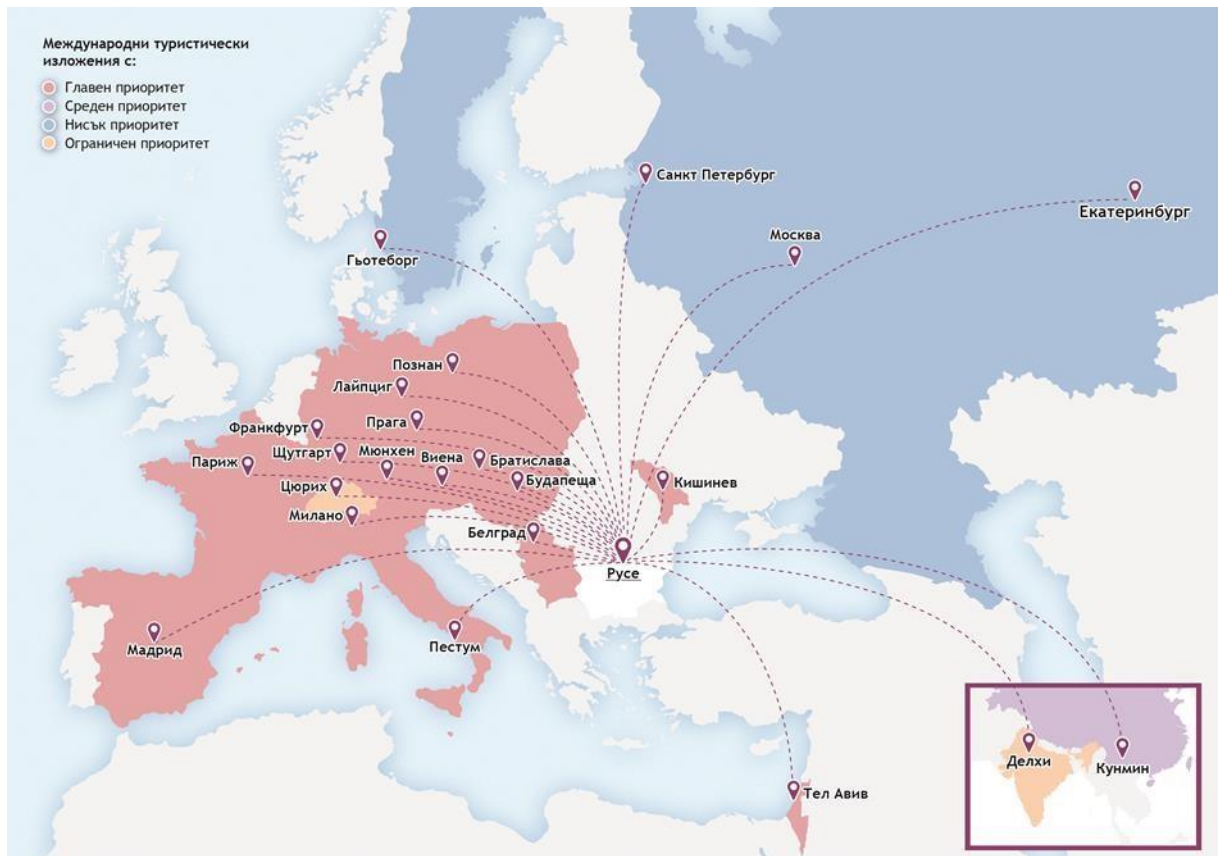
In the short term, the outdoor advertising of the tourist product is mainly applicable to the domestic market for the region (Romania, Bulgaria).

Participation in tourism fairs and expos



To promote the tourist route, it is necessary to present it at international events and exhibitions. The identification of international tourist exhibitions to which the tourist product of the Lower Danube Limes should be presented is subordinated to the identified priority markets. This will ensure the highest rate of return on investment.

Scheme 3. Suggestions for international tourism fairs



Options for participation are through:

- Representative national stands;
- Information stands.

Priority fairs/ expos are: CMT - Stuttgart, ITB - Berlin (Germany); FITUR - Madrid, Spain; Ferien Messe Wien - Vienna, Austria; IFT - Belgrade, Republic of Serbia; UTAZAS, Budapest, Hungary; IFTM Top Resa - Paris, France; Salon Mondial du Tourisme - Paris, France; BIT Milano - Milan, Italy; BORSA MEDITERRANEA DEL TURISMO ARCHEOLOGICO - Pestum, Italy; WTM - London, Great Britain; TT Warsaw - Warsaw, Poland.

The most realistic in the short term is the participation in TTR - Bucharest (Romania); Holiday & SPA Expo, Sofia; Cultural Tourism - Veliko Turnovo, Weekend Tourism - Ruse (Bulgaria).

In addition to a stand, it is necessary to use various forms of advertising offered by the organizers of events and exhibitions, e.g.:

- Inclusion of the film for the tourist route in the tourist film festivals;
 - Use the tools to locate stakeholders on a registered profile and B2B meetings.
- Working with bloggers;
- Organization of workshops and demonstrations on the territory of a route site, located in the respective city - Ruse, Veliko Tarnovo;
 - Organization of personal meetings with tour operators, etc.;
 - Multimedia presentation in the show program and screening of the movie.
 - Organization of a booth presentation through a reenacting group and on a prior invitation from tour operators, journalists and other professional visitors.

Promotional souvenirs

Souvenirs could be used in a variety of ways, their primary purpose being to provoke an emotional positive response to the product by their recipients. Their main advantage is that they are kept by the recipients, i.e. are a durable medium of a creative or an image-forming element. The three main types of souvenirs that are recommended to be made are:

- Cognitive. They aim to associate the regional product with one of the remarkable features - elements of the archaeological heritage, images of the objects, symbols of the Roman heritage, etc.;
- Standard - magnets, key chains, cups, badges, etc. that satisfy the collectible interest of tourists and are most popular among the tourists;
- Souvenir coins depicting the route logo are a specific advertising souvenir. They can be made in different size and material according to the price parameters. It is convenient to put vending machines near the objects of the route so that tourists themselves can make their coin as a memento.

The distribution of souvenirs according to their value and circulation is suitable for tourist fairs, during events as a gift on different occasions, as well as for subsequent communication with the guests after their departure.

To achieve the objectives of the marketing strategy, it is necessary to plan activities aimed at: organizing and conducting advertising / information / motivation campaigns; active use of the web; application of innovative advertising techniques; Organizing demonstrations, promotional, familiarization tours for the stakeholders. It is

important to participate in international tourism fairs and exhibitions, as well as in specialized tourism and cultural forums at national, regional and international level.

For the active promotion and motivation to join the Strategy as a whole, it is suggested to set up prizes for contribution to the development of the tourist route, to be awarded when rotating the host cities with sites, included in the route.

In the short term, development of new advertising and information materials is not envisaged, because the catalog, brochure, film, mobile application and others, developed in the project, will be distributed. However, in the long run and when funding is available, it is advisable that advertising be geared towards using innovative technologies.



Ancient festival “Eagle on the Danube”, Svishtov

Sources: Personal archive

3.8. Communication strategy

The current strategy is consistent with the need for specific communication of the cultural and historical tourist product: Route “Roman frontier within the cross-border region Romania-Bulgaria”.

First of all, the communication process is defined as “sharing knowledge of

the heritage” - an expression of the common European responsibility for its preservation for future generations. It is argued that in a globalizing market the ordinary person feels the necessity of discovering, touching and trying to reach his roots, as well as consciously discovering the vital cultural environment of others. This is not a one-way desire to accumulate factual knowledge, but to touch the unique identity of people as communication agents and cultural values, reflecting to different degrees their own history and heritage. As a subject of communication, the heritage materializes a more open and rich dialogue and more intensive cross-border cultural cooperation through interaction⁶.

Secondly, communication takes place through the channels of distribution of the tourist product. The right choice of distribution channels ensures that the product is successfully positioned on the tourist market. Product distribution should contribute to its recognition and validation at national, regional and international level.

Therefore, communication is envisaged to be realized through two main types of communication channels: information and distribution. Prerequisites for successful implementation of the communication strategy are:

- The information used by the various stakeholders should be consistent with the credibility of the historical facts about the sites included in the route and the general brand of the product;
- Regular presence in on-line space (sites, social networks, etc.);
- Effective partnerships with tourism industry organizations, tour operators, Tourist Information Centers, research units, etc., having the potential to implement the communication measures.

Dissemination is an important component of the marketing strategy and includes specific activities the ultimate goal of which is to selectively establish sales networks that provide the best conditions for direct or through intermediaries (e.g. travel agents) to distribute the tourist product “Roman frontier within the cross-border region Romania-Bulgaria”.

The proposed measures to facilitate the distribution of the tourist product include the creation of the necessary infrastructure for communication purposes; the creation of partnerships with travel agencies and incoming tour operators and, on the other hand, the stimulation of individual tourism through the introduction of a subscription/pass.

⁶ Източник: „Комунікація на наслідството“, (Стратегія от Опатія, 2006)



Communication principles

The communication strategy will be implemented in compliance with the following basic principles:

- Equality - ensuring equal access to information for all stakeholders as well as all types of tourists.
- Timeliness - planning and implementation with a view to timely satisfying the identified needs of the target groups.
- Adaptability - taking into account the specificities of both the target groups and the specific situation in which they are implemented.
- Partnership - open dialogue and interaction with all stakeholders.

Communication tools

The choice of communication tools and activities in the implementation of the communication strategy is consistent with:

- The specificity of the message or messages;
- The characteristics of the target group or subset of tourists - the recipient of the message - as size, communication channels to reach it;
- Possible activities and forms for communication;
- When communicating messages that affect a range of different target groups and subgroups, an integrated communications mix will be used to ensure communication effectiveness, both in activities and forms, as well as in channels. Therefore, communication is envisaged to be realized through two main types of communication channels: information and distribution.

3.8.1. Information and communication channels

Internet space

Online is the most effective communication channel, both in the planning of organized and individual visits, with or without the assistance of a tour



operator/agent, as well as in the choice of a tourist destination.

The web page and mobile application developed on the project should be used regularly as an effective communication channel by keeping up-to-date information on site development, upcoming events from the common cultural calendar,

It is necessary that the site created under the project is included in internet portals for tourism, which will ensure reaching a large number of potential tourists. The information on the web page must be complemented by social media channels, which include:

- **Twitter** is used to send a message up to 140 characters, which may refer to cultural events, new exhibits, completed projects, changes to the visit program, and more. It is recommended that the message be accompanied by a link to a web page that provides more details about the subject of the message in the form of written or graphic content.
- **Facebook** is the social media platform No. 1 in the world, whose members account for more than one billion. Although Facebook was originally created as a socialization channel, it is later transformed through added features, into a space for product/service promotion, businesses/organizations, and even tourist destinations. Facebook offers specific marketing tools such as Facebook marketing, Facebook advertising, Facebook business, Facebook studio and a Facebook studio cloud. Facebook allows users (e.g. visitors to the sites on the “Roman frontier within the cross-border region Romania-Bulgaria”) to give some notes, depending on the satisfaction of their visit. This helps tour operators and destination management organizations to get a real idea of the attractiveness of the tourist product and how well it meets the needs of the target group.
- **YouTube** is an excellent opportunity to increase the visibility of the tourist product at the Romanian-Bulgarian border by publishing promotional videos or even documentaries. It is a free advertising tool that has the potential to attract a large number of Internet users in a relatively short period of time.
- **Travel blogs** that have an increasing impact on the consumption of tourist services. By telling their own trips, bloggers communicate with potential users of tourism and heritage in an empathic, personal and trustworthy way. They create a relationship of trust with tourists that ad agencies do not have access to in the context of their association with the corporate environment, aimed at profit rather than creating social value.



- **Television and radio.** The use of electronic media is effective through the broadcasting of advertising spots or the presentation of the product in thematic broadcasts.
- **Printed editions (specialized).** Among the many existing top-rated print publications are the National Geographic Magazine and Traveler Magazine. The National Geographic Traveler magazine provides a variety of information for traveling readers and is the preferred source of information on tourist topics among potential tourists.
- **Traveler Magazine** is a specialized edition that presents the most exciting tourist destinations in the world: from the shores of Great Britain and Europe to the Far East, the exotic climate of Asia.

At this stage, the use of media is not foreseen because of the high value for the use of this type of communication channel, but where possible and available funding, it is good to plan their involvement in the implementation of information and promotional campaigns.

Local service providers in tourism

A successful communication channel may be the local service providers. For the purposes of marketing and promotion, a study has been conducted on the possibility of using the accommodation in Bulgaria as a communication channel. At present, only 15% of accommodation offers information on tourist attractions in the region.

Excursions to various places are offered (most of which are of cultural value), or there is information and a gallery of cultural tourist sites, which suggests the interest of these hotels and guest houses to be associated with cultural tourism in some way.

This indicates the possibility of realizing a potential partnership in the product positioning of the sites from the “Roman frontier within the cross-border region Romania-Bulgaria” with the private business.

This would increase the attendance of both route and accommodation sites, which in turn will increase the profits of both the private sector and the public.

Partnership dimensions can be oriented towards: providing business information for the tourist route to use on their websites, developing information materials, distributing route materials, and more. It would be useful to organize seminars/trainings on how to promote the route. This is one of the possibilities for improving the quality of the provided service, as a result of which the loyalty of the tourists and the guests in the respective places of accommodation will increase.



Educational organizations

Inclusion in the focus of the marketing strategy of young people as a non-traditional communication channel can be used by secondary and higher education institutions, non-governmental organizations focused on education and cultural-historical heritage, whose target group are students and students. Through them it will be easier to communicate the messages of the different information campaigns and will reach the target groups more quickly.

3.8.2. Distribution communication channels

Tour operators and travel agents

Tourism operators, travel agents, travel agencies, tour guides, etc. have a strong influence on the tourist market.

The interest of tour operators is aimed at expanding the opportunities for creating competitive packages, providing both information on individual resources and services and advertising the tourist area; expanding the circle of potential users of tourist packages through the promotion of tourism opportunities, respectively provoking interest in traveling to the region.

Travel agents with the role of intermediaries can satisfy their need both to provide an expanded circle of motivated travel for information, respectively a wider range of services (accommodation, additional services) and packages from the region and on the basis of advertising the tourist product users. Special attention should be paid to cruise operators.

Their use as a distribution channel is important for the positioning and successful development of the routes of their established niche markets and the supply of the product will accelerate its entry into the tourism market. Therefore, it is especially important to promote the tourist product to the representatives of the tourist business at national, regional and international level and to make regular communication with them.



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Tourist information centers

Tourist information centers in the cross-border region are linked to a national network and have the function of information services for tourists. It is important to establish a partnership with them in order to generate long-term benefits both in terms of the image of the tourist product (through a common promotion ensuring consistency of image-defining values), as well as exploring the satisfaction of tourists.

In the Bulgarian part of the cross-border region there is good provision with tourist information centers.

To make an effective communication campaign, it is important to provide information on the route to attract tourists. It is necessary to provide route and facility information to business representatives, tour operators, non-governmental organizations to be used in their work. To create a positive attitude towards the created website and mobile application of the product it is necessary to provide up-to-date information.

It is necessary to create an information infrastructure for promotion of the objects included in the route (signs, billboards, indicative markings, etc.) as well as provision of information points for providing information.

For the proper use of the product brand and the interpretation of the information it is advisable to provide the opportunity for ongoing consultation by representatives of the organizations implementing the strategy. The most important focus is the development of product distribution channels, using the distribution capabilities to disseminate route information by integrating it into offering travel and cruise operators. Cruise trips have an ever-increasing impact on tourist trips and become the most popular type of tourism. Apart from accessibility from the river, the route has the competitive advantage of generating added value for the tourist. It is an expression of additional services on the coast: sites of high cultural and historical value from the border of the Roman Empire, intangible heritage, visits to antique festivals, shows and more.

Creating partnerships to implement joint initiatives/projects aimed at education, cultural heritage protection, economic stimulation can contribute to communicating the product to domestic and foreign audiences. The cooperation with stakeholders is important to organize discussion events (round tables, focus groups, etc.) on the development of the route, in view of the long period of implementation of the strategy.



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3.9. Activities for implementing a strategy for promoting the tourist route

Through the identified concrete activities, the implementation of the plan for the realization of the marketing objectives of the Strategy for marketing and promotion of a cultural heritage product: Route "Roman Frontier within the Cross-Border Region Romania-Bulgaria" is achieved.

To achieve maximum efficiency in implementing the Strategy for promotion, the marketing objectives are tied to measures to which specific activities are presented. The activities are grouped according to the envisaged measures that contribute to achieving the marketing objectives. Each activity is clearly and precisely defined in terms of timing and resources. This logically bound approach will ensure the implementation of the Strategy.



Table 8. Activities for achieving the marketing objectives

Activities for achieving marketing objective 1. Developing the tourist product for the Roman heritage as a way of using and capitalizing the cultural resources of the cross-border region

Measure		Activities		Tasks	Deadline			Estimated value (EUR)		
					2018-2020	2021-2025	2026-2030	2018-2020	2021-2025	2026-2030
1.1.	Creating a consistent image of the tourist product	1.1.1.	Creating a unique visual identity of the developed tourist product (brand)	Development of Visual Identity Guide, containing brief basic rules for the use of visual signatures (size, fonts, page layouts);				6 000		
				Establishment of own brand of the route.				2 000		
		1.1.2.	Creating and maintaining a cultural	Elaboration of criteria for inclusion of events in the cultural calendar				According to the Development Strategy		



			(event calendar) of the product	Development and positioning of online cultural calendar in the architecture of the website created for the project						
				Regular maintenance of information in the cultural calendar and its distribution to tour operators, travel agents and others.						
1.2.	Development of the tourist products to improve the tourist experience	1.2.1.	Development of the tourist attractions related to the Roman heritage	Participation in the organization of cultural events on related to Roman heritage				10 000	10 000	10 000
				Assistance in organizing antique festivals				5 000	5 000	5 000
				Implementing joint initiatives with municipalities, schools and museums				5 000	5 000	5 000
		1.2.2.	Promoting sub-product development	Development of sub-products of the tourist route;	According to the Development Strategy					



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			and enrichment of the product palette	Providing support for the development of a Cycling Network Development Concept to the sites of the route.					10 000	
				Supporting valorization of local food and wine through events and thematic lines					20 000	



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				Supporting the development of individual product lines for local producers of souvenirs, food products, etc.; creating themes of the tourist product (Roman cultural heritage); develop quality standards for items and souvenirs).					10 000	
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Activities for achieving marketing objective 2. Improving the use and capitalization of cultural heritage aimed at economic growth and community development in the region

Measure		Activities		Tasks	Deadline			Estimated value (EUR)		
					2018-2020	2021-2025	2026-2030	2018-2020	2021-2025	2026-2030
2.1.	Creating information for the route in order to attract tourists	2.1.1.	Providing support for improving the provision of information for the tourist route	Presentation of information about the route and the sites, included in it, to business representatives, tour operators, non-governmental organizations and others				40 000		

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			Supporting the stakeholders to use the brand and interpretation of the information for the route					8 000	
			Organization and conduction of trainings for business organizations, tourist information centers and other stakeholders for the use of the route brand					20 000	
			Joint activities with regional and local authorities for promoting the route (through their websites, providing up-to-date information on sites and events, etc.)						
			Conducting workshops / seminars for representatives of the tourism industry in connection with the promotion of the tourist product and the tourist experience					28 000	

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			Providing the route and cultural (event) calendar for a period of at least one year in order to present it to cruise ship operators and the inclusion of sites from the route in the travel offers					2 000	2 000
	2.1.2.	Providing support for creating an information infrastructure to promote the sites, included in the route (signs, billboards, indicative markings, etc.)	Supporting the creation and maintenance of information- advertising points (with printed and electronic advertising and information materials) at the main entry points of the region						20 000
			Providing support for the production and installation of information boards, billboards and more. for the route (along the main roads, in/on the sites and other locations)					80 000	



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				Dissemination of information materials about the route through Tourist information centers, tourist business and other partners						
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2.2.	Creating partnerships to promote and distribute the tourist product	2.2.1.	Effective use of the opportunities for distribution and dissemination of the information about the route through its integration into the offers of the tourist and cruise operators	Organization of events (workshops, conferences) with representatives of tour operators to present the product and discuss the possibilities of including the route in the packages offered by them				20 000		
				Assistance in establishing contacts between tour operators and local service providers (accommodation, transport, etc.).					10 000	
				Developing partnerships with European tour operators to include the cultural and historical sites related to the route in their advertising and informational materials					10 000	



		2.2.2.	Establishing partnerships for implementation of joint initiatives / projects focusing on education, preservation of cultural heritage, economic stimulation	Interaction with educational and cultural institutions to involve students in the implementation of activities related to the development of the route					15 000	
				Development of joint projects aimed at promoting the route				5 000		
		2.2.3.	Organization of discussion events (round tables, focus groups, etc.) for the development of the route	Organization of discussion / working formats for discussing the possibility of creating an access system by implementing an access card for the sites included in the route					4 000	
				Organization of meetings between the stakeholders to promote the creation of PPPs between the educational institutions and business					6 000	



Activities for achieving marketing objective 3. Promotion of the tourist route “Roman frontier within the cross-border region Romania-Bulgaria”

Measure		Activities		Tasks	Deadline			Estimated value (EUR)		
					2018-2020	2021-2025	2026-2030	2018-2020	2021-2025	2026-2030
3.1.	Promotion of the tourist product	3.1.1	On-line presentation of the tourist route by using innovative forms of advertising	Promoting the developed website and mobile application in an on-line environment (social networks); developing advertising banners (preferably animated);				1 000		
				Organization of information and promotional campaigns in on-line environment (social networks);				2 500		
				Regular update of the information on the official website of the route and the profiles in the social networks				500	500	500



		3.1.2	Development and realization of advertising/informational/promotional campaigns for the tourist route	Planning and implementation of advertising and information campaigns to attract tourists targeting domestic and foreign markets (including markets generating visits throughout the whole year);					25 000	
				Planning and implementation of advertising and information campaigns to encourage trips of residents in the region;					20 000	
		3.1.3	Organization of promotional / demonstration tours	Preparation, organization and conduction of tours for representatives of the stakeholders - tour operators, cruise operators, media, business and others.					40 000	
				Organization of information visits for representatives of Danube cruises, tour operators and travel agencies					15 000	



		3.1.4	Presentation of the route on international tourism fairs and exhibitions	Annual planning of the participation and the way of presentation of the tourist product at international exhibitions and exchanges; Participation in tourist fairs and exhibitions; Elaboration of assessment of the effectiveness of the participation in exhibitions and exchanges;				According to the Development Strategy		
		3.1.5.	Establishing awards for contributions to the development of a tourist route	Developing a statute for the establishment of awards; Preparation, organization and holding of rotation ceremonies in host cities where there are sites included in the route.				10 000		
3.2.	Development, publication and distribution of advertising and informational materials and multimedia	3.2.1	Development of new multimedia products	Production of films, animations, art installations, etc.					40 000	
		3.2.2	Providing support for the	Development and publishing of printed advertising materials					30 000	



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	products for the route		development of advertising and information materials	Applying forms of external advertising Providing support for the development, production and distribution of advertising souvenirs						
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3.10. Expected results

The economic benefits of tourism development are revealed both in a narrow sectoral (tourism) and in a general economic and social aspect.

The expected results from the implementation of the strategy are:

Result 1: A popularized tourist product and increased recognition on the domestic and foreign markets

The successful promotion and positioning of the tourist market on the cultural and historical route will contribute to the improvement of the image and increase of the popularity of the Romania - Bulgaria cross - border region as an attractive place for recreation, offering a full and rich tourist experience. Increasing the visibility of the route and the objects contained in it, tourist attractions, opportunities for animation and activities and ongoing events will contribute to extending the average stay of tourists and increase average revenue per tourist.

Result 2: Sustainable development of the tourist product, diversification of supply and increased satisfaction of tourists

The realization of the tourist product provides a tool for preservation and sustainable use of the cultural and natural heritage of the region. Engaging in the tourist function of small settlements (unpopular as tourist destinations) will contribute to the development of services related to tourism and preservation of the local way of life. Activated tourism development will provoke an expansion of the value chain of tourism by generating engagement and consumption in related sectors and public spheres, sharing economic benefits among wider circles of the local population. The variety of tourist supply, and the improved characteristics of the tourist flow will generate economic benefits - increasing tourism revenues, incl. local taxes and fees, increased employment, and so on.

Result 3: Active tourism development and a growing number of tourists in the region

Improvement of territorial distribution will be achieved by extending the product range of sub-products and services through the tourist product within the region, as well as building the necessary infrastructure. An appropriate combination of existing tourism resources and improved supply quality, efficient use of distribution channels will lead to an increase in the number of tourists.

Figure 9. Relationship between marketing goals and expected results



MO 1.
Developing the tourist product for the Roman heritage as a way of using and capitalizing the cultural resources of the cross-border region

MO 2.
Improving the use and capitalization of cultural heritage, aimed at economic growth and development community in the region

MO 3. Promotion of the tourist route
"Roman border on the territory of Romania-Bulgaria cross-border region"

Result 1: A popularized tourist product and increased recognition on the domestic and foreign markets

Result 2: Sustainable development of the tourist product, diversification of supply and increased satisfaction of tourists

Result 3: Active tourism development and a growing number of tourists in the region



IV. PLAN FOR STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

4.1. Plan for realization of the tourist route

The plan has an operational character and specifies the way and practical measures to achieve the set goals. The plan provides for the necessary financial and administrative resources. The indicative financial framework is presented with the planned financial resources necessary for the implementation of the Strategy, which is detailed for marketing purposes, years and estimated sources of funding.

The structure of the strategy implementation plan is the basis for the budget by activity. The budget is developed at the level of activities and these budgets are integrated at the plan implementation level.

The budget is restrictive, but it is consistent with the minimum needed to implement the plan.

If the development of projects to be funded through the Structural Funds or another EU financial instrument is initiated, the budget of the relevant project should be prepared according to a matrix specified in the relevant call for proposals and all necessary activities should be described and quantified.

Public-private partnership

Tourism, which represents more than a third of total trade in services, is known in all countries around the world as dynamic, value-added and emerging industry. In addition to the significant cultural and social impact, tourism services can also help increase a country's tax revenue, create jobs and play an effective role in horizontal economic development. This has turned tourism and investment into one of the main goals of the government, both at central, regional and local level.

Investment in tourism is not just about creating hotels, restaurants, shopping and leisure centers, but also about projects related to the transport of tourists or transport infrastructure. In view of the various problems faced by public administrations, both in the design and implementation of these types of projects, technical and administrative problems caused both by reduced budgets and by bureaucracy and heavy decision-making, industrial tourism is particularly affected by the fact that it is constantly evolving and needs innovative elements with immediate implementation due to the fact that the needs and desires of users of tourist products and services are changing post-state and quickly. These elements have led to the conclusion that, in order to achieve higher efficiency and lower costs, the only solution is to use the financial and management power of the private sector.



On the other hand, investments, especially in the field of tourism, require special facilities, services and licenses that the private sector alone can not provide. The implementation of some of these projects is of particular relevance to the public sector and the full distribution of these projects to the private sector alone may delay or postpone them. This concluded that the full distribution of these types of projects exclusively to the private sector is not feasible and that local or central public administrations would prefer to participate in this type of project to ensure their operation and to monitor them directly.

The use of innovations and new funding such as PPPs is considered a good way to attract private investors to invest in public service projects, including in the tourism sector. At present, many developing and developed countries use this method to implement different projects at both national and local levels. Given the characteristics and contribution that the public and private sector can use, the integration of their capabilities and the sharing of risks between the two countries, PPPs can have a significant positive impact on the optimal implementation of infrastructure and tourist services projects. Their purpose is to provide a specific project or services traditionally funded by the public sector, but for some reason the public authority decides to do so in partnership with the private sector. The subject of the contract includes the definition of the type of activity that the private sector must design, finance and build and operate on the basis of the characteristics agreed within the timeframe laid down in the contract.

Generally, under this type of contract, instead of directly implementing the project, the public authority transfers, following a transparent bidding procedure, the "privilege" for the construction and operation of the project for a limited period of time to a private company, the terminology of the Design Company.

Notwithstanding the fact that the project may concern the establishment of an airport, the development of ports or the creation of leisure centers or hotels, the project company is responsible for providing and collecting the necessary capital (total or partial) and the design, respectively its construction / . During the project, the Project Company will withdraw its initial capital and the expected return on the contract signed by the private bidder with the public authority that has launched the bidding process, the sale of the goods or services of the project and returns the works have been the subject of public sector service provision at the end of the period negotiated through the contract as a life cycle of the PPP project.



The responsibilities of each partner can vary from project to project. According to this method, the private sector can take on the task of the public authorities, assuming the risk of building, managing and structuring complex projects. One of the principles of risk allocation is that risk must be transferred to the country that could manage it better and at a lower cost. Accordingly, the public sector must identify the risks of the project in partnership and decide on their transfer. In any case, PPPs enable both the public and the private sector to combine their specific benefits and achieve superior results in a way that neither party can do on its own.

Thus, among the main advantages of implementing tourist interest projects in PPPs, we can say: reducing excessive bureaucracy and speeding up the decision-making process, using the latest and most efficient technologies, reducing the final costs of the provided services, building capacity, maintenance and exploitation, prevention of surplus and arbitrary consumption, which would lead to increased tariffs for tourists, but also to increase the efficiency of the use of available resources.

Public-private partnership projects in the tourism industry are subject to certain specificities, taking into account the specific requirements of the industry. In this way, the lack of optimal use of capacity or the inability to provide optimal services sometimes causes irreversible damage to the tourism infrastructure of a country or region. In the case of decisions on the method of creating, renovating or improving tourist facilities, the use of technical and managerial skills is extremely important. The private sector can do well with these tasks, usually in view of the opportunities and the professionals at its disposal. At the same time, the initiative of public authorities is considered necessary to attract investors in tourism projects and to create investor confidence. Government through specialized state bodies and structures should take the first steps, provide the necessary investment context and introduce investment opportunities, facilities and legal support to the investor in every situation. Moreover, given the characteristics of this industry, investments in tourism projects sometimes require an increase in budget spending in isolated and difficult-to-access areas, but with unique opportunities to attract tourists. The provision of facilities related to water, gas, electricity and gas infrastructure can be a determining factor that makes public authorities a keystone in PPP implementation. It is not so that the leading countries that have used public-private partnership projects such as Canada, Britain, France, Italy, Austria, China, Australia, India, Malaysia, Singapore, Turkey and the Czech Republic are also countries where the tourism industry is well developed and well established in the markets.

Today, tourism is considered to be the largest service industry in the world, with the most dynamic economic part of all service categories. Many countries are therefore very focused on developing and rationalizing this area by resorting to multiple funding, construction and exploitation of matrices from different types of specific projects.



Update mechanism

The update mechanism is an important condition for the adaptation of specific measures and activities in case of necessity imposed by the changes.

Legal basis

The developed and adopted strategic document has a long-term horizon - by 2030, and should therefore be regularly and systematically updated in the course of its implementation.

Purpose

This mechanism is intended for members of the Cross-border Management Committee of the Strategy. The mechanism provides the framework and steps for periodic review and update of the Common Strategic Document.

The main objective is to assist the Cross-Border Management Committee of the Strategy with regard to periodic review and updating of the document and adequate reflection of the dynamic development processes in the field of tourism.

An update covers significant changes that do not contradict the vision and objectives.

The main factors that require an update of the Strategy are:

- Changes in economic and social conditions in the cross-border region Romania-Bulgaria;
- updating of strategic documents at national, regional and European level;
- changes in related national or EU legislation;
- Changes in sectoral strategies and programs affecting the implementation of the Strategy;
- conclusions, results and recommendations from interim evaluations.

Periodic review related to the update should cover at least the following aspects:

- Review and update of the Strategy for the realization of the specific objectives - activities, milestones, processes of approvals and approvals, others;
- Review and update the budget of the Strategy - a statement of costs and a forecast of future funding opportunities.

The initiative for updating the strategy lies within the competence of the Cross-Border Management Committee of the Strategy.

The Committee has the following functions and responsibilities:



- Organize and coordinate the management, monitoring, control, monitoring, updating and reporting of the implementation of the Strategy.

- Proposes for the approval of the management bodies of the two partner organizations updated versions of the Program for realization of the specific objectives of the Strategy.

- Coordinate the compliance of the Strategy with the objectives and priorities of the municipal / regional, regional, cross-border and national strategies, plans and programs of the Strategy and propose an update of the Strategy if this is not available.

The strategy is developed for the period 2018-2030 and its implementation will be carried out under conditions of dynamically changing factors and prerequisites, with a view to achieving the long-term and short-term objectives at local, regional and European level.

The mechanism for updating the strategy is in line with the developed Methodology for updating the Development Strategy in order to ensure synergy between the two strategic documents related to the development of the joint tourism product.

1. Method of compliance with basic documents affecting the implementation of the Strategy

When updating the Strategy, it is essential, with a view to fine-tuning the strategic framework, to carry out an in-depth review of strategic documents at European and national level presenting the general framework for tourism management and strategic planning.

When updating the Strategy, it is necessary to carry out an in-depth review of the changes in the general framework for tourism management and strategic planning in the field of cultural and historical tourism in the cross-border region between Romania and Bulgaria and the European Union.

2. A method of matching objectives, priorities, measures and activities to implement the Strategy

The review and update of the Strategy is made to clarify whether the changes in the environment make it difficult or impossible to implement the Strategy and achieve the stated objectives.

An important element of the update of the strategic part is an assessment of the expectations of the implementation of the document. For this purpose, it is necessary to assess and strike a balance between the values and expectations of the stakeholders. The evaluation will define the starting positions in the update of the vision and will provide the necessary clarity for the political dimensions of the future updated strategy document.



3. Updating the strategic part of the Strategy

Updating the strategic part should be done in their interaction with stakeholders.

The main principles on which the strategic framework of the Strategy should be based are:

- Partnership between institutions, stakeholders and civil society structures in the process of realizing strategic intentions;
- Coordination within and between management units at all levels, responsible for achieving the expected state of the field to the planning horizon;
- Concentration of effort, human and financial resources to implement the goals set in the Strategy;
- Close engagement and integrity of the actions set out in the various programs and strategic documents at national and European level to achieve a complex socio-economic impact;
- Openness for additions and adaptability of strategic intentions to the changing conditions of the environment in which the Strategy is implemented;

4. Method of financial update

Financial resources should be assessed in the following areas:

- National funds;
- European funds;
- Other donor programs;
- National funding (local budget and central);
- Private funding;
- Public-private funding.

The expert evaluation of the financial resources should be deduced from the priorities of the Strategy and be presented in absolute figures and relative shares. When analyzing and assessing the necessary financial resources, account should be taken of the funding constraints on the various programs of the European structural and investment funds. An essential element in assessing the necessary financial resources must be in line with both the degree of readiness for the use of these funds during the respective years of the remaining period and the likelihood that these funds will actually be received for the priority / activity concerned in the relevant year.



4.2. Monitoring system on the implementation of the plan for the development of the tourist route

Monitoring is done to track progress in implementing the system of objectives and specific actions to achieve the vision of the Strategy. The developed system includes identified monitoring indicators that are presented in quantitative terms. They will be applied to take account of progress in implementing the strategy on the basis of collected objective information.

In view of the interdependence between the Development Strategy and the Marketing and Promotion Strategy, as well as the implementation of the process of management, monitoring and updating of the two Cross-Border Management Strategy documents, the methodology is compatible.

The control process is:

- Measuring the results of the plan implementation;
- Comparing performance results with the benchmarks;
- Provision of preventive measures at critical points posing risks;
- Assess performance and, if necessary, identify and take corrective action.

Measurement of results will be based on quantifiable results.

The management, monitoring and updating process will be carried out by the Transboundary Management Committee of the Strategy.

Representatives of the operational teams of ADO "Dunav" and CCINA - Constanta will have responsibilities for exercising the functions related to the implementation of the Marketing and Promotion Strategy.

For the purpose of this Strategy, a three-dimensional set of indicators has been developed, each of the three groups tracking performance dynamics at a given hierarchical level from the structure of its strategic framework.

The three sets of indicators are as follows:

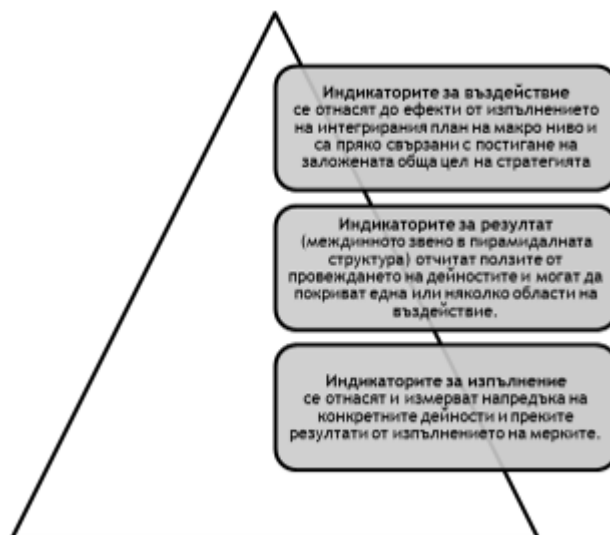
Impact indicators - measure the effects achieved from meeting marketing goals. Impact indicators are important for the overall assessment of the effectiveness of the chosen strategy. The degree of impact is reported to quantitatively and / or qualitatively measurable indicators, and in some cases - with qualitative assessments on the progress in social, economic and infrastructural development of the region / country.

Result indicators - assess the progress of the implementation of the objectives and the results achieved.



Product Indicators - Record quantifiable results / products from the implementation of the Strategy implementation measures.

Figure 10. Monitoring and evaluation indicators



Thus, the pyramid structure allows for both future impact assessments of individual impact areas and progress on the implementation of the overall strategy.

The indicators included in the monitoring and evaluation system comply with the following principles (borrowed and supplemented by the Eurostat quality information requirements):

1. availability of indicator information;
2. Relevance;
3. Efficiency;
4. Quality.

The hierarchy of strategy objectives is the following - marketing objectives, measures, activities. It is envisaged that the performance will be assessed before, at the middle and at the end of the implementation period of the plan through the system of indicators of evaluation. The so-called system of indicators requires the provision of data on the assessment and impact indicators to three key moments - before the start of the implementation period (the so-called baseline), mid-2025 and after the end of the period (p. target value) by 2030. Data on result and resource indicators are provided periodically.



The identification of specific indicators to be used as indicators is based on the available administrative information and on the basis of the official statistical information provided by NSI (Bulgaria and Romania) and Eurostat. This approach is fully applied in the definition of performance and impact indicators.

The determination of baseline indicators is consistent with the latest available statistical information (wherever possible).

The three main sources of information on indicators are: official NSI statistics, administrative information and targeted surveys.

In the process of collecting information and the organizational structure for monitoring and evaluation, the developed Monitoring System for the implementation of the development strategy will be implemented in order to ensure the synchronization of the work of the operational teams by Bulgaria and Romania.

V. CONCLUSION

According to the World Tourism Organization, the expectations are for an average annual growth of international tourism trips by 3.3% by 2030. The forecasts are for increasing the interest of travelers to lesser-known destinations in Eastern Europe. In the event that the strategy for marketing and promotion of the joint cultural and historical tourist product is being worked hard: Route "Roman border on the territory of Romania-Bulgaria cross-border region", there is a real opportunity for all interested parties to take advantage of these trends to attract more tourists. It can be expected that tourist trips to the region will show significant growth.

Under the dynamically changing picture of leading markets, the cross-border region has the potential to take a steady place by attracting new tourists from countries that are geared towards the location of the region as a tourist destination. The real possibility is through the efficient and sustainable absorption of tourism potential, the establishment of a specific and recognizable tourist product.

Implementation of the strategy is a factor in solving the real and potential problems of the territory, improving the welfare and quality of life of the region, quality, comfort and accessibility of public services.

The conditions for attracting foreign investments in the economy will favor the development of annual regional, interregional and international events and the increase of the number of business structures and tourists in the city.



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The strategy also ensures conditions for meeting the cultural needs of the population and the need for active and cognitive recreation, the development of tourism and related activities. Marketing research and information campaigns will contribute to the formation of a new quality of life.

Expected results as a result of the implementation of the strategy are: employment growth; increasing the efficiency of small and medium-sized enterprises, improving the investment climate and developing innovation as well as implementing entrepreneurial initiatives.