



ЕВРОПЕЙСКИ СЪЮЗ  
ЕВРОПЕЙСКИ ФОНД ЗА РЕГИОНАЛНО РАЗВИТИЕ  
ИНВЕСТИРАМЕ ВЪВ ВАШЕТО БЪДЕЩЕ!



РУМЪНСКО ПРАВИТЕЛСТВО



БЪЛГАРСКО ПРАВИТЕЛСТВО



# Strategy for Development, Enhancement and Innovation of an Integrated Cultural Heritage Tourism Product: Route "Roman Frontier Within the Cross-border Region Romania-Bulgaria"



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## Abbreviations

GDP	Gross domestic product
EC	European Commission
ЕСРАН	European Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage
CHA	Cultural Heritage Act
TA	Tourism Act
FA	Forestry Act
ALOUA	Agricultural Land Ownership and Use Act
ALPA	Agricultural Land Protection Act
PAA	Protected Areas Act
BDA	Biological Diversity Act
ICOMOS	International Council on Monuments and Sites
ICT	Information and communication technology
CHH	Cultural and historical heritage
CCINA	Chamber of Commerce, Industry, Navigation and Agriculture -Constanta, Romania
R&D	Research and development
NGOs	Non-governmental organizations
NSI	National Statistical Institute
DMO	Destination Management Organization
CE	Council of Europe
NWPR	North West (Severozapaden) Planning Region
WTTC	World Travel & Tourism Council
UNWTO	UN World Tourism Organization
NCPR	North Central Planning Region
CEE	Central and Eastern Europe
EASME	Executive Agency for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises
TCI	Tourism climate index



## I. Prerequisites for the development of the Strategy

Cultural and historical tourism is a collection of cognitive trips and visits to sites representing tourist-interpreted cultural values. The research and interpretation of cultural values associated with the frontiers of the Roman Empire, often referred to as the Roman Limes, are more than 5,000 km in length and extend to the territory of dozens of countries on three continents - Europe, Asia and Africa. Due to the exceptional importance and influence of the Roman Limes in the history of the Old World, since 1987, efforts have been made to declare it as a monument of the world cultural heritage under the UNESCO Convention. The first institutionalization of a Roman cultural and historical route was made in 2005 when UNESCO included the *Frontiers of the Roman Empire World Heritage Site*, whose artefacts are located in Germany and the UK, on the World Heritage List.

Five years later, the European project "Danube Limes UNESCO World Heritage", co-funded under the Central Europe Programme, was launched, focusing on the preservation and development of Roman monuments along the Danube.

The year 2011 marks the beginning of the international project "LIMES – Development and Implementation of a Mobile Information System for Tourist Exploitation and Marketing of Limes as European Cultural Heritage", supported and co-funded by EC's DG Enterprise and Industry. This is the first thematic project focused on tourism. Its duration is 2 years and is aimed at promoting the development of sustainable tourism in all European countries where the remains of the frontiers of the Roman Empire (the Roman Limes) pass. The project also aims to support mobility in rural areas through the creation of innovative mobile services. Partner organizations from 3 countries (Germany, Austria and Bulgaria (Ruse Municipality)) participate in the implementation of the project, as well as representatives from 7 European countries (England, the Netherlands, Slovakia, Hungary, Croatia, Serbia and Romania) participate in the Advisory Board to the project management.

In 2012, with the financial support of the South East Europe Programme 2007-2013, the "Danube Limes Brand – Extension of the World Heritage Site „Frontiers of the Roman Empire“ into the Danube Countries“ was launched<sup>1</sup>. The implementation of the project is carried out with the participation of nine organizations (universities, research institutes, etc.) from eight European countries – Austria, Italy, Slovakia, Hungary, Croatia, Serbia, Bulgaria and Romania. Its main objective is to assist the participating

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<sup>1</sup> <http://danubelimesbrand.org/bg/>



countries to prepare the documents and procedures through which each country presents its limes section for inclusion in the indicative list under the UNESCO Convention on World Cultural and Natural Heritage. Bulgaria has identified 29 sites which shall form the future serial site "Frontiers of the Roman Empire – the Danube Limes in Bulgaria". The sites are included in the UNESCO indicative list<sup>2</sup>. On Romanian side there are no sites included in the list.

In the same year another European project was launched – LIMES TOURISM CONNECTION<sup>3</sup>, also funded by the EU. Its objective is to turn the frontiers of the Roman Empire, which extend from the west of Great Britain, through the Netherlands and Germany, to the Black Sea, into a transnational European product for sustainable tourism.

The efforts to turn the shared Roman cultural heritage into a tourism product continue in 2016 when the "Development and Promotion of an Integrated Cultural Heritage Tourism Product: Route "Roman Frontier Within the Cross-border Region Romania-Bulgaria"" project was launched. This is a reasoned and rational continuation of the efforts of stakeholders to explore the Danube Limes on a larger scale, so that the cross-border region develops into an attractive cultural and historical destination. The careful consideration of this initiative has led to the necessity of developing and adopting a *Strategy for Development, Enhancement and Innovation of an Integrated Cultural Heritage Tourism Product: Route "Roman Frontier Within the Cross-border Region Romania-Bulgaria"* (Strategy), whose main function is to turn the route into an established and sought tourist destination. The development of the Strategy is a necessary condition for the realization of the potential of the Romania-Bulgaria cross-border region for the sustainable development of cultural and historical tourism.

A "Preliminary Study on an Integrated Cultural Heritage Tourism Product: Route "Roman Frontier Within the Cross-border Region Romania-Bulgaria"" was carried out under the Project. The definition of a cultural route that the study considers to be leading remains the same in this Strategy, namely:

A cultural route is a physical, clearly defined area, defined by a set of material and immaterial cultural and historical elements related to a particular theme, concept or definition, as well as by identifying sites from the existing cultural and historical

<sup>2</sup> <http://whc.unesco.org/en/tentativelists/6126/>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.romanfrontier.eu/en>



heritage within a scattered, linear or regional structure, creating a marked and continuous interpretation of a single entity within the single context of the route.

The study is the first of its kind to identify and explore a total of 181 archaeological sites of the Roman heritage on the target territory. As a result of the implementation of an integrated methodology, including criteria for a UNESCO and CE cultural route, the final definition of the route "Roman Frontier Within the Cross-border Region Romania-Bulgaria" was established. It consists of 18 main and 44 secondary archaeological sites, as well as 8 sites of intangible cultural heritage and 20 thematic museums, a total of 90 sites (see Annex 1 List of Route Sites). The main archaeological sites have a high cultural and historical value and sufficient infrastructure tourism security, which allows them to be offered as a product that can be currently used (local sub-routes can be identified between the main sites). Including secondary archaeological sites, the route "Roman Frontier Within the Cross-border Region Romania-Bulgaria" offers a longer-term vision for the participation of elements that have the potential to be developed within the modern perceptions of cultural heritage and tourism industry conservation. The inclusion of undeveloped tourist destinations turns the route into a dynamic system that united the historical relationships and cultural characteristics associated with their existence. Also, the inclusion of secondary elements in the route fully meets the new European policy for sustainable and responsible tourism development, which promotes its development in lesser-known areas. The integration of intangible cultural heritage sites (e.g. NIKE – The Game and the Victory and Tomis festivals) to the route "Roman Frontier Within the Cross-border Region Romania-Bulgaria" further strengthens its integrity in the experience of ancient history in parallel with the possibility to "observe" it through the archaeological sites. The museums within the scope of the route "Roman Frontier Within the Cross-border Region Romania-Bulgaria" are cultural tourism institutes that are responsible for the search, study, conservation, preservation, proper exposure and promotion of cultural values of different kinds. Movable cultural heritage of the Roman period is presented in the collections of historical and archaeological museums and the expositions in the smaller settlements near archaeological sites. Large collections of Roman cultural heritage are also available in regional museums which are also the main drivers for the display of intangible cultural heritage. In this regard, museums play a key role in turning the route "Roman Frontier Within the Cross-border Region Romania-Bulgaria" into a tourism product, since the region's historical museum is often defined as a major factor and resource for cultural and historical tourism.





Thus, the final route version is dependent to the largest extent to the UNESCO guidelines for the expression and preservation of the authenticity and integrity of the cultural route in its multidimensional features, since with the inclusion of a larger set of sites (main, secondary, intangible and movable cultural heritage), which originally belong to the theme of the route and have preserved their original structure, the route enhances its integrity as a system. Consequently, the "Roman Frontier Within the Cross-border Region Romania-Bulgaria" can be characterized as a dynamic route, the development of which is planned to take place in partnership with all stakeholders. This is the only cultural and historical route of all the studied routes (certified routes and routes in process of certification by UNESCO and EU), whose transformation into a completed tourism product is planned to be carried out in parallel with the operation of the sites thereof as developed cultural and historical destinations. This distinctive feature of the route "Roman Frontier Within the Cross-border Region Romania-Bulgaria" makes it distinctive and innovative among the certified ones. The abundance of diverse sites forming the route creates another innovative feature – it allows to identify local sub-routes that will give additional impetus to the development of the route "Roman Frontier Within the Cross-border Region Romania-Bulgaria". Not least in outlining the innovative aspect of the route are the intentions to carry out the socialization of the secondary sites through the methods of non-invasive archaeology and digital reconstruction of sites. If the implementation of the Strategy is realized by means of modern technological solutions, the targeted route will become the first of its kind on the territory of the cross-border region Bulgaria-Romania.

The Danube Limes in Romania is 1,075 km long and includes masonry or soil (earth walls) fortifying systems, fortresses, towns, settlements, structural elements of bridges and harbours. The Bulgarian Danube Limes is 471 km long, the westernmost point being the Timok river mouth, and the easternmost one – at the Town of Silistra. Thus, the geographic scope of the route includes the following planning and territorial-administrative units:

- (1) 3 Romanian planning regions – Sud-Est, Sud-Muntenia, Sud-Vest Oltenia, and 2 Bulgarian planning regions – North-West planning region and North Central planning region;
- (2) 7 Romanian counties – Mehedinti, Dolj, Olt, Teleorman, Constanta, Calarasi и Giurgiu and 7 Bulgarian districts – Vidin, Montana, Vratsa, Pleven, Veliko Tarnovo, Ruse, Silistra,
- (3) 21 Bulgarian municipalities – Vidin, Kula, Novo Selo, Kozloduy, Oryahovo, Lom, Nikopol, Gulyantsi, Belene, Silistra, Sitovo, Svishtov, Ruse, Borovo, Tsenovo, Ivanovo, Slivo Pole, Belogradchik, Dolna Mitropoliya, Pleven, Veliko Tarnovo





## 1.1. Strategic framework

The strategic framework is a key element of the overall Strategy. The framework presents the objectives, place and role of the Strategy developed in the overall system of strategic planning documents in the field of cultural and historical tourism in the cross-border region Romania-Bulgaria. A review of important strategic and programming documents from different levels of government regulating the conservation and protection of the cultural and historical heritage, as well as the development of tourism, is provided in order to substantiate the main approaches and principles in the preparation of the Strategy and to justify the logic of its structuring.

### 1.1.1 Review of the general framework for tourism management and strategic planning in the field of cultural and historical tourism in the cross-border region Romania-Bulgaria and the European Union

The regulatory framework for the regulation of parameters and aspects of the cultural and historical heritage, the protection, preservation, development and transformation thereof into a tourism product is comprehensive. It includes dozens of UNESCO conventions, directives, resolutions and EU communications. The messages of all regulations are aimed at enhancing the competitiveness of the tourism sector in Europe, developing tourism innovations in order to improve the quality of supply in all dimensions, enhancing professional qualifications, overcoming the seasonality of demand, diversifying the tourism product and services. At the heart of the diversification of tourism services is the promotion of the development of thematic tourism services, including through "transnational synergies". The development of the route "Roman Frontier Within the Cross-border Region Romania-Bulgaria" is in line with the international and European regulations in the area of cultural and historical heritage and tourism summarized below. The EU conventions and directives discussed in the preliminary study are briefly presented so as not to violate the conceptuality of the legal framework under consideration. Other relevant international regulatory documents that build on the review of the legal framework for the protection and development of cultural and historical heritage made in the preliminary study are also described here.

#### ❖ **Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, adopted by UNESCO on 16 November 1972**

The Convention aims to establish a system for international cooperation and assistance between the States Parties thereto, in terms of their efforts for protection and



identification as a manifestation of international protection of cultural and natural heritage. The legal scope of the Convention concerns the protection, conservation, promotion or restoration of sites of cultural or natural heritage, including the identification and differentiation of different types of sites, identification, preservation and promotion thereof, using both their available resources and international assistance and cooperation that may be granted to States Parties to the Convention in financial, artistic, scientific and technical terms.

❖ **Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property, adopted by UNESCO on 17 November 1970**

The Convention aims to establish an effective system for the protection of cultural property by establishing rules both at national level and through international cooperation and assistance to States Parties thereto, in their efforts to prevent the illicit import, export and transfer of ownership of cultural property.

❖ **European Cultural Convention of 19 December 1954**

The Convention aims to achieve greater integrity among the Members of the Council of Europe in preserving and implementing the ideals and principles that are their common heritage through the development of mutual understanding among European nations by encouraging the study of the languages, history and civilization of other states as well as the common European civilization, and by pursuing a policy of joint actions to preserve and promote the development of European culture.

❖ **European Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage of 16 January 1992**

The Convention aims to establish appropriate administrative and scientific control procedures for the protection of the archaeological heritage as a source of European collective memory and as a tool for historical and scientific research insofar as it is seriously threatened by deterioration due to the growing number of large-scale land use plans, natural risks, secret or non-scientific excavations, and insufficient knowledge of the matter by the general public. The Convention defines the concept of archaeological heritage, regulates the measures that the Parties should take for defining and preserving it, conserving, collecting and disseminating scientific information, promoting, preventing the illicit movement of elements of the archaeological heritage and financing the activities for the implementation of these requirements. According to the Convention, each of the participating states undertakes to establish a legal system for the protection of archaeological heritage, which provides for the maintenance of



registers thereof and defining protected monuments and areas, the establishment of archaeological reserves, even when there are no visible remnants of the surface or under water, preservation of material evidence to be examined by the next generations, mandatory reporting to the competent authorities by the discoverer of random discoveries constituting elements of archaeological heritage, and their presentation for research.

#### ❖ **Convention for the Protection of the Architectural Heritage of Europe of 03 October 1985**

The Convention aims at establishing appropriate procedures for administrative and scientific control for the preservation of architectural heritage as an expression of the richness and diversity of the cultural heritage of Europe. It defines the concept of architectural heritage, regulates the need to establish a comprehensive, coordinated, common policy and measures that the States Parties to the Convention should adopt for the definition, preservation and restoration thereof, for collecting and disseminating scientific information, popularizing, promoting the activities of non-profit associations and patronage in the field of the protection of architectural heritage, the prevention of destruction or loss, and the financing of activities to implement these requirements.

#### ❖ **European Landscape Convention of 20.10.2000**

The Convention focuses on sustainable development based on a balanced and harmonious relationship between social needs, economic activity and the environment. At the heart of the Convention is the understanding that the landscape plays an important role in the field of culture, ecology, environment and the social sphere and is a favourable resource for economic activity whose protection, management and planning may contribute to employment creation. The Convention recognizes the landscape as a favourable factor for the creation of local cultures and as a major component of the European natural and cultural heritage contributing to the welfare of the people and the strengthening of the European identity.

#### ❖ **Resolution CM/Res(2007)12 of the Committee of Ministers on the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe**

The Cultural Routes programme of the Council of Europe was officially launched in the 1980s, with the opening of a route that unites the roads used by the majority of pilgrims in all parts of Europe. The programme aims to present, assist and turn into a common practice the common cultural identity of European citizens; to protect and highlight the importance of cultural heritage as a factor in improving living conditions as a source of social, economic and cultural development; to provide citizens with new opportunities



to diversify their leisure time by ensuring a special status of cultural tourism and related practices. The Resolution on the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe reaffirms the objectives of the programme: to promote European identity, unity and diversity; to preserve the diversity of European cultures; to promote intercultural dialogue and to facilitate conflict prevention and reconciliation in Europe. The Resolution recognizes that, in order to preserve common European identities and values, it is necessary to understand European history on the basis of its physical, intangible and natural heritage, in order to show the links that unite the different cultures and regions. Thus, Resolution (2007)12 establishes the formal operational framework of the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe programme. This framework regulates the procedure for obtaining a Cultural Route of the Council of Europe certificate. To become part of the programme, each route should be organized around a particular theme and meet a set of criteria, including:

- the theme should be representative of European values and be common to several countries in Europe (amended to "at least three countries in Europe" by Resolution (2013)67);
- the theme should be explored and developed by groups of multidisciplinary experts from different regions of Europe to ensure consensus in the implementation of the activities and projects that are part of the cultural route;
- the theme should allow for the development of initiatives, good practices and innovative projects in the field of cultural tourism and sustainable cultural development;
- the theme should allow for the development of tourism products in partnership with travel agencies and tour operators targeting other types of audience, including school groups.

In order to achieve the objectives of the programme in optimum terms, the themes should set out several long-term, multidisciplinary cooperation projects and should be within one of the five priority areas set by the Council of Europe.

- (1) Cooperation in the field of research and development;
- (2) Strengthening the common European memory, history and cultural heritage;
- (3) Cultural and educational exchanges for young Europeans;
- (4) Contemporary cultural and creative practices;
- (5) Cultural tourism and sustainable cultural development.



## ❖ **Resolution CM/Res(2013)66 of the Committee of Ministers confirming the establishment of the Enlarged Partial Agreement on Cultural Routes of 18 December 2013**

In order to meet the objectives of CM/Res(2007)12 on the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe (as amended by Resolution (2013)67), the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe adopted Resolution (2013)66 confirming the establishment of an Enlarged Partial Agreement of CoE on cultural routes and the continuation of the work of the European Institute of Cultural Routes, established in 1997 as a result of a political agreement between the Council of Europe and the Grand-Duchy of Luxembourg (represented by the Ministry of Culture, Higher Education and Research). The objective of the Enlarged Partial Agreement on Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe is to contribute to the promotion of European identity and citizenship through knowledge and understanding of the common European heritage as well as the creation of cultural links and dialogue within Europe but also with other countries and regions. An Advisory Council is set up as part of the Enlarged Partial Agreement on Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe, which is a forum for the inclusion of operators of cultural routes, established networks, heritage and tourism preservation organizations, local and regional authorities, NGOs, chambers of commerce, foundations and donor organizations, professional organizations in the field of tourism, heritage and culture conservation. The Council convenes once a year and provides a platform for discussion of trends and challenges in the field of cultural routes, as well as a space for exchange of experience, discussing the progress of cultural routes implementation, launching new initiatives and partnerships.

## ❖ **Communication from the Commission COM(2010)352 Europe, the world's No 1 tourist destination - a new political framework for tourism in Europe**

With this Communication, the Commission recognizes the innovations made by the Treaty of Lisbon which extend the EU's competence in the field of tourism in terms of supporting, coordinating and complementing Member States' actions, expressing its intention to promote a coordinated approach to tourism initiatives and to define a new framework for action to enhance its competitiveness and ability to develop in a sustainable manner. At the heart of this Communication is the understanding that, as one of the world's leading tourist destinations but with ever more dynamic global competition, Europe must offer sustainable and quality tourism services, relying on its comparative advantages, in particular its diversity of natural landmarks and rich cultural heritage. The Communication notes the potential of tourism to contribute to the





development of Europe 2020 flagship initiatives: "Innovation Union", "Digital Agenda for Europe" and "Agenda for New Skills and Jobs". The solution stimulates the development of tourism innovations in order to improve the quality of supply in all dimensions, to improve professional qualifications, to overcome the seasonality of demand, to diversify the supply of tourist services and, last but not least, to improve the quality of statistics and analyses related to tourism. At the heart of the diversification of tourism services is the promotion of thematic tourism services at European level, including through "transnational synergies".

❖ **Directive 2014/60/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 May 2014 on the return of cultural objects unlawfully removed from the territory of a Member State**

The Directive aims at establishing a legal framework of revised and updated clear rules applicable to the return of cultural objects classified or defined as national treasures unlawfully removed from the territory of the Member States.

❖ **Council Regulation (EC) No 116/2009 of 18 December 2008 on the export of cultural goods**

The Regulation aims to establish a clear legal framework for a uniform control of the export of cultural goods at the Community's external borders. In particular, according to the Regulation, the export of cultural goods is subject to the presentation of an export license issued by the competent Member State and valid throughout the Community covered by it. The export licence shall be issued at the request of the person concerned by a competent authority of the Member State in whose territory the cultural object in question was lawfully located. The export licence shall be presented, in support of the export declaration, when the customs export formalities are carried out.

❖ **Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention, UNESCO, 2012**

The Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage define the term "outstanding universal value" and define criteria for assessing "outstanding universal value". The term "outstanding universal value" refers to an object (natural or man-made) of exceptional cultural significance which transcends national boundaries. The World Heritage Committee lays down the criteria for the inclusion of individual sites in the World Heritage List. Upon inclusion of a site in the World Heritage List, the Committee accepts





a declaration of its outstanding universal value, which is a key motivation and recommendation for the future effective conservation and management of this site.

#### ❖ **International Cultural Tourism Charter (ICOMOS, 1999)**

The Charter supports wider initiatives by ICOMOS, other international bodies and the tourism industry in maintaining the integrity of heritage management and conservation. It encourages the involvement of all those with relevant interests to join in achieving its objectives.

The Charter is built on the following principles:

- (1) Since domestic and international tourism is among the foremost vehicles for cultural exchange, conservation should provide responsible and well managed opportunities for members of the host community and visitors to experience and understand that community's heritage and culture at first hand.
- (2) The relationship between heritage places and tourism is dynamic and may involve conflicting values. It should be managed in a sustainable way for present and future generations.
- (3) Conservation and tourism planning for heritage places should ensure that the visitor experience will be worthwhile, satisfying and enjoyable.
- (4) Host communities and indigenous peoples should be involved in planning for conservation and tourism.
- (5) Tourism and conservation activities should benefit the host community.
- (6) Tourism promotion programmes should protect and enhance natural and cultural heritage characteristics.

The above-mentioned international regulations are applicable to both countries of the cross-border region Romania-Bulgaria and the specific national regulations of the relevant country should be taken into consideration upon the development and implementation of the Integrated Cultural Heritage Tourism Product: Route "Roman Frontier Within the Cross-border Region Romania-Bulgaria".

At present, a system for the categorization of cultural-historical heritage is in place in Romania, which was introduced by Act No. 422/2001 on the Protection of Historical Monuments and the delegated secondary acts/regulations. According to Act No. 422/2001 on the Protection of Historical Monuments, historical landmarks are monuments, ensembles and historical sites, each of these categories being defined by



law (Legea nr. 422/2001 Privind protejarea monumentelor istorice) and classified into two groups: group A (historical monuments of national and world importance) and group B (monuments of local cultural heritage).

The monuments can be divided into typological categories as those mentioned in Act No. 5/2000 on the Approval of National Planning – Section III – For the Protected Areas (Legea nr. 5/2000 Planului de amenajare a teritoriului național). This resembles the category types defined by Act No. 422/2001 but introduces a more pragmatic approach in this area.

The main Bulgarian legislation acts relevant in the context of the preparation and implementation of the Integrated Cultural Heritage Tourism Product: Route "Roman Frontier Within the Cross-border Region Romania-Bulgaria" are: Cultural Heritage Act (CHA), Tourism Act (TA), Forestry Act (FA), Agricultural Land Ownership and Use Act (ALOUA), Agricultural Land Protection Act (ALPA), Protected Areas Act (PAA), Biological Diversity Act (BDA), as well as Ordinance No. H-1 of 14.02.2011 of the Minister of Culture on carrying out archaeological field surveys, Ordinance of 25.02.2011 of the Minister of Culture on the scope, structure, content and methodology for the preparation of plans for preservation and management of single or multiple immovable cultural properties, Ordinance No. H-4 of 08.10.2013 of the Minister of Culture on the terms and procedure for presenting cultural properties and Ordinance No. H-5 of 08.6.2010 of the Minister of Culture on the terms and procedure for the reproduction of cultural properties in copies, replicas and commercial items. For the purposes of this document, we have examined the subject-matter and scope of the laws and regulations, the principles, objectives, rules and procedures they establish in relation to the public relations they deal with, such as: the stipulations related to conservation and protection of cultural heritage, management, regulation and control over tourist activities, services and sites, tourist zoning of the country, the change of the purpose of agricultural and forest lands, protection and preservation of protected areas, conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. We have examined the competent state and municipal authorities conducting the respective state policy in the context of the examined regulations, the acts transposed by the relevant European regulations, as well as the basic concepts used in the acts.

Pursuant to Art. 47, item 9 of CHA, a "cultural route" is a group of historical routes along a traditional road together with the included immovable cultural heritage objects and landscapes. A cultural landscape is a group of spatially distinct, sustainable cultural sets, resulting from the interaction of man and natural environment that characterize



the cultural identity of a given territory. Immovable cultural heritage is a collection of cultural properties permanently attached to the earth, including underwater, together with their adjacent environment, which hold historical memory, national identity and have scientific or cultural value. Part of the immovable cultural heritage are also the immovable archaeological cultural properties or archaeological sites within the meaning of Art. 146, Para. (1), which, in accordance with the European Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage (ECPAH), defines the concept of archaeological sites – all movable and immovable material traces of human activity from past eras located or discovered in the terrestrial layers, on their surface, on land and underwater, for which the field studies are the main sources of information.

Ordinance No. H-12 of 21 November 2012 on the procedure for identification, declaration, granting of status and for the definition of the category of immovable cultural properties, for the access and the circumstances to be entered in the national register of cultural properties, effective as of 11.12.2012, issued by the Ministry of Culture, promulgated in State Gazette No. 98 of 11.12.2012, is also significant for determining the methodology and criteria for assessment of immovable cultural properties. This Ordinance also regulates the issuance of a preliminary assessment for the declaration of sites of the immovable cultural heritage and the final assessment for granting the status of a “national cultural property” (NCP) as well as the definition of the category of NCP, which is essentially the determination of the cultural-historical significance of the sites. According to the Ordinance, the connection with the road network, the ownership and the main type, the current state and function (technical state and degree of hazard), the characteristics of the environment where the site is located, the infrastructure, the future intentions and the scientific assessment are established and evaluated. The main criteria outlined in the Final Evaluation Report are authenticity and degree of preservation, scientific value, artistic value, importance of the site for the environment, utilitarian value and public significance.

The Bulgarian legislation on cultural properties (CHA) still doesn't examine cultural routes in sufficient detail, even though these become more and more relevant and subject of interest for international organizations in the field of cultural heritage and tourism. The concepts of cultural heritage are constantly evolving by gradually developing a much more complete vision of the tangible and intangible heritage in terms of values, beliefs, skills and traditions as a resource for sustainable development and quality of life, as means of intercultural dialogue, an incentive for exchange and contact.



The review of the legal framework for the preservation of cultural and historical heritage (CHH) in Europe, Bulgaria and Romania so far also highlights some important statements regarding the responsibilities of public authorities for the maintenance and development of CHH. These highlights are key to defining the strategic framework of the Strategy and the programme for its implementation, as they not only justify it but also become the starting point for formulating action measures. Some of the responsibilities of public authorities, mostly local, include:

- expanding the number of adapted and exhibited sites of immovable cultural heritage;
- combining cultural tourism with other types of tourism;
- rehabilitation, restoration and modernization of the tourist infrastructure;
- offering quality and comfort in tourist trips;
- improvement of the conditions for protection, preservation, adaptation and exhibition of the cultural heritage as a prerequisite for the further development of cultural tourism.

### 1.1.2 Review of applicable national and European tourism legislation

The Strategy is developed in the context of the current socio-economic situation of the cross-border region and in line with the strategic orientation of the European Union regional policy and the national regional development objectives and priorities, taking into account the regulatory and institutional environment for its implementation, monitoring and evaluation. As a result, the Strategy fully fits the objectives, priority areas and measures for the development of cultural and historical tourism in the cross-border region Romania-Bulgaria identified by the analysed strategic documents. Moreover, the Strategy builds on the examined documents, extending and building on them, initiating activities on the implementation of strategic objectives of the examined documents. The system of planning and strategic documents for the development of tourism, and in particular of cultural and historical tourism, consists of some key documents at national, cross-border, and European level, including:

#### (1) Strategy for Sustainable Development of Tourism in Bulgaria 2014-2030;

The Strategy aims to increase Bulgaria's competitiveness as a tourist destination and to support the sustainable development of tourism industry. It outlines a set of long-term measures in the field of planning, investment, domestic tourism, research, services, infrastructure and transport improvement, professional training and qualification of



staff employed in tourism, diversification of the tourism product, restoration and maintenance of existing tourist areas and improving the look of the destination as a whole. The Strategy provides that in the period 2011-2030 tourism will become a structuring sector of Bulgarian economy and the present Strategy for Development, Enhancement and Innovation of an Integrated Cultural Heritage Tourism Product: Route "Roman Frontier Within the Cross-border Region Romania-Bulgaria" is a supportive step in this endeavour.

## (2) Concept for Tourism Zoning of Bulgaria;

The Concept is directly related to the implementation of the Tourism Act of 26.03.2013. According to Art. 15, Paragraph (1) of this Act, the differentiation of tourist areas in the country is made in order to form regional tourist products and to carry out regional marketing and advertising. The need for tourism zoning of Bulgaria is recognized by almost all stakeholders in the tourism sector. It is motivated by the general desire to develop competitive tourism, the implementation of a zoned tourism policy, taking into account the territorial peculiarities and specifics of the different parts of the country and the implementation of effective regional marketing to make tourist areas recognizable to potential tourists and to successfully "market" them - both domestically and internationally. This Strategy has been developed in the context of tourism zoning, covering a specific geographic area of the country which coincides with the Danube tourist region as specified in the Concept. The document identifies 9 tourist regions, each with a specific tourist orientation, divided into basic and extended specialization. For the Danube region, the situation is as follows:

Danube region	Main specialization	Extended specialization
	Cultural and cruise tourism	1. Cultural and historical tourism
		2. River cruise tourism
		3. Adventure and ecotourism
		4. City entertainment and shopping tourism
		5. Wine and culinary tourism
		6. Religious and pilgrimage tourism

The strategic design of the target route "Roman Frontier Within the Cross-border Region Romania-Bulgaria" fully corresponds to the conceptual guidelines for tourism



development presented in the discussed document. The Danube region is the largest tourist destination in the country but the assessment data for its current status in terms of tourist indicators represent it as the least preferred tourist destination along with Thrace and Rose Valley regions. This means that these regions have untapped tourism potential which needs serious investment, attractive marketing and effective management.

### **(3) National Development Programme: Bulgaria 2020;**

Bulgaria 2020 has been developed as a long-term national country development programming document which aims to be the basis for the programming of strategic documents related to the implementation of both national and EU policies. The vision that the programme formulates is that in 2020 Bulgaria will become a country with a competitive economy, providing conditions for full social, creative and professional personal realization through smart, sustainable, inclusive and territorially balanced economic growth. All the measures set out in this Strategy help to achieve the objectives set in Bulgaria 2020.

### **(4) Romania National Tourism Master Plan 2007 - 2026;**

In 2006, Romania adopted a Romania National Tourism Master Plan (2007-2026) which aims to identify weaknesses in the Romanian tourism industry and to provide strategic guidance on how it can be restructured, secured and regenerated in order to compete effectively on the world market. It is a common policy that includes different plans and strategies to optimize the integration of tourism into the overall economic framework of the country. However, the long period covered by the plan reduces its timeliness, and thus a number of newly formed destinations remain outside the scope of the document and lose strategic legitimacy. The document sets expectations for an increase in foreign investment, equalizing the Romanian economy with that of the EU countries, improving living standards, increasing investment in all areas of tourism, stimulating the preservation of cultural heritage, nature, and physical resources of Romania.

In respect of tourism, the plan emphasizes that "the central regions of Romania and the Black Sea coast are the most important in terms of cultural heritage"<sup>4</sup> (p. 18). The plan, similar to the Bulgarian Concept for Tourism Zoning, outlines 6 regions with potential for tourism development as follows:

1. **Bucharest** - cultural tourism, conference tourism and entertainment;

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<sup>4</sup> Romania National Tourism Master Plan 2007-2026





2. **Transylvania** - cultural, natural, ecotourism, health, ski and adventure tourism;
3. **Black sea coast** - seaside recreation, cultural and health tourism, sea cruises;
4. **Bukovina** - cultural tourism, ecotourism, natural-cognitive, wellness, ski and adventure tourism;
5. **Maramureș** - cultural, natural, ecotourism, ski and adventure tourism;
6. **Danube Delta** - natural, ecotourism, river cruises and entertainment;

The area along the Danube river is not recognized as a tourist region. This leads to the conclusion that at this stage the country does not recognize the tourist potential of the Danube region for the development of cultural and historical tourism. This would impede local authorities' attempts to attract external financial resources to transform sites of cultural and historical value into tourism products. As far as the available information indicates, these tourist areas are outlined primarily for the purpose of territorial and investment planning of tourism in Romania, rather than for the purposes of regional marketing. At the same time, there is a lack of information on the extent to which these entities find a real application in Romania's tourism policy. This may be indirectly inferred from the World Bank's report on the activity of the Ministry of Regional Development and Tourism (2011) which states that the strategy itself is not applied and that none of the departments of the Directorate-General for Tourism to the Ministry are responsible for its implementation. Although the development of tourism is present in a number of planning and strategic documents of Romania, there is no comprehensive state policy for its development. At present, the country has no officially accepted regions for the purposes of regional tourist marketing. In this sense, the Strategy fills the gaps in Romania's strategic document system for tourism development by offering the development of a cultural and historical asset (route "Roman Frontier Within the Cross-border Region Romania-Bulgaria") on the basis of extensive public consultation with stakeholders who have explicitly stated the necessity of turning the route into a regional (the area along the Danube river and the Romania-Bulgaria cross-border region) factor for socio-economic development.

#### **(5) National Strategy for Ecotourism Development (2010-2020), Romania;**

The strategy is based on key principles for ecotourism development, building on two international models: (1) Nature and Ecotourism Accreditation Program developed by the Ecotourism Association of Australia and (2) Nature's Best, the accreditation system promoted by the Swedish Ecotourism Society. With the National Strategy for Ecotourism Development, Romania became the first country in Europe to develop an eco-destination assessment system. It is based on the European Ecotourism Labelling



Standard recognized by the Global Sustainable Tourism Council. A similar principle of certification is offered by this Strategy.

#### **(6) National Sustainable Development Strategy and Action Plan for Strategy (2013 - 2030), Romania;**

The strategy provides for improvements in a number of areas that predetermine the quality of life, including infrastructure expansions and modernization of Danube ports, where the success of the objectives of this Strategy are heavily dependent on this measure.

#### **(7) EU Strategy for the Danube Region;**

The Strategy was developed at the initiative of the countries along the Danube river and its implementation depends entirely on themselves. The strategy covers 9 EU Member States (Germany, Austria, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia, Croatia, Bulgaria and Romania) and 5 non-EU countries (Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Ukraine and Moldova). The main problems are organized in 4 pillars: (1) Connectivity, (2) Environment, (3) Building prosperity, (4) Strengthening – which contain 11 priority areas adopted with an action plan. A team of 2 countries are coordinators for a given priority area. Bulgaria and Romania coordinate the implementation of Priority Area 3 "Tourism", while Bulgaria, along with Germany, is also a coordinator of Priority Area 11 "Security, Combating Organized Crime". The joint Implementation of Bulgaria and Romania in the field of Tourism proves the expedience and relevance of the Strategy for Development, Enhancement and Innovation of an Integrated Cultural Heritage Tourism Product: Route "Roman Frontier Within the Cross-border Region Romania-Bulgaria".

#### **(8) Common Strategy for Sustainable Territorial Development of the Cross-border Area Romania-Bulgaria (SPATIAL);**

The Strategy is designed to coordinate the national guidelines and policies for territorial development of the two participating countries and to identify the technical instruments approved by both parties (areas of interest, implementation stages, analysis indicators, development/cooperation provisions). In this sense, the Strategy for Development, Enhancement and Innovation of an Integrated Cultural Heritage Tourism Product related to Roman heritage – route "Roman Frontier Within the Cross-border Region Romania-Bulgaria" is a natural extension of the SPATIAL Strategy, with a focus on tourism, cultural heritage and integrated spatial planning.



**(9) 5 regional development plans for Sud-Vest-, Sud-Multenia, Sud-Est (Romania), NWPR and NCPR (Bulgaria) regions;**

**(10) 7 county strategies for development of Dolj, Mehedinti, Olt, Teleorman, Constanta, Calarasi and Giurgiu (Romania) and 7 district strategies for development of Vidin, Vratsa, Montana, Pleven, Veliko Tarnovo, Ruse, Silistra;**

A summary review of the documents under items 9, 10 and 11 is made in Appendices 2 and 3.

**(11) 21 municipal plans for development of Bulgarian municipalities covered by the route**

The management of public policies for development of tourism in Bulgaria is predominantly centralized. The strategic framework for the development of tourism in the country does not prioritize but classifies all potential forms of tourism in terms of tourist attractiveness. There are no fiscal measures in place to boost entrepreneurship in the sector despite the amendment to the VAT Act in 2011 when a flat rate of 9% was adopted for tourism. A serious difficulty in the management of tourism locally stems from the limited financial capacity of municipalities and their high dependency on subsidized and external financing – deficit of an overall political and legal system for local government in the country.

Unlike Bulgaria, tourism management in Romania is deconcentrated and the country applies a diverse package of fiscal measures that stimulate entrepreneurship in the sector:

- Exemption from profit tax for 3 years for new investments in tourist facilities;
- 5-year income tax exemption for investments in spa tourism;
- Exemption from reinvested profit tax, provided that investments are made to improve tourist facilities;
- Other fiscal incentives for tourist accommodation sites that have received eco-labelling.

The National Tourism Authority of the Romanian Ministry of Economy has 13 representatives at regional and local level and 11 offices abroad responsible for the promotion of Romania in the following cities: Rome, Vienna, Berlin, Paris, Madrid, London, Warsaw, Moscow, New York, Beijing, Tel Aviv. The country has prioritized two major segments of tourism: health tourism and eco-tourism.



In conclusion, it could be summarized that the Strategic Framework of the Strategy for Development, Enhancement and Innovation of an Integrated Cultural Heritage Tourism Product: Route "Roman Frontier Within the Cross-border Region Romania-Bulgaria" has been developed so that it can address a number of difficulties for Bulgaria and Romania in the tourism sector, becoming a strong catalyst for initiatives and impact measures. It is important to address the deficits in terms of the limited information (communication) security provided by Bulgaria and Romania and the tourism product they offer; the insufficient/ineffective advertising of both countries and the lack of clear competitive advantages of both countries as tourist destinations. Also, the expected effects of the implementation of the Strategy shall remedy the continuing existence of a poorly developed and unsatisfactory general and specialized infrastructure; poor maintenance of tourist sites; low qualification of staff – all being deficits of the institutional environment in the target region. The examined strategic documents recommend the inclusion of Bulgaria and Romania in common tourism products with other countries through the formation of cross-border tourist products, thus creating new destinations. Thus, a balanced regional development is achieved, the market positions of Bulgarian and Romanian tourism are improved and a prerequisite for forming a common marketing policy in tourism is created.

## **II. Situational analysis of the development of cultural heritage tourism on the territory of the Romania-Bulgaria cross-border region**

Within the preparatory stage of elaboration of the Strategy for Development, Enhancement and Innovation of an Integrated Cultural Heritage Tourism Product: Route "Roman Frontier Within the Cross-border Region Romania-Bulgaria" several methods were applied for gathering the necessary data and information for development of the situational analysis, the strategic framework of the Strategy and good practices in this area. These are: document analysis, comparative analysis, 2 types of stakeholder surveys, 10 round tables with more than 300 participants. The volume and quality of the information gathered were sufficient to produce detailed thematic analyses according to the requirements of the Association of Danube River Municipalities "Danube" and CCINA.

First of all, the authors of the Strategy made an analysis and a summary of a preliminary study on the Project in order to assess the quantity and quality of the input data which the Strategy is based upon. The Preliminary Study on an Integrated Cultural Heritage Tourism Product: Route "Roman Frontier Within the Cross-border Region Romania-



Bulgaria" is a large-scale project for identifying and exploring sites of Roman cultural and historical heritage on the territory of the Bulgaria-Romania cross-border region. The objective is to establish a thematic cultural and historical route with tourist potential which the current Strategy for Development, Enhancement and Innovation of an Integrated Cultural Heritage Tourism Product: Route "Roman Frontier Within the Cross-border Region Romania-Bulgaria" should develop into an integrated tourism product. Within the cross-border region, the authors of the preliminary study identify and explore 181 archaeological sites of the Roman heritage in total. Each site has its own information file which gives enough insight into the profile of the site in terms of: (1) the archaeological value of the site; (2) the cultural and historical value; (3) the state of the site; (4) the relationship to the context and environment; (5) the tourist potential.

The comprehensive information that the study contains on various aspects related to the development, protection, need for and development of the target route also has a different contribution to the individual activities in the development of the Strategy. The first two sections of the study present a comprehensive review of European legislation in the field of cultural and historical heritage (CHH) and tourism. Also, good practices for the development, management and promotion of cultural and historical products are being presented. The evolution of cultural and historical tourism and the concept of "cultural route" has been traced through a number of UNESCO conventions and EU directives. The study also sets a direction for the integration of the route with other similar routes ("*Frontiers of the Roman Empire*", "*Hadrian's Wall*", "*Antonine Wall*", "*Upper Germanic-Rhaetian Limes*", "*Danube Limes*", "*Roman Emperors Route*", "*Danube Wine Route*"). At the same time, this information helps to highlight competitive routes so that the strengths and weaknesses of the target route can be defined precisely. They are an integral part of the Strategy SWOT analysis and weaknesses are the fundamental basis for defining objectives, priorities and measures for the implementation of the Strategy. The study also gives an answer to the vital issue of the ownership of the sites included in the route, the specifics of which are a prerequisite for assessing its tourist potential as favourable (strength) or unfavourable (weakness).

Another huge contribution of the preliminary study for developing the Strategy is that it defines the parameters of its innovation, namely: (1) high potential for realization of modern technological solutions in the development of the route, (2) turning the route into a completed tourist product is planned to be carried out in parallel with the operation of its sites as developed cultural and historical destinations, (3) it allows for local sub-routes to be identified to give additional impetus to its development.



The broad scope of the benefits of the preliminary study has allowed to formulate more thoroughly, and at the same time in a focused manner, the proposals for strategic framework of the Strategy. It does that in a direction which ensures that a cultural heritage tourism product is obtained, "representing a chain of thematically linked integrated stopping points that promote the development of regional identity and collective memory"<sup>5</sup> (p. 59).

Achieving route integrity is largely the result of the efforts and actions of a number of stakeholders<sup>6</sup> on both sides of the Danube river. For the purposes of the Strategy, the authors attempted to identify all groups of people who unite under the common goal of turning the route into a competitive tourism product. The analysis sets the basis and structure of the planning, monitoring and evaluation of the Strategy through the participation of all those involved in the development of the route in these processes. The selection of stakeholders to be involved in the planning and implementation of the Strategy was done through the PRES (Pressure Analysis) technique using the following methodology:

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<sup>5</sup> Preliminary Study on an Integrated Cultural Heritage Tourism Product: Route "Roman Frontier Within the Cross-border Region Romania-Bulgaria", p. 59, 2017.

<sup>6</sup> Stakeholders are people, groups of people, organizations and institutions that are likely to be affected (in a positive or negative sense) by the Strategy, or those that may have an impact on the results and consequences of implementing the Strategy.





**Table 1 Methodology for selecting key stakeholders**

Stakeholder	Assessment criteria					Result	
List of stakeholders	Interest	Attitude	Power	Influence	Overall score	Necessity of inclusion	Degree of participation
	Measuring the motives and concerns that the stakeholder has with regard to the policy for development of sustainable economic development of Romania-Bulgaria cross-border cooperation programme. It may also be interpreted as potential benefits and/or losses for the relevant stakeholder in the implementation of the policy. The three main interests are listed.	Reflects the potential reaction of individual stakeholders to the implemented Strategy. It is assessed based on the following scale: <b>3 - strong supporter;</b> <b>2- moderate supporter;</b> <b>1 - neutral/independent;</b> <b>"-2" - moderate opponent;</b> <b>"-3" - strong opponent.</b>	The power of individual stakeholders refers to the amount of resources as follows: H - human, F - financial, P - political, the resources that stakeholders have and their ability to mobilize these resources in support or against the implementation of the Strategy. This column identifies the power of each stakeholder in terms of the availability of H, F, and P resources. The power for each of the resource types is determined on a scale of 1 to 5 where: <b>5 - very strong;</b> <b>4 - strong;</b> <b>3 - average;</b> <b>2 - poor;</b> <b>1 - very poor</b>	The level of influence of each stakeholder is determined by the sum of the ratings given for each of the resource types, i.e. <b>influence = H + F + P;</b>	The assessment for each stakeholder is the product of attitude/position and influence, i.e. <b>Overall score = Attitude X Impact.</b>	The need to involve each stakeholder in the process of developing and implementing the Strategy is determined as follows: <b>If the overall score is greater than 10 in absolute value - the stakeholder should participate;</b> <b>if the overall score is lower than 10 in absolute value, the stakeholder may be invited.</b>	This column identifies the level of stakeholder involvement in the policy-making process for sustainable development of tourism and the preservation of cultural heritage and the inclusion thereof in tourism products. For the purpose of the analysis, stakeholders can be divided into three groups: Group 1: With a strong positive or negative attitude towards the objectives and priorities of the Strategy and a high level of authority/power (This group is actively involved in the decision-making process). Group 2: Moderately positive or negative attitude and average level of



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							<p>authority/power (this group should be consulted).          Group 3: Moderately positive or negative attitude and low level of authority/power (this group should be informed).  <b>Where the overall score of a stakeholder in absolute value is:</b>          between 10 and 20 - Should be informed;          between 20 and 30 - Participates in consultations;          above 30 - Actively participates in the decision-making process.</p>
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As a result of the methodology applied, the following groups of persons were identified:

GROUP	STAKEHOLDERS
Central government	<b>Bulgaria</b> Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works Ministry of Tourism Ministry of Environment and Water Ministry of Education and Science Ministry of Economy Ministry of Agriculture and Food <b>Romania</b> National Tourism Authority (NTA) of the Ministry of Economy



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GROUP	STAKEHOLDERS
Regional authorities	<b>Bulgaria</b> Regional development councils Regional coordination councils District governors <b>Romania</b> Regional development agencies
Local authorities	<b>Bulgaria</b> Municipal administrations Municipal councils <b>Romania</b> County administrations City administrations
Business	Tour operators Travel agents Hotelkeepers Restaurant-keepers
Civil society structures (NGOs)	Public benefit organizations Public benefit associations Local action groups Business sector associations Employer organizations Chambers of commerce and industry Tourist companies Tourist associations
Museums	Regional history museums Local museums
Scientific and educational institutions	Research organizations Universities Secondary schools Vocational secondary schools



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GROUP	STAKEHOLDERS
	Technical schools

A database of all identified stakeholders has been composed, which is available at the Association of Danube River Municipalities "Danube" and CCINA. After identifying the stakeholders, the authors of the Strategy conducted a study on their vision for development, enhancement and innovation of route "Roman Frontier Within the Cross-border Region Romania-Bulgaria". For this purpose, a variety of methods were applied aimed at different target groups in order to collect opinions, assessments and recommendations for the strategic framework (vision, objectives, priorities) and the activities related to innovative development and improvement of the route. These methods include:

- 10 round tables (5 in Bulgaria and 5 in Romania) with stakeholders;
- a survey among round table participants;
- a separate online survey among tour operators and travel agents;

All respondents strongly support the development and institutionalization of route "Roman Frontier Within the Cross-border Region Romania-Bulgaria".



The 10 round tables were attended by a total of 301 representatives of local authorities, businesses, NGOs, regional museums, media, and citizens. Discussions during the meetings involved: (1) more realistic targeting of the strategic framework of the Strategy for Development, Enhancement and Innovation of an Integrated Cultural Heritage Tourism Product: Route "Roman Frontier Within the Cross-border Region Romania-Bulgaria", (2) more and more adequate modern marketing steps and products, (3) holding regular similar discussions as one-off meetings do not generate sustainable results, (4) all stages of the route development work should be consistent with the different target groups of tourists that the route seeks to attract, (5) integration of the route with existing tourist routes and products, (6) improvement of the cooperation with tour operators and agents which is currently almost absent, especially in the Bulgarian Danube region, (7) the management structure of the Strategy should involve scientific and non-governmental organizations working in the field of cultural and historical heritage development, (8) the cross-border region is not a recognizable destination with regard to the Roman heritage, these weaknesses should be overcome at the very beginning of the implementation of the Strategy (9) trainings for staff employed in tourist services in the target area are needed.

The survey among participants in round tables aims to explore the views of stakeholders on the way and direction of development of route "Roman Frontier Within the Cross-border Region Romania-Bulgaria". Feedback was received from 114 participants.

In response to the question related to the competitive advantages of the route, 75% of respondents point out *the favourable conditions for the integration of the route with other types of tourism* as its greatest strength. On second place (46%), by level of competitiveness, respondents put *the route's potential for inclusion in a larger international tourism product - Danube Limes*. The economic accessibility of the route is given a lower score and a lower priority.

Regarding the weaknesses of the route and the obstacles to its transformation into a tourism product, as expected, half of the respondents point out the poorly developed general and specialized infrastructure as a top priority issue. Second, stakeholders have raised the lack of entrepreneurship in the tourism sector and third, the lack of qualified staff. All the assessed priority weaknesses of the route are reflected in appropriate measures and activities within the strategic framework of the Strategy.

In response to the question *How do you see the route in 2030?*, respondents had the opportunity to prioritize the proposed answers in view of their realistic implementation. Most score for moderate realistic achievement (58.6%) received the



vision of the route as a ***Thriving centre of Roman culture from the Lower Danube Limes Romanus***. As a most realistically achievable vision, although the result was lower than the above (41%), was chosen the answer ***An established and institutionalized cultural heritage route as part of the Danube Limes Romanus***. The route vision proposal ***A main destination for cultural heritage tourism in the Romania-Bulgaria cross-border region*** was least supported by the stakeholders participating in the survey.

The question examining the respondents' perceptions of what role ADRM "Danube" and CCINA should play in achieving the desired outcome in 2030, offers three possible scenarios that the respondents assess in view of their realistic implementation. The most supported, but as a moderately realistic scenario (44%), was the mission of the two organizations to ***conduct a comprehensive policy for the development and management of the route***. The most realistic to achieve, supported by 40% of responses, was the scenario representing the two organizations as ***initiators and advocates for conducting organized actions for the recognition of the route by public authorities as a potential product for economic growth as well as in the process of development and establishment of the route as part of the Danube Limes Romanus***. With an equal number of responses, with a realistic and moderately realistic assessment score, was the role of the two organizations as ***coordinators in building partnerships between central and local authorities, the private and non-governmental sector in order to turn the route into an integrated tourism product***.

The online survey conducted among Bulgarian tour operators and travel agents specializing in cultural and historical tourism aimed at exploring expert opinion on what features the route should have in order to become an attractive tourism product.

The survey was carried out thanks to the mediation support of the Association of Bulgarian Tour Operators and Travel Agents, which disseminated the link with the questionnaire to its members.

Feedback was received from 7 respondents, all of whom work in the field of cultural and historical tourism.

More than half of the respondents offer tourist services in the cross-border region Bulgaria-Romania and along the Danube.

In response to the question ***Please prioritize the specified competitive advantages of the route with a view to turning it into a tourism product on a scale of 1 to 4, where 1 is the lowest priority and 4 - the highest***, 71% indicate as a most competitive advantage the route's potential for inclusion in a larger international tourism product - Danube Limes. Rated by an equal number of





respondents (57%), are the availability of favourable conditions for the integration of the route with other types of tourism (eco-, rural, wine, pedestrian, bicycle, river, sea, etc.) and the fact that the natural and cultural heritage of the target area is a potential subject to protection by UNESCO.

In response to the question *Please prioritize the specified limitations of the route with a view to turning it into a tourism product on a scale of 1 to 4, where 1 is the lowest priority and 4 - the highest*, respondents point out the poorly developed general (roads, water supply and sewerage, electricity) and specialized infrastructure (accommodation, food, other services and entertainment options) and the lack of qualified staff as the major obstacle. Second by degree of importance, respondents choose the low policy coherence and measures for the management and development of the sites on the route. Objectives and measures to overcome the prioritized weaknesses of the route should be reflected in the strategic framework of the Strategy for Development, Enhancement and Innovation of an Integrated Cultural Heritage Tourism Product: Route "Roman Frontier Within the Cross-border Region Romania-Bulgaria".

The evidence of the route's great potential to become a tourism product may be demonstrated by the responses to the question:

*Do you consider that the establishment of a cultural heritage route with sites of Roman times along the Danube river is, in itself, an attractive tourism product?*



Yes - No - Cannot decide

More than half of the respondents (57%) again give a positive answer to the question on whether the thematic linking of the tourist package route (Roman cultural and historical heritage) attracts more customers/tourists.



In response to the question *What type of tourist groups would the route be attractive for*, from the 5 groups of tourists provided, tour operators specify only three:

- Middle-aged and older people in organized groups - 43%
- Organized groups from Danube cruises - 29%
- Middle-aged people organizing their trips on their own - 29%

When assessing route attendance, 57% of respondents specify that it could be developed as seasonal, and 43% - as perennial.

An optimistic perspective for the realization of the route are the answers to the question *If the route was already a complete tourism product, would you include it in your travel services?*



On the related question, *If you would only include certain sites of the route, please specify the selection criteria* respondents list three:

*Attractiveness for the customer target group, orientation towards tourist experiences, not only sightseeing*

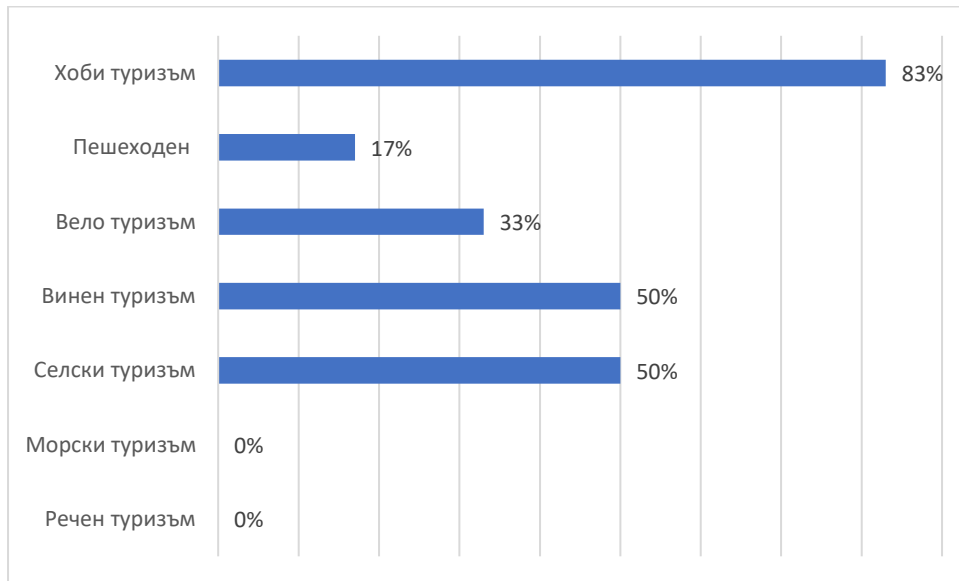
*Interesting destination, well organized, good roads to it, good restaurants, possibility for additional events*

*Accessibility, accommodation, additional offers (restaurants, wineries, cultural events)*

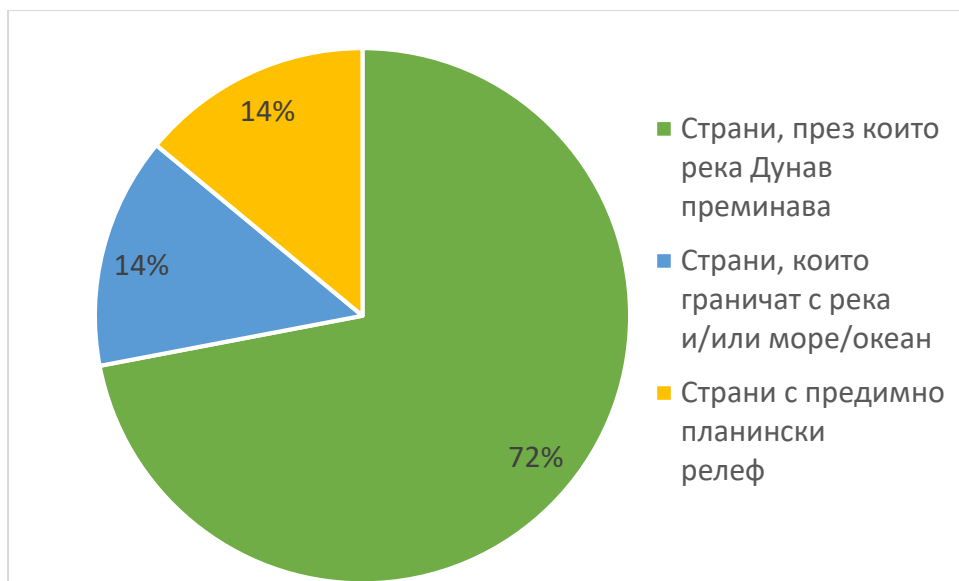


The main highlights in these criteria are the infrastructure and integration of the route with other forms of tourism. These two components are incorporated into the strategic framework of the Strategy.

In response to the sub-question - in combination with which tourist services they would offer the route, respondents point out:



In terms of tourist flow, respondents classify three groups of countries from which the highest number of visitors may be expected. This information is useful when planning marketing activities for route promotion.



According to respondents, the countries with the strongest traditions in cultural and historical tourism, which are competitive destinations with the potential to attract



tourists, are Italy, Greece, Spain, Austria, Germany, France, and Croatia. Also, western, central and northern European countries, in particular France, Germany, Belgium and Spain, form a potential group of incoming route visitors. Tour operators mention only Japan as a non-European country with a potential interest in the route.

The last question of the online survey *Please specify the criteria by which your company selects tourism products to offer?* aims to explore the elements of successful tourism products that, if possible, to be applied to the developing route "Roman Frontier Within the Cross-border Region Romania-Bulgaria" as well.

- Orientation towards tourist experiences and beautiful places for photography;
- Attractiveness;
- Opportunity for further experiences (*precisely in order to meet this need, intangible cultural heritage sites have been included within the scope of the route*);
- Marketability;
- We offer products for which we receive the most frequent inquiries. When we receive individual inquiries with the same requirements, we also design a package programme;
- Authenticity, accessibility, accommodation, additional offers.

The answers indicate the necessity of prerequisites (authenticity, attractiveness, further experiences) for a tourist destination to be in demand on the basis of which the tourist package is designed. That is, the approach applied in tourism supply is bottom-up. This predetermines the development of the route to be planned in a similar perspective - *conditions-demand-supply*.

## 2.1. General description - profile of the region as a cultural heritage destination

The development of cultural tourism in recent decades is most affected by globalization processes and technological advances in the field of logistics and information technology. Within the global society of the 21st century, concepts such as "close" and "distant", "foreign" and "unknown" have a blurred meaning and adopt new forms of content such as "authentic", "specific" and "unique" which correspond to a higher degree to the new reality. Information and logistical accessibility to every point and place in the world alters the overall worldview and perception of the traveller, and they, in turn, seek new forms and manifestations of their tourist experience. This relatively new need of demand finds an answer in the increasing degree of specialization and diversification of tourism supply.



Tourism development has traditionally been associated with the development of culture. Tangible (e.g. historic buildings, monuments, churches) and intangible cultural heritage (e.g. customs, festivals) can attract a wide range of visitors. The unique cultural characteristics of a region serve as a basis for shaping cultural supply and are necessary to the local community but at the same time they contribute to enhancing its tourist competitiveness.

Over the past decade, an intensive regional policy has been implemented at national and European level aimed at promoting the cultural and historical heritage of the countries of the Romania-Bulgaria cross-border region as an integrated, shared resource, carrying precious universal European value and proof of the dramatic historical past and development of the region. It is rich in cultural and historical heritage of all ages: artefacts from the Paleolithic and Neolithic age, archaeological, architectural, ethnographic and religious sites, monuments of totalitarian and contemporary art.

The Route "Roman Frontier Within the Cross-border Region Romania-Bulgaria" covers 5 planning regions (3 in Romania and 2 in Bulgaria), 14 counties/districts (7 in Romania and 7 in Bulgaria) and 21 Bulgarian municipalities. The synthesized presentation of cultural and historical assets from each planning region will provide a clear picture of the scale of the cultural and historical heritage accumulated in the target region.

### **North West (Severozapaden) Planning Region (NWPR), Bulgaria<sup>7</sup>**

NWPR has a remarkable cultural potential as a region-"gate" of the country. There are **3,883** immovable cultural properties registered on its territory which have historical and cultural evidence from ancient till modern times – Antiquity, Middle Ages, Modern Times; with remarkable connections with Central and Western Europe and the Danube riparian countries in different historical periods. The monuments "of national importance" category on the territory of the region are 198 (Vidin district – 42, Montana district – 28, Vratsa district– 44, Pleven district – 25 and Lovech district – 59).

The sites of movable cultural heritage are **11** museums, and of intangible cultural heritage – **35** festivals and celebrations. The elements listed on the National Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage "Living Human Treasures – Bulgaria – Traditional Rites and Feasts" are:

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<sup>7</sup> Only the districts Vidin, Vratsa, Montana, Pleven, which fall within the scope of Route "Roman Frontier Within the Cross-border Region Romania-Bulgaria", have been analysed within NWPR.



- Name of the project – "Kalusha – long-standing tradition kept for the generations to come", "Nikola Y. Vaptsarov" Community Center, Harlets village, Kozloduy municipality, Vratsa district, "Kalushari" Authentic Folklore Group;
- Name of the project – "Let's preserve the Danube rhythms in v. Antimovo", "Razvitie - 1926" Community Center, Antimovo village, Vidin municipality, Vidin district, "Danube Rhythms" Wind Orchestra.

European cultural corridors from different eras go through NWPR, there are sites proposed for inclusion in UNESCO's World Heritage List– Magura Cave, Karst Nature Reserve, Vratsa and Belogradchik Rocks.

European cultural corridors, such as the Danube Cultural Route, also run through the territory of the region.

### **North Central Planning Region (NCPR), Bulgaria<sup>8</sup>**

The cultural and historical landmarks of the region are numerous and some of them are unique bearers of information both for the life and culture of the region and Bulgaria, and for the development of the whole Balkan region. This territory along the waters of the Lower Danube has a centuries-old and vast history, it was a crossroads in the movement of different tribes and peoples. That is why it has a rich cultural and historical heritage - monuments of regional, national, international and even world importance – the Rock-hewn Churches of Ivanovo and the Thracian Tomb of Sveshtari.

The immovable cultural properties on the territory of NCPR are **5,480**, which represents 18.6% of the immovable cultural properties in the country and which ranks it second after the South West region (25.0%). Among the immovable cultural properties in the region there are ones that are included in the UNESCO World Heritage List and in the 100 National Tourist Sites list of the Bulgarian Tourist Union (BTU).

The sites of movable cultural heritage are **20** museums, and of intangible cultural heritage – **44** festivals and celebrations.

### **Muntenia South Development Region, Romania<sup>9</sup>**

The region falls within the historical region of Wallachia which existed between 1330 and 1861, from the Battle of Posada until the formation of the United Principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia. The Principality of Wallachia has historically emerged as

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<sup>8</sup> Only the districts Veliko Tarnovo, Ruse and Silistra, which fall within the scope of Route "Roman Frontier Within the Cross-border Region Romania-Bulgaria", have been analysed within NCPR.

<sup>9</sup> Only the counties Teleorman, Călărași, and Giurgiu, which fall within the scope of route "Roman Frontier Within the Cross-border Region Romania-Bulgaria", have been analysed within Muntenia.





a self-governing autonomous territory at different times in a feudatory situation vis-à-vis Bulgaria, Hungary and the Ottoman Empire.

The region also falls within the scope of the ancient East European Kingdom of Dacia (in Latin: Dacia Traiana) which covers an extensive territory having the Tisza River to the west, the Carpathian Mountains to the north, the Danube to the south, and the Dniester River to the east. From 85 to 89, during the rule of Duras-Diurpaneus, the indigenous people (Getae) undertook an aggressive policy and made two successful wars on Rome. During the reign of Domitian, the Romans made a successful military counterattack but failed to conquer Dacia and were forced to make strategic peace.

The rich ancient history of the Muntenia region is materialized in numerous archaeological sites, cultural and historical monuments and local museums. In Călărași county, for example, there are about 170 libraries, 5 museums and one theatre. The landscape of cultural life in the county is complemented by the Cultural Centre of Călărași County Directorate of Culture and National Cultural Heritage which organize together many cultural activities and several famous festivals, including the National Festival for the Interpretation of Worldly Romanian Music - May Flowers, National Theatre Festival "Stefan Banica", "Danube Guitar" Folklore Festival and others. In terms of movable cultural heritage, the Lower Danube Museum stands out in the city of Călărași. It was founded in 1951 and is a mirror of history in this region. On an area of 441 m<sup>2</sup>, it has over 43,000 exhibits - from Neolithic to modern age.

### **Oltenia South West Development Region, Romania<sup>10</sup>**

Similarly to Muntenia region, Oltenia also falls within the historical Wallachia region. The cultural and historical assets in the target areas of the region give identity/uniqueness to the cultural heritage and are represented by a number of immovable artefacts, including: towers, fortresses, bathhouses, bridges. For example, 569 sites of cultural heritage are registered within Mehedinți county, among which there are various historical and architectural monuments and archaeological discoveries. The ones of key importance to the development of Route "Roman Frontier Within the Cross-border Region Romania-Bulgaria" are:

- **The medieval fortress of Severin** – the most important and strategic fortress at the Danube river. Possession thereof meant opening up opportunities for new

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<sup>10</sup> Only the counties Mehedinți, Dolj, and Olt, which fall within the scope of Route "Roman Frontier Within the Cross-border Region Romania-Bulgaria", have been analysed within Oltenia.



conquests. At the end of the 13th century, the Hungarian King István (Stephen) made 5 wars on the Bulgarian Tsar in order to protect the Severin fortress.

- **Roman Fortress in Drobeta** – the first stone-built fortress in the Roman province of Dacia. Trajan's column presents a scene from the opening of the bridge (in the spring of 105) and shows us the already built fortress.

- **Trajan's Bridge in Drobeta** – the largest bridge built in the ancient world. The scope and building techniques applied are astonishing even today. The bridge was built for the record time of three years (103-105), during the peacetime between the two Roman-Dacian wars.

There are 20 museums in Dolj county, with the emphasis being on the Oltenia Museum (in Craiova) which is divided into three sections: history, ethnography and natural sciences.

The County Department of Culture and National Heritage proposes the establishment of 6 cultural and tourist routes on the territory of Dolj county, namely:

- Perișor – Maglavit – Cheet – Desa – Calafat – Vidin, including Henri Coanda Memorial House, Maglavit Monastery, Baba Vida Fortress, Desa archaeological site, and Disa Marinku fortress cultural association, as well as Calafat beach;
- Craiova – Cernatesti – Grecești - including museums, cultural institutions and places of worship in Craiova, Romanescu Park, the botanical garden, the Cernatesti towers and the lands of Grecești;
- Craiova – Kotofeni – Răcari – Filiassi – consisting of 2 archaeological sites, a library and the Fassiniolo Chapel;
- Craiova – Segarcea – Giurgița – Ostroveni/Zaval/Gighera – includes the monastery, the library and the cellars of Segarcea and "Giurgița" Ensemble;
- Craiova – Sadova – Călărași – Bechet – Oryahovo – the monastery in Sadova, Maria Tanase Folklore Festival in Călărași, carpet weaving workshop and the port of Bechet;
- Craiova/Calafat – Plenița-Terpezița Fortress – включва окарина семинар от Terpezița, Божур Празник на пленарната и култура Харбър Castle.
- Rural and landscape tourism can be developed on the following route: Ciupercenii Noi – Desa – Poiana Mare – Băilești – Bucovăț – Craiova – Coșoveni – Bratovoesti – Geormani – Segarcea – Gighera – Bistreț.

More recently, the Romanian National Association of Travel Agents has implemented a project with European funding to create an ethno-cultural and architectural tourist route on a regional level, namely: Bechet – Sadova – Segarcea – Podari – Craiova –



Bucovăț – Filiași – Butoiesti – Turceni – Vladimir – Țicleni – Rovinari – Targu Jiu – Bălănești – Cartiu – Curtisoara – Mușetești – Bumbesti Jiu.

The specified potential cultural and historical routes have the opportunity to develop as local sub-routes of route "Roman Frontier Within the Cross-border Region Romania-Bulgaria"

The National Contest of Ballads and Doina, a traditional Romanian folk song included in the UNESCO World Heritage List, should not be missed in Drăgănești, Olt county.

### **South East Planning Region, Romania<sup>11</sup>**

In Constanta county, in the field of art and culture, there is a vast historical heritage and a well-developed cultural infrastructure – 6 theatres and musical institutions (including the Drama Theatre in Constanta, Fantasio Theatre, Oleg Danovski Ballet Theatre), 12 museums, 9 public libraries, 6 cinemas and 2 summer gardens. From a cultural point of view, an important feature of the county is the combination of old and new and tradition and modernity.

Today's Constanta is the former Greek colony of Tomis founded around the 6th century BC. Evidence of the fantastic world of Greek antiquity are the preserved mysterious legends of poets in search of muses, heroes and deities. The history of the city can be observed everywhere but mostly in the expositions of the *Archaeological Museum*. It houses ancient objects of art, collections demonstrating the Hamangia culture, the marble statue of the goddess Fortuna, the statue of the snake god Glykon (Asian deity). Evidence of the thriving region during the Roman period are the amphorae and columns of the park which is a true open gallery, as well as the beautiful preserved Roman mosaic building.

According to the National Institute of Historical Monuments at the Ministry of Culture and Religious Affairs, there are 265 historical monuments in Constanta county, 164 of which are located in Constanta. Of the 164 monuments in the city, 67 are of the category of monuments of national importance and 97 fall into the category of "regional importance". There are also 7 museums in Constanta.

In the field of intangible cultural heritage, the most notable is the Tomis Festival dedicated to the Roman cultural heritage in the region.

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<sup>11</sup> Only Constanta county, which falls within the scope of Route "Roman Frontier Within the Cross-border Region Romania-Bulgaria", has been analysed within the South East region.



## 2.2. Current state of cultural heritage tourism in the region

The Romania-Bulgaria cross-border region is rich in cultural and historical heritage of all ages – there are artefacts from the Paleolithic and Neolithic age, archaeological, architectural, ethnographic and religious sites have been established as well as monuments of totalitarian and contemporary art. The best preserved and frequently visited among the archaeological and historical sites are Baba Vida fortress in Vidin; the ancient fortress of Almus near Lom; the Late Antiquity Storgozia fortress and the Plevan Epopee Panorama - Pleven; Shishman's fortress and Elia water fountain in Nikopol; a prehistoric settlement near Telish village, Cherven Bryag municipality, where the largest and the only prehistoric altar in Europe was discovered; the Dimum ancient Roman fortress - Belene; Novae fortress - Svishtov; Ulpia Eskus archaeological reserve; Sexaginta Prista military fortress; the medieval town of Cherven; Medjidi Tabia fortress, the Roman tomb, the North and South fortress walls in Silistra; Thracian Tomb of Sveshtari and the ancient Roman settlement Abrittus - Razgrad district. The religious monuments among the leading tourist sites are the monasteries Chiprovski, Lopushanski, Rakovichki, Koprivetski, Kamenski, and Gradeshki. Almost every settlement has interesting churches and chapels, where the Chiprovtsi district is distinguished by its unique system of votive stelae. The Rock-hewn Churches of Ivanovo are included in UNESCO's World Heritage List.

Tourist sites of national importance are the Albotin Rock Monastery near Vidin, the Large and Small Nisovski Monasteries, the rock church near Tabachka village, etc. Basarbovo Monastery is the only active rock monastery in Bulgaria. There are many tourist sites of architectural value, including: the architectural reserve "Ribarska mahala" - Tutrakan, Kolyo Ficheto's bridge over the Yantra river in the town of Byala, the centre of Ruse, part of UNESCO's tangible cultural heritage. Expositions at the regional historical museums in Vratsa, Plevan, Ruse and Silistra; "Sexaginta Prista" open-air exhibition, the National Museum of Transport and Communication - Ruse, the House-Museum "His Royal Majesty Karol I" - Pordim, Lavrov Park - Gorni Dabnik village, Museum of Danube Fishing - Tutrakan; Dobrudja House in Alfatar, Tutrakan Epopee, Radetzky Ship Memorial Complex and many others are of continued interest among tourists.

One of the region's attractions is the living heritage and lifestyle of local communities which is expressed in the diversity of ethnicities, preserved traditions and folklore. Handicrafts, including carpet weaving in Chiprovtsi, filigree silver processing in Berkovitsa, fishing net knitting, boating, reed mat weaving in Ruse and Silistra, broom-making and knitting in Plevan are preserved even today. Almost everywhere in the region, pottery, weaving and blacksmithing continue to be practised. The culinary specialities typical of Vratsa are lyutiki salad, Vratsa cheese



and sharena sol (a mixture of ground dried herbs, salt and paprika). Gornooryahovski sudzhuk, gornooryahovsko garne, kapana banitsa and kuyrukliya gyuvech, Dobrudzha dishes, stuffed vine leaves, kachamak (polenta), lamb and groats, apricot rakia, fish soup, fish dishes, mamaliga, trienitsa, pryasol, maznitsa and barkanitsa are specialties typical of Nikopol and Svishtov. The Lopushna, Magura, Borovitsa, Château du Val, and Château Burgozone wineries can be included as wine tourism sites.

The diversity of customs, feasts and festivals is a prerequisite for the development of event tourism. Some traditional religious celebrations are lazaruvane, Enyovden, koleduvane, Gergyovden (St. George's Day), Trifon Zarezan, and Petrovden (St. Peter's Day). Traditional folklore and fishing festivals have been preserved in the Danube cities, including the Danube Day dedicated to the river. The Wind Music Festival in Oryahovo, the Danube Feasts of Culture in Nikopol and the International Art Festival in Svishtov are peculiar to the region. Pagan customs, such as the Kalusha Festival in Dolni Tsibar, influenced by the Thracian culture on both sides of the Danube, are preserved even today as well as the customs "blind mare" and "butterfly" in Dolna Mitropolia and the International Kuker Festival in Kalipetrovo village. The "Rosen" custom and Horo of the Dead are typical of the Vidin region. Nine community centres from Bregovo and Nedelino organize a two-day folklore festival each year where the first day is dedicated to amateur teams, and the second day is a festival of wind music. The international festival "Banat Delicacies - Traditions of my Village" and the feast of Asenovo village with the participation of Romanian, Serbian and Hungarian formations are all devoted to culinary temptations. The feast of the water lily in Malki Preslavets village and the Wild Peony Festival are an attraction for nature lovers. Other interesting events for visitors are the Festival of Ancient Heritage "Eagle on the Danube" and laduvane in Svishtov, the Apricot Feast, "River Notes", "The Fiery Danube", Folk Commemoration Gathering in Silistra, International Festival for Classical Music "March Music Days", Festival for Authentic Folklore "The Golden Rebec" and the Jazz Festival in Ruse, the International Folklore Festival and the Yoghurt Fair in Razgrad. Banat Bulgarians are an undeveloped niche in the Bulgarian part of the cross-border region. They are very active and travel for festivals, gatherings, culinary and pilgrimage tourism, both in Bulgaria and in Romania.

Tourist sites that are included in route-cognitive trips or rural tourism programs are the Fishing Village in Vrav, the Museum of Danube Fishing and the Fishing Quarter in Tutrakan. Silistra municipality has a very rich Roman cultural and historical heritage which can be developed as a tourism product in combination with natural resources: "Srebarna - Medjidi Tabia - South and North Fortress Walls".





Some 140 cultural monuments of national importance (nearly 15% of all in the country) are located on the territory of Veliko Tarnovo region and are concentrated almost entirely in Veliko Tarnovo (67%), Svishtov (11%) and Elena (8%) municipalities. Here is the largest concentration of monasteries in Bulgaria (Tarnovo Sveta Gora) with about 15 monasteries (Preobrazhenski, Patriarshenski, Petropavlovski, Kilifarevski, Kapinovski, Prisovski, Arbanashki, etc.). The area has significant tourist attractions related to folklore, customs, traditional crafts (e.g. Samovodska charshia) and production (e.g. viticulture and wine-making), as well as periodic and episodic events (gatherings, celebrations, congress events, etc.). Ruse district occupies a special place in Bulgarian national history and has a rich cultural and historical heritage, including monuments of world significance such as the Rock-hewn Churches of Ivanovo.

The cultural, historical and architectural heritage of the target region has been preserved and relatively well researched, with its most valuable part being awarded the status of "cultural monument" under the terms and conditions set by the Cultural Monuments and Museums Act and its secondary regulations. The protected immovable properties of cultural and historical heritage in the territorial range under consideration are varied in nature and heterogeneous in terms of their current physical condition, degree of socialization (exposure, respectively modern use and accessibility) and location in urban, respectively non-urban areas. As a subject of research in the context of tourism potentials, this is related to the availability of conditions for accessibility and to the degree of servicing provided, respectively tourist infrastructure. A specific resource for tourism development is the rich and unique for the country architecture of Old Ruse from the late 19th-early 20th century in Baroque and Secession style made by Italian, Austrian, German and Bulgarian architects. The list of buildings in this style is very long but emblematic for the city of Ruse is "The Profitable Building" (Sava Ognyanov Drama Theatre today). The network of museum expositions with the Regional History Museum - Ruse is well developed. Among them are the Museum of City Life - "The House of Kaliopa" and the Museum of Transport which are unique for the country. In the autumn of 2002, after a renovation under the "Beautiful Bulgaria" programme, the "Sexsaginta Prista" open-air exhibition was opened. The repairs of the "Pantheon of writers of the Bulgarian National Revival" have also been completed. Generally speaking, about 30 sites which can be considered as resource ones and which only partly correspond to cultural monuments, have been identified on the territory of Ruse district. The cultural and historical heritage, as a major tourist resource, is heavily concentrated mainly on the territory of Ruse and Ivanovo municipalities. In Dve Mogili and Byala municipalities there are smaller concentration points. Sites of cultural and historical heritage have a tourist





potential, although their current status (physical condition, exposure, mode of functional operation, accessibility, provision of complementary tourist services) does not always allow for optimal realization of this potential.

The cultural layers and presence in Silistra district are from Thracian, Roman, Byzantine, Turkish, Renaissance and contemporary nature. The vast majority thereof is concentrated on the territory of the regional centre.

Despite the rich cultural and historical heritage in the target region in Romania, cultural and historical tourism along the Danube is not recognized by national strategy papers (see above the Romania National Tourism Master Plan 2007 - 2026 review) as a niche for development with tourism potential. However, on the other hand, regional and county planning documents (see Appendix 3) strongly confirm the need for focused measures for the development of cultural and historical tourism in the respective territory as a complementary sector in priority tourism branches - cruise, sea, wine, rural, ecotourism, spa, etc.). The linking of archaeological sites from route "Roman Frontier Within the Cross-border Region Romania-Bulgaria" to attractions of other forms of tourism is extremely rich and relatively well positioned on the general tourist map of the respective region/county. Artefacts from the Middle Ages, especially in the Muntenia and Oltenia regions, are well exposed, giving tourists excellent opportunities to "experience" the transition from Antiquity to Middle Ages. Sites from the Middle Ages are, for example:

- Medieval Fortress of Severin in Drobeta-Turnu Severin
- Remains of the Medieval Fortress Tri Kule in Svinița
- The monasteries of Mraconia (Mraconia Bay) and St Ana (Orsova)
- Trajan's Plaque "Tabula Traiana" at the exit of Cazanele Mici
- Tudor Vladimirescu and Nistor towers of Cârneci, Șimian municipality

The current state of cultural and historical tourism is inextricably linked with the practice of other forms of tourism. The opportunities for nature tourism, for example, in the Romanian part of Romania-Bulgaria cross-border region are inexhaustible. Some famous sites are:

- The Danube Gorge (Cazanele Dunarii);
- The Iron Gates Natural Park (the longest gorge in Europe - 134 km) and the Cukaru Mare massif;
- The Forests of Strehareti, Seaca, Poboru, Teslui, Lunca Oltului, Olt county;
- "Balta Suhaia" Nature Reserve near the town of Zimnicea - special bird protection zone;



- In Mehedinti county there are several famous caves, including Topolnita, Epuran, Gura Ponicovei, and Bulba;
- Ponoarele Geological Reserve - natural karst bridge and Ponoarele lilac forest;
- The Ornithological Reserve of Ciupercenii;
- Paleontological Reserve - Bucovat, near Craiova;

The Danube River, together with the surrounding geological (often referred to as an "open-air geological museum"<sup>12</sup>) and biodiversity (over 1,600 plant and over 5,200 animal species) create unique conditions for eco-tourism.

The city of Craiova, Dolj county, offers a variety of cultural and historical experiences combined with religious tourism, as the city and its surroundings are extremely rich in religious buildings, symbols, churches, and monasteries. Craiova's Art Museum, housed in Dinu Mihail Palace which was built in the early 19th century in a neoclassical style by a French architect, attracts hundreds of art lovers every year. Another contact and visit point for art lovers is the Izbiceni Culture Center in Olt county<sup>13</sup>. The county is also a key destination for cultural, historical and religious tourism due to the existence of monasteries with diverse architecture such as: Brancoveni, Caluiu, Hotarani, Clocociov, Streharet. Olt county is also known for the Caracal Ruins, the residence of the voivodes Matei Basarab and Constantin Brâncoveanu during the time of Michael the Brave (16th century).

A diverse cultural and historical experience, again with a focus on religious tourism, is also provided by Mehedinti county with its monasteries Gura Motrului, Strehaia, Vodita. Cultural and historical monuments and statues of tourist interest are the monument of Trajan, who takes over the governance of the Roman civilization north of the Danube, created by the sculptor D. Franasovic in 1906; the Decebal statue - the brave Dacian who chooses suicide over being captured by the Roman conquerors; the statue of Apollodorus of Damascus, a renowned architect who lived between 60 and 125 and created one of the greatest constructions of the Ancient World.

Cultural and historical tourism is being developed thanks to the excellent conditions for practicing wine tourism, which are determined by the microclimate and soil of southern Muntenia and southwest Oltenia. Winemaking artefacts near the Danube date back before the New Age. The region is extremely competitive with world wine tourism destinations. The winery Vinju Mare (from 1898), which offers ancient grape varieties such as the sweet white "Tămâioasă Românească 2010", late harvest or dry red "Prince Vlad Fetească Neagră (Black Feteasca) Grand Reserve 2011", has a

<sup>12</sup> <http://danube.travel/main-menu/explore/romania/useful-information/about.160.html>

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.izbiceniolt.ro/>



high tourist potential. The dry "Merlot Rosé" won a gold medal in Cannes (France) in 2012.

Constanta county, apart from being the most popular Black Sea and one of the most visited spa areas in Romania, is a region rich in cultural, historical and ethnographic heritage. It falls within the historical Dobrudzha region. According to information provided by the Ministry of Regional Development, Public Administration and European Funds<sup>14</sup>, the historical, cultural and religious resources of the Oltina Plateau represent 59% of the remarkable tourist potential of Dobrudzha. Such are, for example, the remains of the ancient cities Histria, Tomis and Callatis, complemented by the discoveries of Halmyris, Arrubium, Dinogetia, Beroe, Aegyssus, Noviodunum, Tropaeum Traiani, Capidava, Carsium. The main archaeological sites of the Byzantine period are the medieval fortress Păcuiul lui Soare (dating back to the 10th-11th centuries), the Citadel of Heraclea of Enisala (13th century), the Basarabi Complex (10th century). The most frequently marketed and used tourist routes in and around Constanta county are<sup>15</sup>:

(1) Constanța – Murfatlar – Adamclisi – Ion Corvin – Ostrov – Ion Corvin – Cernavodă – Murfatlar – Constanța, with visits to Murfatlar vineyards and Wine Museum, Valu lui Traian botanical reserve, Basarabi monk cave complex, Fântânița-Murfatlar botanical reserve, Adamclisi Triumphal Monument, Saint Apostle Andrew's Cave Monastery, Derwent Monastery, Canaraua Fetii Reserve, Есейови forests, Byzantine citadel from Păcuiul lui Soare, Bugeac, Vederoasa, and Oltina lakes.

(2) Tourism route Constanța – Ilistria – Baia – Babadag – Enisala – Murighiol – Tulcea – Niculițel – Măcin – Ciucurova – Baia – Constanța, with visits to Histria and Enisala fortresses, Celic Dere, Saon, Cocoș, and Uspenia monasteries, martiricon basilica from Niculițel, Măcin National Park, archaeological reserves along the Danube.

### 2.2.1. Analysis of good practices

In support of the sustainable implementation of the Strategy for Development, Enhancement and Innovation of an Integrated Cultural Heritage Tourism Product: Route "Roman Frontier Within the Cross-border Region Romania-Bulgaria", a review and analysis of good practices for development and management of cultural and historical routes have been made according to 3 main criteria:

1) Experience in the formation and functioning of destination management organizations at regional level - application of best practices in the development of

<sup>14</sup> <http://mdrap.ro/>

<sup>15</sup> [https://mpr.ub.uni-muenchen.de/61767/1/MPRA\\_paper\\_61767.pdf](https://mpr.ub.uni-muenchen.de/61767/1/MPRA_paper_61767.pdf)



marketing strategies and programmes for the management of Destination Management Organizations (DMOs);

2) Experience in the management of cultural and historical tourism;

3) Experience with forms of tourism zoning and involving stakeholders in destination management at regional level.

Good practices constitute a concept that describes development processes and following a standard pathway for the implementation of a given practice, which different organizations can apply in their management, organizational policies, and development models. "Good practice is a technique/method/process/action that is considered to be more effective in delivering a specific result than any other technique, method or process. In this sense, the implementation of appropriate processes, checks and tests can lead to the desired end result with fewer problems and unforeseen complications. Good practices can be defined as the most efficient (with least effort) and effective (best results) way of performing a task based on repetitive procedures proven over time before a wide range of people.<sup>16</sup>"

For the purposes of this Strategy, we have used the good practices described in the "Analysis of Foreign Practices in Tourism Management at Regional Level" to the Concept of Tourist Zoning of Bulgaria; Study and analysis of good practices in a European context for development, management and promotion of cultural heritage products, including cross-border ones - Danubius Consortium; Presentation of good practices in alternative tourism to Project No BG161PO001/4.2-01/2008/010 "Sharing Successful European Practices in Alternative Tourism - the Key to Sustainable Regional Development in Krushari and Tervel Municipalities".

## France

Tourist zone management in France is laid down in the Tourism Code, Chapter III (Territorial Communities and Grouping Thereof). Each administrative district has a Regional Council which defines the policy for medium-term development of tourism in the district to which a Regional Tourism Committee is formed. Membership in regional tourism committees is determined by law.

In France, destination management organizations exist in different legal forms. Destination management organizations (DMO) at NUTS 2 level are administrative (Regional Council, Regional Tourism Committee). At the Department level, Tourism

<sup>16</sup> Analysis of the European experience in the field of alternative tourism, presentation of good practices in alternative tourism; Operational Programme "Regional Development" 2007-2013; October 2009



Councils CDT (Conseil Departamental de Tourisme) may be established which have the right to choose their legal form. At the same time, voluntary associations are formed between local and regional authorities and professional (tourism) structures (groups of departments or municipalities in partnership with private companies, associations, etc.)

The law stipulates that the Regional Tourism Council determines the status, organization and composition of the Regional Tourism Committee. Thus, the committee involves the delegates of the regional council, one or more delegates at each general council (not that of tourism), and members representing:

- Advisory bodies on tourism in the region
- Any departmental tourism committee or similar organization
- Tourist Information Centers (TICs) and tourist initiative associations;
- Experts in tourism, spa industry and the entertainment industry;
- Associations in tourism and entertainment
- Municipal associations or tourism authorities or their associations and tourism offices (sub-regional TICs).

In France, apart from independent destination management organizations, there are also those who carry out this function, although they are regional organizations with a broader scope of activity - chambers of commerce, foundations for the development of the regions, etc. In some regions or groups of departments, DMO is an independent structure, while in others it is part of a development foundation for the region, and in third ones - it is part of a chamber of commerce.

The whole territory of France is covered by the tourist regions since tourist regions coincide with the administrative territorial units in the country.

The main functions and activities in the field of tourism in the regions depend on the particular DMO and its legal organization. In some cases, the organization is part of larger foundations for regional development and includes marketing and advertising for investment in the area. Sometimes it is a "clean" DMO and its functions are marketing (including website sales fees) of tourism in the area.

In terms of applicability to Bulgaria, the whole country is covered by tourist zones and there is a national DMO (Destination Management Organization - ATOUT FRANCE). There is a strong decentralization of DMO operational management and very strong public-private partnerships. At the same time, there is a very well developed information network, including websites of all tourist regions. There is a very strong strategic and marketing planning of the regions.





The weakness in terms of feasibility in Bulgaria is the fact that the tourist regions coincide with the administrative regions, which have regional self-governance, and their management is carried out through organizations created by the regional authorities. The whole government is administratively subordinated to regional and state authorities, not to the industry itself, which leads to low expertise, on the one hand, and to a low level of commitment by tourist enterprises. At the same time, there are harsh procedures for holding marketing programme selection - once a year and a large state budget for funding, which is not applicable in Bulgaria.

## Spain

Spain has a National Destination Management Organization (DMO): TURESPAÑA, whose function is international marketing of the country. TURESPAÑA, through the National Tourism Council (CONESTUR) and through the Conferencia Sectorial del Turismo, implements the link and coordination with the regions on strategy, policy and marketing issues of Spain as a tourist destination.

As in most European countries, Spain's tourist regions are historically grounded. They completely coincide with the administrative division of the country - the so called "autonomous communities" which are also NUTS 2 regions. The autonomous community is a territorial unit which, within the constitutional framework of Spain, has the legislative and executive power, including significant competences in the field of tourism.

The provinces (40), which are also traditional, historically formed regional communities, are used at a lower level as tourist regions, respectively as a basis for establishing destination management organizations. Autonomous communities have exclusive competences in the field of tourism and have their own ministries responsible for tourism. Each of these ministries may have a different field of activity and a corresponding denomination. Specific marketing activity is implemented by relatively distinct agencies whose legal form varies within the various autonomous communities (determined by them) and changes over time (public agency, single-member joint-stock company or limited liability company, association of territorial and sectoral organizations). Each region has its own Tourism Act which governs tourism activities, including policies, strategies, taxes, etc.

The specific functions of destination management organizations in Spain are governed by the tourism acts of each region.

DMO budgets are determined by the respective autonomous community. They are distributed through grants, projects and funds, with funding from the relevant autonomous community reaching up to 80%. DMOs are funded by the relevant autonomous community, and for external marketing - by TURESPAÑA.





## Applicability to Bulgaria

A survey on the zoning of Spain answers two questions that are relevant to Bulgaria 1) How did autonomous communities deal with their new responsibilities in terms of tourism in 1978? and 2) What is the effect of decisions and interventions at the new intermediate level on the development of tourism in the country - Pearce (1996)?

Although the study was carried out nearly 20 years ago, it is completely relevant to Bulgaria for at least three reasons: 1) the results reflect the initial stage of zoning (transition from a highly centralized to a zoned country) in the field of tourism; 2) despite differences in size, there are many analogies between Spain (especially in the 1980s and 1990s) and Bulgaria, in particular in terms of the highly deformed product, market and territorial structure of tourism (emphasis on international coastal tourism), planning deficiency, infrastructure, etc.

The main conclusions on the first question (implementation of the new responsibilities of the autonomous communities) are:

- As Spain was a highly centralized country, the functions (competences) acquired by the new autonomous communities were rather potential opportunities than a transfer of established responsibilities.
- As regards tourism, all autonomous communities perform two sets of functions: Regulation - regulation, registration and control of hotels and restaurants, and Promotion - marketing, promotional campaigns, visitor service on site. Other functions that are carried out to varying degrees and are classified differently in one of the two sets include: research, development, planning, education.
- In autonomous communities, independent agencies are created over time in order to carry out marketing and other functions. Establishment thereof, beyond the traditional administrative framework, contributes to the flexibility of the structure in the implementation of the promotional function, without the limitations of the bureaucratic institutions and the easier participation of the private sector therein. ("Depoliticization of tourist promotion").
- The legal forms of these regional tourism organizations are different and changing over time.
- Budgets were initially small but showed a rapid upward trend (from 2 to 20 times) since the early 1990s, one of the main factors for which is the access to EU Structural Funds. The major part of the budget comes from public sources.
- Special attention is given to the development of strategies and plans after the establishment of regional tourism organizations.



- Promotional activities are mainly oriented towards the domestic market - foreign markets are exclusively dealt with by the national tourism organization).

The main conclusions on the second question (the effect of zoning) are:

- Enhanced attention to promotion on the domestic market - regional authorities are not obsessed with the idea of currency revenue: inter-regional wealth transfers related to domestic tourism have the same effect as foreign currency revenue from international tourism.
- A new level of tourist image emerges - regional, which replaces or complements the image of individual resorts and the overall image of Spain.
- Wider coverage of local destinations in each community, diversification, fuller utilization of the diverse potential (not focus on one major product and the most attractive areas)
- Coordination of local initiatives.

The establishment of a regional level for public sector interventions has had an impact on tourism development, but it should not be overestimated as there are many others - mainly external factors. What makes the "creation" of a regional level is the provision of additional response tools.

Notwithstanding all the advantages and benefits of the Spanish model, it is worth noting the differences in size and political structure, but it is possible to use some of its approaches in route management.

## Italy

At state level, tourism in Italy is governed by the Department for Development and Competitiveness of Tourism which aims to support the implementation of government policy in the tourism sector to the Prime Minister's Office, whose head has the rank of a minister (until 2011 - from the Ministry of Culture and Tourism). The functions of a national destination management organization are carried out by the National Tourist Board (ENIT), a state agency in whose management board the regions are represented, among others. The activities of ENIT are carried out under the supervision of the Department of Tourism. In Italy, as in Spain, there is a National Institute for Statistics in Tourism.



The legal basis for tourism policy at national level is the Tourism Code, adopted in 2011 (Codice della normativa statale in materia di ordinamento e mercato del turismo), which simplifies legislation by integrating various pre-existing regulations.

The tourist regions of Italy coincide with the 20 NUTS 2 regions, which are also traditional historic regions. For statistical purposes, macro-regions - five in total, which coincide with NUTS 1, are also used.

The country is characterized by strong regional self-government. In 2001, the constitution gave significant autonomy to the regions - they can define all their tourism policies and strategies, adopt their own acts (there are over 60 regional acts governing hotel and other tourist infrastructure, categorization of accommodation, mediation sector, tourist organizations, tourist advertising, etc.). Region DMOs, on the other hand, may delegate activities to the municipalities.

Existing administrative tourist offices have been replaced by provincial tourism organizations (Agenzie di promozione turistica - APT) since the early 1990s, whose purpose is to stimulate tourism in the respective region. They are funded by the region. The formation of provincial tourism organizations is based on the number of nights spent - a separate organization can be established in the presence of 10 million nights spent. At local level, there are tourist information centers (Agenzie di Informazione turistica) which are members of APT.

In Italy, there are 3 legal forms of management for all tourism organizations operating at regional level:

- Regional Tourism Administrations;
- Public-private partnership established between certain regional, provincial or local structures and private companies or organizations - associations, private tourist information centers (TICs), etc.;
- Private structures - some TICs, associations, etc.

Regional tourism administrations, acting as a DMO, carry out the following functions:

- ❖ Development of tourism legislation at regional level;
- ❖ Strategic planning in tourism at regional, sub-regional and municipal level;
- ❖ Tourism marketing at national and international level (the latter is coordinated by ENIT);
- ❖ Licensing functions - tour guides and other professions of licensing regime;
- ❖ Registration and categorization of tourist companies, including tour operators and travel agencies;



- ❖ Statistical functions, including entry of local tourist enterprises in the national register;
- ❖ Quality assurance in tourism;
- ❖ Coordination between culture and tourism.

Functions of other regional DMOs:

- Joint participation in projects together with official DMOs;
- Tourism marketing at national, regional and local level;
- Some marketing research - tourist profiles, attitudes to visits and other soft indicators;
- Sales, bookings, etc.

In terms of applicability to Bulgaria, the following strengths should be noted:

- (1) High-level tourist regions coincide with NUTS 2 administrative units but at the same time are traditional regional communities with an established and recognizable image;
- (2) Clear, simplified organizational structure at regional level;
- (3) Wide competences of DMO, including in the sphere of regulation of supply, planning, etc.
- (4) Clear, simplified funding system - from the budget of the regional authorities.

Weaknesses and application limits in Bulgaria are again linked to differences in regional self-government - Italian regions have wide competences and significant own resources. At the same time, administrative units correspond to historically formed regional communities. These are prerequisites that are not available in Bulgaria.

When analysing the reform of the transition from a centralized to a decentralized state, however, the approach to the determination of lower-level destination management organizations deserves attention - introduction of a quantitative criterion (number of nights spent), which ensures the formation of organizations in sufficiently large regions and prevents the trend to fragmentation.

## Estonia

Estonia is the most developed tourist country of the three Baltic countries - former USSR republics. Since 2001, the Tourism Act has been in place, but it does not concern the topic of zoning. Tourism in Estonia is governed by the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications, which in turn has delegated these functions



to Enterprise Estonia - the State Agency for Economic Development, Innovation, Investment and Tourism (SAEDIIT), established in 2000 to support businesses and the regional development of the country. Within the structure of the agency, the tourism sector is under the authority of the National Tourist Board which is also responsible for the development of tourist regions.

There are three tourist regions in Estonia: 1) Northern Estonia, 2) Southern Estonia, and 3) Western Estonia, where the capital, Tallinn, is given a special status.

Estonian tourist region DMOs have been set up voluntarily, without the intervention of central authorities. They are established at different times: 1994 - Southern Estonia, 1998 - Western Estonia and 2008 - Northern Estonia.

Within Enterprise Estonia, the Tourism Development Center is established, which is responsible for coordinating tourist regions.

In 2013, a National Tourism Development Plan for Estonia for the period 2014-2020 was developed. It provides for the establishment of a national strategy for tourist zoning. The plan provides that Enterprise Estonia shall methodically assist the development of this strategy.

The management organizations in Northern and Southern Estonia are foundations, and the Western Estonian organization is an NGO non-profit organization. They are all in partnership with Enterprise Estonia.

All tourist regions in Estonia are created primarily for advertisement and promotion of destinations and development of their own regional products. Marketing research and statistics, market analyses, etc. are not part of the organizations' functions.

The strength of tourist zoning in Estonia is that it has begun to develop voluntarily, even before a strategy has been set up. Another strength is that all established foundations (management) are in a voluntary partnership with the state tourism organization. In terms of applicability to Bulgaria, it goes as far as the necessary to realize the need to include representatives of local, regional authorities, private sector stakeholders and non-governmental organizations in the management organizations, i.e. the need for development of tourist destinations and regions in partnership. Another feature is the non-simultaneous establishment of individual regions - at different moments over a sufficiently long period of time, according to their readiness.

Greece



There are 13 tourist regions in Greece, but while they do not function well from a marketing point of view, prefectures are brilliant in destinations marketing.

Greece has a clear division of responsibilities for the marketing of destinations between different territorial levels:

- (1) National level: Greek National Tourism Organization (GNTO)
- (2) Regional level: Regional authorities (the country is divided into 13 regions)
- (3) Regional level II: Prefectures with their Prefecture Tourism Promotion Committees (PTPCs) - the country is divided into 54 prefectures
- (4) Local level: Municipalities or groups of municipalities.

### Conclusions from the experience of Greece

- The failure of the attempted decentralization of tourist marketing and planning at regional level (above prefectures) is due to the fact that this action has not been supported by the necessary accompanying actions, such as organizational restructuring and adequate provision of human resources. On the other hand, prefectural organizations established by law are financially secured and function well;
- Less than 10% of funding comes from non-public funds even 13 years after the establishment of PTPCs;
- The planned marketing costs, even when reviewed by GNTO and its marketing directorate, again lead to ineffective marketing;
- Where there are guaranteed advertising funds, effectiveness thereof is not sought.

## Croatia

By an amendment to the Constitution and the Amendment and Supplement Act of the State Administration Structure Act in November 2000 (SG 5/08), an independent Ministry of Tourism was established in Croatia. The Ministry of Tourism performs administrative and other tasks related to the Croatian tourism policy - it supports the development of tourism and strategic planning as well as investment in tourism, supports the development of various forms of tourism and small enterprises in the tourism industry, it is responsible for the distribution of tourist information and the promotion of Croatian tourism abroad, etc.

Croatia's national tourist organization is the Croatian National Tourist Board (CNTB71). The Board was established in 2008 in order to promote tourism





development and create identity, improve the image and reputation of Croatian tourism abroad. The mission involves planning and implementing a common strategy and a concept for its promotion, application and implementation of promotional activities of mutual interest to all participants in tourism in the country and abroad, as well as increasing the overall quality of the tourist services offered in the Republic of Croatia through the creation and formalization of tourist regions for marketing purposes.

The Croatian National Tourist Board and the other tourist boards in the country (96, according to unofficial information) were created in accordance with the Tourist Boards and the Promotion of Croatian Tourism Act (December 2008) which regulates the system of tourist boards, their structure, tasks and manner of operation, as well as the basic principles of their funding and management.

The system of tourist boards includes: tourist boards of settlements, tourist boards of municipalities, tourist boards of cities, tourist boards of territories, tourist boards of counties, the Zagreb Tourist Board and the Croatian National Tourist Board. Municipalities and settlements are divided into tourist classes and the formation of boards is compulsory for municipalities and settlements that fall into Classes A and B, but may also be voluntary (optional), respectively, when not in the specified classes. Each board is a legal entity and is entered into a special register.

Tourist settlements are divided according to their significance for tourism in four tourist classes: A, B, C and D. These tourist classes include settlements, municipalities and cities that meet the conditions for inclusion in a given tourist class, according to quantitative and qualitative criteria and in accordance with the Tourist Board Membership Fee Act (as of December 2008). The grouping of settlements in tourist classes is based on official data from the Croatian Bureau of Statistics according to the following quantitative criteria:

1. Average annual number of tourist nights spent in the tourist municipality, city or settlement for a period of 5 years;
2. Number of tourist nights spent per capita of the tourist municipality, city or settlement (tourist flow intensity index);
3. Amount of turnover in the hotel/restaurant-keeping field per capita of the tourist municipality, city or settlement (specific tourist turnover index);
4. Average annual number of tourist nights spent per bed or per accommodation unit for a period of 5 years.

The general objectives of the tourist boards are:



- ❖ Stimulation and initiation of the development and improvement of the existing tourist product, initiation of the development of new tourist products on the territory for which they are established by managing the destination at the level for which they are established;
- ❖ Promotion of the tourist product in the territory for which they are established;
- ❖ Building awareness of the importance and economic, social and other effects of tourism as well as the necessity and importance of preserving and erecting all elements of the tourist product on a given territory, especially for the protection of the environment, nature and cultural heritage, with the objectives of sustainable development.

Mandatory members of the tourist board of a municipality or a city are all legal and natural persons having their registered address, subsidiary or subdivision, etc. (for brevity - subdivision) on the territory of the municipality or the city in which a tourist board is established and which generate income from hotel or restaurant services or other tourist services or carry out activities directly related to tourism. They pay membership fees to the tourist board in accordance with a separate act.

The Croatian model of tourist destination management organizations (tourist boards) has a number of strengths, such as:

- Mandatory membership of all persons earning revenue from tourism;
- Clear division of mandatory members - at local level these are the companies, at regional - local tourist boards;
- Guaranteed sources of funding (travel fee - analogous to the Bulgarian tourist tax - and membership fees) that make their income predictable and independent of the political situation and the relevant decisions on state or local budgets;
- Clear and fair regulation of membership fees according to the benefits of tourism;
- Minimum additional business load - membership fees vary between 0.08 and 0.25% of the turnover of tourist companies and between 0.01 and 0.05% for other companies;
- Regulated and clear income distribution between different territorial levels.

In order to be applied in its pure form, Croatia's model implies a substantial change in Bulgarian legislation (not only in the Tourism Act, but also in other acts, e.g. the Local Taxes and Fees Act). Furthermore, there are also significant differences at regional level of governance as well as in the structuring of the National Tourist Organization (which does not exist in Bulgaria).

Nevertheless, some elements may be applied at a later stage, in particular the mechanism for utilizing tourist fees (tax) for funding activities of destination



management organizations at different levels and the introduction of a tax on marketing activities (analogous to the mandatory membership fees in Croatia).

### Study of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2012)

The OECD study of 2012 covers 51 countries, including all OECD and EU Member States. The study examines different aspects of tourism management, but for the purposes of the Strategy we have considered the section on the sub-national level of tourism management whose most important findings and conclusions are:

- In many countries not all tourism competences are given to the central government, hence it is important to manage tourism at sub-national level;
- An important task for central governments is to develop a country brand to provide a "hat" under which sub-national brands can operate. Tourism management at regional level should take into account the possibility of working under the national brand in order to be effective.
- At sub-national level, there is an opportunity to interact with a wide range of smaller enterprises and local and regional business organizations. Greater proximity to the private sector means that sub-national authorities are often responsible for operational regulation and for improving service quality;
- An important function of sub-national authorities is spatial and urban planning of tourism;
- There are usually two types of tourism management organizations at sub-national level. The first type is a ministry or agency that is responsible for policy and governance and ensures interaction with other ministries. The second type is a destination management organization, often in the form of a public-private partnership, that provides interaction with the private sector and has the primary responsibility for marketing and promotion. The destination management organization (DMO) is usually funded by and reported to the competent sub-national ministry or agency. The regional DMO may establish sub-regional or local DMOs;
- The efficient functioning of tourism as an economic activity requires the coordination of various stakeholders at regional and local level. This role is often performed by the destination management organization or other similar organization;



- Capacity of actors is crucial. Good policy formulation is not enough to achieve the desired results. The implementation is crucial to the success of policies. This depends on the capacity and resources of organizations (financial, material, human, knowledge, even time) and utilization thereof. It is therefore necessary to build capacity at national and regional level through education, training, participation in "learning by doing" programmes, etc.;
- Capacity development is important at all levels but is critical to regional and local levels;
- The main obstacles to capacity building include: staff turnover; occupation of positions without special education in tourism; difficulties in involving the community; political aspects (short-term approach, biased approach to project selection, tendency towards a balanced allocation of resources rather than focusing on priorities); the lack of clarity about roles and responsibilities (in particular the fear of some organizations that other organizations may "take over their territory"); the deficiency of information and statistics at regional and local level.
- The "overlapping of competences" is seen as a specific obstacle to capacity building - especially where the boundaries of tourist areas do not coincide with political and administrative boundaries. It is emphasized that in such cases the formation of new organizations is necessary. The policymakers' task is to find management mechanisms (tools and incentives) to ensure policy coherence in physically and economically homogeneous but politically fragmented areas.
- Although destination management and marketing functions go far beyond the scope of DMOs, they have to play the leadership role. One of the major challenges is the conflicting requirements for the size of the DMO (regions) - they must be sufficiently "local" (small) to identify stakeholders and their objectives, but at the same time must be large enough to be effective on the market and have a budget sufficient to achieve the objectives.

**A Practical Guide to Tourism Destination Management, UN World Tourism Organization (2007)**

In 2007, the World Tourism Organization issued a tourism destination management guide that summarizes the experience of many countries. Although it is not explicitly linked to a specific territorial level, this guide provides a number of principles and guidelines that are relevant to this Strategy. The most important of these are:



- The importance of the regional level is emphasized: "The optimal level of destination management is in most cases sub-national";
- Destination management levels are defined - national, regional, local. Regional destination management organizations are defined as organizations "responsible for the management and/or marketing of tourism in a geographical area designated for that purpose, which is sometimes, but not always, an administrative region such as a district, state or province";
- The diversity of legal forms in which destination management organizations may exist is highlighted:
  - ❖ Department in a separate public body;
  - ❖ Partnership between public authorities serviced by partners;
  - ❖ Partnership between public authorities serviced by a joint management unit;
  - ❖ Outsourcing performance from public authorities to private companies;
  - ❖ Public-private partnership for certain functions - often in the form of a company that does not distribute profit;
  - ❖ An association or company wholly funded by private sector partnerships or by revenue from own business - again only for some functions;

There are clearly distinguishable two sets of destination management functions - marketing (outward), which should attract visitors to the area, and service provision on the spot (inward), which in turn should ensure the quality of all aspects of tourist experience - coordination, development of new products, event organization, development and management of attractions, provision of information, training, consultancy for businesses, planning and research).

On the other hand, DMO activities are divided into primary, exclusively related to marketing (product development, destination and product packaging, promotion, distribution and sales, logistics, on-site activities and services, customer aftercare), and supporting, with an indirect impact but high importance (infrastructure, planning, human resources development, technologies - with emphasis on information and communication technologies, development of tourism-related industries and activities, etc.).

The trend of change in tourism policy (destination management) is emphasized - "a transition from the traditional public sector model that implements government policy to a more corporate model that highlights efficiency, return on investment, the role of the market and public-private partnership".



The need to plan and manage tourism development in the destination (going beyond the narrower marketing functions) is emphasized to ensure its sustainable development.

The need to involve stakeholders and to coordinate their activities at regional level is also emphasized.

It criticizes the aspirations of some public agencies to adopt a strategy of gradually reducing the funding of DMO that relies on self-funding. "Destination management organizations must concentrate on delivering the expected services and not constantly be forced to seek funding - as is the fate of many tourist organizations".

It is recommended to ensure the standards of good management by accreditation (by Destination Marketing Association International), which recognizes compliance with universal standards for DMO operations or UNWTO Sbest Certification of Excellence certification (certification programme of the World Tourism Organization) which is a recognition for good governance in tourism.

### Cultural Route "Frontiers of the Roman Empire" Carnuntum, Austria

Carnuntum (Καρνους, Carnous in Ancient Greek according to Ptolemy) was a Roman Legionary Fortress and also headquarters of the Pannonian fleet. After the 1st century, it was capital of the Pannonia Superior province. It also became a large city of 500,000 inhabitants.

Its impressive remains are situated on the Danube in Lower Austria halfway between Vienna and Bratislava in the "Carnuntum Archaeological Park" extending over an area of 10 km<sup>2</sup>. It includes today's villages of Petronell-Carnuntum and Bad Deutsch-Altenburg. The park comprises three sites.

- The thermae warmed by the functioning hypocaustum with praefurniums have been restored.
- According to the old Roman tradition, the shops attached to the thermae have also been restored as well as the latrine (toilet), practically utilizing the water already used in the thermae.
- The civilian Basilica has been fully reconstructed - a place for meetings, litigation, etc., as well as the city tavern.





Considerable attention is paid to the development of interest in children and the cultivation of attitude towards cultural properties and heritage. Activities for children of different ages and various interests are regularly organized: they can participate in battles, gladiatorial skirmishes, craft workshops, etc.

In September 2011, aerial photographs and ground-penetrating radars led to the discovery of the typical contours of an ancient Roman gladiator school to the south of the Roman settlement, covering an area of some 3,350 square yards (0.280 ha). This approach of aerial photography and modern remote sensing has allowed for a detailed virtual recreation of the gladiator school.

GPR surveys of the Legionary camp (non-invasive archaeology) have been carried out as well, based on which a three-dimensional model was constructed afterwards which is used in presentations and through the possibilities of the virtual reality.

For the development of the tourist product, the Carnuntum Archeological Museum, located in the village of Bad Deutsch-Altenburg on the Danube, has been created and shows all the important archaeological finds from the ancient city. An old factory has been adapted to a cultural center (Culturfabric) - a place for cultural events and meetings, performances; a museum with a fascinating and accessible story of the study and restoration of the neighbouring Roman city.

Petronell-Carnuntum is an extremely good example for a site involved in multi-level cultural routes - routes within the route, local routes and the great transnational Danube Limes route, where all the best ideas for preservation and display of cultural heritage have been realized over a very long period of time.

At Petronell-Carnuntum, it is possible to trace and learn not only the Roman history, but also the history of the system of preservation of the immovable cultural properties, and here you can see the most innovative means of presenting the cultural-historical heritage. The site is a very good place for a broader involvement of local communities, people of different ages and different national backgrounds, children and youth. Continuous research, as well as the addition of newly discovered sites and the introduction of new technology, ensure the vitality of the site, its continuous development and the attractiveness at every moment in the future.

## Pula, Croatia

The Croatian city of Pula on the Adriatic coast is another good example of "repeatability" which has preserved the remains of the Roman colony established in the middle of the first century BC in this place.



A modern museum, constantly evolving in expositions and activities, has been built in the fully preserved Roman amphitheatre - one of the six best preserved in the world. Two smaller Roman amphitheatres are also preserved in the city. Even today they are a stage and a scenery of various cultural events, festivals and concerts. United in a local (to Pula) cultural route are the remains of the fortress walls and two preserved gates of the Roman city - the Arch of the Sergii, the Gate of Hercules and the Twin Gates.

In the city centre, which has inherited the ancient forum, stands the authentically preserved Temple of Augustus, twin temple of the Temple of Diana, and in composition with the Capitoline Triad Temple (both not reserved). It hosts various cultural events and exhibitions and participates not only in urban planning as an active element but also in the cultural life of the city.

The development of cultural routes facilitates the diversification of the tourism sector by reaching a new tourist segment. The inclusion of cultural heritage resources offers the opportunity to create a tourist product that is typical only to this place, where visitors can be stimulated to have a unique experience combining entertainment, learning, and discovery.

### Archaeological Ensemble of Mérida (Spain)

Archaeological Ensemble of Mérida, proposed by Spain as a best practice, is interesting as a case study for the following aspects: cultural property management by a consortium, stakeholder collaboration, comprehensive management strategy, research, training, sustainable urban and economic development, special protection plan, creation of private sponsorship models, steering plans, visitors rules.

The Consortium “Monumental, Historical-Artistic and Archaeological City of Mérida”, as managing body of the Archaeological Ensemble of Mérida, assumes from 1996 its protection and ensures the conservation of its Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) through a comprehensive Management Strategy. The Consortium brings together all authorities with responsibility for Historical Heritage and this facilitates the comprehensive management of the property, carrying all the actions in a coordinated and agile way. Also different citizen’s associations take part within the Consortium, thus participating in the management of the property and gather the biggest possible consensus. The comprehensive management of the Archaeological Ensemble of Mérida covers all the necessary scopes of actuation in order to achieve



the final objective to preserve and improve the Ensemble. These scopes of actuation are:

- Administration - the Consortium assumes all the administrative competencies with regard to heritage, which affect the Archaeological Ensemble with the aim to assure its legal protection.
- Archaeological interventions - the Consortium executes and/or monitors all the archaeological actions that take place within the Ensemble.
- Documentation - the Consortium has created its own documentation system based on three premises: the consideration of the city as a “single site”, the establishment of a Methodological Unit of archaeological register and extending the documentation to all the historical sequence. This way all the documentation about the Archaeological Ensemble is systematized and at disposal of researches, enabling the knowledge about the property and its subsequent presentation to the public.
- Research - the Archaeology Institute of Mérida was created in 2004. It carries out research, and more specifically archaeological research, of the Archaeological Ensemble of Mérida.
- Conservation - the Special Plan for Protection of the Archaeological Ensemble of Mérida, elaborated by the Consortium, allows for the synchronisation of urban development and the preservation of the archaeological ensemble. It also creates different preservation and integration possibilities for the remains, but always considering constructive solutions so not to stop the expansion of the city.

### European Cultural Route "Routes of the Olive Tree", Messinia, Greece

The European Cultural Route "Routes of the Olive Tree", which has an official certificate since 2004, is run by a cultural foundation of the same name, specially created by the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Messinia, Greece, in partnership with other associations across the Mediterranean, beyond the area of Europe. The idea was born in 1999 when the President of the Chamber took a Mediterranean motorbike trip and discovered an incredibly close olive-tree culture. A second trip was organized next year, this time with the participation of experts, and the dialogue on shared heritage with local chambers and universities was launched. Travels continue in 2001, when the recognition of the historical and cultural ties that unite people is crowned with a Memorandum of Cooperation between chambers, organizations, public and private institutions in many countries. The initiative is supported by the International Olive Council. Thus, in 2002, the



Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Messinia founded the Cultural Foundation "The Routes of the Olive Tree". Within its main priority, a multidisciplinary scientific team of professionals (museum workers, historians, technologists, gastronomers, ethnographers, etc.) has been set up to develop a methodology for the promotion of olive tree culture in order to protect and promote the common cultural heritage and the development of cultural tourism on the routes of the olive tree.

### 2.3. Tourist market analysis

The analysis is based on statistical data of the National Statistical Institutes of Bulgaria and Romania, Eurostat, the UN World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC). Data, however, should be interpreted and perceived carefully due to methodological imperfections of tourism statistics as well as due to the hidden economy in the tourism sector in Bulgaria and Romania. However, the data reveals the trends in tourism development in both countries, and this is important for adequate and appropriate planning of the strategic framework of the Strategy. In order to overcome the statistical inconsistency between Bulgaria and Romania in terms of their size, the main object of analysis and evaluation is not the absolute values of the data, but their change in percentage ratio in relation to the given time scope.

Tourism continues to demonstrate its key role in generating economic growth. It is ranked as the fourth most important economic sector after fuels, chemical and food industries. According to UNWTO<sup>17</sup>, in 2016 international travel trips increased for the seventh consecutive year, reaching 1.2 billion (a 4% increase compared to 2015) - a sequence of continuous growth not observed since the 1960s. The highest growth was recorded in Africa, Asia and Pakistan. The growth of tourist trips to destinations from developed economies (+5%) is higher than in developing countries (+2%).

According to WTTC<sup>18</sup>, despite the growing and unpredictable shocks of terrorist attacks, political instability, pandemics, and natural disasters, tourism continues to register sustainable development, and in 2016 it accounts for a direct contribution to GDP growth of 3.1% (the economy accounts for 2.6% direct contribution) or a total contribution of \$7.6 billion (10.2%) for GDP. In 2016, tourism has provided 292 million jobs (1/10 of all). Tourism alone accounts for 6% of world exports or 29% of exports of services (UNWTO).

<sup>17</sup> <http://media.unwto.org/publication/unwto-annual-report-2016>

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.wttc.org/research/economic-research/economic-impact-analysis/>



Again, according to UNWTO<sup>19</sup>, tourism in the EU has grown from 153 million international tourist trips in 1980 to 433 million in 2013. At the same time, international tourism revenue increases from \$55 billion to \$403 billion. In recent years, both worldwide and in the EU, international tourism revenue has grown faster than GDP.

Europe is the world's leading tourism region (UNWTO). The table below summarizes inbound tourism data by region, with a special emphasis on Central and Eastern Europe (CEE), whose data are decomposed by country. As can be seen from the table, Europe has a market share of 52% in 2013, however, a downward trend can be observed.

<sup>19</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/growth/tools-databases/newsroom/cf/itemdetail.cfm?item\\_id=8828&lang=en](http://ec.europa.eu/growth/tools-databases/newsroom/cf/itemdetail.cfm?item_id=8828&lang=en)



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**Table 2 Inbound tourism in selected regions, 1995-2013**

	Inbound tourism							Market share			Growth rate		Average annual growth	
	1995	2000	2005	2010	2011	2012	2013	1995	2005	2013	2012/11	2013/12	1995/13	2005/13
	Number of foreign tourists (1000)										%		%	
<b>Worldwide</b>	528 m	676 m	807 m	948 m	995 m	1,035 m	1,087 m	100	100	100	4.0	5.0	4.1	3.8
<b>Europe</b>	305 m	387 m	449 m	485 m	516 m	534 m	563 m	58	56	52	3.6	5.4	3.5	2.9
<b>EU-28</b>	268 m	331 m	364 m	380 m	401 m	412 m	433 m	51	45	40	2.7	5.0	2.7	2.2
<i>Northern Europe</i>	33,351	42,092	56,239	57,398	58,951	60,040	63,317	6.3	7	5.8	1.8	5.5	3.6	1.5
<i>Western Europe</i>	104,956	131,476	134,106	145,402	152,581	158,272	165,234	19.9	16.6	15.2	3.7	4.4	2.6	2.6
<i>Central and Eastern Europe</i>	43,571	40,897	47,398	44,578	47,855	50,454	52,278	8.2	5.9	4.8	5.4	3.6	1.2	1.2
<b>Bulgaria</b>	<b>3,466</b>	<b>2,785</b>	<b>4,837</b>	<b>6,047</b>	<b>6,328</b>	<b>6,541</b>	<b>6,897</b>	<b>0.7</b>	<b>0.6</b>	<b>0.6</b>	<b>3.4</b>	<b>5.5</b>	<b>3.9</b>	<b>4.5</b>
Czech Republic	3,381	4,773	9,404	8,629	9,019	9,461	9,004	0.6	1.2	0.8	4.9	-4.8	n.a	-0.5
Estonia	530	1,220	1,917	2,372	2,665	2,744	2,868	0.1	0.2	0.3	3.0	4.5	9.8	5.2
Hungary	2,878	2,992	9,979	9,510	10,250	10,353	10,675	0.5	1.2	1.0	1.0	3.1	n.a	0.8
Latvia	539	509	1,116	1,373	1,493	1,435	1,536	0.1	0.1	0.1	-3.9	7.0	6.0	4.1
Lithuania	650	1,083	2,000	1,507	1,775	1,900	..	0.1	0.2	..	7.0	..	6.5	-0.7
Poland	19,215	17,400	15,200	12,470	13,350	14,840	15,845	3.6	1.9	1.5	11.2	6.8	-1.1	0.5





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<b>Romania</b>	<b>766</b>	<b>867</b>	<b>1,430</b>	<b>1,343</b>	<b>1,515</b>	<b>1,653</b>	<b>1,715</b>	<b>0.1</b>	<b>0.2</b>	<b>0.2</b>	<b>9.1</b>	<b>3.7</b>	<b>4.6</b>	<b>2.3</b>
Slovakia	903	1,053	1,515	1,327	1,460	1,528	1,653	0.2	0.2	0.2	4.6	8.2	3.4	1.1
<i>Southern Europe</i>	86,074	116,734	126,085	132,634	141,906	143,460	151,809	16.3	15.6	14.0	1.1	5.8	3.2	2.3

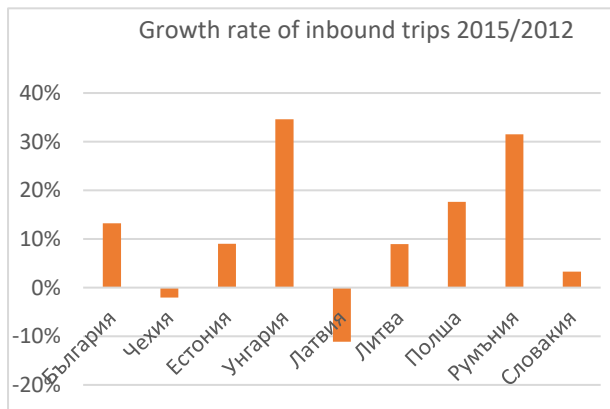
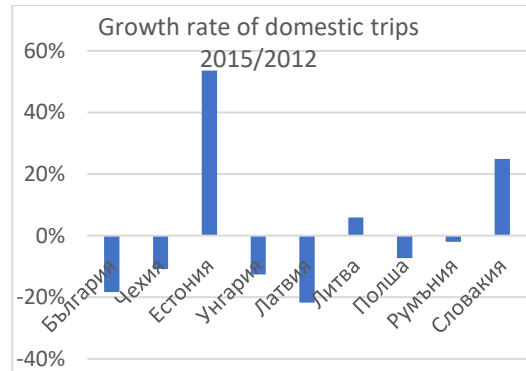
Source: UN World Tourism Organization

In the period 1995-2013, the number of foreign tourists in CEE registered steady growth in all the specified destinations, with the exception of Poland. Of course, the leading position is occupied by Western Europe, and last is the CEE region. But in 2012, compared to 2011, CEE registered the highest growth of foreign tourists which could be explained by the continuing negative economic effects of the financial crisis, since the destination is most accessible compared to other regions of the European continent. Poland, followed by Romania, reported the highest number of foreign tourist visits in CEE in 2012, compared to 2011. A year later, Bulgaria ranks fourth (after Slovakia, Latvia and Poland) in terms of most visited by foreign tourists central and eastern European destinations.

The structure of trips within CEE is also an interesting indicator of the degree of tourist attractiveness.



**Chart 1 Structure of trips to Central and Eastern Europe**



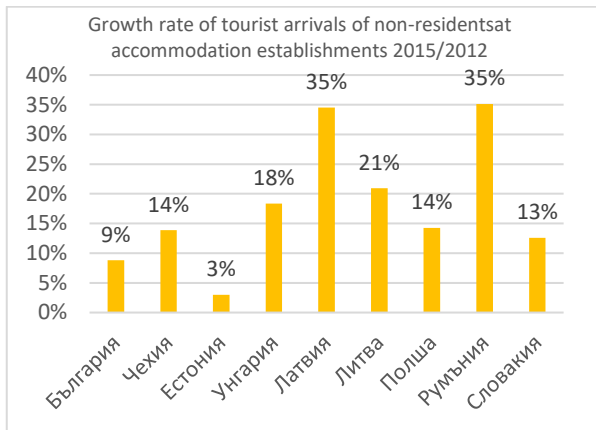
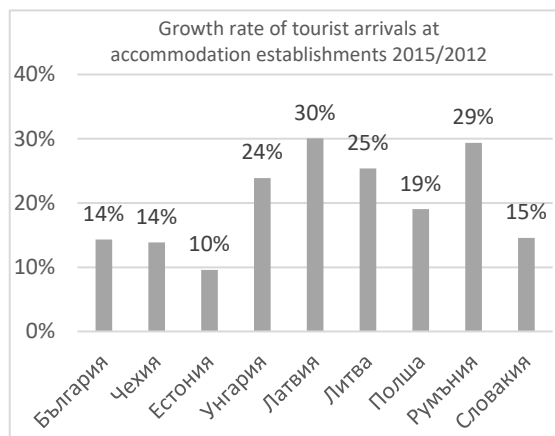
Source: Virtual Tourism Observatory, EC<sup>20</sup>

A review of travel data of other EU Member States shows that the share of domestic travel (resident trips within the country they live) is traditionally higher in larger countries/destinations, while the smaller ones register a larger share of inbound trips (non-resident travel). However, in 2015, compared to 2012, Bulgaria, albeit a small country, registered an increasing share of inbound travel on its territory (+13%), at the expense of a declining share of domestic travel (-18%). Generally, however, travel to Bulgaria decreased by 14% over the reviewed period. Data for Romania reveal a similar trend but at different scales - the share of domestic travel decreased by only 2% for the target period, while foreign visits registered a growth of 32%. Romania and Hungary (35% growth) are the most preferred destinations for foreign tourists for visits in 2012-2015.

<sup>20</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/growth/tools-databases/vto/country-fact-sheets>



## Chart 2 Tourist arrivals at accommodation establishments in Central and Eastern European countries



Source: Virtual Tourism Observatory, EC

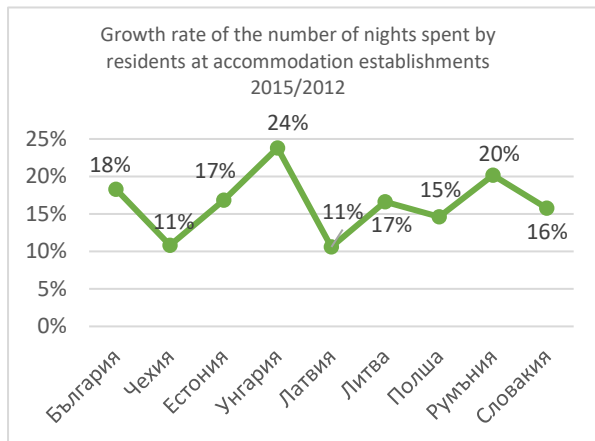
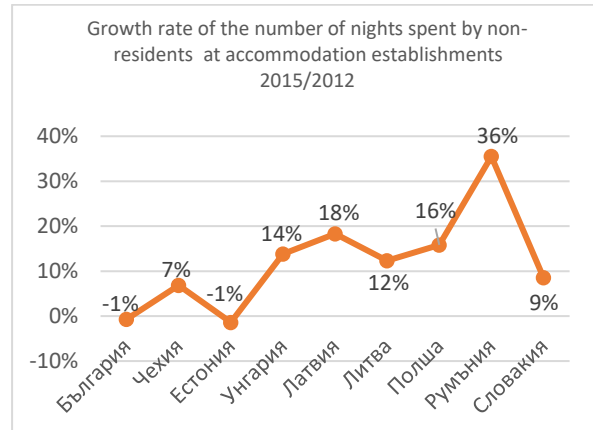
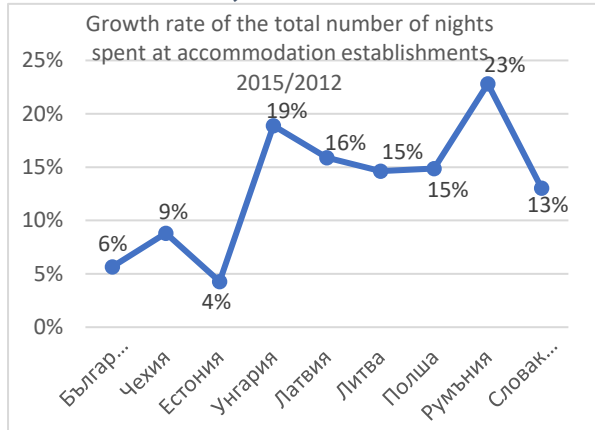
As seen in the first chart, the preference of tourists for overnight stays at accommodation establishments grew substantially in the period 2012-2015, with Latvia and Romania registering the highest growth, while Estonia, Bulgaria and the Czech Republic - the smallest. Similar growth rates are also registered in terms of the non-residents' arrival at accommodation

establishments indicator, with Latvia and Romania again being the leaders, and Estonia and Bulgaria at the other end of the list.

The number of overnight stays in accommodation establishments is another key indicator of tourist attractiveness of the destination. It provides important information about the still insufficiently researched correlation between satisfaction and the duration of the tourist stay. There are a number of other direct and indirect factors that predict the duration of the tourist stay, among which: the size of the destination country, presence of other tourist sites in the visited country, availability of quality superstructure, price of airline tickets, etc. Undoubtedly, however, the longer the tourist stay, the more attractive the target destination.



**Chart 3 Dynamics of the number of nights spent at accommodation establishments, CEE**



Source: Virtual Tourism Observatory, EC

This indicator also reveals a tendency for an east-north axis formation in CEE in terms of tourism development. Romania, together with Hungary, Lithuania and Latvia, lead the group of countries with the highest rate of development of the indicator examined, and Bulgaria and the Czech Republic being the last. However, it should be noted that the whole region has an upward trend in the number of

overnight stays in favour of foreign tourists.

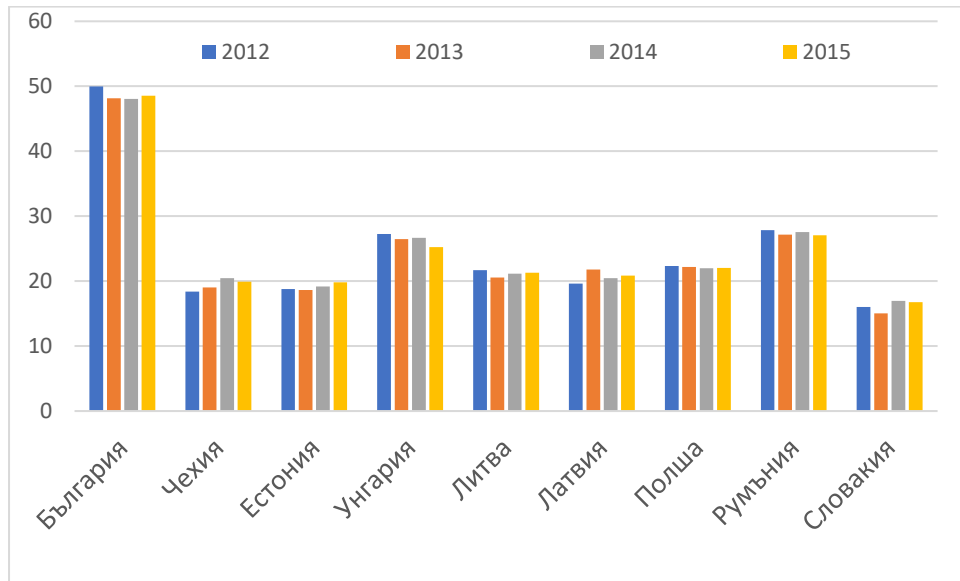
An indication of the degree of tourist attractiveness of a destination is the indicator "average length of nights spent". The shorter average duration reveals a tourist interest mainly as an excursion, linked with a one-time visit to the tourist attraction rather than residence. All CEE countries surveyed registered a downward trend in the average length of nights spent in the period 2012-2015 (-6% on average for the region), with the most negative trend being in Latvia (-11%), Lithuania (-9%) and Bulgaria (-8%). Other countries in the group registered lower dynamics in the length of nights spent, with the result of Romania being -5%.

Another significant indicator of the state of tourism is the "seasonal amplitude" indicator. It provides an important assessment of the tourist potential of the countries surveyed. Seasonality creates considerable difficulties in terms of reducing the profitability of tourism enterprises and the use of their main funds, degrading tourist services and generating employee turnover. Estimation of the seasonal



amplitude is done through the so-called Gini Index, which measures the degree to which the distribution of tourist overnight stays in a country deviates from non-seasonal distribution. Values close to 0 reflect a low degree of seasonality, while values close to 100 reflect a high degree of seasonality.

**Chart 4 Seasonal amplitude in the CEE countries**



Source: Virtual Tourism Observatory, EC

Evident from the chart, the country with the lowest degree of seasonality is Slovakia, which means that the country has conditions for year-round tourism on its territory. At the opposite end of the ranking is Bulgaria, which is the CEE country with the least conditions for year-round tourism.

Another prospect of benchmarking of CEE countries in the field of tourism is the Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Index, maintained by the World Economic Forum. For 2017, Romania is ranked 68th out of 138 (the places are equal to the number of countries covered) and Bulgaria is ranked 45th. The further down a country is in the ranking, the higher its competitiveness in tourism.

Bulgaria (45th), Romania (68th), Czech Republic (39th), Estonia (37th), Hungary (49th), Lithuania (56th), Latvia (54th), Poland (46th), Slovakia (59th place).

According to the index, the weakest (and therefore the most vulnerable) elements of tourism in Romania are terrestrial and port infrastructure, followed by airport infrastructure, human resources and labour market, price competitiveness. At the other end of the ranking, the highest place is taken by the indicators of health and hygiene, safety, environmental sustainability, and cultural resources. The



weaknesses of Bulgaria's tourism competitiveness are safety, airport, terrestrial and port infrastructure, and the strengths are health and hygiene, environment and tourist services and infrastructure.

From the comparative review of the data on the development of tourism in CEE, the following conclusions could be made:

- Despite the number of challenges to tourism (terrorist threats, climate change, political instability), its development outruns the growth of global economy's GDP;
- Europe continues to be the world's leading destination for domestic and inbound tourism;
- Major competitors of Bulgaria and Romania from the CEE region are Latvia, Lithuania and Hungary - this trend reveals the growing tourist interest in more unpopular destinations;
- A tourist axis east-north is formed within CEE

Romania is ahead of Bulgaria on all surveyed tourism development indicators.

## **Bulgaria**

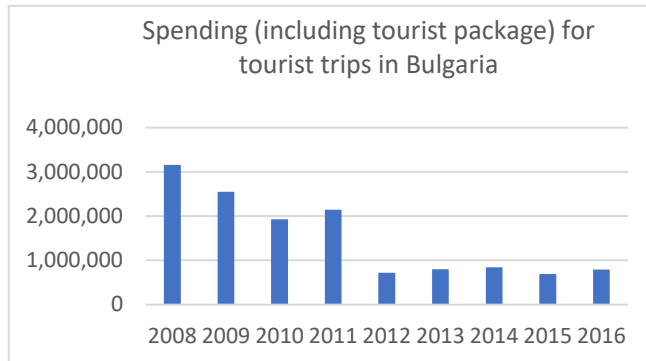
For decades, international tourism in Bulgaria has seen a steady trend of continuous increase in the number of foreign tourists who have chosen the country as a place for vacation. According to the World Travel and Tourism Council, the direct contribution of tourism to Bulgaria's GDP in 2016 was BGN 3,115.9 million. (3.4% of GDP). It is expected that in 2017 it will grow by 4.6% to BGN 2,358.7 million. Tourism in the country generated 98,000 jobs in 2016 (3.2% of total employment), with the number expected to increase by 6.2% in 2017 to 104,000 (3.4% of total employment). Foreign tourist spending is a key element of tourism's direct contribution to GDP. In 2016 Bulgaria generated BGN 6,962.0 million on this indicator. In 2017, spending is expected to increase by 5.7% and the country - to attract 8,163,000 foreign tourists.

Despite the optimistic assessment and forecasts for the development of tourism in the country made by international organizations, current NSI statistics illustrate less positive scenarios of development. The above-mentioned comparative analysis of tourism development in CEE countries placed Bulgaria at the last place on all surveyed indicators, including by growth of foreign tourists. The negative trend of development of the country is marked by tourist trips, domestic trips, overnight stays of foreign tourists (non-residents) at accommodation establishments indicators. Tourism in the country is the only one in Europe with the highest degree of seasonality. Despite the growing number of foreign tourists in Bulgaria, tourism spending also registered a negative trend, decreasing by 75% in 2016, compared to 2008.





**Chart 5 Tourism spending in Bulgaria, 2008-2016, BGN thousand, NSI**



The illustration shows a drastic drop in spending in 2012 (-66% compared to 2011), this level being maintained until 2016. - The reasons for this decline are complex, but the fact is that the higher costs coincide with the period of the global financial crisis, and their sharp decline occurs in the post-crisis period. The

conclusion is that Bulgaria continues to maintain a negative image of a cheap destination (visited more often in times of crisis) and its inability to respond to the growing demand for higher quality, authenticity, attractiveness and diversity of tourist services and environment is obvious.

The country is still not competitive enough on the tourist services market. It is also said that it is more known as a country for mass sea tourism and the popularity of alternative forms of tourism is still limited despite the favourable conditions for their practice. Undoubtedly, the estimate that the economic benefits from foreign citizens' spending in Bulgarian destinations are significantly higher, is true. This fact suggests that it is much more reasonable to focus marketing and commercial efforts on external emitting (generating) markets. Due to the significantly lower spending of tourists in the country for end-use of tourism-related products, the targeted stimulation of domestic tourism would have less economic impact.

Similar negative trends in the development of tourism in Bulgaria are also observed at regional level. The subject of the study are 7 regions, which fall within the area of the targeted route: Vidin, Vratsa, Montana, Pleven, Silistra, Veliko Tarnovo and Ruse.

**Table 3 Number of accommodation establishments in the target regions, 2011-2015, Bulgaria**

Region	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	% change 15/11
Vidin	45	33	36	36	32	-29%
Montana	32	30	26	27	27	-16%
Vratsa	33	25	29	30	29	-12%
Pleven	13	14	23	29	29	123%
Veliko Tarnovo	107	104	112	118	116	8%
Ruse	123	46	44	42	47	-62%
Silistra	33	20	20	20	20	-39%



*Source: NSI*

Pleven and Silistra regions are the only ones that have registered a positive growth in the number of accommodation units. For the same period, the growth rate of the number of overnight stays increased by 20% in Pleven region, while in Silistra region it decreased by -8%. That is, in both regions, the development of facilities outweighs the volume of tourists who use them, and this is an indicator of unstructured and incoherent processes in tourism development.

The table below gives a more detailed picture of the dynamics of the number of actual nights spent in the target areas.



**Table 4 Actual number of nights spent per target region, 2008, 2012, 2016, Bulgaria**

Region	2008			2012			2016			% change in the total number of nights spent 16/08
	Actual number of nights spent at accommodation establishments - total	Actual number of nights spent by Bulgarian citizens	Actual number of nights spent by foreign citizens	Actual number of nights spent at accommodation establishments - total	Actual number of nights spent by Bulgarian citizens	Actual number of nights spent by foreign citizens	Actual number of nights spent at accommodation establishments - total	Actual number of nights spent by Bulgarian citizens	Actual number of nights spent by foreign citizens	
<b>Total for the country</b>	18,295,403	35%	65%	20,252,038	34%	66%	25,185,996	36%	64%	38%
<b>Vidin</b>	35,413	79%	21%	52,249	79%	21%	51,090	77%	23%	44%
<b>Vratsa</b>	51,884	85%	15%	72,679	86%	14%	95,703	81%	19%	84%
<b>Montana</b>	61,482	92%	8%	71,917	92%	8%	63,772	92%	8%	4%
<b>Pleven</b>	95,708	83%	17%	80,863	74%	26%	80,962	82%	18%	-15%
<b>Veliko Tarnovo</b>	221,033	82%	18%	275,162	78%	22%	320,395	80%	20%	45%
<b>Ruse</b>	133,761	76%	24%	148,091	71%	29%	145,759	69%	31%	9%
<b>Silistra</b>	33,288	75%	25%	39,337	74%	26%	30,902	80%	20%	-7%

Source: NSI

In the period 2008-2016, again on the territory of Pleven and Silistra regions, a negative trend was registered in the decrease of the number of nights spent. Vidin, Vratsa and Veliko Tarnovo regions report an upward trend in the number of nights spent in values above the national rate. The number of nights spent in Montana and Ruse regions also grows but with values below the national average. A key feature of the surveyed regions is that the share of domestic tourism is



higher than that of inbound tourism, while the country's average data is in the opposite perspective. Out of all 7 regions, Ruse, followed by Vidin, has the highest share of overnight stays by foreign tourists, and Montana region, followed by Pleven, has the lowest. As regards the number of people who stayed overnight in the target regions, the picture is no different from the number of actual nights spent. The leader in the group is Vratsa region, which marks a 62% growth in 2016 compared to 2008, followed by Vidin region with growth of 56%. The results of both regions exceed the average number of overnight tourists in the country, which registered a 43% growth in the period 2008-2016. At the other end of the ranking are Pleven (-18%) and Silistra (-11%) regions.

A review of the *average number of nights spent per tourist* indicator places the target areas in the opposite order. The leader in terms of growth in the length of nights spent for the period 2008-2016 is Silistra (51%), which otherwise has a downward trend in the number of tourists visiting the area and the number of overnight stays. In absolute terms, however, the region where tourists stay the longest in 2016 is Montana - 2.4 nights per tourist. The shortest stay is reported by Vidin (1.3 nights), followed by Veliko Tarnovo (1.4). The duration of tourist stay in all target regions is below the average for the country. The duration of the tourist stay is an important factor with positive effects on the economic development of the respective territory and an important indicator of its tourist attractiveness.

Regarding the degree of development of cultural and historical tourism in the target Bulgarian regions, it could be pointed out that its current state is unsatisfactory but with high potential for designation as a key tourist tendency. Within the preliminary study and during the preparation of this Strategy, all 90 sites of the route were thoroughly evaluated in terms of a number of indicators, such as accessibility, information and technical infrastructure, physical condition, legal status, relationship with other forms of tourism, accommodation establishments and others. The main challenges to archaeological sites to be addressed are in the field of improving accessibility, socialization and exposure of sites.

Regarding the Bulgarian sites of movable cultural heritage (museums) from the route, the following main difficulties that museums face could be summarized:

- A major problem affecting the entire north-west of Bulgaria is the uncontrollable scale of treasure hunts, which is why most archaeological sites outside the settlements have been destroyed. There is no security.



- When compiling the map of restored property (MRP) and the cadastres, archaeological sites are not taken into account - they are not entered at all or are not in their exact places, their properties are not classified as cultural assets;
- In most archaeological sites, no boundaries and regimes have been set, no status has been assigned to many of the archaeological sites;
- The majority of land ownership in archaeological sites is private. One part is managed as agricultural land, another falls within the scope of settlement systems, and so sites do not receive the necessary "archaeological site" designation.
- Extremely limited funds of archaeological excavations;
- The archaeological sites of Roman culture heritage are unpopular;
- The museum has problems with the material base due to poor quality restoration activities;
- Poorly developed connection of museums with tourist business. There is a need to increase the management capacity for museum expositions in the context of increasing competition and the development of a digital society.

Below is a review and analysis of the degree of development of cultural and historical tourism in Romania.

## Romania

On Romania's official website for the promotion of tourism in the country there are 37 administrative counties (out of 41) represented as tourist destinations and 9 historical districts<sup>21</sup>. All counties through which the route "Roman Frontier Within the Cross-border Region Romania-Bulgaria" passes, are marketed as destinations for cultural tourism, but thematic directions have not been mentioned (e.g. Antiquity, Middle Ages, etc.). Meanwhile, the historic regions Oltenia and Muntenia, through which the route "Roman Frontier Within the Cross-border Region Romania-Bulgaria" passes, are presented as Lesser Wallachia (Oltenia) and Greater Wallachia (Muntenia). The whole region of Wallachia is presented as a colourful mix of historical and natural attractions focusing on the numerous museums, theatres and exhibition halls in Bucharest, ski resorts and Peles castle in the Carpathian Mountains, and numerous monasteries, including Horezu (UNESCO site).

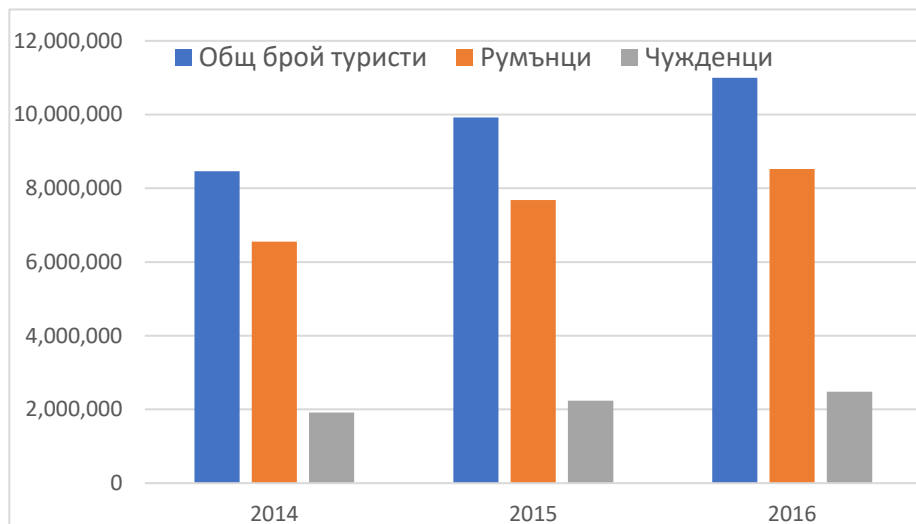
<sup>21</sup> <http://www.romania.travel/>



Romania, as a tourist destination, is also presented on the Internet by separate sites in the relevant foreign language, such as those made for the target outbound countries: [www.rumaenien-info.at](http://www.rumaenien-info.at), [www.rumaenien-tourismus.de](http://www.rumaenien-tourismus.de), [www.guideroumanie.com](http://www.guideroumanie.com), [www.romania.it](http://www.romania.it), [www.romaniatravel.ru](http://www.romaniatravel.ru).

The ever more focused and target-tourist oriented tourism development policy of Romania and the country's ever-competitive tourist performance in CEE generate positive effects on the dynamics of the development of key tourism indicators. Below is a selection of indicators with a three-year time frame, 2014-2016, according to the most recent edition of NSI dedicated to tourism<sup>22</sup>.

**Chart 6 Number of tourist arrivals at accommodation establishments, Romania**



Source: NSI

All three groups of tourists have an average annual growth of 30% in the period 2014-2016. The prevailing share of domestic tourism is impressive, while in Bulgaria there is predominantly inbound tourism. Here it is necessary to clarify that Romania has a population almost 3.5 times larger than that of Bulgaria and the direct comparison between the two countries is statistically incorrect. The number of overnight stays is 3:1 in favour of domestic tourism.

**Chart 7 Number of nights spent at accommodation establishments per tourist zone, 2016, Romania**

<sup>22</sup> <http://www.insse.ro/cms/en>





Source: NSI

The chart shows that the Bucharest region is the most visited by tourists, and on the other end of the ranking is the Danube delta. Although the area of the target route "Roman Frontier Within the Cross-border Region Romania-Bulgaria" does not fall entirely within any of the differentiated tourist zones, these data are important for highlighting the competitive destinations and defining marketing measures to overcome the uncompetitive characteristics of the route.

At the level of planning region, the leader in terms of tourist visits is again the capital Bucharest.



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**Table 5 Number of tourist arrivals at accommodation establishments and number of nights spent per planning region, 2015 and 2016, Romania**

Region	Tourist arrivals at accommodation establishments (number)						Number of nights spent					
	2015			2016			2015			2016		
	Total	Romanians	Foreigners	Total	Romanians	Foreigners	Total	Romanians	Foreigners	Total	Romanians	Foreigners
<b>TOTAL</b>	9,921,874	7,681,896	2,239,978	11,002,522	8,521,698	2,480,824	23,519,340	19,047,701	4,471,639	25,440,957	20,609,141	4,831,816
<b>1. North East</b>	939,475	822,251	117,224	1,084,045	948,926	135,119	1,934,306	1,699,624	234,682	2,205,775	1,935,068	270,707
<b>2. South East</b>	1,347,969	1,251,822	96,147	1,506,616	1,404,096	102,520	4,918,408	4,547,330	371,078	5,313,781	4,974,217	339,564
<b>3. South - Muntenia</b>	852,652	730,491	122,161	914,141	785,648	128,493	1,909,901	1,661,086	248,815	1,996,392	1,709,716	286,676
<b>4. South West – Oltenia</b>	582,142	531,301	50,841	630,446	582,423	48,023	1,727,528	1,615,675	111,853	1,810,428	1,692,412	118,016
<b>5. West</b>	875,750	713,729	162,021	899,961	726,143	173,818	2,233,754	1,872,194	361,560	2,283,902	1,914,718	369,184
<b>6. North West</b>	1,140,667	931,900	208,767	1,316,363	1,077,788	238,575	2,713,820	2,270,244	443,576	3,088,566	2,607,023	481,543
<b>7. Centre</b>	2,332,362	1,901,886	430,476	2,585,938	2,094,943	490,995	5,042,039	4,122,471	919,568	5,386,220	4,373,269	1,012,951
<b>8. Bucharest - Ilfov</b>	1,850,857	798,516	1,052,341	2,065,012	901,731	1,163,281	3,039,584	1,259,077	1,780,507	3,355,893	1,402,718	1,953,175

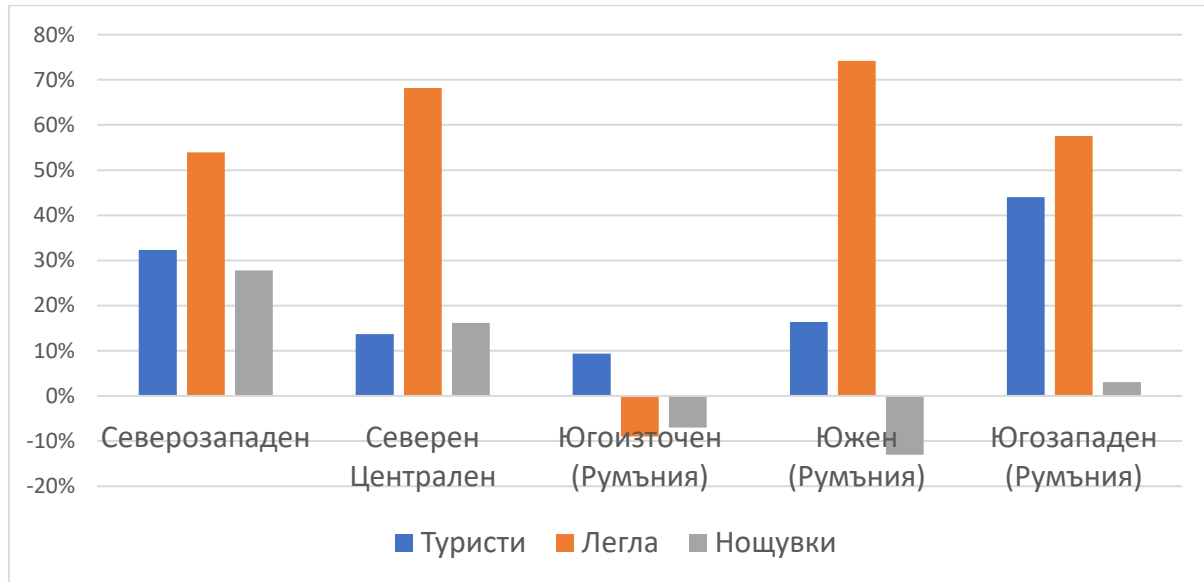
Source: NSI

The most attractive regions to visit by Romanian tourists are the South East (covering the Black Sea and the Danube Delta), Centre (Transylvania), Bucharest-Ilfov and North West (Maramures historical region). These are also the most economically developed regions in the country. Except for the South East region (obviously this destination is replaced by the Bulgarian Black Sea coast), the other three are most frequently visited by foreign tourists, the leader in the group again being Bucharest-Ilfov. The same regions are also at the top of the ranking for most actual nights spent by foreign tourists.



By comparing the tourist attractiveness of the 5 planning regions that fall within the route "Roman Frontier Within the Cross-border Region Romania-Bulgaria", the following illustrated results are obtained:

**Chart 8 Growth of number of tourists, beds and nights spent per target planning region, 2015/2005, Bulgaria and Romania**



Source: Eurostat

For a 10-year period, in the illustrated Bulgarian and Romanian planning regions there are diverse tourism development processes. In Bulgaria there is an upward trend in the development of key tourist indicators, while in Romania the growth is varying to negative. The key indicator for economic development "actual number of nights spent" marks a negative growth in Romania and positive in Bulgaria. A careful review of the chart could outline the following behavioural profile of a tourist in the area of the route "Roman Frontier Within the Cross-border Region Romania-Bulgaria": visits the South West region of Romania, staying overnight in the North West of Bulgaria. Tourists choose places to stay where the area is more concentrated in terms of tourist attractions in a relatively close distance from each other. In terms of location, attractions in the South West region are positioned in distant territories from each other.

The choice of Romanian tourists for the realization of specialized forms of tourism is illustrated in the table below.



**Table 6 Number of Romanian tourists participating in local tourist activities per forms of tourism, 2015 and 2016**

<i>Tour operators</i>		<i>Sales agencies</i>		<i>Forms of tourism</i>
2015	2016	2015	2016	
430,832	590,500	133,502	162,618	<i>Total number of tourists</i>
248,174	340,949	50,302	61,437	<i>Black Sea tourism</i>
151	282	-	31	<i>River cruises</i>
114	125	25	79	<i>Sea cruises</i>
8,984	6,043	849	1,587	<i>Danube Delta</i>
5,120	15,356	7,257	9,145	<i>Cultural tourism</i>
2,484	21,014	1,366	1,871	<i>Religious tourism</i>
63,105	76,758	21,068	24,155	<i>Mountain tourism</i>
29,212	24,892	9,009	13,159	<i>Spa tourism</i>
73,488	105,081	43,626	51,154	<i>Other forms</i>

Source: NSI

The preferences of Romanian tourists for practicing cultural tourism in the country in 2015, using tour operators, account for 1% of total domestic tourism, while in 2016 the share increases to 3%. Cultural tourism, however, marks the second largest growth of 200% in 2016 compared to 2015, preceded by religious tourism, which registered a growth of 746%. The probable cause is the most common combination of cultural and other types of tourism. The typical combinations with cultural tourism are culinary, mountain, sea tourism, rural and eco-tourism. This makes the route "Roman Frontier Within the Cross-border Region Romania-Bulgaria" an attractive cultural route for integration with a main tourist destination.

## 2.4. Priority markets

According to the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), despite the growing and unpredictable shocks of terrorist attacks, political instability, pandemics, and natural disasters, tourism continues to register sustainable development, and in 2016 it accounts for a direct contribution to GDP growth of 3.1% (the economy accounts for 2.6% direct contribution). The tourist market is one of the most dynamically developing,



with trends of increasing both inbound and outbound tourism from and to Asia, the Pacific, Latin America, Central and Eastern Europe.

According to UNWTO<sup>23</sup>, **China** has been the fastest growing outbound tourists market in recent years, climbing first in the 2012 foreign tourism expenditure ranking. In 2013, China registered a record high spending on tourism by EUR 17 billion, reaching a level of EUR 97 billion, forming a lead of EUR 32 billion against the US (second in the ranking) and Germany (third in the ranking). Supported by the rising middle class and rapidly growing disposable income, as well as less restrictions on foreign travel and high currencies, Chinese tourism spending has registered almost exponential growth in recent decades. Chinese tourism spending has increased almost seven times in 13 years, from EUR 14 billion in 2000 to EUR 97 billion in 2013.

In 2013, the **Russian Federation** became the fourth largest outbound market, registering a 25% increase in tourism spending, reaching EUR 40 billion. This is the second fastest growing market in recent years after China, thanks to an increase in annual spending by EUR 26 billion since pre-crisis 2006. In 2000, Russians travelling abroad spent just under EUR 10 billion and since then the spending has increased four times.

**Brazil** is the third fastest growing outbound tourists market with annual spending, since 2006, an average of EUR 14 billion. In 2013, Brazilians' travel expenses abroad grew by 13% to EUR 19 billion. In 2000, Brazilians travelling abroad spent just EUR 4 billion, and since then spending has increased more than four times.

A whole set of developed and developing economies increased their tourism spending by EUR 1 billion (up to EUR 6 billion). Among the latter are the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Qatar in the Middle East, Malaysia, the Philippines, India, Indonesia, Iran and Thailand in Asia and the Pacific Ocean. Only two countries spend significantly less in 2013 than before the crisis: United Kingdom (EUR -11 billion) and Japan (EUR -5 billion). Thus, the growth of non-European tourists is expected to be an average of 2.9% per year, reaching 144 million in 2025. In the two decades 2010-2030, a large proportion of EU tourists will come from countries in Asia, Latin America, Central and Eastern Europe, Eastern Mediterranean Europe, Africa and the Middle East (UNWTO).

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<sup>23</sup> <http://mkt.unwto.org/en/barometer>



This trend of development of the tourist market reveals the priority markets for incoming tourists, which the development of the route "Roman Frontier Within the Cross-border Region Romania-Bulgaria" should attract through an appropriate marketing strategy. Inbound tourism to Bulgaria and Romania is projected to increase on average by 3.7% per annum by 2025, while the proportion of non-European tourists is expected to grow even faster.

In the Strategy for Sustainable Development of Tourism in Bulgaria 2014-2030 the target markets were identified and divided into the following groups:

(1) Western European markets (UK, Germany and Sweden), which usually have high purchasing power, high intensity of travels abroad and high spending abroad. Also, for all three markets, there is a high affinity for sea vacations in a sunny and warm climate – something that cannot be found in these countries. Another common feature is that Bulgaria has little market share on these three markets, but all three markets have a potential for interest that is considerably higher than the current volume of travel.

(2) The second group is formed by Eastern European and, respectively, neighbouring markets (Czech Republic, Russia, Ukraine, Serbia, Romania, Greece and Turkey). Also, unlike Western European markets where the majority of the population can actually afford to travel abroad or trips to Bulgaria, only a small fraction of the population in Eastern European or neighbouring markets can afford to travel abroad (due to lower purchasing power). However, Bulgaria also has a great potential for interest in all these markets, exceeding (in some countries even many times) the current volume of travel. Another common advantage of these markets is that they have a certain "proximity" to Bulgaria, which means either geographic proximity as a neighbouring country (which usually raises the number of trips) or proximity and familiarity based on similar culture, history and language.

Target markets can also be outlined on the basis of preferences for specific forms of tourism. Bulgaria has a relatively broad target group. This is largely due to the main product of the country – seaside holidays (the so-called mass tourism product on the market), which usually attracts people from all ages and people with different levels of education and income. In contrast, tours focused on cultural tourism or winter sports vacations, for example, are attractive only to people of certain age groups, levels of education and income.

Bulgaria's annual Programme for National Advertising for 2016 specifies the following markets according to the traditional choice of the country's tourists:





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**Bulgaria market** - Bulgarian tourists prefer weekend trips, spa and wellness, eco-tourism, cultural and art festivals, sports events, skiing and summer vacations

**Traditional mass markets** – seaside and ski holidays – Germany, UK, Russia, Ukraine, Scandinavia, Central Europe, France, Benelux, Balkan countries

**Special interest markets** – special events (Spain), eco- and cultural tourism (France), cultural and spa tourism (Germany, Israel), adventurous (UK), pilgrimage (Russia), cultural and art festivals (Japan and China), cultural tourism (Italy, Spain), spa tourism (Scandinavia)

**New markets with growth potential** - Middle Asia and the Far East

Bulgaria's annual Programme for National Advertising for 2016 prioritises the following markets, with the objective the prioritizing to support communication measures:

(1) Markets of top priority for Bulgaria should be Germany, Russia, Romania, the UK, Greece, Turkey.

(2) Secondary priority markets should be France, Poland, Benelux, the Czech Republic, Austria, Macedonia, Israel, Serbia, Italy, Sweden, Hungary

NSI data on inbound tourism make another arrangement of the markets whose outbound tourists choose Bulgaria as a tourist destination.



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**Table 7 Actual number of nights spent by foreign citizens at accommodation establishments in Bulgaria**

	2013	2014	2015	2016	% growth rate 2016/2013
<i>TOTAL</i>	14,370,426.00	14,077,798.00	13,352,281.00	16,150,666.00	12.4%
<i>European Union</i>	8,299,093.00	8,232,264.00	8,660,299.00	10,888,611.00	31.2%
<i>Other European countries</i>	4,398,673.00	3,896,720.00	2,723,160.00	3,286,609.00	-25.3%
<i>Germany</i>	2,286,613.00	2,342,577.00	2,339,836.00	3,232,877.00	41.4%
<i>Russian Federation</i>	2,823,295.00	2,396,020.00	1,355,826.00	1,865,558.00	-33.9%
<i>Romania</i>	1,454,411.00	1,203,802.00	1,462,940.00	1,587,836.00	9.2%
<i>Poland</i>	837,196.00	933,527.00	989,481.00	1,368,215.00	63.4%
<i>United Kingdom</i>	1,042,027.00	1,010,391.00	1,124,930.00	1,341,086.00	28.7%
<i>Other countries</i>	446,144.00	536,935.00	632,910.00	722,548.00	62.0%
<i>Israel</i>	318,596.00	401,104.00	467,981.00	546,817.00	71.6%
<i>Czech Republic</i>	312,840.00	339,099.00	360,762.00	502,461.00	60.6%
<i>Norway</i>	335,719.00	328,516.00	292,558.00	321,416.00	-4.3%
<i>Belgium</i>	177,567.00	185,751.00	210,164.00	315,099.00	77.5%
<i>France</i>	259,255.00	274,332.00	261,327.00	303,767.00	17.2%
<i>Greece</i>	225,925.00	226,457.00	225,201.00	246,235.00	9.0%
<i>Slovakia</i>	222,026.00	220,884.00	205,760.00	224,202.00	1.0%
<i>Denmark</i>	165,581.00	150,038.00	170,985.00	186,533.00	12.7%
<i>Hungary</i>	168,056.00	139,739.00	158,569.00	184,279.00	9.7%
<i>the Netherlands</i>	151,084.00	144,099.00	130,473.00	177,476.00	17.5%
<i>Italy</i>	130,237.00	164,211.00	162,101.00	176,888.00	35.8%
<i>USA</i>	96,279.00	103,527.00	136,987.00	150,377.00	56.2%

Source: NSI



Presented data on nights spent in Bulgaria combine trips for tourism and business purposes so they should not be considered an indicator of tourist attractiveness. The fact that business trips are becoming an increasingly important niche for the development of tourist destinations also should not be underestimated. Presented data show that countries with an interest in cultural tourism, as mentioned above – France, Germany, Israel, Italy, register a marked increase in overnight stays in the last four years. It is also noteworthy that the growth in the number of actual nights spent of Belgium (77%) and Israel (71.6%) is impressive but the hypothesis is that the larger share thereof was realized in the capital in the form of business trips as a result of the growing administrative and business relationships with Belgium, and trade relationships with Israel. However, organized trips of Israeli tourists to the Bulgarian Black Sea coast and their preference for a combination of mass and non-mass tourism (see above) are sufficient prerequisites for Israel to become a target market with a medium priority. The United States and the Netherlands may join the same group as they registered a high growth in overnight stays in Bulgaria. Due to the rich ethnic diversity inhabiting both countries, tourists from these countries are not classified as traditional admirers of mass tourism. If the demonstrated growing interest of the USA and Israel in Bulgaria is combined with an appropriate marketing strategy on the targeted cultural and historical route, the cross-border region Bulgaria-Romania would be attractive enough to the remote USA and Israel for which the opportunity to visit more countries with just one destination (route "Roman Frontier Within the Cross-border Region Romania-Bulgaria") is crucial.

An almost identical market for inbound tourists is also registered in Romania. In the latest compendium of the Romanian NSI on the development of tourism in the country data are presented only for 2015 and 2016, and only those for 2016 are illustrated here, due to the lack of sufficient statistical information to register a development trend.

**Table 8 Actual number of nights spent by foreign citizens at accommodation establishments, Romania, 2016**

Country	Number of nights spent	Share of total number of tourists from Europe
<b>Germany</b>	546,275	15.41%
<b>Italy</b>	452,274	12.76%
<b>Hungary</b>	295,065	8.32%
<b>France</b>	264,482	7.46%
<b>United Kingdom</b>	250,763	7.07%
<b>Poland</b>	174,764	4.93%
<b>Spain</b>	170,279	4.80%



<b>Moldova</b>	159,075	4.49%
<b>Greece</b>	115,237	3.25%
<b>Bulgaria</b>	112,030	3.16%
<b>the Netherlands</b>	109,745	3.10%
<b>Austria</b>	108,796	3.07%
<b>Israel</b>	579,414	
<b>USA</b>	254,487	

Source: NSI Romania

Surprisingly, the largest number of nights spent in Romania in 2016 has been made by citizens of Israel, with the number of overnight stays slightly surpassing that of the leader Germany, while US citizens outrun the traditional representative of the group of major markets – United Kingdom. As noted in Appendix 3.5 Tourism Analysis, unpopular destinations such as Bulgaria and Romania attract more visitors from non-European countries, and the marketing strategy for the development of route "Roman Frontier Within the Cross-border Region Romania-Bulgaria" should adequately reflect this trend. A comparison between the target markets of Bulgaria and Romania highlights the following two differences:

- (1) The Scandinavian countries, together with the Czech Republic and Slovakia, are a market with potential for development in Bulgaria in the segment of maritime tourism, while in Romania this sub-sector is not competitive and therefore these countries are absent in the group of countries with high number of visits;
- (2) Romania is a frequent choice of a tourist destination for neighbouring countries as well as for France, Spain and Italy due to similarity in the language systems with the last three countries. This is a factor of great importance for the development of tourism due to the ability of language to form a sense of closeness and similarity in many other spheres.
- (3) The United Kingdom is a major target market for tourism in Bulgaria and Romania, but the country is more of a follower of mass tourism (seaside, winter) and, to a lesser extent, the alternative. However, British people who have reached retirement age form a fundamental target group for cultural tourism combined with balneology, for which Bulgaria and Romania can offer inexhaustible resources and conditions for every taste. The historical link between the route "Roman Frontier Within the Cross-border Region Romania-Bulgaria" and the first Roman Limes route certified by UNESCO, encompassing the UK and Germany, is a mandatory element of the marketing strategy for the development of the route.



Romania, like Bulgaria, also identifies markets for tourism development in the country. In the national Strategic and Operational Plan of Tourism Marketing for 2011-2015, 8 main target markets are identified: Germany, Italy, France, United Kingdom, Austria, Russia, USA, Hungary, and 11 markets with potential: the Netherlands, Spain, Poland, Belgium, Sweden, Bulgaria, Ukraine, Serbia, Republic of Moldova, China, Japan.

From the review of quantitative (official statistics for Bulgaria and Romania) and qualitative (analysis of strategic documents) data on inbound tourism in Bulgaria and Romania, the following priority markets for route "Roman Frontier Within the Cross-border Region Romania-Bulgaria" can be summarised and grouped, having a time horizon 2030.

The most suitable for inclusion in the group of **main priority markets** for route "Roman Frontier Within the Cross-border Region Romania-Bulgaria" are:

- (1) Germany, Austria, Slovakia, Hungary, Croatia, Serbia, Moldova, Ukraine – countries along the Danube;
- (2) Czech Republic, Poland, France, Spain and Italy – the first two are traditional countries for Bulgarian tourism with increasing number of nights spent, whose tourists tend to combine mass and non-mass tourism, especially those who visit the area on the Bulgarian Black Sea coast. The last three are the traditional market of Romania with improving indicators, with France and Italy registering increasing interest in Bulgaria as a tourist destination offering a variety of natural and anthropogenic resources. The diversity of resources is also a distinctive feature of tourism in France, Spain and Italy.
- (3) Israel – citizens of the country are increasingly visiting Romania and Bulgaria, registering steady and sustainable growth; they demonstrate a high interest in combining mass and non-mass tourism, and in particular with cultural and spa tourism.

The most suitable for inclusion in the group of **medium priority main markets** for route "Roman Frontier Within the Cross-border Region Romania-Bulgaria" are:

- (1) The United States and the Netherlands – countries with increasing number of nights spent which are ethnically diverse, with varying interests and preferences, and this is a prerequisite for tourists from these countries not to be classified as traditional fans of mass tourism;
- (2) Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia – the outbound tourism of the three countries and the interest in studying new cultures (as opposed to the traditional image they create - of isolated and closed cultures) are increasing;



(4) United Kingdom – target group 66+;

(5) China – visits of Chinese tourists to both countries continues to grow with sustainable rates. This country's interest in European civilization and history is unconditional, and combined with forecasts for being the fastest growing outbound tourism by 2030, China is becoming a serious potential market.

The most suitable for inclusion in the group of **low-priority markets** for route "Roman Frontier Within the Cross-border Region Romania-Bulgaria" by 2030 are:

(1) Russian Federation and Scandinavian countries – the interest of tourists from these countries in mass tourism dominates over non-mass. For Scandinavian tourists, however, the river cruises from the Upper Danube to route "Roman Frontier Within the Cross-border Region Romania-Bulgaria", marketed through appropriate tourist packages, are an alternative destination or one that adds value to mass tourism. However, the attracted number of tourists for cultural and river cruises would be relatively small and this is the main consideration for their positioning in this group of markets.

(2) Relatively small countries in Europe – Portugal, Malta, Cyprus, Ireland – with a proposal to diversify sea tourism, which is key to island and semi-island countries, with river tourism, where the water element is key for destination selection.

The most suitable for inclusion in the group of **limited priority markets** for route "Roman Frontier Within the Cross-border Region Romania-Bulgaria" are:

(1) Switzerland and Luxembourg – countries with preference for higher class and more expensive destinations;

(2) Countries from Central Asia, the Far East, Latin America, Africa, Australia, New Zealand and Canada.

The development of route "Roman Frontier Within the Cross-border Region Romania-Bulgaria", as an integrated cultural and historical tourism product, attracts the following target groups of tourists:

1. Organized groups from Danube cruises
2. Older people in organized groups
3. Middle-aged people organizing their trips on their own
4. Young people up to 29 years





## 5. Groups of children, students

Groups 1,3,4,5 are identified in the Preliminary Study on an Integrated Cultural Heritage Tourism Product: Route "Roman Frontier Within the Cross-border Region Romania-Bulgaria", implemented within the framework of this project. Target group 2 is identified as a priority by the Association of Bulgarian Tour Operators and Travel Agents, which also took part in the development of the questionnaire to examine the views of its members on what characteristics are needed for route "Roman Frontier Within the Cross-border Region Romania-Bulgaria" to become a competitive tourist product. As a result of the survey, 43% of respondents consider the route to be most attractive for group 2. Equal number of votes (27%) are shared between groups 1 and 3.

Taking into account the current state of the route as a complex of developed and undeveloped tourist sites, the profile of the most frequent visitor to the route could be outlined as follows: a foreign citizen, aged 30 and above, with higher education, average finances, and using a tourist package/organized trip.

Bulgarian and Romanian tourists visiting route "Roman Frontier Within the Cross-border Region Romania-Bulgaria" would have the following profile: people of all ages living mainly in big cities, more often with average and higher earnings, with average duration of stay – between 2 and 3 days.

### 2.5 SWOT analysis

The results of the socio-economic analysis have shown that all territories that fall within the area of route "Roman Frontier Within the Cross-border Region Romania-Bulgaria" have untapped tourism potential which requires serious investment, attractive marketing and effective management. There is seasonal consumption and limited diversification of route "Roman Frontier Within the Cross-border Region Romania-Bulgaria", limited duration of stay and low average income from tourists. The diversity of sites implies a fragmentation in the approaches to its management that would violate the integrity of the route. The different degree of socialization and infrastructure security of the sites also produces other deficiency characteristics of the route, which together with its unconditional competitive advantages form the starting points in the planning of the strategic framework. One of the most serious deficiencies of Bulgarian sites on the route is their fragmented ownership, and undeveloped general and specialized infrastructure of secondary sites. Many of these sites have either private or mixed ownership. The poor service and low prices of Bulgarian tourist products create a danger for building a lasting image of the country as a "cheap destination". Poverty



and low income of a significant proportion of the population in the target region restrict consumption and access to culture and narrow the domestic tourism market. The outdated system for vocational training in tourism and the lack of sufficient interest and incentives as well as modern forms of education and training in the field of culture do not contribute for an adequate tourist interpretation of the cultural and historical resources.

Within the process of elaboration of the SWOT analysis for the purposes of strategic planning for the development of the route, the following factors with the greatest influence on the transformation of the route "Roman Frontier Within the Cross-border Region Romania-Bulgaria" into an established tourism product have been identified:

(1) The most important role for the development of the route is its potential for integration in another well-established transnational cultural, historical and tourist route– the Danube Limes.

(2) 1/3 of the sites on the route function as independent tourist sites and are already included in the preliminary list of UNESCO;

(3) Crucial to the development of the route are the factors affecting financing, crediting and taxation of cultural tourism. Romania's diverse fiscal incentives to stimulate tourism supply increase opportunities for competitive development of the infrastructure and services in the target region, but the delay of Bulgaria in this direction poses a risk of unbalanced development of the route;

(4) Lack of attractive advertising of cultural and historical tourism in both countries, which in respect to Bulgaria leads to deepening of the negative image of the country as a "cheap destination". This image is also fuelled by the deceleration in increase rate in the quality of the Bulgarian tourism product compared to that of the competing countries, including Romania. The poor quality of most of the components of the Bulgarian tourism product is one of the biggest problems faced by the industry today. At the same time, due to the lack of effective marketing policy of Bulgarian hotel-keepers, the high quality product is sold at low prices;

(5) The current state of the tourist superstructure in the target region is unsatisfactory and uncompetitive;

(6) With the introduction of ICT in tourism demand and supply, there is an upward trend for the share of cultural tourism worldwide. This is due, on the one hand, to the increasingly accessible information on various cultural and historical topics and, on the



other hand, to the increase of short city and weekend holidays for visiting cultural events. Contributing to the development of this type of tourism is the expansion of low-cost flights, making destinations accessible to more and more tourists;

(7) Cultural and historical tourism is seldom carried out in a "pure" form and is most often combined with other traditional and specialized types of tourism, which increases the likelihood of more tourists in cultural and historical destinations. Suitable for practicing all year round and outside the active tourist periods;

(8) As natural destinations, riparian areas, together with islands and coastal areas, are the destinations most exposed to environmental changes that can lead to the transformation of tourist choices and activities. It is necessary to apply a balanced approach based on the principles of mitigation (i.e. actions limiting factors contributing to climate change, thus mitigating its impact) and adaptation (i.e. taking the necessary steps to tackle the effects of climate change).

As a result of the above, the following SWOT analysis was developed for the innovative development and improvement of route "Roman Frontier Within the Cross-border Region Romania-Bulgaria" into a tourism product. The purpose of the SWOT analysis, besides suggesting and justifying the development of a strategy, is that it sets the direction of interventions by striving to minimize the effects of the weaknesses and maximize the benefits of the strengths.

**Table 9 SWOT analysis of the development of route "Roman Frontier Within the Cross-border Region Romania-Bulgaria"**

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
Strong potential for route differentiation both as a separate tourism product "route "Roman Frontier Within the Cross-border Region Romania-Bulgaria"" and as part of the transnational Danube Limes route	Unbalanced economic and tourist development of territories of the target region, including deteriorating demographic picture of the target area
Strong potential for integrating the route with other preferred forms of tourism	Unbalanced form of management of sites from the route on both sides of the Danube
Geographical scope of the route covered by marketed tourist regions in Bulgaria and Romania	Insufficient prioritized development of cultural and historical tourism by national, regional and local authorities
High potential for joint and coordinated with local partners route management	Poor coordination between the subjects of management of cultural and historical tourism in the region



	Lack of recognizable image of Romania-Bulgaria cross-border region as a cultural and historical tourist destination
	Relatively high seasonality
	There are no incentives for investments by Bulgarian sites
	Low average annual employment at accommodation establishments in the target region
	Low quality of the general technical infrastructure of secondary sites on the Bulgarian part of the route
	Low quality of specialized infrastructure (e.g. basic and complementary services) for most route sites
	Poor stationary information-guiding English-speaking system and minimum provision of tourist information at sites
	Unattractive exposure of the main sites of the route
	Low degree of embedded ICT within the operation of sites

OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
Increased demand for alternative forms of tourism on a global, regional and national level	The growing global wave of terrorism and extremism
Raising tourist demand on the basis of territorial and ethnic proximity	The unclear fate of the EU after the expiry of the current programming period (Brexit, Hungary, Poland)
Romania's improving image as a democratic state with respect for the rule of law, which attracts both foreign investment in tourism and foreign tourists	Worsening image of Bulgaria as a "cheap destination" with poor quality services
An increasing share of low-budget flights and an increase in the number of airports serving such flights	The development of cultural and historical tourism has not been prioritized by Bulgaria and Romania



Emerging clustering, including in the field of cultural and historical tourism	Institutional impotence for effective combat with treasure hunting
The territory of the route falls within the scope of the EU Strategy for the Development of the Danube Region	Increasing manifestations of climate change and natural cataclysms
1/3 of the cultural and historical sites of the route function as independent tourist sites	

Evident from the analysis, the weaknesses of the route predominate, that is, at the moment it is uncompetitive to attract a growing number of tourists. The result undoubtedly implies and justifies the development of a Strategy for Development, Enhancement and Innovation of an Integrated Cultural Heritage Tourism Product: Route "Roman Frontier Within the Cross-border Region Romania-Bulgaria"

### III. Strategic objectives, mission, vision for sustainable development of the Roman historical and cultural tourism in the cross-border region Romania-Bulgaria

#### 3.1. Priorities, vision, mission and strategic objectives

The strategic framework of the Strategy for Development, Enhancement and Innovation of an Integrated Cultural Heritage Tourism Product: Route "Roman Frontier Within the Cross-border Region Romania-Bulgaria" has been developed in the context of a number of planning and strategic documents (see section 1.1.1) in accordance with the new approaches to spatial organization, coordination and territorial management of cultural and historical tourism, including the new technological approaches to the adaptation and exposure of archaeological sites. The concept of the route, detailed in the preliminary study on the project, is "subject to the UNESCO guidelines for the expression and preservation of authenticity and integrity of the cultural route in their multidimensional features, since through the inclusion of a larger set of sites, synchronous and interconnected with the core elements that primarily belong to the theme of the route and have preserved their original structure, the route enhances its integrity as a system".<sup>24</sup> This is an evolving, open in time route whose dynamics are

<sup>24</sup> Preliminary Study on an Integrated Cultural Heritage Tourism Product: Route "Roman Frontier Within the Cross-border Region Romania-Bulgaria", p. 153, 2017.



supported by 90 sites (see Appendix 1) that have the potential to be developed into modern concepts of cultural heritage preservation and tourism industry. The diversity of sites implies a fragmentation in the approaches to its management that would violate the integrity of the route. The different degree of socialization and infrastructure security of the sites also produces other deficiency characteristics of the route, which together with its unconditional competitive advantages form the starting points in the planning of the strategic framework. Last but not least, the priorities, vision, mission and strategic objectives of the Strategy for Development, Enhancement and Innovation of an Integrated Cultural Heritage Tourism Product: Route "Roman Frontier Within the Cross-border Region Romania-Bulgaria" were formulated, discussed and adopted with the active participation and feedback of stakeholders from the target region. Sustainable development of cultural tourism implies maximum respect for the interests of local communities. They should be the main beneficiaries of development, be optimally involved in the development and especially in the realization of cultural tourism products, actively participate in the preservation and management of the tangible and intangible cultural heritage.

The advisory process for defining and adopting the strategic framework of the Strategy has been conducted long enough to allow careful consideration of the outcomes of the discussions and proposals for changes to the framework. The process took place in three directions:

- (1) 10 round tables were held with all stakeholders – 5 in the Bulgarian regions covered by the route, and 5 in the Romanian ones with a total of 301 participants. Within the round tables, a stakeholder survey was conducted (see Section II. Situational analysis of the development of cultural heritage tourism on the territory of the Romania-Bulgaria cross-border region), where respondents assessed the three options for vision and mission proposed by degree of feasibility. An additional opportunity to discuss the strategic framework of the Strategy was given to stakeholders during the round tables;
- (2) 4 meetings were held with the Contracting Authority to discuss and adopt the strategic framework
- (3) an online survey was also conducted (see section II. Situational analysis of the development of cultural heritage tourism on the territory of the Romania-Bulgaria cross-border region) among tour operators and travel agents under which the respondents prioritized the strengths and weaknesses of the route in terms of its transformation into a cultural and historical tourism product – meaningful basis on which the definition of the strategic framework is set.





- **Vision and mission**

During the preparation of proposals for vision and mission, a detailed review of already defined visions in current strategic documents at European, national, regional and cross-border level was carried out. The methodological guidelines for strategic planning in Bulgaria were studied, whose definition of vision and mission are considered as leading in defining the strategic framework of the Strategy. The vision is a realistic direction for future development. It represents a long-term route picture and illustrates how this route should look after the completion of the Strategy. The vision ensures that the route is situated in the context of the common desirable direction for its development and in turn sets a framework for the objectives. According to the Strategic Planning Methodology, the vision should be:

- inspirational - clear and challenging;
- focusing - giving purpose and direction;
- oriented towards the future - achieving a desired state;
- guiding - provides guidance, without limiting, but addresses overcoming outstanding weaknesses and deficiencies;
- sustainable - provides a long-term perspective without cementing it;
- consistent with the macro targets of relevant planning and strategic documents

If the vision defines the desired state of the route reached for a certain period of time, then through the mission ADRM "Danube" and the Chamber of Commerce, Industry, Navigation and Agriculture – Constanta declare their tasks and responsibilities, the field of competence and the directions of action in the development, management and improvement of the route.

Key highlights of the vision and mission of the Strategy have been outlined in the preliminary study in a direction which ensures that a cultural heritage tourism product is obtained, "representing a chain of thematically linked integrated stopping points that promote the development of regional identity and collective memory" (p. 59).

It is also necessary to point out some key route deficiencies that form the starting point for defining a vision and a mission of the Strategy:

- Fragmented property of a number of Bulgarian sites – a prerequisite for unbalanced development and management of the route which violates its integrity;



- Partial or missing general and specialized infrastructure for secondary sites – again a prerequisite for unbalanced development and management of the route which violates its integrity;

- Insufficiently implemented ICT in the management and socialization of route sites

At the same time, the route also has undeniable competitive advantages which could be summarized as follows:

- Strong potential for route differentiation both as a separate tourism product "route "Roman Frontier Within the Cross-border Region Romania-Bulgaria"" and as part of the transnational Danube Limes route
- Natural and cultural heritage of territories covered by the route is protected by UNESCO;
- Favourable conditions for the integration of the route with other types of tourism

The vision should offer a scenario for a desirable state of the route that overcomes the weaknesses and enhances the strengthens so that the route "Roman Frontier Within the Cross-border Region Romania-Bulgaria" can become an attractive and successful tourism product. The time scope of the Strategy covers the period 2018-2030 in order to be in line with other relevant strategic documents, which are in place until 2030, such as A report to the European Council by the Reflection Group on the Future of the EU 2030, Tourism towards 2030 of UNWTO, Strategy for Sustainable Development of Tourism 2014-2030, National Sustainable Development Strategy Romania 2013-2020-2030, etc.

Thus, as a result of a desk research and analysis of the preliminary study, three options for vision and mission of the Strategy were defined and as a result of the consultation process and working meetings with the Contracting Authority, the following visions and missions of the Strategy for Development, Enhancement and Innovation of an Integrated Cultural Heritage Tourism Product: Route "Roman Frontier Within the Cross-border Region Romania-Bulgaria" were finally adopted:

**Vision 2030** of the Strategy for Development, Enhancement and Innovation of an Integrated Cultural Heritage Tourism Product: Route "Roman Frontier Within the Cross-border Region Romania-Bulgaria"



**Mission 2030 of ADRM "Danube" and the Chamber of Commerce, Industry, Navigation and Agriculture - Constanta for the development, management and improvement of route "Roman Frontier Within the Cross-border Region Romania-Bulgaria"**

- **Strategic objectives and priorities**

Once it was established that cultural tourism is recognized as a top priority in tourism development in almost all regional, district and local planning documents studied and there is no need for an additional objective in the current Strategy to prove the appropriateness of route development, we proceeded to highlight milestones and key components of the route development. We were led by the belief that the purpose and the benefit of the Strategy is to propose and implement solutions for overcoming the main shortcomings of the sustainable and balanced territorial development of cultural and historical tourism in the Romania-Bulgaria cross-border region, namely the solution of problems in key areas – infrastructure, development of the product of cultural and historical tourism (in our case it is the route), institutionalization and information provision. The very title of the Strategy (Strategy for Development, Enhancement and Innovation of an Integrated Cultural Heritage Tourism Product: Route "Roman Frontier Within the Cross-border Region Romania-Bulgaria") defines two directions of intervention with a given method of action – innovation. In Appendix 5.3, the following innovation functionalities were outlined in the context of the route:

(1) This is an evolving, open in time route whose dynamics are supported by 18 functioning tourist archaeological sites of high cultural and historical value (they are subject to improvement in the Strategy), 44 secondary archaeological sites (they are the subject of development in the Strategy), 8 objects of intangible cultural heritage and 20 thematic museums – 90 objects in total;

(2) The abundance of diverse sites forming the route allows for local sub-routes to be identified that will give additional impetus to the development of the route "Roman Frontier Within the Cross-border Region Romania-Bulgaria".

(3) The socialization of the secondary sites of the route shall be carried out through the methods of non-invasive archaeology and the digital reconstruction of sites.

Innovative development and improvement of the route cannot take place without measures to manage this process with the involvement of local authorities and the community. The main issue for the successful development of cultural and historical



tourism is to develop and implement a strategy leading to a sustainable tourism industry. A strategy that brings long-term benefits to the three major social groups in the tourism process – the local population, tourists and tour operators, without harming the natural and anthropogenic environment in the destination. The involvement of all stakeholders in the planning and implementation of public policies and measures enhances the legitimacy of efforts and helps the mobilization of power and public energy. Therefore, a third component of the Strategy's objectives is formed – (3) joint/partner management, along with development (1) and route improvement (2).

The formulation of proposals for strategic objectives and priorities also builds on the results of the SWOT analysis (see section 2.5). Here we will highlight key assessments of the strengths and weaknesses of the route, the correction of which could be within the competence of ADRM "Danube" and the Chamber, and also for easier following of the logic of constructing the strategic framework of the Strategy:

### **Weaknesses**

- Unbalanced form of management of sites from the route on both sides of the Danube;
- Poor coordination between the subjects of management of cultural and historical tourism in the region;
- Lack of recognizable image of Romania-Bulgaria cross-border region as a cultural and historical tourist destination;
- Low quality of the general technical infrastructure of secondary sites on the Bulgarian part of the route;
- Low quality of specialized infrastructure (e.g. basic and complementary services) for most route sites;
- Poor stationary information-guiding English-speaking system and minimum provision of tourist information at sites;
- Unattractive exposure of the main sites of the route;
- Low degree of embedded ICT within the operation of sites.

### **Strengths**

- Strong potential for route differentiation both as a separate tourism product and as part of the transnational Danube Limes route;
- Strong potential for integrating the route with other preferred forms of tourism;
- Geographical scope of the route covered by marketed tourist regions in Bulgaria and Romania;
- High potential for joint and coordinated with local partners route management;



The purpose of the SWOT analysis, besides suggesting and justifying the development of a strategy, is that it sets the direction of interventions by striving to minimize the effects of the weaknesses and maximize the benefits of the strengths. As a result of compliance with the above-mentioned provisions, three options for strategic objectives and priorities were proposed for discussion with stakeholders and the Contracting Authority and the following were chosen as a final option:

<p><b>Strategic objective 1</b></p> <p><i>Priority 1</i></p> <p><i>Priority 2</i></p>	<p><b>Development and improvement of the route as a cultural and historical tourist destination related to the world Roman heritage</b></p> <p><i>Public presentation of the route</i></p> <p><i>Sustainable development and improvement of the route</i></p>
<p><b>Strategic objective 2</b></p> <p><i>Priority 1</i></p> <p><i>Priority 2</i></p>	<p><b>Development and implementation of systems for joint innovative route management and improvement</b></p> <p><i>Partnership for innovative route development</i></p> <p><i>Competent and efficient route management</i></p>
<p><b>Strategic objective 3</b></p> <p><i>Priority 1</i></p> <p><i>Priority 2</i></p>	<p><b>Transforming the route into a sustainable integrated cultural and historical innovative tourism product</b></p> <p><i>Increased tourist potential of the route</i></p> <p><i>Integrity of the route in a broad cultural network</i></p>

#### IV. Strategic plan

The strategic plan is prepared in accordance with established models and modern practices in the field of strategic tourism planning. A combination of several basic principles is applied:

- **Publicity.** The plan is the subject of a public discussion with over 300 inhabitants of the Romania-Bulgaria cross-border region through: (1) 10 round tables, (2) a survey among 114 stakeholders from the region, (3) a separate online survey among tour operators and travel agents, and (4) 4 meetings with the Contracting Authority dedicated to the Strategy's strategic framework and plan.
- **Coherence.** The Strategy, in particular the framework, plan and implementation programme thereof, successfully takes its place among the Danube region's



development document system, by matching, interpreting and specifying the proposals of higher level documents EU Strategy for the Danube Region, Common Strategy for Sustainable Territorial Development of the Cross-border Area Romania-Bulgaria (SPATIAL), European Charter for Sustainable and Responsible Tourism, EC, regional, district/county and municipal development plans, etc.

- **Focus.** The specific objectives of the plan allow for a clear focus of efforts and resources in an optimal number of complementary directions for the development and improvement of route "Roman Frontier Within the Cross-border Region Romania-Bulgaria".
- **Commitment.** The contemporary integrated approach to planning is used, where individual activities are tied together and jointly improve certain aspects of the development of the cultural and historical tourism in the region, and in particular the route. Commitment is also projected into the very philosophy of the Strategy which is based on the sustainable joint management of all processes related to its implementation, notably through the perception of ADRM "Danube", CCINA, public authorities and stakeholders as an informal governing body.
- **Groundedness.** The structure and content of the strategic plan are based on the regularities of tourism development, summed up by public opinion, the synthesized results of the surveys and the compliance of the Strategy with relevant planning and strategic documents.
- **Efficiency.** The strategic plan ends with a set of measures decomposed into activities that allow for clear, mutually supportive actions over the next 12 years, united in pursuing the common objective of the Strategy - turning the route into a competitive tourism product/destination.

#### 4.1. Specific objectives

The formulation of the specific objectives follows an analogous to the definition of the strategic framework approach - desk research of specific objectives in the relevant planning and strategic documents, compliance with conclusions of the conducted analytical studies and the SWOT analysis for the route development, public and expert consultancy. The accumulated content base for outlining the direction of implementation of strategic objectives and its priorities, which materializes through the





specific objectives, allowed the latter to be drawn up, taking into account basic principles in the targeting:

- To determine the specific direction of action, to be specific;
- Implementation thereof shall lead to achievement of strategic objectives;
- Be realistic and feasible within the specified time scope;
- Be measurable and facilitate the process of monitoring and assessment of Strategy implementation;

As a result of the process described above, the following specific objectives were finally formulated:

<b>Strategic objective 1</b>	
Development and improvement of the route as a cultural and historical tourist destination related to the world Roman heritage	
<b>Priority 1.1</b>	<b>Priority 1.2</b>
Public presentation of the route	Sustainable development and improvement of the route
<b>Specific objective 1.1.1</b>	<b>Specific objective 1.2.1</b>
Enhancing public, professional and institutional awareness on route development	Creating favourable conditions for sustainable development and improvement of the route

**Specific objective 1.1.1** is motivated by the fact that the route "Roman Frontier Within the Cross-border Region Romania-Bulgaria" is established as such within the currently implemented project. In its entirety it is not known to the public and the tourism industry, and knowledge thereof is a prerequisite for absorbing its potential and realizing tourist attendance. Achieving the objective – a route popular among the public and the media – is a leading argument and largely justifies the plans and efforts to initiate its innovative construction and stimulation of tourism attendance – specific objective 1.2.1. It sets the foundations of the innovative development of the route by applying good practices and involving academic institutions in the discussions and projects for the implementation of modern technological solutions and processes in the research, reconstruction and interpretation of the archaeological sites from the route.



Strategic objective 2	
Development and implementation of systems for joint innovative route management and improvement	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Priority 2.1</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Partnership for innovative route development</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Priority 1.2</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Competent and efficient route management</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Specific objective 2.1.1</b></p> <p>Creating a shared space for the development and improvement of cultural and historical tourism and the route</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Specific objective 1.2.1</b></p> <p>Increasing the capacity of participants in the management of the route and in the provision of tourist services in the cross-border region Romania - Bulgaria</p>

Following the positioning of the route in the public space and the beginning of its modern construction, the need to seek and obtain broad support for the institutionalization of route "Roman Frontier Within the Cross-border Region Romania-Bulgaria" (specific objective 2.1.1) is on the agenda. Institutional development is a primary factor for achieving the competitiveness of the cultural and historical product. It becomes a fact when public authorities recognize the potential of the route as a factor in the development of cultural and historical tourism. Simultaneously with the establishment of partnerships with regional/county/district/local authorities, another productive action in this direction is the formation of mutually beneficial cross-border and transnational co-operations, because besides legitimizing the efforts to turn the route into a completed tourist destination, they are also an inexhaustible resource of good practices, ideas and approaches for effective and efficient results.

In the course of institutionalizing the route and laying the foundations for its shared management, it is good to launch initiatives to increase the capacity of all participants in these processes – specific objective 1.2.1. As a result of the analytical studies and assessments of the development of tourism in the target region as well as during the discussions at the round tables, the lack of qualified human resources for work in the sector was repeatedly highlighted as one of the region's deficiency characteristics. The number of tourist trips around the region of the Danube river is growing, but the volume of tourism industry is decreasing and the quality of the services is deteriorating. Management skills for a cross-border product so large in size and so heterogeneous in terms of infrastructure are absent at all levels of management. This justifies the strong



and urgent need to increase the capacity of different target groups to successfully participate and contribute to shared route management.

<b>Strategic objective 3</b>	
Transforming the route into a sustainable integrated cultural and historical innovative tourism product	
<b>Priority 3.1</b>	<b>Priority 3.2</b>
Increased tourist potential of the route	Enhancing route integration
<b>Specific objective 3.1.1</b>	<b>Specific objective 3.2.1</b>
Modernisation of secondary potential sites and improving management thereof	Enhancing route integration

The expected increased capacity of countries involved in route management contributes to the gradual transformation of the route into a well-established tourist destination in all directions of development. The most crucial but also the most resource-intensive and time-consuming is the direction of infrastructure building, improvement, modernization, exhibition of sites through modern technological methods (digital reconstruction for added, virtual or mixed reality). Specific Objective 3.1.1 covers initiatives in this direction mainly for secondary sites as they are those which need an accessible and modern tourist interpretation. The role of ADRM "Danube" and CCINA in these processes can only be to support the work of public authorities since the infrastructure development of the route is entirely within the competence of the latter. In support of authorities' efforts to create a favourable environment for visiting the sites is specific objective 3.2.1, which aims to improve the integration of the route, given the different degree of socialization of the sites on both sides of the Danube river. This is another step on the way to turning the route "Roman Frontier Within the Cross-border Region Romania-Bulgaria" into a sought and preferred tourist destination for tourists sailing along the river and visiting Bulgaria and Romania. An approach for simultaneously strengthening its integrity and popularity can be the positioning of the route in a network of cultural routes and events, the preparation, realization and promotion of a Roman cultural calendar, etc.



The cumulative implementation of the strategic framework of the Strategy is expected to produce the main target result of its realization - route "Roman Frontier Within the Cross-border Region Romania-Bulgaria" to become an established tourist destination within the cross-border region Romania-Bulgaria.

#### 4.2. Specific objectives implementation programme

Implementation of the strategic framework of the Strategy for Development, Enhancement and Innovation of an Integrated Cultural Heritage Tourism Product related to the Roman heritage, route "Roman Frontier Within the Cross-border Region Romania-Bulgaria", covering a period of 22 years (2018-2030), is supported by 32 activities, thematically grouped in 9 measures, for the purposes of strategic planning, management, monitoring and evaluation. In Appendix 4, the programme is presented in a table for greater convenience during work.

The achievement of the outcome of *Strategic Objective 1 "Development and improvement of the route as a cultural and historical tourist destination related to the world Roman heritage"* is secured by 3 measures as follows:

##### (1) Measure 1.1.1.1 Positioning of the route in the public space

As the title of the measure itself suggests, activities are planned to increase public and expert awareness of the existence of the route. Such an activity could be the inclusion of route "Roman Frontier Within the Cross-border Region Romania-Bulgaria" in registers and platforms for tourism promotion. There are dozens of them, all of them are online, and new ones are being developed permanently. These are, for example: <http://bulgariatravel.org/>, <http://romaniatourism.com/>, <https://www.roughguides.com/>, <http://www.lonelyplanet.com/>, <https://www.viator.com>, <https://www.tripadvisor.com/>, shared travel websites and blogs and a number of other online resources to which more and more tourists are turning, especially those who prefer unorganized travel. Another activity for building a positive public image of the route is its inclusion on the agenda of relevant regional, national and cross-border events, which is within the competence of ADRM "Danube" and the Chamber and the Constanta Chamber as key advocates and activists in the joint efforts to validate the route. Its presentation at tourist fairs/exhibitions/special events and participation in tourist competitions (e.g. the EDEN platform and the Read and Travel contest of the Shumen Regional Museum of History) should be a priority objective on the way to becoming a tourist destination. In this context, it is also the ambition of



the two organizations not to interrupt the contact with stakeholders by continuing the thematic meetings with them, as such desires were expressed at the round tables, for the direction, initiatives and innovative development of the route.

### **(2) Measure 1.2.1.1 Provision of professional and technological support for sustainable development and improvement of the route**

This group of activities aims to support the attractiveness of the route and to encourage those involved in the tourism industry to offer better quality services so as to improve the satisfaction of the visitors and hence increase the competitiveness of the destination. It is planned to create expert partnerships with academic institutions, to provide a basis for transfer and application of the latest achievements in the field of archaeology so that the socialization of the sites of the route to be in line with the most innovative solutions. Another element with an innovative flavour is the creation of a tourist calculator to support the ever-wider group of tourists who organize their trips themselves. With this calculator, visitors will draw their own itinerary by means of an interactive map (a proposal from the round tables), among the variety of sites and sub-routes of route "Roman Frontier Within the Cross-border Region Romania-Bulgaria". Individual, personalized programmes for a true and complete experience is what tourists are looking for. The calculator will also allow or even stimulate the combination of cultural and historical tourism with other forms of tourism in the region. Both for the benefit of tourists and the industry, ADRM "Danube" and the Chamber of Constanta are encouraged to develop a tool by stimulating entrepreneurship. This is the idea for developing a system for certification of sites from the tourist industry (accommodation and food establishments) along the cultural and historical tourist route in the cross-border region Romania-Bulgaria. A quality mark is defined and each of the industry units that has covered the certification criteria receives this certificate as a competitive advantage over non-certified accommodation and food establishments. Possession of the certificate would result in a number of benefits for its bearers: improved business results, management systems and procedures for long-term maintenance of high quality and level of customer satisfaction, market recognition, improvement and competitiveness, transparency, loyal customers, profiled training, direct market access, up-to-date information on trends in the field of service quality and others.

### **(3) Measure 1.2.1.2 Periodic surveys, analyses and forecasts on the development of tourism in the cross-border region which build and update existing ones**



The development and improvement of the route would not take place without the maintenance of a constantly updated knowledge base, studies, assessments of both related themes to the route and cultural and historical tourism as a whole. This is a way to keep the route up to date in a growing competition environment. Last but not least, this group of activities provides for regular surveys on site attendance, where the results shall be converted by ADRM "Danube" and the Chamber in Constanta into measures to improve the development and enhancement of the route as a cultural and historical tourist destination.

The implementation of *Strategic objective 2 Development and implementation of systems for joint innovative route management and improvement* is supported by the following three sets of initiatives aimed at creating territorial capital for partnership management and route improvement:

**(1) Measure 2.1.1.2 Development of interregional and transnational cooperation in the field of cultural and historical tourism**

The potential development of route "Roman Frontier Within the Cross-border Region Romania-Bulgaria" in a context isolated from its surrounding environment, is not a favourable and recommendable direction. As has been emphasized many times, the evolution of the route builds on the democratic basis of shared, partner management of a public asset. The efficient functioning of tourism as an economic activity requires the coordination of various stakeholders at regional and local level. In old Member States, the partnership principle is already a built-in component in both project programming and planning, whereas large-scale stakeholder involvement is becoming the norm in new Member States. The accumulated European and world experience on such management, as well as on the qualification of human resources involved therein, provides inexhaustible examples of good practice. The transformation of a territory and its settlements into a tourist destination leads not only to spatial but also to socio-cultural change. Whether positive or negative, this depends on the existence or lack of sustainable shared management of cultural and historical resources by all stakeholders. Therefore, ADRM "Danube", CCINA and all stakeholders should learn the most tried and proven, by other partners, knowledge and skills for modern management of cultural and historical routes. Furthermore, the Council of Europe's recommendation is that each cultural route be able to stimulate the creation of long-term, international, multidisciplinary cultural route projects within several priority areas of action: research and development; emphasizing memory, history and European heritage; cultural and educational exchanges of young Europeans; contemporary cultural and artistic





practices; cultural tourism and sustainable cultural development. Moreover, the inclusion of long-term multidisciplinary and international/interregional projects as well as the possibility of educational and cultural exchange could be expected through the addition of secondary elements not yet developed. In this context, the activities "Developing a mechanism for sharing experience and good practices for the management of cultural and historical destinations" and "Development and implementation of common policies and programmes for improving the quality of the workforce in cultural and historical tourism" are proposed.

Exchanged and shared experience strengthens the legitimacy of the route which facilitates its institutionalization. A possible act for the institutionalization of route "Roman Frontier Within the Cross-border Region Romania-Bulgaria" is, for example, the signing of a memorandum of shared management between the two organizations and the public authorities, the jurisdiction of which covers sites of the route. The memorandum is proof of recognizing the route as a public resource with socio-economic benefits for the target communities.

Last but not least, ADRM "Danube" and the Chamber in Constanta should strive to develop the competitiveness of the route in all possible directions. The most optimistic, at this stage, is the establishment of partnerships with responsible institutions managing sites of thematically similar routes, and at the same time competitive to route "Roman Frontier Within the Cross-border Region Romania-Bulgaria". This is the first necessary step towards the inclusion of the route to other more global cultural and historical destinations.

## **(2) Measure 2.2.1.1 Strengthening the capacity for strategic and sustainable route management**

Within this measure, more concentrated and focused activities are planned to increase the capacity for strategic and sustainable route management, with the main target groups of the measure being representatives of the public authorities. It is planned to assess the training needs of participants in the development and management of the route. An effective training programme should meet the needs of the individuals involved. The identification of those needs can be realized in different ways, including: (1) consultation with trainees; (2) consultation with their direct managers; (3) consultation with other people familiar with the work of potential trainees (their subordinates, colleagues, clients), etc. The development of programmes for continuing interactive education in the field of cultural and historical tourism is encouraged -



innovative ICT aggressively penetrate the sector and often the self-governing bodies remain aside of these trends. Regional historical museums, although serious participants in the tourist interpretation of cultural and historical heritage, often lack the necessary financial and human resources to meet the growing needs of the tourist for an increasingly attractive, varied, memorable presentation of culture and history. Limited museum staff need constant improvement of their capacity in order to attract visitors.

Participation in trainings has been planned for ADRM "Danube" and the Chamber for improving their own administrative capacity for development and management of the tourist destination, according to evolving needs that go hand in hand with the development of the route.

In addition, the creation of a scientific committee, which is a recommendation of UNWTO in its Guide to Tourism Destination Management, is also proposed in the set of activities aimed at enhancing the capacity of the participants in route management. The members in this committee could consist of 7 (an odd number to observe the majority principle) prominent academics and practitioners in the fields of archaeology, architecture, history, and tourism. Their role will be counselling and generating ideas and models for contemporary exposure, socialization and interpretation of sites. The committee is proposed as an advisory body to the informal joint decision-making structure of ADRM "Danube" and CCINA, tailored to the needs and objectives of the Strategy (see below).

Stimulus and motivation for constant improvement of knowledge and skills in the cultural and historical sector is the membership of ADRM "Danube" and the Chamber in relevant member organizations. These may include the Danube Cultural Cluster, Arbeitsgemeinschaft Donauländer, Danube Chambers of Commerce Association, Danube Competence Center, DAC Danubius Academic Consortium, and many others whose exhaustive list can be seen here: <http://www.danube-region.eu/funding/who-is-who>. Membership in a network of similar organizations united by common goals ensures a constant transfer of new knowledge and good practices in route management, which in turn minimizes its potential loss of relevance and attractiveness.

### **(3) Measure 2.2.1.2 Strengthening the capacity for service provision at tourist sites along the route**

The aim of this measure is to concentrate on the development of the tourist industry serving sites from route "Roman Frontier Within the Cross-border Region Romania-Bulgaria", along with the evolution of the route. In conditions of strong competition,



and especially within the transition to a market economy, it is very important to integrate the efforts of all entities that are directly or indirectly related to tourism. In many places within the cross-border region there are no tourist guides to add value to the tourist visit. With the lack thereof, as attractive as the exposure of sites of the shared Roman heritage may be, the tourist experience remains incomplete - there is no adequate historical information about the visited site. The low quality of hotel and restaurant service, consisting of a lack of professional knowledge and skills and lack of language skills, is often a source of negative experiences for the tourist, and thus the attractiveness of the destination drops down significantly. The activity "Partner development of training programmes for enhancing the knowledge and skills of employees in tourist sites and sites along the route" is planned in response to these deficiencies. Within the implementation, ADRM "Danube" and CCINA are encouraged to look for a variety of solutions to overcome this negative feature of local tourism. Such solutions may be:

- Partnership with academic institutions, vocational schools, vocational training centres and others, in order to develop modern training and qualification programmes for those employed in the sector and those who are about to start a career in tourism;
- Training for cultural managers and tour guides with a cultural heritage profile;
- Training for restaurant and hotel-keepers, maids, waiters, chefs, including the provision of a mobile training service, i.e. on-the-spot training;

For the purpose of developing a competitive tourism industry servicing the route, the activity "Participation in training visits to organizations responsible for the management of tourist destinations" is also foreseen so that tourism service providers can also benefit from the exchange of experience and good practices.

The implementation of *Strategic objective 3 Transforming the route into a sustainable integrated cultural and historical innovative tourism product* is supported by three sets of activities addressing major deficiencies and opportunities for route development.

**(1) Measure 3.1.1.1 Improving the socialization of sites-** a key prerequisite for turning the route into a tourism product. The need for infrastructure development and modernization of the interpretation of secondary sites, mainly from the Bulgarian part of the route, are obvious (see Appendix 3.3). There are no roads, electricity and water supply, wi-fi, parking and recreation areas, informational infrastructure is extremely undeveloped to missing, etc. The urgency of such investment is as high as it is resource



and time consuming. ADRM "Danube" and CCINA do not have a direct commitment to the implementation of infrastructure activities but could support the responsible public authorities with expertise (knowledge and technology transfer), trainings, preparation of project proposals and others.

Another supportive activity in this direction, which is also within the competence of the two organizations, is the attraction of students and volunteers for archaeological site excavations as well as internships in museums. The internship is a contemporary attractive form to satisfy a disrupted supply and demand chain in certain economic sectors, such as tourism. ADRM "Danube" and CCINA could develop a variety of internship programmes in partnership with universities and vocational high schools which would be beneficial for everyone involved.

### **(2) Measure 3.1.1.2 Creating favourable conditions for effective and sustainable management of sites**

In this group of activities, support by ADRM "Danube" and CCINA to public authorities is also planned for acquiring protection legal status for some sites according to the applicable legislation and in implementation of the initiatives for the assignment of the right of use and management of sites with multiple ownership - a fundamental problem of Bulgarian sites towards the balanced and integrated development of the route.

An activity is planned that aims to encourage public authorities to develop and adopt a mechanism for relocation of part of the income from tourism for the preservation and management of the sites of the route. With its instability, tourism threatens the exceptional universal value of the cultural heritage property. The necessary economic link between cultural heritage and tourism is not regulated, and more precisely – directing part of the profit from tourism activities towards the preservation of the property.

### **(3) Measure 3.1.2.1 Positioning of the route within a network of cultural routes and events**

This group of activities is aimed at enhancing the integration of the route. At present, site attendance is of varying intensity. The popularity of secondary sites of the Roman cultural heritage from route "Roman Frontier Within the Cross-border Region Romania-Bulgaria" is unsatisfactorily low. At present, only a few sites on both sides of the Danube are attractive where conservation and socialization projects have been implemented and/or are popular due to their location in larger urban centres. The fact is that this route is currently established, so steps are needed to overcome its fragmentation and



integration into a system. The integration of cultural routes in a network at different levels (local, national, regional, European, global) creates opportunities for open cultural tourism that is capable of covering all levels of cultural properties. Fragmentation of the cultural and tourist market only in local contexts will have a partial and incomplete effect, whereby much of the tourism resource will remain inaccessible. An exceptional competitive advantage of route "Roman Frontier Within the Cross-border Region Romania-Bulgaria" is its possible inclusion in a thematic network of routes, e.g. Danube Limes, Roman Emperors Route, Danube Wine Route, Frontiers of the Roman Empire, Upper Germanic-Rhaetian Limes, and others. This way, the route ensures world-wide recognition and a key place in European and global tourist catalogues.

The abundance of diverse sites forming the route allows for local sub-routes to be identified that will give additional impetus to the development of the route "Roman Frontier Within the Cross-border Region Romania-Bulgaria". Linking cultural routes to a territorial network creates opportunities for flexible regulation of tourist flows. Instead of a limited number of single destinations that overload major cultural sites, a network of domestic destinations could be developed that evenly distributes tourist flows. Thus, conditions are created to satisfy the tourist interest in the whole variety of cultural heritage features in terms of types, layers, values, themes, etc. Last but not least, there is an opportunity to express the full cultural and tourist potential of the cross-border region and to activate an unknown cultural and tourist resource.

Last but not least, the creation of a cross-border cultural calendar devoted to Roman heritage is planned, which combines visits of sites from the route with events of the intangible Roman cultural heritage.

### 4.3 Updating mechanism

Any strategy document covering a relatively long period of action should be subject to an update. Section 8 describes the factors that require updating, with the key aspects highlighted here.

Many times in the Strategy so far it has been noted that the development of route "Roman Frontier Within the Cross-border Region Romania-Bulgaria" is planned to be realized through a continuous process of improvement of existing sites of the route and



development of new ones (e.g. local sub-routes ). In this sense, the Strategy can be defined as a complex dynamic system whose development covers two main aspects: (1) the development of Route "Roman Frontier Within the Cross-border Region Romania-Bulgaria" and (2) the compliance of the route dynamics with the current regulatory framework and with the intentions and wishes of stakeholders for the direction of its development. This predetermines the existence of many factors that outline the degree of implementation of the objectives, measures, and activities set in the Strategy.

Generally speaking, the circumstances that require updating the Strategy demonstrate changes in: (1) the economic and social conditions in the cross-border region Romania-Bulgaria; (2) related national legislation or EU legislation; (3) sectoral strategies and programmes influencing the implementation of the Strategy, and in accordance with the results of performance evaluations.

Subject to update are all or some elements of the structure of the Strategy, and the update is necessary due to their interdependence, which, in turn, creates causal links. For example, if there are significant changes in the socio-economic environment of the cross-border region, this would lead to a change in the situational analysis of the Strategy, which would require changes to the SWOT analysis, strategic framework and plan as the definition of the latter two to a large extent is based on the current socio-economic environment.

Validation of ongoing changes in the context of the Strategy is usually done by independent observers in the form of an assessment of its implementation. Assessments can be annual, interim, or follow-up – depending on the objective they pursue.

The process of estimating the need for an independent assessment of the implementation of the Strategy as well as the assignment and acceptance of the work of independent assessors is governed by the Strategy Management Cross-border Committee (SMCBC). Point 7.1.4. of this Strategy describes the structure and mechanism for decision-making within the Committee.

## **V. Indicative financial table summarizing the necessary resources for the implementation of the Strategy**

The indicative financial table (see Appendix 5) for implementation of the Strategy builds on the budget and its planning principles.





The budget of the strategic framework is largely predictive and indicative. Expectations for detailed budgeting and specific information on potential financing of the costs associated with the implementation of the Strategy are difficult to accomplish. The development and improvement of the route falls within the time scope of three EU programming periods, the funds of which form the main financial resource. These are 2014-2020, 2020-2027 and 2027-2034 programming periods. Only 2 years remain for application, ranking, and negotiation from the current programming period, for which application opportunities are relatively more clearly defined. The period is too short in order for some of the funds needed to implement the Strategy's Implementation Programme to be concentrated in it. It was not until this year that the negotiations on the priority and financial framework for the next programming period were launched, while that of the 2027-2034 period is not even on the agenda. A serious factor that may slow down or even stop the implementation of the Strategy is still the unclear and hesitant future of the EU. Taking into account the fact that the indicative programmes for launching calls for EU funds applications are made year by year, the possibility of predictable funding of the Strategy becomes minimal.

The main considerations in budgeting the indicative cost of implementation activities of the Strategy implementation programme are the following:

- Matching the indicative value to the cost categories (remuneration, training, travel, purchase of materials and equipment, etc.) and their current market value in Bulgaria and Romania;
- The proposed budget for each activity includes the total expenditure to be done by ADRM "Danube" and CCINA;
- Maximum budget adequacy and feasibility is sought;
- The proposed budget for each activity is summarized for the entire implementation period of the Strategy. It is inappropriate to allocate funds to implementation periods due to the lack of information on the type and amount of eligible costs after 2020.
- The management costs for the implementation of the Strategy should represent an approximate share of 15% of its total budget, covering all the activities of ADRM "Danube" and CCINA team related to the monitoring and assessment of the degree of implementation of the Strategy. Management costs do not include the outsourcing of activities in connection with interim evaluations and updates of the Strategy.



- The attraction of funds through public-private funding schemes is not provided since there are no infrastructure measures planned in the Strategy Implementation Programme. ADRM "Danube" and CCINA do not own the sites of the route, therefore they have no rights and responsibilities for their direct management. This defines the planning and budgeting of measures to improve the infrastructure of sites to be implemented by the two organizations as inappropriate. Other private funds, such as sponsorship and financial support, ADRM "Danube" and CCINA could attract through public entertainment initiatives such as events from the Roman cultural calendar.
- The inadequacy of investment project planning in the current Strategy determines the lack of project readiness of the sites in the budget and the Strategy Implementation Programme. Project readiness is an assessment of the capacity of an organization to carry out infrastructure improvements of sites and resources of public importance. It requires the existence of: (1) a technical or working project in accordance with a relevant regulatory act; (2) exploration and establishment of technical characteristics, (3) assessment of the compliance of the investment project with regulatory requirements, etc. It is necessary to note here that within the preliminary study on the project, the project readiness of each of the sites of route "Roman Frontier Within the Cross-border Region Romania-Bulgaria" which needs improvement has been assessed. This assessment is presented in Appendix 5.8. Project readiness of sites subject to the preliminary study.
- Indicating compliance of the Strategy's activities with operations under the respective operational programmes would violate the budgetary coherence since information is available for only 3 years and the time frame of the Strategy extends over a period of 12 years. However, information on potential sources of funding for the Strategy until the end of the current EU programming period are specified below.



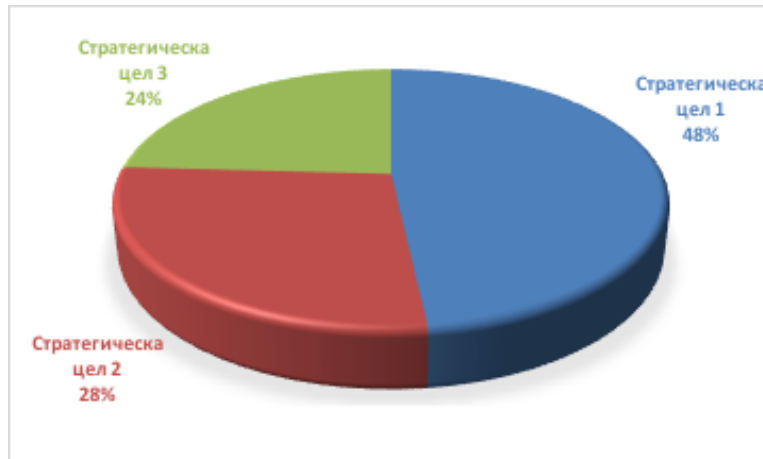
Table 10 Strategy budget

Period 2018-2030	Own and local funding			External public funding						Private funding		Total
	Own funds	Local budget	Total share (%)	Central budget	Total share (%)	EU funds	Total share (%)	Other sources	Total share (%)	PPP/Concession	Total share (%)	
Strategic objective 1	€ 50,000		10%	€ 50,000	10%	€ 380,000	80%					€ 480,000
Priority 1.1	€ 20,000		15%			€ 110,000	85%					€ 130,000
Priority 1.2	€ 30,000		9%	€ 50,000	14%	€ 270,000	77%					€ 350,000
Strategic objective 2	€ 40,000		15%			€ 155,000	56%	€ 80,000	29%			€ 275,000
Priority 2.1	€ 20,000		20%			€ 80,000	80%					€ 100,000
Priority 2.2	€ 20,000		11%			€ 75,000	43%	€ 80,000	46%			€ 175,000
Strategic objective 3	€ 55,000	€ 15,000	29%			€ 95,000	40%	€ 75,000	31%			€ 240,000
Priority 3.1	€ 40,000	€ 15,000	39%			€ 60,000	43%	€ 25,000	18%			€ 140,000
Priority 3.2	€ 15,000		15%			€ 35,000	35%	€ 50,000	50%			€ 100,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>€ 145,000</b>	<b>€ 15,000</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>€ 50,000</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>€ 630,000</b>	<b>63%</b>	<b>€ 155,000</b>	<b>16%</b>			<b>€ 995,000</b>



As can be seen from the table, the distribution of the budget under the two main funds "Own and local funding" and "External public funding" is 84% in favour of the latter.

### Indicative budget allocation by strategic objectives



Most resources are provided for development and improvement of the route as a cultural and historical tourist destination related to the world Roman heritage (Strategic objective 1). The biggest costs in the objective's budget are for the activities "Building an online platform for individual planning of visits to sites on the route (tourist calculator)" and "Developing a certification system for sites of the tourist industry (accommodation and food establishments) on the cultural and historical tourist route within the cross-border region Romania-Bulgaria". These are the only 2 initiatives that are relatively more resource intensive than others, so it can be concluded that the indicative budget is well balanced between the three directions on how to turn the route into a tourism product.



## Budget allocation by priority



The priority with the greatest financial burden is *1.2 Sustainable development and improvement of the route*, within which are the two most resourceful activities - the tourist calculator and the certification system. Despite their high value due to the nature and scale of their implementation costs, on priority level the budget is well balanced, highlighting the importance of each of them for achieving the vision of the Strategy – **"Roman Frontier Within the Cross-border Region Romania-Bulgaria"** – an integrated, institutionalized, innovatively developing cultural and historical tourist route in the Romania-Bulgaria cross-border region.

## VI. Sources of funding

### 6.1. Types of sources of funding by origin

Typically, funding sources for strategic documents cover the following groups: (1) National funds, (2) European funds, (3) Other donation programmes, (4) National funding (local and central budget) (5) Private funding, and (6) Public-private funding. Below is a synthesized description of

#### BULGARIA

##### 1. National funds

###### 1.1 National Science Fund

The National Science Fund (NSF) aims to support projects and activities to promote research consistent with the ratified framework programmes with certain priorities of



the European Union and with the Bulgarian National Scientific Research Strategy by 2020.

### 1.2 National Culture Fund

The main objective of the Fund is to support the development of culture by recruiting, managing and spending funds intended for the implementation of the national cultural policy set out in the programmes of the government of the Republic of Bulgaria for the relevant period and in the Protection and Development of Culture Act. The priorities in the activity of National Culture Fund are also in compliance with the criteria of chapter "Culture and Audio-vision" of the Treaty of Accession of Bulgaria to the European Community.

### 1.3 "13 Centuries Bulgaria" National Donation Fund

The fund initiates and supports projects of national importance in the fields of education, science, culture, the restoration and preservation of historical and cultural properties, health and the social sphere.

## **2. State budget**

The Cultural Heritage, Museums and Fine Arts Directorate at the Ministry of Culture provides target financial support for field archaeological research and field conservation.

Eligible organizations:

- Cultural institutions
- Scientific institutions
- University institutions

The main activity of these institutions should be related to the search, exploration and conservation of archaeological cultural heritage and field conservation.

Each calendar year, until January 15, the applications for funding are determined.

Documents are submitted by April 10th.

## **3. European Structural and Investment Funds for Bulgaria 2014-2020**

### 3.1 Operational Programme "Innovation and Competitiveness" (OPIC) 2014-2020





The main objective of OPIC 2014-2020 is to achieve a dynamically competitive development of the economy based on innovation, optimization of production chains and high added value sectors. Programme opportunities related to the Strategy's activities are programmed under priority axes 1 "Technological Development and Innovation" and 2 "Entrepreneurship and Growth Capacity for SMEs". Axis 1 supports innovation co-operation between businesses and between businesses and academia, while Axis 2 supports enterprises operating in the cultural and creative industries.

### 3.2 Operational Programme "Regions in Growth" 2014-2020

The main objective of the programme is the implementation of a model of moderate polycentrism for the territory of Bulgaria, leading to a reduction of internal and external migration. Opportunities provided by the programme relative to the strategy's activities are programmed under Priority Axis 6: Regional Tourism. The priority axis focuses on the preservation, conservation, promotion and development of cultural heritage by developing fully completed integrated tourism products for cultural monuments of national and global importance.

### 3.3 Operational Programme "Good Governance" 2014-2020

The programme will fund measures in key areas, including administrative reform and e-government, e-Justice and judicial reform. The potential beneficiaries are the target municipal administrations covered by route "Roman Frontier Within the Cross-border Region Romania-Bulgaria" and the Ministry of Culture, Cultural Heritage, Museums and Fine Arts Directorate, which, with supported projects under the programme, would generate indirect benefits for turning the route into a tourism product.

### 3.4 Operational Programme "Human Resources Development" 2014-2020

The programme aims to provide higher and better quality employment, enhance institutional capacity to modernize public policies, reduce poverty and promote social inclusion. Opportunities provided by the programme relative to the strategy's activities are programmed under Priority Axis 1 "Improving Access to Employment and the Quality of Workplaces".

### 3.5 Operational Programme "Science and Education for Intelligent Growth" 2014-2020

Through the specific activities of the Operational Programme, within the framework of Priority Axis 1 "Research and Technological Development", measures will be implemented for participation of the research institutes, universities and the Ministry of Education and Science in targeted projects, programmes and measures supporting



the priorities of the Danube Strategy. Priority Axis 2 "Education and Lifelong Learning" supports projects related to investment in education and vocational training for skills acquisition and lifelong learning, including those in the field of tourism supply.

### 3.6 Rural Development Program (RDP) 2014 - 2020

One of the objectives of the programme is to improve the socio-economic development of rural areas, providing jobs, reducing poverty, social inclusion and a better quality of life. Within this objective, the programme provides opportunities for development of the tourism sector and they are programmed into Sub-measure 6.2 - Start-up aid for non-agricultural activities. Support for the launch of new non-agricultural activities is aimed at developing entrepreneurship and promoting the diversification of the rural economy by increasing the number of micro-enterprises in the non-agricultural sector, opening up new and preserving existing jobs, expanding and improving services for the population, integration of the tourism sector into rural areas, promoting the preservation and development of traditional rural activities. Activities for the development of tourism are funded, including the construction and renovation of tourist sites and the development of tourist services as well as the development of crafts (including the provision of services related to the participation of visitors in craft activities).

Measure 07 *Basic services and renovation of rural villages (for municipalities and NGOs)*, Sub-measure 7.5 provides investment for public use in infrastructure for recreation and tourism.

Additional possibilities for financial support of activities under the Strategy are also provided by Sub-Measure 19.2. "Implementation of operations within community-led local development strategies".

## **ROMANIA**

### 1. Operational Programme "Competitiveness" 2014-2020

The main objective of the programme is to contribute to the achievement of the strategic objective of the Partnership Agreement by supporting R&D and ICT for competitiveness and development. Relevant to the activities of the Strategy is Priority Axis 2: "Information and Communication Technologies for a Competitive Digital Economy". The axis funds ICT for education, inclusion, health and culture.

### 2. Operational Programme "Human Resources" 2014-2020



Appropriate axes of the programme, within which projects related to the implementation of the Strategy would be supported, are Priority Axis 1: "Youth Initiatives", Priority Axis 2: "Improving the Situation of Young People" and Priority Axis 3: "Work for Everyone".

The objectives pursued by Priorities 1 and 2 are aimed at increasing the employment of young unemployed people aged 16-24, registered at the State Employment Service in priority counties, including the target South and South West regions. The objective of Axis 3 is to improve the knowledge/skills/abilities of persons in need related to the needs of economic sectors/areas.

### 3. Operational Programme "Regional Development" 2014-2020

The objective of the programme is to increase overall economic competitiveness and improve the living conditions of local and regional communities by supporting the development of the business environment, infrastructure and services for the sustainable development of the regions so that they can effectively manage resources and benefit from their potential for innovation and absorption of technological progress. These objectives are decomposed into 11 priority axes. Relevant to the Strategy is the priority (Priority Axis 1) related to the promotion of technology transfer, which supports projects for the creation, improvement and expansion of innovation and technology transfer infrastructures, irrespective of economic activity. The programme devoted a separate priority to the tourism industry - Priority Axis 7: "Diversifying Local Economies through Sustainable Tourism Development". The scope of eligible activities for support includes:

- Economic valorisation of the potential of SPA tourism
- Economic valorisation of local tourist potential
- Tourist infrastructure for recreation

### 4. Operational Programme "Administrative Capacity" 2014-2020

The objective of the programme is to create a modern state administration capable of facilitating socio-economic development through competitive public services, the quality of the regulatory framework, thus contributing to the achievement of Europe 2020 objectives. Eligible applicants for the programme are:

- Public authorities and institutions, central, autonomous administrative bodies.
- Non-governmental organizations
- Social partners



- Accredited higher education and research establishments
- Romanian Academy of Sciences
- Local authorities and state institutions

## PROGRAMS FOR TERRITORIAL COOPERATION (2014-2020)

### 1. Cross-Border Cooperation Programme INTERREG V-A Romania – Bulgaria 2014-2020

The objective of the programme is to support the development of the cross-border region by improving accessibility, fostering institutional cooperation and preserving and developing regional wealth. The Green Region, Skilled and Inclusive Region, Efficient Region priority areas provide opportunities to support a broad range of Strategy implementation activities.

### 2. Danube Transnational Cooperation Programme 2014-2020

The Danube Transnational Programme is a specific financial instrument that supports the integration policy of the Danube region. The Managing Authority of the programme is the Office for National Economic Planning of the Ministry of National Economy of the Republic of Hungary. The programme fully covers the geographic scope of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region, involving the participation of 9 EU Member States: Austria, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Germany (Bavaria and Baden-Württemberg federal states), Croatia, Hungary, Romania, Slovenia and Slovakia and 5 candidate countries: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Moldova, Montenegro and 3 regions of Ukraine: Ivano-Frankivsk, Zakarpatskaya and Odessa. The total budget of the Danube programme is EUR 222 million. Target groups and main types of beneficiaries are national, regional and local authorities as well as non-governmental organizations. The programme will contribute to achieving the objectives of the four pillars of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region and the eleven priority areas thereof.

Activities for the implementation of the Strategy for Development, Enhancement and Innovation of an Integrated Cultural Heritage Tourism Product: Route "Roman Frontier Within the Cross-border Region Romania-Bulgaria" are eligible for support in the following programme areas:

**Priority axis 2 "Environment and Culturally Engaged Danube Region":**

**Specific objective 2.1: Sustainable use of natural and cultural heritage and resources.**



**Specific objective 2.2:** Restoration and management of ecological networks and corridors – eco-tourism, alternative tourism.

The possible directions are: cultural and historical tourism, eco-tourism, alternative tourism, etc.

**Priority axis 4 "Well-governed Danube Region":**

**Specific objective 4.1:** Boosting institutional capacity to address major societal challenges.

**Specific objective 4.2:** Improving management systems and capacity of public institutions involved in the development and implementation of the objectives of the Danube programme.

In order to achieve the objectives set, the programme shall mainly fund "soft measure" activities tailored to each of the specific objectives.

## 2. INTERREG Europe 2014-2020

The objective of the programme is to continue the process of exchange of experience and policy-making between public authorities to improve the implementation of European policies and programmes. The programme allows public authorities, public-law organizations and non-profit organizations to carry out private-benefit activities engaged in regional development across Europe, to exchange practices and ideas for implementing public policies, thus finding solutions to improve their strategies for the benefit of citizens in line with the Europe 2020 priorities for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. For example, Priority Axis 2: SME Competitiveness supports cross-regional cooperation projects and policy-making platforms to enable partners from different Member States to work together on issues of common regional interest in the field of SME growth promotion policy, and entrepreneurship.

The projects under the programme will be implemented in two stages:

Stage 1 will include exchange of experience in policy implementation (1 to 3 years). The stage ends with the elaboration of an Action Plan for each region participating in the supported project.

Stage 2 will include monitoring of the implementation of the Action Plan (2 years), including possible pilot activities.

A stage for setting up a "stakeholder group" is also specified. All organizations involved in the policy implementation process are expected to be involved here. Each region



should indicate which are the main stakeholders of the project but they cannot be direct partners (institutions, agencies, academic partners, NGOs, businesses, etc.). It is necessary to include the main stakeholders in the project from the beginning of the cooperation until the end of stage 2.

## EU POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES

### 1. COSME 2014-2020

COSME is an EU programme for boosting the competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises. The EC is responsible for the implementation of the COSME programme, while partial implementation is also delegated to the Executive Agency for SMEs (EASME).

In the Tourism section of COSME are identified main areas to be funded within 2014-2020 with a total of EUR 9 000 000, of which EUR 600 000 for the EDEN programme, including:

- **Increasing tourist flows in inactive seasons;**

In this direction, project partnerships will be supported which create conditions for increased tourist flow during the weak tourist season, between Member States and/or non-EU countries. The target group is a particular/specific group, such as the elderly and young people. Applicants must work in a consortium of partner organizations composed of state organizations and other stakeholders (SMEs, associations, federations, organizations) working within the thematic scope of the call for proposals.

- **Diversification of European tourist offers and products;**

Here, the focus will be on supporting transnational thematic products in the field of shared heritage, maritime tourism, business tourism, rural tourism, sports and tourism, cultural and industrial tourism, including synergy between cultural and creative industries and tourism, and the promotion of distinguished European tourist destinations.

### 2. Creative Europe 2014-2020

Creative Europe is the new EC framework programme to fund cultural and creative industry projects in the 2014-2020 period. The programme brings together the Culture, MEDIA and MEDIA Mundus programmes in a common framework and creates a completely new mechanism improving access to funding for artists, cultural and audio-visual





professionals, arts, publishing, cinema, television, music, cultural heritage. Funding will support these professions to operate across Europe, reach new audiences, preserve cultural and linguistic diversity.

Types of programme projects related to the activities of the Strategy:

- Transnational cooperation projects - organizing international cultural events, such as combined tours, exhibitions, exchanged visits, festivals.
- European networks for promoting the cultural and creative sector and work in a transnational and international environment.
- European Capitals of Culture - the title is awarded each year to two European cities. The aim of the initiative is to highlight the richness and diversity of European cultures as well as the unifying factors.

## OTHER DONATION PROGRAMMES

### 1. *The Financial Mechanism of the European Economic Area and the Norwegian Financial Mechanism.*

The grants under this mechanism are aimed at reducing the economic and social disparities in Europe and strengthening bilateral relations with 15 beneficiary countries in Northern, Central and Southern Europe.

Priority sectors and areas of the programme for the period 2014-2021 related to the implementation of the Strategy are:

- **Innovation, research, education and competitiveness**
  - Development of business, innovation and SMEs
  - Research
  - Education, scholarships, internships and youth entrepreneurship
  - Balancing professional and private life
  - Social Dialogue - Decent Work (Norwegian grants)
- **Social inclusion, youth employment and poverty reduction**
  - Children and young people at risk
  - Participation of young people on the labour market
  - Local development and poverty reduction
- **Culture, civil society, good governance and fundamental rights and freedoms**



- Cultural entrepreneurship, cultural heritage and cultural cooperation
- Civil society
- Good governance, responsible institutions, transparency
- Human rights - national implementation

### Private funding

Private funding sources: funds from private banks, funds, initiatives, projects and funds of private companies and non-governmental organizations in private benefit.

### Public - private funding

- **Public-private partnership**

Public-Private Partnership (PPP) is a leading tool for the implementation of infrastructure projects around the world. The need for developed public infrastructure as a driver of the country's economic development and the limited budgets for its construction and maintenance are the prerequisites for the emergence and spread of this form of cooperation between public authorities and the private sector. The main features and advantages of the public-private partnership are:

- ❖ Long-term contract between a public and private partner for provision of services of public interest based on new or improved assets;
- ❖ The private partner participates in all stages of project implementation - design, construction, funding, maintenance and/or operation of the site;
- ❖ The public authority defines objectives, defines quality and quantity requirements and controls implementation;
- ❖ The private partner finances fully and most of the project implementation;
- ❖ A fair distribution of risks among partners based on who can better deal with them;
- ❖ The public sector payment mechanism is tied to implementation;
- ❖ Improving site management and enhancing service quality;
- ❖ Better value of funds invested.

One of the traditional forms of public-private interaction is the concession.

## VII. Monitoring the implementation of the Strategy

Monitoring and control over the implementation of the Strategy is an integral part of the overall process of implementing the document. The monitoring system must ensure effective and efficient implementation of the measures and activities that fall within



the scope of the Strategy. The role of the monitoring system is to ensure that the results of the strategy document are constantly monitored and promoted. The monitoring process requires the collection of quantitative and qualitative data for the implementation of the relevant activities. The monitoring system aims at providing regular information on progress in achieving the objectives and results set to the competent national, regional and local authorities in the Romania-Bulgaria cross-border region, as well as to all stakeholders. The main objective is to identify deviations or risk areas in the implementation of the planned activities, thus improving the implementation of the Strategy for Development, Enhancement and Innovation and facilitating/improving the further development of the implementation process.

On the basis of the monitoring results, timely changes and updates can be made to the way the Strategy is implemented. Monitoring is essential in the implementation of the strategy document which covers a long period of time (several time stages), extends to different territories and populations and refers to several economic sectors.

## 7.1. Continuous monitoring

The Strategy for Development, Enhancement and Innovation implies the existence of interrelated actions and resources (technical, organizational, legal, financial, human and other resources) for its implementation.

The monitoring and control mechanisms of the Strategy are also in line with the following principles, essential for the planning, management and implementation process, monitoring, control and evaluation of the implementation of strategy papers:

- Unity of the strategy paper;
- Adequacy and relevance of the strategy paper;
- Applicability of the strategy paper;
- Overall impact of the strategy paper;
- Effectiveness and efficiency of the strategy paper;
- Financial management;
- Openness, transparency and publicity;
- Monitoring and accountability;



- Sustainability.

Only in the presence of all the elements and the observance of the above principles shall a Strategy have a real chance for success and achievement of the objectives set and the expected results.

The process of monitoring the implementation of the Strategy will be carried out in compliance with several basic principles:

- Comprehensiveness of monitored sites;
- Clarity and transparency;
- Objectivity;
- Mutual control and coordination between the responsible institutional units;
- Clear rules and procedures for monitoring;
- Partnership and interaction with all stakeholders.

Subject to Strategy monitoring will be all elements for the assessed:

- efficiency of the resources used - the resources used can be financial, human, technical or any other means and/or assets;
- effectiveness in achieving the objectives - effectiveness is measured as a ratio of the targeted results and achieved objectives.

The subjects for monitoring the progress of the Strategy are those bodies, institutional units and/or stakeholders that are directly or indirectly employed and/or responsible for monitoring activities. As follows:

- Cross-border Management Committee of the Strategy for Development;
- Representatives of municipal/county, regional, national authorities, directly/indirectly responsible for the implementation of the assessed Strategy;
- Representatives of the local population and structures of civil society, businesses, educational and scientific organizations, etc., in their capacity of stakeholders or participants in the monitoring process;
- External organizations/evaluators/experts - in the case of external monitoring.



## Key elements of the Monitoring System:

- **Planned results** - the target results clearly outline the desired effect - the expected change as a result of the implementation of the Strategy;
- **Monitoring indicators** - identify the specific desired change by setting achievable target values;
- **Sources of information, methods and periodicity of information gathering.** The monitoring system provides sufficiently comprehensive and accurate information on specific sources of tracking information on identified key indicators, information gathered, and periodicity for gathering information for each of the defined indicators.

Monitoring and assessment are mandatory tools of good governance. They are an integral and essential part of the decision-making and management process of the overall cycle of development, implementation and assessment of the Strategy. These tools create and ensure:

- ***Effectiveness and efficiency of the Strategy:*** institutions, organizations and stakeholders achieve results that are adequate to public needs, and the resources available are used in the best possible way. Leaders and the public build a broad and long-term perspective for good governance and development. Improving the quality of implementation of the Strategy, the results achieved, the products created and the services provided. Improving and developing the capacity of all institutions, organizations and their networks involved in the implementation of the Strategy.
- ***Accountability:*** the answers to the question: to what extent does the Strategy achieve its objectives, the rational use of public resources, what are the social impacts. Accountability enables all stakeholders to assess the extent to which their interests are protected.
- ***Responsibility of management:*** The Cross-border Management Committee on the Strategy for Development, in particular the two operational teams responsible for managing the Strategy, make the results of the Strategy's implementation public, take action on the discrepancies between the planned and the results obtained.
- ***Transparency of management processes:*** Information on the Strategy,



procedures and responsible management organizations are accessible to stakeholders and the public, and channels for stakeholder communication are open.

- ***Mechanisms for citizen participation:*** Active citizens are given the opportunity to participate in the decision-making about the implementation of the Strategy or the need for change thereof.
- ***Agreement:*** the public debate allows reconciliation of different interests and reaching agreement and support for the implementation of the Strategy. In the process of monitoring and assessment of the Strategy, stakeholders are given an opportunity to influence them, leading to the mobilization and coordination of the public actions of various stakeholders.

The monitoring and evaluation methodology focuses on the analytical overview and the comparative analysis of the results and impact of the implementation of the Strategy, taking into account the socio-economic and political changes at local, regional, national and European level.

The evaluation of the Strategy needs to go through the following milestones: research, analysis and evaluation, agreement and completion.

The evaluation methodology is based on a structured and systematic process of collecting, analysing and presenting the information and can be summarized as follows:

- ✓ **Choice of intervention logic.** The evaluation methodology needs to focus on the implementation and improvement of the quality of planning. The focus on implementation is achieved by assessing efficiency and effectiveness, while focusing on improving the quality and relevance of planning is achieved by:
  - an up-to-date review of the implementation of the Strategy;
  - studying changes in the context of the Strategy;
  - making the necessary changes to maximize the impact of the Strategy.
- ✓ **Development of evaluation methodology.**

The methodological assessment tool includes the use of certain evaluation criteria that characterize the potential for realization and the quality of the results in the implementation of the Strategy:





- ✓ Strategic compliance and harmonization with the objectives and priorities of local, regional, national and European tourism development policies for the relevant programming period;
- ✓ Regulatory compliance with the principles, rules and standards for tourism management enshrined in national and European legislation
- ✓ Reflection and Impact on the condition and changes in the socio-economic profile of Romania-Bulgaria cross-border region.
- ✓ Achieved results, impact and overall effectiveness of the implementation of the Strategy so far;
- ✓ Effective and efficient use of resources to implementation of the Strategy;
- ✓ Political and social engagement, administrative and institutional capacity to implement the Strategy;
- ✓ Sustainability of achieved desired effects - will they continue to exist beyond the time scope of the Strategy?

The indicators for monitoring the Strategy are not in themselves a sufficient basis for an objective assessment. In order to prepare one, a toolkit with criteria (Appendix 7), additional indicators and evaluation questions have been developed to complement the quantitative and qualitative parameters set out in the Strategy. Its main objective is to contribute to an objective evaluation of the Strategy and effective planning of follow-up actions.

Assessment is an activity that systematically and objectively assesses progress towards a given outcome and its final achievement.

**The main types of assessment** of strategy papers are: preliminary, interim and ex-post.

The task of the **preliminary assessment** is to verify whether the objectives set are relevant and meet the needs and abilities of the actors involved in the implementation of the measures to achieve them.

**The interim assessment** has the task of giving an indication of whether the interventions performed lead to the desired changes. For this reason, it is advisable to carry out this kind of assessments once some of the planned actions have already been completed. With the help of the recommendations of the interim assessment, action can be taken to modify the implementation of projects and programmes if it is confirmed that they are ineffective and are not expected to have a positive impact.



The **ex-post assessment** examines, above all, the impact and sustainability of the results of the implemented interventions on the Strategy. These are usually done after a certain time after the completion of the activities in order to allow for the application of results and, accordingly, the accumulation of change on the target groups/subjects.

In connection with the development of the Strategy, only interim and ex-post assessments will be carried out. The preliminary assessment of the Strategy was carried out during a series of 10 round tables in Romania and Bulgaria.

Assessment is a structured process and is reflected in the practical estimate of the Strategy. Its main objective is to support the processes of developing high quality and competitive products, on the basis of which local needs will be satisfied and the necessary resources to reach the desired state will be efficiently allocated.

Upon implementation, account should be taken of:

- Conclusions of previous experience;
- The socio-economic context of the activities carried out under the Strategy;
- The strategic choice of priorities for action and their internal and external coherence;
- Quantification of objectives;
- The assessment of the expected socio-economic impact and resource allocation;
- The Strategy Monitoring System.

The results obtained from the assessment are grounds for updating the Strategy or for taking corrective action.

The specific change and the progress made in the implementation of the Strategy and the achievement of the planned results can be traced only on the basis of specific values (key indicators).

### **Strategy assessment reports**

The assessment of the Strategy is carried out periodically depending on the type of assessment. Operational teams in Bulgaria and Romania submit progress reports on the Strategy. The reports shall contain a report on the activities, the identified risks and measures to overcome them.

### ***Periodic reports on the implementation of the Strategy***



The Managing Authorities of both organizations set the period during which the operational teams implementing the Strategy prepare progress reports. The report contains the interim results on the specific activities, and the implementation of the Strategy as a whole. The report monitors the implementation of the monitoring indicators set out in the strategy paper.

The report is discussed at a meeting of the Management Committee and submitted for approval to the Managing Authorities.

In case of corrective measures and a change in the overall Strategy, the operational teams in Bulgaria and Romania prepare a report for discussion by the Management Committee, on the basis of which a decision for discussion by the Managing Authorities is prepared.

A decision for an update is adopted by the Managing Authorities of the two partner organizations.

### ***Interim assessment***

The interim assessment takes place after the start of the implementation of the Strategy every four years. At the time of developing the Strategy, 2 interim assessments are recommended as follows:

- 1st interim assessment - by the end of 2022
- 2nd interim assessment - by the end of 2026

The interim assessment report is presented and accepted by the Management Authorities of the two partner organizations and, if necessary, a decision is taken to request a modification of the Strategy

The results of the interim assessment are promoted through appropriate channels.

### ***Ex-post assessment***

The ex-post assessment is made after a certain time (preferably after the first year) after the last year of the time scope of the Strategy.

The purpose of the ex-post assessment is to provide independent and up-to-date information on the results of the implementation of the Strategy, to make recommendations on the implementation of policies for the development of cultural and historical tourism, and in particular the management and development of cultural



and historical tourist routes. To accomplish this objective the following tasks are fulfilled:

- Exploring the results of the implementation and the overall impact of the Strategy;
- A review of the implementation of the Strategy for compliance and relevance of the objectives and priorities set;
- Conclusions and recommendations for improving the policies for the development of cultural and historical tourism and in particular the management and development of cultural and historical tourist routes.

The main criteria used in the preparation of the ex-post assessment of the Strategy are: adequacy and relevance, applicability, overall impact, efficiency and effectiveness, financial management, openness, transparency and publicity, monitoring, accountability and sustainability.

The scope of the powers of the Managing Authorities of the two organizations is to decide whether a subsequent evaluation of the Strategy will be carried out.

### 7.1.1. Catalogue of indicators for continuous monitoring

The indicator system is an integral part of the overall process related to the monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the Strategy as well as its updating. The indicators cover a wide range of topics that directly correspond to the socio-economic growth of the target region, the development of the tourism industry, the institutionalization and legitimacy of the route. Generally speaking, they measure the extent to which the objectives and measures are being met and justify the need to update the relevant strategy papers.

For the purposes of this Strategy, a three-dimensional system of indicators has been developed, where each of the three groups tracks 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 results achieved by the implementation of the *strategic objectives*. Impact indicators are important for the overall assessment of the effectiveness of the selected strategy and policy for innovative and sustainable route development for the relevant period. The magnitude of the impact is measured by



quantitatively and/or qualitatively measurable indicators and, in some cases, by qualitative assessments of the achieved level in social, economic and infrastructure development of the region/country.

**Result indicators** - evaluate the progress in implementing the *specific objectives* and the results achieved.

**Product indicators** - register quantifiable results/products from the implementation of the *measures* from the Strategy implementation programme.

Such a three-dimensional set of indicators aims at creating conditions for the most exhaustive, comprehensive and complex monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the Strategy. Appendix 6 presents the structure and content of the proposed indicators in a table format. Here, in short, their selection will be justified.

The guiding principle in the selection of indicators is that they be quantifiable and that the information about them is accessible. All indicators are formulated on the basis of the key thematic components of the content of the relevant hierarchical level of the strategic framework that they measure. When an impact or result assessment is intended, the most frequently used measure unit is the percentage as it allows to measure the degree of change between the initial and the final level of performance. For Result and Product indicators, the baseline is 0, as the implementation of the Strategy is scheduled to begin in 2018, and it is not appropriate at present to set baseline values other than 0. Another argument in support of the use of a zero base is the fact that the Strategy aims at developing and improving a new product (route "Roman Frontier Within the Cross-border Region Romania-Bulgaria"), which is being established as such almost simultaneously with its launch. The zero base value allows for the dynamics of the route's transition into a tourism product to be traced in a purely and objectively traceable way, with the influence of external factors being minimized.

The Impact Indicators group consists of four quantitative indicators which measure socio-economic effects through an arithmetic average of the data of all target areas/counties: growth of the number of nights spent in target planning regions, growth in arrivals at accommodation establishments in target planning regions, growth of the share of tourism in Bulgaria's GDP and growth of the share of tourism in Romania's GDP. If the desired final target values for these indicators are reached, then this would mean that the Strategy has achieved its primary objective - the route functions as a sought and highly visited tourist destination. Here, it is necessary to make the important provision that the contribution of the route to GDP change, nights spent and arrivals



can only be hypothetical as the impact on indicator growth is compounded by many other factors.

The Result Indicators group consists of 8 quantitative indicators as follows:

- ❖ Number of media publications on the route/sites of the route - evaluates the degree of media presence of the route, which in turn is a popularity indicator;
- ❖ Number of stakeholder meetings - the indicator quantifies the benefits of joint activities with stakeholders;
- ❖ Number of established partnerships - the indicator quantifies the benefits of implemented partnership initiatives;
- ❖ Increase in the number of site visitors on the route;
- ❖ Number of initiatives for development and improvement of the route - the indicator quantifies the benefits of implemented partner initiatives;
- ❖ Number of events/forums/trainings to increase management capacity - the indicator quantifies the benefits of the interventions to increase management capacity;
- ❖ Increase in the number of visitors to secondary sites - measures the change in attendance of secondary sites as a result of the modernization of the general and specialized infrastructure related to the sites;
- ❖ Number of initiatives to promote the route as an integrated route - the pursuit of a higher route integration can be measured through initiatives that promote it as such.

The product indicators are 19 and their selection is guided by the focus and scope of the Strategy implementation activities themselves. As this is the level at which the implementation of the Strategy is actually implemented, it is also the easiest to measure. The indicators track the volume of outputs/results from the implementation of the activities.

### **7.1.2. Means of collecting information**

Monitoring and assessment entails exploring a baseline situation and tracking the changes in time brought about by interventions as a result of the implementation of the Strategy.

Various sources of information, as well as different methods and approaches for its collection, can be used for monitoring and assessment.

The following sources of information should be used to monitor, assess and control the Strategy:





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## Information originating from internal documents available at the Strategy Management Cross-border Committee

This category of documents includes:

- Periodic reports on the implementation of the Strategy;
- Periodic reports on the implementation of the Strategy prepared by the operational team;
- Reports for implemented activities/projects and initiatives regarding the sites along the route;
- Reports, memos and other documents originating from relevant local administrations (lead organizations in project implementation) having a direct relation to the implementation of the policy or programme concerned;
- Recommendations for updating the Strategy as a result of changes or as a result of an assessment.

## Sources of information originating from documents issued by external bodies and institutions

In this category of sources of information, the following categories of documents may be included:

- Opinions from different institutions and control bodies concerning the implementation of the Strategy;
- Interim and ex-post assessments of the Strategy;
- Recommendations for updating the Strategy as a result of changes or as a result of an assessment.

## Statistical information and information contained in databases collected at national, regional and local level

The following types of information are included in this category:

- ❖ Reports by the National Statistical Institute on key indicators for the tourism sector, for the period of the assessment of a specific policy;
- ❖ Reports from other institutions and organizations collecting and processing data at a regional level for visits to tourist sites (e.g. regional historical museums, municipal/county administrations, etc.).



## Information obtained as a result of feedback from stakeholders

Participation and involvement of all stakeholders at every stage in the development and implementation of the Strategy is critical to both the success of its implementation and the objective and effective evaluation of its implementation.

There are different approaches and methods that could be used to obtain feedback from different stakeholders, which is a guarantee of an objective evaluation of the Strategy. Some of them are:

- Survey;
- Online survey through the websites of organizations participating in the Strategy Management Cross-border Committee, etc.

### 7.1.3. Organizational structure for monitoring and assessment

The process of management, monitoring, assessment and updating of the Strategy and the Specific Objectives Implementation Programme shall be carried out by the Strategy Management Cross-border Committee (SMCBC).

The Committee shall be composed of heads and members. The heads shall be the Executive Director of ADRM "Danube" and the President of CCINA, whereas the members can be:

- operational teams of ADRM "Danube" and CCINA;
- representatives of local and regional authorities;
- representatives of central authorities;
- representatives of other stakeholders - business, investors, sector organizations, non-governmental organizations, scientific organizations, universities, representatives of the tourism industry, etc.

The composition of SMCBC will be further specified by the Managing Authorities of the two partner organizations. Like any aspect of the Strategy for Development, Enhancement and Innovation, the exact structure of the Committee will be discussed and endorsed by the Managing Authorities of the two organizations.

The main task of SMCBC is to take initiatives to implement the Strategy's activities, to initiate and coordinate stakeholders, to maintain a permanent base of opportunities for application with project proposals and to support and assist in the process of



preparation for application, implementation and reporting on projects funded through national, European and other donation programmes

Leaders will report to their Managing Authorities on progress in the implementation of the Strategy, the challenges and obstacles encountered.

The Strategy Management Cross-border Committee will periodically review and update the Specific Objectives Implementation Programme and the budget for the implementation of the Strategy. In the event of a significant change in the socio-economic situation, the legislative framework or sources of funding, an update to the Programme will be suggested.

The monitoring and updating of the Specific Objectives Implementation Programme of the Strategy should cover at least the following aspects:

- Review and update of the Strategy for the implementation of specific objectives - activities, milestones, processes of agreement and approval, others;
- Review and update of the Strategy budget - cost statement and forecast of future funding opportunities.

**With regard to the management, monitoring and control over the implementation of the Strategy and indicators, SMCBC has the following functions and responsibilities:**

- Organizes and coordinates the management, monitoring, control, supervision, updating and reporting of the implementation of the Strategy.
- It proposes updated versions of the Specific Objectives Implementation Programme of the Strategy for approval by the Managing Authorities of the two partner organizations.
- Coordinates the compliance of the Strategy with the objectives and priorities of the municipal/county, regional, cross-border and national strategies, plans and programmes of the Strategy and proposes an update to the Strategy if such compliance is not available.

SMCBC meetings may include representatives of industry organizations, scientific organizations, representatives of regional authorities and central government and other stakeholders in the Romania-Bulgaria cross-border region. Information on the Committee's activities will be published on the websites of the partner organizations, thus being accessible to the general public. This practice, combined with periodic consultations and meetings with stakeholders, will ensure transparency in the



implementation of the Strategy (Strategy for Development, Enhancement and Innovation of an Integrated Cultural Heritage Tourism Product: Route "Roman Frontier Within the Cross-border Region Romania-Bulgaria").

**The operational teams of ADRM "Danube" and the Chamber of Constanta will be responsible for the following (the list is not exhaustive):**

- Assist in the process of implementing and managing the activities included in the Strategy;
- Monitor the progress of the implementation of the activities set out in the Specific Objectives Implementation Programme of the Strategy and the predefined indicators;
- Preparation of periodic reports on the progress of the implementation of the Strategy;
- Implementation of the necessary administrative work in support of the Committee's work - coordination, preparation of documents, etc.;
- Maintain thematic databases related to the implementation of the Strategy - with stakeholders, donation programmes, funding opportunities, etc.
- Preparation of reports and other reporting documents related to the implementation of the Strategy;
- Collecting information on the extent to which the indicators are being met;
- Collecting information on the need to update the Strategy, etc.

### **Involvement of stakeholders**

Consultation with stakeholders on the adoption, implementation, monitoring, control and evaluation of documents is being promoted as a working mechanism that enhances the quality of strategy papers as well as the legitimacy of decision-making and governance as a whole. Thus, the decisions adopted reflect to a larger extent the interests of not only the authors of the strategy paper, but also the stakeholders in their diversity.

Involvement of stakeholders in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation processes of the Strategy leads to:

- Greater transparency and accountability of the Committee;
- Improving the quality of the Strategy since the Committee receives information of the various possible effects that it would not otherwise have access to;
- The Strategy responds to and reflects to a greater extent the public interest;



- Improving the implementation of the Strategy;
- Predictability of the Strategy;
- Taking into account different perspectives and interests.

The tools for stakeholder engagement in managing, monitoring and evaluating the Strategy can be: signing Memorandum and/or Co-operation Agreements, setting up consultative working groups, exchange of experience and other forms of informal search for feedback on the implementation of the Strategy, etc. We propose that the focus should be on the first two instruments as forms of structured cooperation with stakeholders.

### **Memoranda and/or Agreements**

Signing a Memorandum and/or Agreements with stakeholder organizations and institutions is a tool that formalizes a consultation process of the Strategy with stakeholders. The Memorandum/Agreement may set out detailed procedures for the consultation. The rules and procedures set out in the document shall bind the Committee without, however, leading to the invalidity of the Strategy if it is impossible to involve a stakeholder group at a stage of its implementation, control or evaluation. The Memorandum/Agreement itself is desirable to be developed with the involvement of stakeholders and using good practices in a number of European countries.

### **Advisory working groups**

The developed management model requires a partner approach and involvement of stakeholders in the process of implementation and assessment of the Strategy. In order to achieve broader support and legitimacy of the Strategy's objectives, consultative working groups will be set up where necessary - a mechanism for direct stakeholder involvement in the decision-making process related to the implementation of the Strategy.

### **Representatives of local and regional authorities**

Representatives of local and regional authorities will be involved in working meetings of the Advisory Group where necessary and in accordance with their competencies. In connection with the formation of the groups, the Committee will send an invitation to include representatives from the relevant authorities for participation in the meeting. The meetings shall ensure:

- the involvement of experts from local and regional authorities for inclusion in teams when developing project proposals to implement the Strategy's activities;



- maintaining active communication with other stakeholders;
- maintaining a positive image of the Strategy;
- initiating projects in implementation of the Strategy;
- preparing opinions and reports on emerging issues and cases in the implementation of the Strategy.

### **Representatives of sector organizations (Bulgaria and Romania)**

Representatives of sector organizations will be included in working meetings of an advisory group when necessary in accordance with their competencies. In connection with the formation of the groups, the Committee will send an invitation to include representatives from the relevant sector organization for participation in the particular meeting. The meetings shall ensure:

- the involvement of experts from the sector for inclusion in teams when developing project proposals to implement the Strategy's activities;
- maintaining active communication with other stakeholders;
- maintaining a positive image of the Strategy;
- preparing opinions and reports on emerging issues and cases in the implementation of the Strategy.

### **Representatives of civil society (Bulgaria and Romania)**

Representatives of non-governmental organizations will be included in working meetings of the advisory group when necessary in accordance with their competencies. In connection with the formation of the groups, the Committee will send an invitation to include representatives from the relevant non-governmental organization for participation in the particular meeting. The meetings shall ensure:

- the involvement of experts from NGOs for inclusion in teams when developing project proposals to implement the Strategy's activities;
- maintaining active communication with other stakeholders;
- maintaining a positive image of the Strategy;
- preparing opinions and reports on emerging issues and cases in the implementation of the Strategy.





## **Representatives of educational and scientific organizations/institutions**

Representatives of educational and scientific organizations will be included in working meetings of the advisory group when necessary in accordance with their competencies. In connection with the formation of the groups, the Committee will send an invitation to include representatives from the relevant organization for participation in the particular meeting. The meetings shall ensure:

- the involvement of experts from educational and scientific organizations for inclusion in teams when developing project proposals to implement the Strategy's activities;
- maintaining active communication with other stakeholders;
- maintaining a positive image of the Strategy;
- preparing opinions and reports on emerging issues and cases in the implementation of the Strategy.

## **Representatives of the central government**

Representatives of central government will be included in working meetings of the advisory group when necessary in accordance with their competencies. In connection with the formation of the groups, the Committee will send an invitation to include representatives from the relevant institution for participation in the particular meeting. The meetings shall ensure:

- maintaining active communication with other stakeholders;
- maintaining a positive image of the Strategy;
- initiating projects in implementation of the Strategy;
- preparing opinions and reports on emerging issues and cases in the implementation of the Strategy.

The Strategy Management Cross-border Committee will seek to ensure sustainability in several aspects:

- Financial sustainability is related to the achievement of the outcomes of the implementation of the Strategy and is conditioned by the financial stability of the sources of funding and the realization of the benefits expected from the activities/projects in the Romania-Bulgaria cross-border region. The Committee



must provide all necessary costs for the implementation of the individual activities, taking into account the update of budgets thereof.

- **Institutional sustainability** implies establishing and maintaining formal and ad hoc partnerships (advisory working groups) and forms of cooperation between stakeholders.

Successful implementation of the Strategy will be largely ensured by sound planning and appropriate control mechanisms that the Committee will apply as a good allocation of tasks and responsibilities among the experts involved in the Committee.

The steps for implementing the assessment include the implementation of several consecutive and interrelated processes as follows:

#### ***Composition of the assessment team***

The heads of the Committee are responsible for the formation of assessment teams. Their proposals are approved by the managing authorities of the two partner organizations.

It is also recommended to include **stakeholder representatives** for more objective and transparent assessment.

#### ***Number of members of the assessment team***

It is recommended that the assessment team of the Strategy be composed of a minimum of three and a maximum of seven people in order to be a flexible and working structure and decisions to be taken by a 2/3 majority.

#### ***Organization and structure of the assessment team***

The heads of the Committee must determine:

- the structure of the assessment team;
- coordinator;
- objectives and tasks;
- the period within which the assessment is to be carried out.

#### ***Collection of data required for assessment***

The documents that contain relevant information are also included in the developed assessment toolkit. These same documents, many of which are official documents, can



also be used as documentary evidence of effectiveness in implementing and observing the principles of strategic planning and management.

The members of the assessment team have the task of gathering the necessary data and information on the additional indicators and questions specified in the toolkit and should be assisted by all participants in the implementation of the Strategy.

The collection of the necessary data can also be accomplished by filling in semi-structured and structured questionnaires, holding interviews, discussions, workshops, etc.

### **Assessment work of the team**

At the start of the assessment team's work, the coordinator shall familiarize the members of the team with the methodology (basically the principles set out therein) and the rules for its implementation, and the session must end with a decision that necessarily includes:

- the necessary supporting documents to be presented and considered in order to gather the necessary information and data - where and how they will be procured, who and how will submit them to the committee;
- working papers and subsequent meetings of the assessment committee.

The decision shall be submitted to the heads of the Committee.

At subsequent meetings, the team members have the task to work on the task and apply the methodology by discussing the questionnaire and the data collected and agree on the answers.

The aim is to consider at each meeting the indicators for monitoring the Strategy and the additional indicators on the criteria included in the toolkit.

If it is necessary to collect additional information and/or data, the team decides who and how will obtain this information for the next meeting.

Minutes shall be drawn up at each meeting, stating:

- attendees (members of the assessment team);
- the agenda of the meeting - it is particularly important to indicate the monitoring indicators and the criteria to be considered at the meeting;
- discussions and substantive discussions;



- an inventory of the submitted evidence for each monitoring indicator and additional indicators/question according to the requirements of the methodology;
- conclusions;
- committee decisions.

Once the assessment committee has completed its work, the coordinator summarizes the data.

As a result of the assessment, a summary report is drawn up which includes a descriptive analysis of the collected and summarised data.

The content of the report may follow the following sample structure:

- I. Introduction
- II. Methodology
- III. Basic assessment components:
  1. Assessment of Principle 1: Unity of the Strategy
  2. Assessment of Principle 2: Adequacy and relevance of the Strategy;
  3. Assessment of Principle 3: Applicability of the Strategy
  4. Assessment of Principle 4: Overall impact of the Strategy
  5. Assessment of Principle 5: Effectiveness and efficiency of the Strategy
  6. Assessment of Principle 6: Financial management
  7. Assessment of Principle 7: Openness, transparency and publicity
  8. Assessment of Principle 8: Monitoring and accountability
  9. Assessment of Principle 9: Sustainability
- IV. Assessment of the implementation of the monitoring indicators of the Strategy
- V. Conclusions
- VI. Recommendations
- VII. Appendices



## VIII. Methodology for updating the Strategy

### 8.1. Factors requiring the establishment of a methodology for updating the Strategy and strategic programmes

The developed Strategy can be defined as a complex dynamic system that has been formed, is being formed and will be formed in the future, on the one hand, on the basis of the development of the Route, and on the other - in accordance with the intentions and wishes of the society, expressed through regional planning and regional policy formulated under a specific regulatory framework and specified by developed and applied models for development of cross-border region Romania-Bulgaria and cultural and historical tourism. This requires the establishment of an adequate system for analysis, management and monitoring of the Strategy, which should provide both timely and in-depth information on its implementation and allow for the formulation of an adequate strategy for planning and managing the Strategy. The dynamics of these processes requires the development of a flexible and adaptable strategic document that accurately reflects changes in development factors and conditions. This document should set the necessary parameters correcting the direction of development of *route "Roman Frontier Within the Cross-border Region Romania-Bulgaria"*. An integral part of strategic planning is the assessment of implementation and subsequent updating, if necessary.

This methodology has been developed in order to achieve greater document and update flexibility due to changes and/or interim performance assessments.

The methodology aims to provide in an accessible and synthesized manner the basic requirements in the Strategy update as well as practical guidelines in five main groups:

- ✓ A summary of the key elements for the successful update of the Strategy;
- ✓ Effective organization of updating work;
- ✓ Updating situational analysis;
- ✓ Updating the strategic part of the document;
- ✓ Monitoring system and indicators;

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

- ✓ changes in the economic and social conditions in Romania-Bulgaria cross-border region;
- ✓ updating strategy papers at national, regional and European level;
- ✓ changes in related national legislation or EU legislation;



- ✓ changes in sectoral strategies and programmes affecting the implementation of the Strategy;
- ✓ conclusions, results and recommendations from interim assessments.

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

## 8.2. Match method in key documents affecting the implementation of the Strategy

When updating the Strategy, it is essential, with a view to fine-tune the strategic framework, to carry out a thorough review of strategy papers 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 Romania-Bulgaria and the European Union.

## 8.3. Match method for objectives, priorities, measures and activities for the implementation of the Strategy

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

The update of the Strategy should be based on the following basic principles:

- **Feasibility** - realistic objectives must be formulated, which means that they must be tailored not only to the potential for development but also to factors such as institutional environment, tourism development trends, training levels in the tourism sector, financial security and a number of others that can play the role of containment factors for the effective implementation of the Strategy;
- **Sustainability** - the Strategy should not contain tasks, events and specific activities, the solution of which has an isolated, operational and campaigning character, with





a short-term and rapidly "damping" effect on the implementation of the objectives set in the Strategy;

- **Continuity** - the update of the Strategy should not start "from scratch" - continuity must be ensured with the current strategy paper, municipal/county plans, sectoral strategies and programmes at national and European level;
- **Partnership** - the Strategy should be the result of joint efforts of a number of stakeholders (representatives of state, regional, municipal/county authorities, business, scientific and educational institutions and the non-governmental sector).

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

The next step is the reformulation (updating) of the strategic part of the Strategy.

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 implementation of strategic intentions;
- Coordination within and between management units at all levels responsible for achieving the expected state of the area as at the planning endpoint;
- Concentration of efforts, human and financial resources to achieve the objectives set in the Strategy;
- Close engagement and integrity of the actions set out in the various programmes and strategy papers at national and European level in order to achieve a complex socio-economic impact;
- Openness for additions and adaptability of strategic intentions to changing conditions of the environment in which the Strategy is implemented;

The strategic objectives of the document specify the vision of development as at the time of action of the strategy paper. They should be:

- consistent with the fact that the Strategy is defined as a strategic document with a time span of action. This implies greater specificity and clearer spatial conditionality. The strategic objectives are formulated, on the one hand, in line



with the available route development potential, the expectations of the stakeholders and, on the other, the need to reflect with priority the basic, primary needs of the route;

- compatible with the objectives and priorities for the development of tourism and, in particular, of cultural and historical tourism in national, regional and European strategic documents;
- in line with the need to apply an integrated approach to tackling common development problems and to impose a unified approach to planning and managing tourist routes;
- in line with the requirement to increase the efficiency of use of the route planning and management tools, and above all of those funds coming from the state budget and the European structural and investment funds;
- clearly formulated to know what is to be expected with the development of the route and what the effect of its achievement will be, i.e. how the implementation of the strategic objectives will contribute not only to the development of the route but also to the development of Romania-Bulgaria cross-border region; should have specific justification and clear, measurable performance criteria;
- priorities are determined on the basis of thorough analysis (including SWOT analysis) to achieve the respective strategic objectives;
- it is necessary that the objectives are channelled into certain priority axes and specified in relevant measures with a clear scope and expected results;
- specific objectives detail what we want to achieve in the different priority areas;
- the measures should reflect the concrete actions needed to implement the underlying strategic objectives, specific objectives and priorities for the development of the area concerned.

A characteristic feature of data collection for the implementation of the Strategy's objectives in the cross-border region Romania-Bulgaria regarding the development of cultural and historical tourism are:

- the lack of official statistics at national and European level by segments of the tourism sector;
- a small amount of sample surveys for cultural and historical tourism that are not representative of the region.



Before setting up a system of indicators, a complete set of criteria must be created to assess the reliability of the source information and the indicators themselves. Indicators must meet the following criteria:

- Rationale (appropriateness) - comply with the common priorities and objectives of sustainable development;
- Information availability - to have a constant source of information for each of them;
- Opportunity for presentation in quantitative terms (the possibility of setting value objectives and, where possible, establishing a baseline);
- Simplicity (comprehensibility) - easy to formulate and understand;
- Informative (analytic) indicators - they should be provided with sufficient information to draw relevant conclusions and make decisions;
- To be complex, i.e. to be hierarchically linked to lower-level indicators. The main indicators correspond to the complex ones.

#### 8.4. Financial update method

The overall assessment of the resources needed to implement the updated document should not be regarded as a financial plan or an indicative financial table, but as a general expert assessment in terms of mainly the necessary financial resources.

Funding should be assessed in the following areas:

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

Expert assessment of financial resources should be drawn from the priorities of the Strategy and presented in absolute figures and relative shares. When analysing and assessing the necessary financial resources, account should be taken of the funding limitations on the various programmes of the European Structural and Investment Funds. An essential element when assessing the necessary financial resources must be in line with both the degree of readiness for utilization of these funds during the respective



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years of the remaining period and the likelihood that these funds will actually be received for the priority/activity concerned in the relevant year.

### **Appendices:**

Appendix 1 – List of sites;

Appendix 2 – Review of strategy papers at regional and local level - Bulgaria

Appendix 3 – Review of strategy papers at regional and local level - Romania

Appendix 4 – Strategy implementation programme

Appendix 5 – Indicative financial framework

Appendix 6 – Indicators

Appendix 7 – Assessment tool