

Advertising of Regional Cultural Heritage in 3D –Arch 3D

*INTERREG V-A Romania-Bulgaria Program,
Priority axis no. 2 „A green region”,
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heritage“*





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***Common Advertising Plan of the cultural
heritage of the trans-border region Balchik –
Mangalia***

- **PROJECT BACKGROUND, OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY**

Project goals

This Common Advertising Plan is developed as part of the project ***“Advertising of Regional Cultural Heritage in 3D –Arch 3D”***, which addresses the needs of two municipalities in the trans-border region Bulgaria-Romania.

The project aims to support the promotion and boosting the development of cultural tourism in the common area of Balchik and Mangalia

The ARCH 3D projects addresses the mentioned problem by improving the use of sights of cultural heritage in the area.

The main goal of the project is aimed to be achieved by developing an innovative instrument to advertise the cultural and historic heritage of the region - 20 promotional 3D videos.

Launching events have to be organized in Balchik and Mangalia, on which the elaborated videos should be presented.

Further use of the innovative tools is by demonstrating the 3D videos on the facades of sites of cultural heritage on both sides of the border.

As part of the projects the current common plan for advertising of cultural heritage in the cross-border region of the two municipalities has to be elaborated.

Two exhibition halls in Mangalia and Balchik are to be established, in which the promotional videos will be presented on a year-round basis.

It is anticipated that the implementation of the project would result in an increase of the number of tourist overnights in the CBC region and in the tourist visits to sites of cultural heritage and in the elaboration of a common plan for advertising the cultural heritage for sustainable economic uses, thus contributing to the Programme indicator “Increase in expected number of visits to supported sites of cultural and natural heritage and attraction”.

Methodological framework

The Common Advertising Plan is based on the analysis of the information obtained through two research methods:

- desk research – from all available sources – municipalities' sites, other websites, strategic documents, statistics collected by their informational centers, informational and advertising brochures
- in-depth expert interviews with the specialists involved in taking decisions regarding development of tourism, PR and advertising – those were mayor, vice mayor, managers of departments dealing with tourism, PR and international co-operation and , specialists at informational department, EU integration and projects activities

The collected data was analyzed and summarized in the current common advertising plan.

Caveat

The following specificities and prerequisites have to be taken into account when considering the content of the current Common Strategic Advertising Plan:

- Creating a common advertising plan of the cultural heritage of the trans-border region Balchik – Mangalia is a very complicated task, because,
- It is a novelty – there is no significant previous experience of elaboration and application of such strategic document;
- it needs to combine the approaches of promoting certain large social formations and territories (such as regions, districts, cross-border region as a whole), at one hand, and at another, to identify and propose specific approaches, products and services – developed or potential, that are similar for the regions and which may be introduced to certain markets.
- As well, the current Plan had to compensate the lack of Marketing Strategy within which an Advertising Plan is usually developed.
- The proposed strategic goals and activities at one hand are based on the Strategies for development for the period until 2030, and, at another, they reflect the opinion of the key specialists and municipality top managers. However, they have a non-obligatory character and their accomplishment would depend on further practical decisions and steps of the decision makers of the two municipalities. Therefore, the Plan is not associated with expected outputs and outcomes.

Introduction

According to the European Convention on Transfrontier Cooperation between Territorial Communities or Authorities (the so called Madrid Convention) – a *transfrontier* cooperation is any concerted action designed to support and encourage neighborly relations between territorial communities or authorities in regions that share a border. *Transfrontier* cooperation is seen as a factor in reducing the adverse effects induced by the boundaries by:

- improving the living conditions of the population through more intensive exchange of goods and services – in one or more areas of life (cultural, social, economic, etc.);
- inclusion of isolated or remote national areas;
- improving cross-border environmental protection and management of shared natural resources.

During the recent years there has been an intensive process of regional integration and cooperation in Europe (which can be seen on the European map of border and cross-border regions), which is partly due to EU policies and programs to stimulate that process.

In Bulgaria there is also an activation of the process, including in the cross-border region that is the subject of this plan and project. Furthermore, there are several established Euro regions, which are members of the Association of European Border Regions (AEBR): Euroregion Danubius (Rousse – Guyrgevo), “Nišava” (Piroto, Babušnica, Dimitrovgrad, Bela Palanka, Kostinbrod, Bozhurishte, Dragoman, Slivnitsa, Godech, Svoge), “Sofia-Niš-Skopje”, “Morava-Pčinja-Struma”; “Stara Planina” (Belogradchik, Berkovitza, Chiprovtsi, Chuprene, Georgi Damyanovo, Godech, Varshetz,– Dimitrovgrad, Zaječar, Knjaževac and Piroto).

In the widespread notion, the collaboration and cooperation are usually associated with intensification of interaction between people of the border regions, primarily through more active exchange of goods and services and, in more rare cases, through joint activities in the establishment of a business, but so far, not in the phase of their marketing.

Marketing of similar products and services are usually associated with their competing on the market. Joining efforts of regional competitors so as to offer goods and services on international markets is a relatively new concept that gradually, with the manifestation the synergic effect of the process, becomes more and more adopted in the attitudes of “neighbors” in the TBR Bulgaria-Romania. The idea to joint effort in the field of advertising of the cultural tourism of the two municipalities in a trans-border region – Balchik and Mangalia is the core of this Common Advertising Plan.

• **THE TOURISM IN BALCHIK AND MANGALIA: SITUATION ANALYSIS**

• **The latest trends of the contemporary tourism**

During the last decades the tourism world-wide appears to be an unprecedentedly developing sector. Despite the economic crisis and the recent threat of terrorism six consecutive years it shows a steady growth- according to the World Organization of Tourism the number of international tourists in 2015 increased by 4.4% reaching the impressive number of 1.18 bln per year.

The world tourism provides about 5-6 % of the global GDP, and it is almost not affected by economic fluctuations and crises. The tourism registers growth almost everywhere and for Europe it is 5%.

Increasing of the role of the historical and cultural assets is one of the very visible trends in the latest years. The Cultural tourism (CT) is one of the most successful types of modern travel and its share of all travels is slightly over one third - 37%. It grows quickly - by 15% annually and covers more areas and fields of social and economic life. According to the World Tourism Organization (WTO) it represent between 18% and 25% of the outgoing tourist flow, as the expectations are for the

increasing their share. Forecasts of WTO are that in 2020 it will have a leading role in the world.

There are several factors which contributed to the intensification of the contemporary tourism:

- Increased use of air transport services - the market share of the low-cost airlines
- Use of internet and boom of informational sources about travel and tourism: not
- Changed profile of the contemporary tourist

The socio-psychographic profile of the contemporary tourist

The advertising, as all other marketing activities has to be well oriented according to the changes of the addressed target groups. There are some universal psychographic characteristics of contemporary tourist that are also valid for the ones who are current or potential visitors of Bulgaria and Romania. Therefore it is important to take them into account in any marketing related concepts, documents and activities. The profile of the now-a-days tourism consumer is features by the following traits:

- He/she is well-informed and experienced, which results
- is very price oriented and informed of price differences: due to internet and much richer personal experience the now-a-days tourist is very well aware and estimates adequately the value-for-money of the tourist services. The decision regarding his holiday is almost always based on comparison of different price variants;
- He/she has higher expectations, because he has more information about the product and about the respective tourist destination;
- He is more conscious about his/hers consumer rights.
- He/she uses more diverse sources to take a decision regarding his tourist travels. The predominant source for foreigners from developed markets is the tourist agency; however, the internet gives opportunity for the initiative taking and self-starting people to organize their trip better and for better value for money than a tourist agency can do that. Word-of-mouth and previous experience, however, remain very significant factors for taking decisions.

This makes him/her very flexible and unsteady, with regard to consumer criteria, when taking tourist decisions.

- He/she needs an innovative approach and an “integrated tourist product” – a combination of standard service that is custom-designed so as to meet specific interests – in sport, music, culture, since:
- He/ seeks self-realization trough entertainment and active confirmation of his individuality. Therefore he/she wants not only to participate in the experience but also to choose its elements him/herself.
- He has more interests, because he/she is better educated - Besides the main product he is also interested in the availability of additional offers.
- His/her holiday time is shorter and split into several vacations throughout the year, therefore

it should be more intensive

- He/she seeks for more elements combined in one:

The typical set for a middle aged tourist should combine rest, nature, culture and culinary, conditions for moderate physical activities – swimming, fitness

- The typical set for the young should include adventure, fun, loud music extreme sports
- The new type of more spiritually oriented customers nature, quiet, spiritual practices such as yoga, meditation, art workshops
- Part of the tourists 32% are tempted by adventurous (but still safe) long-distance travels with various daily routes Yet, significant part – 43% prefer traditional and relatively close destinations – in that respect Mangalia and Balchik have attractive offers for Europeans, as well as for ex-soviets citizens
- Not all of the now-a-days tourists desire to establish contact with the local people. They might be interested in the local cuisine and traditions, but not necessarily seek personal communication. The all-inclusive offers give opportunity to those tourists to prefer to enjoy their vacation in relatively isolated from the social surroundings environment. Cultural and alternative tourism – the opposite – gives opportunities to get to know local culture, tradition, mentality and to create personal communication with local people
- The now-a-days tourist is of all ages. The aged tourists can afford and tend to spend more than the younger ones and that is why many of the tourists products become third-age oriented .

The segments of tourists with regard to their interest to cultural tourism

These segments deserve special attention since the cultural tourism is in the focus of this advertising plan. To identify the users of cultural tourism it is possible to use the various approaches: socio-demographic, behavioral and motivational:

- **The sightseers** – for them the main attractions are the historical, architectural and art sights – monuments, galleries, buildings, etc. They are of two types:
 - Passive – they usually join an organised excursions with guide and all program scheduled
 - Active – they design and organise their travel and sightseeing themselves including booking of the hotels, flights etc.
- **The event lovers** – they are purposeful cultural tourists, for whom the leading trigger are the cultural events – festivals, concerts, workshops, etc. Some of the tourists are attracted not only by the possibility to observe a cultural event but also actively to participate and to improve their own skills That can be considered and different variety of event tourism – the so-called **creative tourism**

- **Casual or incidental cultural tourists**- their primary purpose is another kind of tourism– having a rest or business and sightseeing or visiting a festival could be a concomitant activity
- **Culture averse tourists** – this type of travelers are not attracted by the sightseeing and cultural events but prefer to concentrate on recreation, sport activities, extreme, adventurous or eco-tourism.

• The latest trends in the tourism of Bulgaria and Romania

Bulgaria and Romania are one of the new destinations in Europe which during the last years achieved a real breakthrough on the international tourist market. The growth of the tourists visited both countries is almost double higher than the average for the world and for Europe – on-average about 10 % and by some parameters even about 15 – 17% for each country.

In the last 8 years, **the tourism in Bulgaria** shows a stable tendency of growth by all parameters. In 2016 Bulgaria is visited by 8 251 995 foreigners (transit travelers excluded). They are with 16,2% more, compared to 2015. The increase of 19.9% is observed among tourists coming for rest and vacation and 27.9% growth among those who came to visit friends/relatives. The business visits grew with 19.4%

In 2016 the biggest groups of foreign visitors were Romanians (1.7 mln), followed by Greeks (1.2 mln.), Germans (1.2 mln.) and Turks (1.3 mln)

3,8 mln were the Bulgarian citizens who have made any touristic travels - 83,4% of them travelled only inside the country, 12,9% - only abroad 3,7% - in Bulgaria and
The total number of tourists in Bulgaria is about 12 mln.

The total number of overnights at all places for accommodation for 2016 were 25.2 million or with 17.7% more than in the previous year. There is a clear cut tendency towards increase of the number of overnights at expensive hotels. In 2016 66% of all overnights spent in Bulgaria by foreign tourists were in 4-5 stars hotels and 31.5% of Bulgarians. 25.1% of the overnights spent by foreigners were at 3 start hotels and 29.1% - by Bulgarians.

For the period 2009 – 2016 the national incomes generated by tourism have increased from 1.4 bln leva to 1.9.

The occupancy rate has grown significantly – from 25 to 40%. In 2016 in Bulgaria have functioned 3331 accommodation places with over than 10 beds. The number of rooms in them is slightly over 140 000 and of the rooms – 328 000. Compared to 2015 the number of places for accommodation in such establishments grew with 4% and the number of beds with 1.8%

The **tourism in Romania** for 2016 follows the same trend as in Bulgaria – its tourist sector also has registered significant growth during the last year – even slightly higher than in Bulgaria, but still the number of arrivals in Romania is about 10 mln and the number of foreigners is 2.2 mln (which could be seen in the tables below). That is the main difference between the two countries in the structure of the tourist flow - in Bulgaria it is definitely comprised predominantly of foreigners – Bulgarians are

less than half of that (46.3%), while in Romania – that proportion is the opposite – the Romanians are more than two thirds (77.4 %) of all tourists. However, with the current trend and pace of inflow of foreign tourists to Romania the structure of the tourist arrivals will most likely become the same as in Bulgaria. In the first 3 months of 2017, there were 2.06 millions of foreign arrivals. Compared to the same 3 months of the previous year, arrivals increased by 10.9% and overnight stays in accommodation establishments increased by 7.1%.

The average number of overnights per arrival is 2.7 in Bulgaria vs. 2.4 in Romania.

The tourism contribution to the GDP - in Romania - EUR 2.09 billion, while in Bulgarian economy it was about EUR 5 billion.

Number of tourists accommodated in Romania in 2015 and 2016

	Number of arrivals				Growth
	2016		2015		2016/2014
	N	%	N	%	%
Total	9930496	100%	8465909	100%	17,3%
Romanians	7690518	77.4	6551339	66.0	17,4%
Foreigners	2239978	29.1	1914570	24.9	17,0%

Number of overnights in Romania in 2015 and 2016

	Number of overnights				Growth
	2016		2015		2016/2014
	N	%	N	%	%
Total	23519340	100%	20280041	100%	18,8%
Romanians	19047701	77.4	16119372	66.0	19,1%
Foreigners	4471639	29.1	3768104	24.9	18,6%

In the active tourist season for the destinations Bulgaria and Romania, the biggest part of tourists are in the active age group between 25-46 years old. The share of people on leading positions among the foreigners is twice as high as the share among Bulgarians (24-28% versus 13-16% respectively). In our country, foreigners taking a holiday are mainly with higher education – 52-57%.

The statistics of the largest tour-operator of charter holidays in Romania shows that Romanian youth have normally three holidays a year – two short breaks like a week-end in Europe and a summer holiday between 7 and 10 days spent in Bulgaria, Greece, Turkey or Spain.

According to a study of the National Association of the Tourist Agencies, in Romania, in the past 10 years, the trips made by young people (between 26 and 35 years old) in the country have increased with 21%. However, the biggest increase in touristic travels can be seen in Romanians over 55 years old – 35 % more than 2005. Around 17 % of the Romanians will spend more than 4000 lei /900 EUR/ for their holiday in 2017. In 2005 only 5 percent of the population of our northern neighbors has put such a sum aside for their holiday. This year, only 11% of the Romanians put aside under 1000 lei /220 EUR/ for their holiday, whereas ten years ago 34 percent of them have been on a holiday for such an amount. There is also a reduction in the number of people who do not go on holiday at all, while in 2004 they were 44% and 2016 – that share dropped to 22%. Half of the population goes on holiday in Romania, almost the same number as ten years ago, but the holidays abroad have almost tripled – from 9 % in 2004 to 28 % in 2015.

On the whole, in 2016 the tourism in Bulgaria and Romania has reached a peak never seen before. The summer tourism continues to be the leading one, although the winter tourism is also in a uplift. The major factors that have brought about to that growth are:

- Both countries are peaceful and safe destinations, which is a significant advantage in view the recent unrest in some of the most popular touristic countries
- Turkey as a tourist destination has lost its attractiveness due to the political instability.
- Both countries are positioned as good value for money destinations - directly competing with Turkey, Croatia and Greece.
- The tourist products and services have increased their quality and diversity
- Many innovative offers provide interesting combinations between recreation and cultural tourism, adventurous entertainment, sports, studying of foreign languages, self-development seminars, medical and dental services etc.
- Intensified exchange of tourists between Bulgaria and Romania is also one of the factors for the significant growth of the tourism in both countries: Romania is the country that has generated the highest growth among international tourists in Bulgaria in 2016 r. – nearly 1,1 mln visits – with 11% growth compared to 2015. This tendency continues in 2017 – for the first 6 months 17% of growth is registered, compared to the same period of 2016. At the same time, during this period the number of visits of Bulgarians in Romania grew with 27%, compared to 400 000 visits in 2016
- The countries are becoming more and more famous for their cuisine and for hospitality;
- The infrastructure in both countries has been significantly improved due to EU funding for regional development
- The well developed mobile and WIFI networks are also one of the important factors for the tourists, especially for the young ones.

All those factors have led to shifts in the preferences of some of the value oriented EU citizens to different value for money destinations, on first place, those were the German tourists. As the European Tourist Commission found out during the first quarter of 2017 40% more German tourists visited Bulgaria and 18% more – Romania compared to the same period of 2016. At the same time, Croatia reported significant drop in the number of German arrivals. Bulgaria and Romania seems to have become also the new winter destinations - many German families have substituted the winter resorts in Austria and Switzerland with the cheaper Balkan ones.

• **The tourism in Balchik and Mangalia municipalities**

Balchik municipality

The recreation capacity of the beaches of Balchik municipality is 31200 people.

The accommodation capacity in 2016 was more than twice bigger than in 2012 when it was 11 856 beds, while in 2016 there were officially licensed 24 315.

The biggest share of the rooms and beds are in the hotels - 82% of the rooms and beds.

Over the last 15 years there was a clear- cut trend of diminishing the number of guest rooms at the expense of those at hotels, family hotels, guest houses and apartments.

From 4660 in 2004, the number of guest rooms has dropped by 81% to 868 in 2012r., then increased to 967 in 2015 and slightly dropped to 695 in 2016.

Tourists accommodation places in Balchik municipality

№	Types of accommodation places	2015			2016		
		places	rooms	beds	places	rooms	beds
1.	Hotels	81	10 142	20 421	76	9 849	19 609
2.	Tourists villages	2	77	106	2	77	150
4.	Villas	2	30	60	2	30	60
1.	Family hotels	31	479	1027	32	484	1 020
2.	Bungalows	11	364	811	11	351	731
3.	Camping	1	196	392	1	196	392
4.	Rest stations	9	292	668	8	254	588
5.	Guest houses	66	395	844	39	266	564
6.	Guest rooms	147	445	967	136	429	898
7.	Guest apartments	2	4	10	57	119	695
	Total	352	12 424	25 350	363	11 859	24 315

Source: Statistics provided by Balchik municipality Informational Center

As could be seen in the table on the next page:

- Overall, the number tourists, accommodated at Balchik municipality in 2016 was 345 777 and the number of overnights -1 801 243 which is on average 6,45 overnights per tourist – higher than the average for the country – 2.4;
- The tourist flow in Balchik municipality in 2015 and 2016 even outscores the national trend of significant growth – the number of arrivals grew by 14.5% and of overnights - with 11%;
- The major share of tourists and overnights in Balchik municipality (93.8%) is generated by the tourists from 16 countries. Among the tourists of those countries the number of overnights is above 20 000 and number of tourists - above 3 000;
- The structure of tourists flow consists of one third Bulgarians (33%) and two thirds foreigners;
- Romanian tourists are slightly above one fourth (27%) and the other two significant groups are Germans (11%) and Russians (6%).

Tourists and overnights in Balchik municipality in 2015 and 2016 – by country of origin

Countries of tourists origin	2016 r.				2015 r.			
	Tourists		Overnights		Tourists		Overnights	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Total	34577 7	100%	1801243	100%	30181 6	100,0%	1618503	100,0%
BULGARIA	11351 2	32,8%	415264	23,1%	10764 6	35,7%	435677	26,9%
ROMANIA	93870	27,1%	379234	21,1%	79581	26,4%	321083	19,8%
GERMANY	37915	11,0%	304241	16,9%	28563	9,5%	234658	14,5%
RUSSIA	20448	5,9%	185541	10,3%	17543	5,8%	166822	10,3%
NORWAY	9113	2,6%	70384	3,9%	10011	3,3%	72682	4,5%
POLAND	10064	2,9%	63958	3,6%	7245	2,4%	50130	3,1%
BELORUSSIA	5575	1,6%	50899	2,8%	7007	2,3%	64020	4,0%
FRANCE	6674	1,9%	42386	2,4%	5536	1,8%	36692	2,3%
UCRAINE	5904	1,7%	37440	2,1%	4668	1,5%	31941	2,0%
MOLDOVA	6182	1,8%	36018	2,0%	6756	2,2%	41445	2,6%
CHECK REPUBLIC	4587	1,3%	30032	1,7%	2006	0,7%	12726	0,8%
GB	4531	1,3%	29162	1,6%	2892	1,0%	17368	1,1%
SWEDEN	3869	1,1%	25110	1,4%	3317	1,1%	20886	1,3%
OTHER	23533	6,81%	131574	7,30%	19045	6,31%	112373	6,94%

Source: Statistics provided by Balchik municipality Informational Center

The table below shows that:

- German, Polish, Ukrainian and those from Czech Republic increased in 2015 and 2016 most significantly;
- Most drastic outflow can be seen in the group of Belorussian tourists – two consecutive years their number drops;
- In the tourists from Russia, GB, Ukraine the negative trend, observed in 2015 is already turned to positive in 2016.

Growth in the number of tourists and overnights in Balchik municipality

Countries	Growth in the number of tourists			Growth in number of overnights	
	2016/2015	2015/2014		2016/2015	2015/2014
Total	14,6%	1,6%		11,3%	-6,1%
BULGARIA	5,4%	6,1%		-4,7%	3,7%
ROMANIA	18,0%	19,7%		18,1%	14,0%
GERMANY	32,7%	15,7%		29,7%	13,4%
RUSSIA	16,6%	-52,1%		11,2%	-50,1%
NORWAY	-9,0%	8,3%		-3,2%	1,4%
POLAND	38,9%	37,7%		27,6%	40,7%
BELORUSSIA	-20,4%	-38,6%		-20,5%	-39,1%

FRANCE	20,6%	-5,5%		15,5%	-7,0%
UCRAINE	26,5%	-17,0%		17,2%	-20,3%
MOLDOVA	-8,5%	-0,4%		-13,1%	-6,1%
CHECK REPUBLIC	128,7%	26,4%		136,0%	39,2%
GB	56,7%	-26,3%		67,9%	-35,0%
SWEDEN	16,6%	105,8%		20,2%	100,6%
OTHER					

*The colored fields indicate growth of above 15%

Average number of overnights in Balchik municipality

	2016 r.	2015 r.	2014 r.
BULGARIA	3,66	4,05	4,14
ROMANIA	4,04	4,03	4,24
GERMANY	8,02	8,22	8,38
RUSSIA	9,07	9,51	9,12
NORWAY	7,72	7,26	7,75
POLAND	6,36	6,92	6,77
BELORUSSIA	9,13	9,14	9,22
FRANCE	6,35	6,63	6,74
UCRAINE	6,34	6,84	7,13
MOLDOVA	5,83	6,13	6,51
CHECK REPUBLIC	6,55	6,34	5,76
GB	6,44	6,01	6,81
SWEDEN	6,49	6,30	6,46
Other	5,59	5,90	5,98
Mean	6,45	6,58	6,72

Source: Statistics provided by Balchik municipality Informational Center

Mangalia municipality

The statistical information, provided by the administration of Mangalia municipality is summarized in the tables below. Based on that, the following conclusions can be made:

- The number of the tourists in Mangalia municipality(332 thsn) is almost the same as in the municipality of Balchik (345 thsn)
- The share of foreign tourists in Mangalia municipality is lower than the average for the country of Romania – 15.5% vs. 22%.

- The average number of overnights in Mangalia municipality was 4.8, double compared to the average for the country, but shorter than in Balchik municipality – 6.4 . That explains the fact that the number of overnights in Mangalia were with 200 thsn less than in Balchik.
- Most significant by the number of tourists and overnights are the shares of two resorts Neptun and Venus – they comprise about half of total number by both parameters.
- The most significant growth in 2016 compared to 2015 appears to be have the number of visitors and overnights in Venus – 4-5%, followed by Neptun - about half of that.

Tourists accommodated in Mangalia Municipality

	2016 r.				2015 r.			
	Tourists		Overnights		Tourists		Overnights	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Total	332437	100%	160369 1	100%	240927	100%	161850 3	100%
Romanians	327449	84,5%	157344 5	98,1%	239468	88,4%	435677	85,7%
Foreigners	49818	15.5%	301246	19%	54213	11.6%	321083	14.3%

Share of tourists and overnights by resorts in Mangalia Municipality

	2016 r.		2015 r.	
	Tourists	Overnights	Tourists	Overnights
MANGALIA	6,6%	9,2%	7,7%	11,1%
OLIMP	7,3%	6,5%	6,1%	5,7%
NEPTUN	27,9%	26,1%	26,5%	23,8%
JUPITER	13,4%	12,7%	15,2%	13,7%
CAP AURORA	6,5%	6,8%	6,8%	6,2%
VENUS	23,8%	18,1%	18,1%	14,5%
SATURN	14,6%	20,5%	19,6%	24,9%

Source: Statistics provided by Mangalia municipality

• The cultural tourism

Cultural tourism is defined by the World Tourism Organization (Report WTO, 2012) as "trips, whose main or concomitant goal is visiting the sites and events whose cultural and historical value has turn them being a part of the cultural heritage of a community".

The "cultural heritage", which includes intangible and tangible movable and immovable heritage as "A set of cultural values that are carriers of historical memory, national identity and have scientific or cultural value" (Cultural Heritage Act, Art. 2, para. 1)..

Cultural tourism is an instrument for sustainable economic development in case it is organized in way that is favorable for the local population. The business in the tourism is looking for ways to create marketable tourism products, but very often private interests destroy the opportunities, provided by natural and historical environment. The over-construction with modern buildings, driven by the consideration of fast profit from mass tourism is detrimental for the cultural tourism as most of the

tourists prefer to escape from their usual modern environment to the one with an ancient history.

Cultural-cognitive tourism is a cross-point of interaction between cultural, ethnic and historical components of the society or of the place to be used as resources to attract tourists and tourism development.

Socialization of cultural and historical heritage and valorization them into commercial assets are two very important factors and processes for bringing the achievements of culture to general usage and for turning them into a source of business. Their practical realization is related to the implementation of certain technical activities. For most of the cultural-historical sites it is inevitable activities such as – research, development and conservation, construction of transport infrastructure, accommodation facilities and regulating of the mode of their use, maintenance and control.

According to forecast analysis of the World tourism organization, in 2020 the cultural tourism will be leading worldwide. That trend would give additional advantage to Bulgaria and Romania – countries with rich cultural-historical heritage, and, in particular, to both municipalities of interest as they have already traditions in developing of different kinds of cultural tourism.

• The cultural tourism in Romania and Mangalia

The economies of both Balchik and Mangalia are significantly dependent on the seasonal tourist flow. The local authorities have realized the need to diversify the natural tourism with other types of tourism and for years they have applied significant efforts to do that.

The historical and cultural heritage in both municipalities, the richness of traditions and customs created by the location of the cross-border zone, which is at the crossroad of many civilizations and nations (the European and the oriental civilization, Christians and Muslims, Greeks and Romans, Slavs and Latins) appears to be suitable for the development of the cultural and rural tourism throughout the entire year.

On the territories of both municipalities there are well preserved historical sights, which worth to be promoted as world-class tourist attractions

The analysis shows that Balchik has focused primarily on cultural-cognitive tourism and cultural events, while Mangalia has been positioned for years as a destination for recreation and healing tourism promoting its balneo and spa centers, planning to become one of the leading destinations for attracting retired people – as Malta and Spain are. However, the strategic planning of Mangalia development envisions the municipality to strengthen its positions in the cultural tourism turning Mangalia into a town-museum – which means to develop and maintain a whole integrated concept about that.

Unfortunately, there is no statistics based on which, the contribution of cultural tourism at both municipalities can be proved.

Both municipalities performs numerous activities developing the potential of the cultural tourism at the municipality. They are mainly into two directions:

- ***Preservation, socialization and promotion of the tangible and intangible cultural heritage in***

the region.

The town of Balchik traditionally has developed the cultural tourism and has become famous for its remarkable cultural events and historical sites. It is one of the notable places by the number of monuments of UNESCO. Now-a-days, the Municipality maintains a number of museums, cultural centers, art galleries and other sites of cultural heritage from various historic ages.

The municipality completed successfully several EU funded projects.

There were mainly addressed to the need of conservation, restoration and exposure of the immovable cultural properties thus revealing the region's rich local cultural and historic heritage of local and national significance:

Conservation and restoration of the ruins and adjacent area of the Medieval Castle "Dionysopolis" in the "Horizont" residential area in Balchik; Conservation, restoration and transformation of the building of "Melnitsata" ("The Mill") in Balchik into a converging information center for the visitors of the town and the region; Conservation, restoration, exposure and socialization of the "Teke Ak Yazala Baba – St. Athanasius" site and the adjacent area near Obrochishte village in Balchik Municipality.

Mangalia municipality also has a number of monuments, museums and historical attractions that give the opportunity to develop cultural tourism. The municipality of Mangalia also had completed successfully several EU funded projects for developing these sites into touristic sights, such as the "Mangalia Walking Tour" project, promoting them.

- **Cultural events**

Balchik has been pronounced for "Festival Capital of the Balkans" due to hosting several international and national festivals for years.

The Municipality maintains a rich calendar of artistic and cultural events held annually, which are quite intensive in the summer months during the tourist season.

Mangalia Municipality is also active in conducting cultural events – festivals with international participation.

The table below summarizes the cultural assets of the two municipalities which are socialized and marketed to the tourists:

<u>Balchik</u>	Mangalia
Historical and architectural sights	
Palatul și Grădina Botanică Balchik își datorează faima ca un loc romantic, în principal la reședința de vară a reginei Maria de Edinburgh, reprezentând un complex de monumente și elemente de parc arhitecturale și istorice. Centrul cultural este cea mai populară și atractivă atracție turistică din oraș și include: Complexul cultural "Palatul"	Muzeul arheologic "Calatis" A fost construită în 1925. Într-un loc central este expus așa-numitul Tomb cu papirus - un artefact din secolele IV-III B.C., numit și mormântul lui Skith. Bogăția muzeului arheologic este completată de o vastă bibliotecă care conține peste 1000 de volume de cărți din arheologie.

Palatul este remarcabil prin arhitectura sa, în care influențele și stilurile religioase se împletesc armonic - creștin, islamic și oriental; elemente ale casei tradiționale bulgare și bazilica bizantină, precum și detalii gotice și maure.

Grădina Botanică

- Grădina Palatului impresionează cu o mare varietate de specii, culori și compoziții create cu gust.
- Templul lui Cybele
- Este unul dintre cele mai interesante și importante locații istorice din Balchik. Acesta este singurul templu al Zeitei Mamei din partea de est a Peninsulei Balcanice și cel mai bine conservat templu elenic din Bulgaria. Rezultatele sunt comparate în importanță cu cele ale complexului antic din Pompei.

The Khanqah near Obrochishte

The two burial type's house of prayer of the Muslim saint Jak Yazala grandmother and his Christian counterpart St. Athanasius is one of the lesser-known but extremely interesting architectural monuments with a strong religious and cultural sense. Jak Yazala Baba Khanqah is a mysterious and charming place, believed to be charged with divine energy.

Museum of History

The Historical Museum of Balchik has more than a hundred years of history. Today in the collections of the Historical Museum of Balchik there are over 20 000 exhibits that represent the city's past - from its arising in VI century BC until its liberation from Romanian occupation in 1940.

Historical Monuments

- The medieval fortress walls of the city

Moscheea Esmahan Sultan

Moscheea din Sultanul Esmahan din Mangalia este unul dintre cele mai importante monumente istorice și religioase din sudul Mării Litorului. Locul musulman de închinare a fost construit în 1573 de către fiica unuia dintre cei mai mari conducători ai Imperiului Otoman, Selim al II-lea, în memoria tatălui său. Moscheea este construită din piatră tăiată și înconjurată de un cimitir vechi de 300 de ani, plin cu pietre funerare.

The remains of the Calatis stronghold.

To the heritage of the citadel there are also:

- **The big Necropolis with tombstones from IV – II century B.C.**
- **The ancient port**
- **The Syrian basilica**
- **Christian grave with psalms**

[The Byzantine Edifice](#)

The Byzantine Edifice from Mangalia is a historical monument dating back to the fifth and sixth centuries BC. Historic artifacts were discovered between 1993-1995 on the ground of President Hotel and were included in the accommodation building, where a museum was opened.

[The Marine Museum Mangalia](#)

The Marine Museum of Mangalia was built in 2004 in one of the buildings of the disused barracks. The Institute is conceived as a museum dedicated to naval technology and highlights the port of Mangalia activity between 1952 and 2000. In the two halls of the museum is exposed an impressive collection of military equipment and heritage objects

[The Touristic Harbor Mangalia](#)

- Renaissance stone fountains
- Traditional Renaissance houses
- Memorial of the citizens of Balchik who died in the wars during 1912-1913, 1915-1918, 1941-1944.
- A square, named after Captain Georgi Radkov

Ethnographic Museum

The ethnographic museum presents the rural and urban life in the area from the late 19th century. The beautiful two-storey house, built in the 60s of the XIX century, once inhabited by a grain merchant, is restored without losing its authentic spirit, and has a curious ethnographic collection displayed inside. The livelihood and lifestyle of the locals is illustrated with a reconstruction of the living rooms in traditional rural and urban houses.

Renaissance Complex

The Renaissance complex includes the Orthodox Church "St Nicholas" and the Bulgarian mutual school - the first in the town. Until the Liberation of Bulgaria from Ottoman yoke it established itself as one of the main factors for the awakening of the Bulgarian national spirit.

Art Gallery

The Art Gallery of Balchik is a preferred place for the expression of artists from different generations and countries, for recitals, concerts and creative meetings. Founded in the 30s of the XX century, it is the oldest art gallery in Southern Dobrudzha.

Today the gallery stores 1,500 works by 447 Bulgarian and foreign artists.

The Art Gallery constantly organizes new group and individual exhibitions, retrospective and thematic events.

"The mill" in Balchik – a public building, immovable cultural asset of local importance, which used to be the most modern mill in the Balkans in the beginning of 20th century is now

The Touristic Harbor of Mangalia is the modern Romanian harbor for small vessels which sails along the Black Sea coast. The harbor was arranged during 2006-2008 with European and local funding. The Tourist Harbor of Mangalia may lie up to 146 boats that benefits of modern docking and maintenance.

The Stud Farm

The Stud Farm of Mangalia is located approximately 3 km north of Mangalia and about 500 meters from the Black Sea. Established in 1926, the stud farm of Mangalia is the largest complex of its kind in South-East Europe and hosts approximately 350 thoroughbred horses, such as Arabian thoroughbreds and ponies.

Cave Limanu

The cave is located near Calatis and it is considered a very valuable natural asset with a historic value.

being restored and turned into a center for public events and tourist informational center. Its several halls are suitable for conferences, concerts, exhibitions. Currently on its wall every evening are projected the 3D videos, produced for the purposes of this project.

Balchik 's Orthodox temples are important historical, architectural and spiritual sights of the town from the times of the Renaissance - developing literature, art and education.

- ***Memorial Temple “St. Nicholas Mirlikiyski Chudotvoretz”***

This is the first Bulgarian Renaissance church, built together with a Bulgarian school in 1845.

- ***Chirch “St. George”***

This is the largest church in Balchik. Woodcarving takes the center of the decorations. The carved iconostasis is especially remarkable.

- ***Chapel “Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary”***

The chapel was built in the traditions of the Byzantine church architecture and was painted by Romanian artists. The wood-carved throne and iconostasis were made in 1721 and were bought specifically for the chapel from Cyprus.

- ***Chirch “St. Constantine and St. Helena”***

The temple was built in 1894 and is a three-nave basilica with a semi-cylindrical plain ceiling. Due to its exceptional acoustics, many concerts and recordings of musical work are done here.

- ***Chirch “St. Reverend Paraskeva – Petka Tarnovska”***

The newest Orthodox Church in Balchik, initiated by the Romanian authorities in 1936, completed in 1954. It is the only Orthodox Church in Balchik designed by a professional architect.

Cultural events

“Process – Space”

Callatis Festival

In June, in the city is held one of the oldest local festivals - "Process - Space", which has a history of more than 20 years. The festival is open to all kinds of arts, including music, theater, performance, and multimedia.

Short Film Festival

This is one of the most famous and important international forums in Balchik. It gathers in late June young artists in the field of visual arts. During the festival of short films, "In the Palace", participants from Bulgaria and all over the world show productions of exceptionally high level, pre-selected by a distinguished international jury.

"Balchik Classics Days"

At the height of summer - a week from the last Saturday of July, the coastal alley of the White City becomes a scene for "Days of classics in Balchik" - the emblematic cultural forum on the Northern Black sea coast.

Via Pontica – art students festival

Before the start of the school year, between the 1st and 15th of September, Bulgarian students at the Academy of Arts in Balchik come for the festival "Via Pontica". Their stage and base of creativity are the Palace, the library and the gallery. Here their practical skills are trained, and during the night they show what they have learned to a live audience

Folklore, choral and children's festivals

In Balchik a series of events dedicated to folklore and choral arts are held.

Every year, in the beginning of June, the international "Sounds of the Black Sea" ("Chernomorski Zvutsi") festival sets the start of the summer season in Balchik. The event combines competitive and concert programs together with unique choral workshops.

The science-fiction festivals "Bulgacon" and "Zlaten Kan"

It is the largest music and culture festival held in [Romania](#).

Every year the location is the same - huge stage and a very large backstage area, enough to hold over 200 people located on a barge that is docked into the [touristic harbor](#) of [Mangalia](#). The spectators sit on stairs across the harbor, about 20 meters away from the stage. The festival is organized by the Callatis Fest – Black Sea Association and the South Seaside Tourism Association.

The week-long event is usually held in August is themed 'Callatis Fest – Coming of age at the seaside' and features well-known guests who hold theatre, dance, music and fusion art performances

The show "Longing for Callatis" is an event dedicated to traditional folk songs and dances.

"The Book on the Sand" Fair

It has been carrying out since 1991 and lasts now-a-days 23 days;

The Youth Festival

It lasts 14 days and has been attended by over than 650 musicians.

Antique Festival

It is a kind as a look back at the history. It lasts 2 months and it is located near the Neptune Summer Theater presented with numerous workshops and events.

These festivals are hosted by different towns of Bulgaria and Balchik was one of the hosts throughout the years.	
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• **SWOT analysis of the tourism in the region Balchik-Mangalia**

- Rich natural potential of the region
- good location and favorable geographic conditions
- close distance to cities Constanta and Varna
- big resorts at the Black Sea are within the borders of the municipalities (especially Mangalia municipality includes the biggest ones in Romania)
- availability of an airport, offering low-cost flights in rather close distance (Varna); opportunity to use an ex-military small airport for charter flights – close to Balchik
- Excellent conditions for cultural tourism and existing traditions in its developing at both municipalities due to the availability:
 - many interesting cultural and historical sights
 - well established image in the festival tourism
- Various opportunities for accommodation in both municipalities, offering wide range of quality conditions
- Conditions for spa-tourism and balneo-tourism
- Relatively qualified staff in both municipalities
- Knowing of Romanian/Bulgarian by the local citizens
- Membership of both countries in the EU – improved image; more trustworthy than were before
- Tourist agencies and tour operators marketing the touristic events and attraction
- A variety of tourist routes and packages of trips in close proximity of Balchik and Mangalia, giving opportunities for one-day excursions
- Good value for money offers; affordable prices for East European tourists; perception of the destination as “cheap”
- The municipalities of Balchik and Mangalia are active players in facilitating tourist industry and especially in the development of cultural tourism;
- There are stated vision, intentions and activities for constant development of the regions

- Created elements of informational infrastructure - informational centers (in Balchik municipality they are four – two in Balchik town, one in Albena resort and one in Kranevo)
- Short distance between the two municipalities enabling development of common activities
- Short tourist season – concentration of tourists only in the 3-4 summer months
- Lack of national advertising of both municipalities
- The share of foreign tourists in Romania is still low (below one third), though growing significantly
- Lack of overall marketing strategy and action plan for its implementation
- Lack of sufficient staff and/or structure of specialists dealing with promotional activities
- Insufficiently developed touristic products, designed into packages addressed to particular groups
- Weak, insufficient or ineffective advertising of the tourist destinations and of the connection between the regions
- Development of all other types of tourism, in particular: cultural tourism, eco-tourism adventurous tourism, balneo-spa, sport tourism, conference tourism, rural tourism, etc.
- Organizing international visits to exchange experience between the two regions
- More active advertising through all channels, but in particular via internet
- Elaboration of a relevant marketing strategy, in accordance with the needs of the region, to increase the competitive power
- Improving the quality
- Utilizing more effectively the potential of all already socialized cultural assets and infrastructure – e.g. the Mill in Balchik.
- Socialization and valorization of more cultural and historical monuments (e.g. Kibea's Temple in Balchik and Mangalia City through the following measures:

- Participation in national, regional and European programs for recreation of the tourism in the area of the sea coast of the Black Sea (support for restoration of the cultural heritage, for preservation of the natural heritage, for diversification of the tourists offers, for training of the staff in the field of tourism and the services that comes with it, for refreshing the accommodation conditions, etc.)

- Attracting investors in the region
- Attract young people as volunteers and create volunteers camps
- Unpredictable economic stagnation and crises, which affect tourism

- Increase of tension, anxiety and fears from terrorism worldwide, but especially in Europe – that makes all potential tourists shrink their travelling plans
- Unfavorable external political relations (e.g. deterioration of the relationships with Russia)
- Better developed tourist product in Greece, Turkey, Croatia, Slovenia and other countries in the region
- Constantly increasing demands and expectation of the tourists
- Negative demographic tendencies in the region: depopulation of the region due to low birth rate and migration of the work force abroad and ageing of the population
- aggressive human activities not observing the principles of nature conservation and sustainable development - hindering the zones with wild nature with construction and pollution, over-construction with big buildings, industrial sites near some of the beaches or near natural and cultural sites;
- Mafia and lobbyist groups supported on high state level that cannot be stopped by local authorities and people
- deterioration of the condition of the cultural monuments
- Natural erosion of the beaches
- Private business interests that contradict to the community interests

• **The advertising at the municipalities of Balchik and Mangalia**

The analysis of the advertising activities of tourists products and services at the two municipalities identified the following positive, as well as negative aspects

Positive aspects

There are:

- PR departments and experienced specialists dealing with some aspects of marketing activities, but their professional tasks are mostly focused on PR; as well, often they are engaged with extra organisational and executorial activities
- Programs/plans and budgets allocated promoting tourism for each year and for organizing events
- Budgets, allocated for media advertising and print materials is available only at Balchik municipality
- Some well-established and effectively functioning media channels
- Partnerships with media partners
- Informational centres

Negative aspects

- As it appeared there are no:
- available marketing strategies and based on them communication plans
- consistent and systematic marketing activities
- budget allocated specially for media advertising and materials (Mangalia)
- budget allocated for international advertising
- The communication of local municipality websites are poor – they are not easily accessible and not available in many foreign languages, or not at all
- The collected statistics is not regularly analysed and used for marketing decision making

Each year Balchik municipality council accepts the program for promoting tourism with defined priorities for the year. Hereunder are summarised the expenses for development of tourism and they are almost exclusively used for cultural tourism. It can be stated that the fixed spending from Municipality side only on cultural events and advertising vary between 200 and 270 thousand euro per year during the last 4 years.

Balchik Municipality budget for development of tourism (in EUR)

No	Types of cultural activities & promotion	2017	2016	2015	2014
1.	Celebrations of local and regional importance	99 718	81 807	88 198	138 867
2.	International Events	107 371	92 032	112 484	125 727
3.	Media advertising and advertising materials	28 121	46 406	51 129	28 121
	<i>Only for events and their advertising</i>	235194	220 246	251 811	292 715
4.	Support of project of regional and national importance	30 677	12 782	5 113	2 556
5.	International co-operation	12 782	17 895	17 895	15 339
	Total for events, advertising & projects	278 654	250 923	274 819	310 609
Other investment in tourism					
	Cultural site – The Mill	610 286	452 103	456 899	
	Infrastructure and green	46 272	48 573	35 790	282 489
	Total – other investments	656 814	500 676	492 689	282 489

The incomes from tourism in Balchik municipality are coming through the following sources – based on article 60 paragraph 1 from the Law of tourism in Bulgaria

1. Tourist tax
2. Fines and sanctions
3. Taxes for categorization of touristic places HORECA (hotels/restaurants/cafe;
4. Funds provided for execution of programs and projects

5. Donations, grants, international funding – case when they are not supposed to be submitted to the state budget;
6. Interest;
7. Other sources

For now, Mangalia has no specific budget for advertising, but only for making events and their advertising in touristic sites, events and activities – it is around 90.000 EUR/year

For 16 programmed events per year - artistic events and national celebrations it is about 45.000 EUR/year (350.000 LEI)

For another cultural activities it is about 35.000 EUR/year (150000 LEI).

Media channels and tools

The advertising of cultural events is organized in similar ways in the two municipalities: municipality PR department send information to the following media channels when it organizes the events.

National and local televisions – press releases, interviews

Local and national radio stations - announcements and interviews

Both municipalities work with ***media partners*** for some of the events.

Off-line advertising

- print materials – brochures and leaflets, provided at informational centers and at the receptions of some hotels
- publications in local and national newspapers

Online advertising - publications in informational websites and in specialized web-sites for tourism.

• **STRATEGIC PLAN FOR ADVERTISING**

• **Advertising in the priorities of the strategic planning of the two municipalities**

The strategic goals of the current common advertising plan are based on the priorities in the documents for strategic development of the two municipalities:

- The Plan for Development of the Municipality of Balchik 2014 - 2020
- The Local Development Strategy 2016-2023 of Mangalia City

It is important to highlight those points and aspects of the strategic planning that can be relevant to identification of the strategic goals of the Common Advertising Plan.

The following priorities and measures stated in the Plan for Development of the Municipality of Balchik 2014 – 2030 are directly linked to the development of tourism, including its marketing and

advertising

Priority 1. Sustainable development of the touristic sector through extension of the existing tourist products and prolonging of the tourist season

- ***Development of the tourism, so as to strengthen the municipality position as resort with specific image and alternative to the mass sea resorts tourism***

Measure 1.1.1 Maintenance and improvement of the transport, communication and other tourist infrastructure.

Measure 1.1.2. Better integration of the tourism as part of the ecological, economic, educational and cultural policies of the Municipality :

Measure 1.1.3. Categorization of the touristic businesses and control of the quality of their services.

Measure 1.1.4. Elaboration of targeted marketing and advertising strategies, corresponding to the needs of the different categories of users of the touristic products

Measure 1.1.5. Informational service of the tourists with stress on the contemporary technologies (mobile, web-based, interactive) and accessibility in terms of language Measure 1.1.6. Development of professional capacity of the managements and employees in the sector

1.2. Aggressive development of complementary and alternative kind of tourism so as significantly to prolong the tourist season

- *Main challenge is that some of the types of tourism have specific requirements to the infrastructure and material conditions, which contradict to each other (e.g. :*

Measure 1.2.1. Current analysis of the qualitative and quantitative parameters of the tourists flows of their needs, level of satisfaction and future intentions

Measure 1.2.2. Evaluation of the potential and of the specific needs of the particular segments of tourists especially those out of the active season (retired people, students , business people scientific researchers and professors, people needed balneology, climate-therapy rehabilitation, sportsmen, hunters, fishermen, nature explorers etc.).

Measure 1.2.3. Identification of the opportunities and resources of the municipality traditions knowledge, know-how, opportunities for cooperation with other municipalities:

Extension of the touristic season – golf, hunting tourism, training and rehabilitation of sportsmen scientific and congress tourism business tourism; ecotourism

Village and farm tourism adventure tourism (horses, safari, paint ball etc.) entertainment tourism – concerts carnivals; visits of modern industrial sites (agroindustry, photo-solar and wind power stations).

Measure 1.2.4. Support of the entrepreneurship in the cultural and creative industries (stress on the industries related to festival and cultural events, visual and performing arts promotion of cultural heritage, media and advertising) – key condition to enrichment and improvement of the tourist products quality).

Measure 1.2.5. Research and conservation and exhibiting of archeological and other cultural monuments. Development of the adjacent infrastructure so as to turn them into touristic sites suitable for mass visits

Measure 1.2.6. Improvement of the existing infrastructure in view the sustainable development and integration of the sea and the alternative types of tourism.

Measure 1.2.7. Transfer of knowledge and know-how from the centers of excellence in Bulgaria and abroad for the selected touristic priorities and exchange of best practices

Measure 1.2.8. Training of the managerial teams and of the municipality personnel

Measure 1.2.9. Advertising of the destination Balchik into the defined priorities

Measure 1.2.10. Coordination and integration of the alternative and main (sea side) tourism on municipality and regional level

The **Local Development Strategy 2016-2023 of Mangalia City** also aims at actions that would have serious impact on tourism, on the cultural tourism and respectively – would require systematic and long term approach to the advertising. The common advertising is not particularly envisaged explicitly, but it is considered implicitly as integral part of the issue of cross-border cooperation.

On the whole, in order to achieve its general strategic goal for sustainable development the municipality plans various actions, of which four directions are most distinguishable and relevant to the contexts of overcoming the seasonality of the tourism and developing cultural assets:

- Developing and positioning Mangalia as a green city

Turning the municipality into a holiday destination 365 days per year by investing in diversification of the tourist offers through developing of alternative types of tourism - recreation and tourism tourism, balneary tourism, cultural tourism, sports tourism, religious tourism, leisure services have to be developed.

The city of Mangalia aims to achieve, by 2023, in partnership with the tour operators the following investments:

- developing a 18-hole golf course at international standards;
- the development of a water park at international standard standards 365 days a year;
- developing a wellness and spa center with therapeutic applications using thermal, sulphurous, seawater; rehabilitation and upgrading of the hippodrome and the stud farm;
- building a camping with facilities at international level (caravan, bungalow, tents, glamping, etc.)
 - Turning the entire Mangalia City into a Museum of History and Archeology exposing its millenary and multicultural history,
 - Making Mangalia municipality an attractive destinations for resettlement of pensioners from developed countries - Along with Malta, Portugal and Spain

• **Mission, vision and strategic goals**

Based on the above strategic goals of the two municipalities it can be stated that **the mission of the region** as a touristic destination is to achieve sustainable development by providing a variety of touristic offers, including cultural ones, thus increasing the competitiveness of the touristic industry in the trans-border area Balchik–Mangalia, compared to other European destinations. As a result it is expected to achieve high life standard, economic and cultural prosperity and preservation and improvement of ecological environment.

The vision is that Balchik and Mangalia have all prerequisites to accomplish that mission but they need to be supported by better communication to the outside world through more effective advertising.

When formulating the strategic goals it can be differentiated between strategic business goals and strategic advertising goals

Strategic business goals of the tourism in the region Balchik - Mangalia

Generate a growing source of business and incomes for the local population and companies in both districts

Create conditions for sustainable development of the local economy

Improve the quality of life, infrastructure and environment

Strategic goal of the common advertising of the cultural tourism in the region:

To provide better communication of the offered products of cultural tourism in the two municipalities thus creating synergy in their activities, so as to:

- Achieve better valorization of all historical and cultural attractions and activities carried out by the two municipalities
- Improve the competitiveness of the local touristic business in the TBR

That will eventually lead to:

- Prolonging the touristic season beyond the summer season through these products
- Increase of the flow of tourists
- the number of the tourists visited the region
- the number of overnights spent in both municipalities
- Increase of the income, generated from the cultural tourism

The approximate time frame these goals have to be achieved within is up to 10 years

Short and middle term goals of the advertising of the region

- Create a clear, distinctive and appealing positioning and image of the region on the touristic markets – domestic, as well as on international markets, both existing and new ones
- Generate high overall awareness of the region Balchik - Mangalia and of its cultural touristic offers
- Maintain the interest of existing customers and provide new advertising teasers and triggers
- Attract interest of new target groups – tourists of other nations
- Create emotional bonds by involving the tourists more actively into the touristic events
- Involve and motivate the business stakeholders

The approximate time frame within these goals have to be achieved is within 3 – 5 years

As means to achieve that are identified the following key activities, which can be referred to the both municipalities

Construction and maintenance of infrastructure serving the tourist activities, including the local roads to the sites;

- establishment and functioning of informational centers and organization of the tourists informational service;
- creation and maintenance of tourists sites, which are municipality property or for which municipality is authorized to manage;
- organization of events with local and national importance;
- conducting of research, analyses of the development of the tourism in the municipalities;

- intensive and innovative advertising including participation in tourists exhibitions and fairs.

Factors /prerequisites, necessary to accomplish the strategic goals of the advertising plan

In the context of current plan the factors can be differentiated into:

- **Objective factors -basic conditions for developing of cultural tourism**
 - Availability of well packed, affordable and accessible cultural touristic products
 - Well maintained modern infrastructure
 - Good accommodation conditions
 - **Subjective factors - depending on the decision makers from the two municipalities and which are of critical importance for achieving the set up goals for common advertising:**
 - Will for common action and joint activities from both sides; very well elaborated and followed agreement
 - Allocated financing for the common advertising activities
 - Availability of organizational structure and responsible for the accomplishment of the trans-border cooperation and its sustainability over time:
 - a team of specialists devoted to the communication of the two municipalities and to the execution of the common strategic and action plan
 - A social technology - a set of organizational principals and rules according o which to execute the activities
- Availability of :
 - a common marketing concept, including advertising concept;
 - well elaborated advertising tools;
 - appropriately selected advertising channels.

• SWOT analysis of the concept of common advertising of both municipalities.

It is very important to evaluate all pro' and cons' of the concept for common advertising of the trans-border area.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better utilization of funding due to the synergy effect of promotional activities • Many touristic assets from both sides - natural and cultural prerequisites suitable to be designed and offered • Experienced specialists at the municipalities, devoted to promoting the cultural heritage; people with ideas and enthusiasm • Established cooperation with tourist agencies and tour operators in informational trips, fairs and exhibitions • Joining efforts with private businesses – promoting together cultural events • well-designed informational materials • Existing informational points 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No enough employees involved in the marketing activities of both municipalities • Insufficient funds, allocated to the marketing activities from both sides • No contracted advertising or PR agency to deal professionally with promotional activities – at both municipalities • Lack of experience to promote the region • No concept of integrated approach towards common advertising • Lack of an informational visualizing system – there is no even informational boards (in the town of Balchik)

Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a joint, cross-border team, which can overcome differences for the sake of the common success. In its ultimate form it can be social enterprises at both municipalities that can valorize the efforts of the municipality employees • Elaborate a clear cut action plan and agreement for following the common plan including allocation of particular sums • Develop joint touristic offers, tools and channels of their realization on practical level • Elaborate of a set of key advertising tools indispensable for common advertising of the region 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The accomplishment of the common advertising plan to be taken with no sufficient involvement and agreements between the two municipalities to be not accomplished • The municipalities' authorities to not allocate enough funding and staff for promotional activities • The efforts to be scattered; loss of focus in advertising • The advertising to remain not noticed on international scale

The target groups

The target groups, to which the current plan for common advertising is oriented, are **five types of shareholders** – each one with very different role in the process of market exchange of touristic products and services:

- **Tourists, which can be divided into the following segments**
- Segments, with regards of their previous experience with tourists services in the region – existing and potential visitors in both municipalities:
- Tourists, who have been at least once in the region
- Tourists, who have never been or heard of the region
 - Segments, with regard of the country of origin
 - Internal tourists – those who come from the region – Bulgarians and Romanians
 - External tourists – those coming from all over the world

Among them there can be identified several groups which can be targeted separately due to their significant cultural differences:

Europeans

Countries of the ex-soviet union

North America – USA and Canada

Middle east

Far East – Japan, South Korea and China

- **Current providers of tourist products and services** - any kind of business and non-business organizations or sole traders -
- tour operators and tourist agencies
- owners of hotels and other type of accommodation
- small businesses providing foods, drinks, entertainment, transport – etc.
- By a proper advertising of the destinations, the focus group will benefit from the longer visits of more tourists, generated by an innovative and sustainable advertisement of the cross-border destination and will be in the condition to expand its business all-year round, and by

- this way improving the overall condition of the region.
- NGOs (non-governmental organization) involved in providing tourist services and
 - Municipality units that are taking care of cultural sights
 - **Local authorities** – municipalities and other local administration units – as their employees are entitled to provide various services and conditions facilitating the activities of the business players
 - **Investors** - the advertising will increase the ROI of existing investments and also can attract potential investors to the region. Opening new employment opportunities would lead to reducing poverty and to improved well-being of the population and, hence, to an increased attractiveness and competitiveness of the region.
 - **Local population** – directly or indirectly the local people are involved in all touristic processes and their opinion has to be taken into consideration in planning of the touristic activities. They also have to be educated and prepared for bigger touristic flows.

• Creative strategy

The creative strategy includes several key elements. In the center of that is the marketing positioning, which reflects the common strategic goals, formulated by both municipalities. It is aimed to promote the existing products and to create new ones, responding to the needs of the envisioned development.

Marketing positioning should be developed into an advertising positioning, which will embody the marketing advantages and goals into creative ideas, which through advertising tools and channels promote the products to their potential users.

The advertising positioning should be implemented into appropriate tools and communicated through relevant advertising channels and ultimately reach the target groups of existing and potential customers.

The customers can contribute to the improvement of the products and services by providing feedback information indicating the level of their satisfaction and loyalty.

Marketing positioning

Marketing positioning is an organized approach and system of actions aimed to create a particular picture of the object of sales and promotion – product, brand, organization, etc. in the recipients' minds. Today's consumer society is excessively message-heavy and over-communicated; people swim in an ocean of advertising messages. So, advertising messages, in and of themselves, must really hit their mark if they want to carry any meaning at all. In the late 1960s, the idea of market positioning was born to create a way for brands to cut through all the advertising clutter and reach an audience of people whose minds they do stand a chance of leaving an impression on.

To be successful in a particular market a product must occupy an "explicit, distinct and proper place in the minds of all potential and existing consumers". It has to also be relative to other rival products with which the brand competes.^[29]

Specificity of the marketing of the region Balchik - Mangalia.

Positioning of a socio-economical geographic region, especially split between two nationalities is an extremely complicated task since

- different products and services under one umbrella have to be promoted
- it has to address different target groups
- the competition is on world-wide market – with all other touristic destinations
- It has to be managed by two teams
- working in a distance
- having, though quite close, still different national mentality,

Positioning statement:

The region of Balchik-Mangalia is still not fully discovered and explored part of Europe with unrevealed potential. The region can provide the visitors of both sides with variety of new opportunities for having a good time with cultural sights and events, apart from enjoying its natural resources – sea, sunny sandy beaches, balneo and spa good food and hospitality

Values to be communicated: rich cultural heritage, close to Central Europe, but still unknown, novelty (compared to the popular destinations of European cultural tourism), diversity, getting more from the free time, sophisticated entertainment, high level of touristic services, hospitality, wonderful food, etc.

The **Unique Selling Proposition (USP)** of the region Balchik - Mangalia could be the unique combination of 3 elements:

- wide range of cultural offers
- rest amidst beautiful nature
- good value for money (best price offers in Europe)

Advertising positioning

The advertising positioning creates a visual, contextual and sound image of the object of advertising, conveying the idea of the marketing positioning through dressing it in a creative idea. The creative idea usually has one or more elements

- particular visual image – a picture of a landscape, woman or man, a celebrity, or some emblematic architectural sight
- a story or different ads under the same idea (e.g. “Men know why” – Kamenitza’s key message that boosted the brand and made it national leader)
- a slogan – a statement with emotional appeal
- a particular jingle (tune)

There could be a general positioning and advertising of the region and product specific ones.

The advertising is developed onto particular marketing advantages aimed to communicate and imply particular messages emotions so as to create emotional bonding with the offered products and with the places within the region, in general.

Marketing advantage	Advertising idea	Emotions
Old history	cradle of many civilizations	National pride, curiosity, mystery, feeling intrigued
Various	Have more than rest on the	Curiosity, anticipation of new experience,

opportunities	beach	feeling intrigued
Novelty	Undiscovered Europe	Feeling of safety and trust (due to belonging to Europe), pride related to old traditions and rich history, feeling intrigued

The creative advertising ideas for the common positioning of Balchik and Mangalia can be based on combination of several marketing advantages, common for the region and developed into creative advertising ideas with different focus – depending on the target group it is addressed to.

Here are some examples for advertising ideas, that could correspond to the initiative of common advertising. They can be used as possible directions in the future creative work of the advertisers.

Variant 1: focus on the unknown Europe

Advertising idea: Discover unknown part of Europe

Possible appeals/slogans:

- When addressed to all tourists who never heard of the two touristic destinations or never have experienced them
- Revealing the unknown Europe: the sea side region Balchik –Mangalia
- The sea side region Balchik –Mangalia: Discover the unknown Europe
- When addressed to Europeans who prefer short distance travels
- Not far away, but still unknown Europe: the Black sea-side region of Balchik and Mangalia
- Not far away, but still unknown: enjoy the uniqueness of the region Balchik - Mangalia
- When addressed to tourists who have come or have planned to visit one of the two municipalities

Advertising idea: have more than just visiting one country

Possible appeals/slogans:

- Within a hand reach, just for a day - another country – new adventure: Visit Mangalia/Balchik
- Use the chance of the short distance: Visit Mangalia /Balchik. Another country, new adventure

Variant 2: focus on the combination of natural prerequisites with cultural ones

Advertising idea: Have more than just rest

Possible appeals/slogans:

- Nature and culture – enjoy the uniqueness of the region Balchik - Mangalia
- Not just sea and sun, but (have) also culture and fun. Balchik and Mangalia – various opportunities for rest
- Have an interesting rest (vacation): enjoy the rich cultural life in Mangalia and Balchik
- Double the pleasure: enjoy the sea, but also the unique culture of the region Balchik - Mangalia
- Laying on the beach is great, but have much more – enjoy the cultural events and sights of Mangalia and Balchik

The cultural tourism products

Based on the situational analysis of the tourism at the two municipalities it can be concluded, that there is a potential to advertise the following touristic products or to develop joint variants using the existing ones:

- Sightseeing - walking, bus and cycling tours
- Cultural events – festivals, concerts,
- Local fests – thematic fun fests, folklore fests and fairs
- Conference events
- Art workshops - plain airs and others
- Folk tourism - visits and picnics in villages; wine and food degustation

These products are tools for offering the cultural assets of the two partnering municipalities.

The table below shows the connection between the elements /assets of cultural tourism and the products through which they are or can be promoted to their users:

Element /assets of cultural tourism	Touristic products
History, religion, architecture	Sightseeing - walking, bus and cycling tours
All kind of arts	Cultural events – festivals, concerts Art workshops – plain-airs and others Art exhibitions
Communication and education	Conferences, business meetings, trainings, seminars
Local culture - traditions, folklore, cuisine	Food and wine degustation Folk tourism - visits and picnics in villages

Sightseeing - walking, bus and cycling tours

Both municipalities have developed sightseeing tours showing their historical and natural sights museums, temples, etc.

This product is offered either by tour operators, by some of the tourists agencies or locally by the hotels. Visiting of some of the sights has to be coordinated with the people from the municipalities. Some of the tours are organized by bus, others – walking. Offering an extended sightseeing – visiting the sites in the partnering municipality across the border, should be organized by bus and on place – by walk. An entirely cycling tour also can be offered and organized because of the existing conditions in both municipality towns due to the commonly accomplished trans-border project for creating conditions for renting bicycles, funded by the EU.

The target groups:

This product is addressed to all group of tourists, but it is mainly to middle and older age groups. Since the socialists' times it is known that the tourists from the ex-soviet union countries have been more knowledgeable and more interested in history and museums.

Young tourists also can be attracted to the historical and architectural sights – firstly through virtual tours, but also in a more entertaining way (e.g. adventurous games for searching of hidden treasure). It has to be noted, that this product has to be designed and time scheduled so as to allow the tourists to use part of the day for other kind of rest and recreation activities. That is why it would be suitable the tours, organized for the tourists accommodated in Balchik (where the beach is quite scarce) to be combined with spending some time at the sandy beaches of Mangalia resorts.

The unique selling proposition: sophisticated pleasure and entertainment, enrichment with new knowledge, intellectual and emotional experience

Cultural events

Festivals and concerts

As could be seen in the tourist situational analysis, both municipalities are famous for their active cultural activities. The local authorities of Balchik and Mangalia see in them the main opportunity for prolonging the touristic season.

The municipalities are the organizers of these events and they have allocated budgets for that purpose, though they often appear to be not sufficient. Some of the events are provided for free, with no entrance fees, as attending these events is considered a promotional activity of the municipalities themselves among the tourists. However, that approach can be reconsidered, since the audience has to be educated to value and support culture and even a small entrance fee could have a positive effect in terms of educating customers, as well as in terms of rewarding the organizers of the events, which are very often some of the municipalities' employees.

The target groups of these activities are:

- Among all age groups, though classical concerts attract more middle age and older audience, while contemporary music concerts – the younger one – 18 – 35
- among connoisseurs and professionals, as well as among general public, with the major difference between them, that the first group can be attracted any time of the year to make a special visit, while the latter usually combine attending those events with rest at the seaside and with other touristic products.

The unique selling proposition: sophisticated pleasure and entertainment, enrichment with new knowledge and emotional experience

Thematic fun fests

They are organized primarily by local stakeholders - tour operators, hotel owners, NGOs, etc. Typical example for that are **Neptune nights** or **The Sprat Fish Fest**. Some of these fests are supported financially by the municipalities

The unique selling proposition: having good time, fun, laughter, creativity, new acquaintances

The target groups: mostly young and middle aged, predominantly singles

Folklore fests and fairs

Bulgaria and Romania have interesting traditional rituals, music, dances and songs, as well as attractive folk costumes. The interest to the local folklore can be is why

Both municipalities offer such fests and they can be significantly enriched by extending their offer in the neighboring country.

Unique selling proposition: experiencing the local folk dances, music and traditions; useful and emotional entertainment

Target groups: This kind of fests are offered in two variants

- For people who actively practice dancing or singing participate in folk arts
- For mass tourists, who like to observe folk dances and music, primarily foreign tourists, although some of the native tourists are also interested

Folk home visits; folk picnics

These are mini events organized for some small groups of tourist usually by the hotels accommodating them or by small folk guest houses or restaurants. They also present the folklore and local traditions and give opportunities to the tourists to experience local traditional activities like

Target groups: all kind of tourists, with exception of those averse to culture; usually they sports and other hobbies oriented_

Unique selling proposition: taking part in the practicing of the local traditions; in-dept impressions; emotional involvement_

Art events

The **plain airs** and the creative workshops are well established events giving opportunity to artists from various places to gather, exchange ideas, work together outdoor and to donate their works or the earned money from their sales to local cultural institutions or to charity bazaars, devoted to various causes.

Balchik is famous as a place for gathering of artists. Mangalia – is rather famous as gathering musicians.

Target groups:

- professional artists and
- people with creative attitudes among the general public

The unique selling proposition: sophisticated entertainment, provoking creativity, variety

Art /craft /self-development workshops

These are a relatively new tourist products worldwide and there is significant business potential in their promotion. They could be for fine arts – drawing, painting, small plastics or pottery making, for performance art – acting, singing, dancing, playing some instrument, etc. All local museums or art galleries or any other suitable locations can organize such workshops.

Target groups: tourists with more creative attitudes

The unique selling proposition: spending time in a creative and useful way

Conference events

Conference tourism is the other product that can significantly extend the touristic season throughout all the year for both municipalities. The availability of airports with low-cost flights in rather close distance give a growing opportunity for developing business tourism – for organizing not only conferences but also company trainings and workshops

However, since the profit from this tourist product is made from the utilization of real estate assets – through accommodation and hall rents, Balchik and Mangalia appear to be direct competitors in providing it. That is why, the common advertising plan is applicable when offering the conference tourism to potential clients as an offer of alternative options - as diverse possibilities.

Conference tourism can be developed on the base of exchange of customers who want to experience another location with all concomitant touristic offers.

Target groups: business and non-business organizations

The unique selling proposition: good conditions for gatherings of people in combination with beautiful nature and various touristic offers, including cultural ones.

The advertising tools

The advertising tools are the means through which the touristic offers can be promoted to their users. They themselves are products, combining elements of visual arts – graphic and computer design, as well as film design, etc.

The currently used tools are:

- **Print materials: Brochures and leaflets**

These are the most used tools. Both municipalities have very well elaborated and attractive brochures and leaflets

- **Internet posts and publications on informational sites**
- **Outdoor advertising – posters, informational maps and boards, billboards**

This media is insufficiently developed as

- **PR activities – articles, promotional events**, announcements and participation in the broadcasts of radio and local cable TV channels electronic
- **Video advertising – The 3D videos** created for this trans-border cooperation project appeared to be very impressive and successful tool for promoting the cultural heritage of the two municipalities. Currently they are shown on one of the wall of the restored monument of culture – the Mill.

Several activities would help to exploit more intensively their communication potential

- Organizing a cocktail for presenting the videos
- Diversify the channels so as to reach a broader audience – various options for that are:
 - to show a teaser on major touristic sites
 - to present the videos in the cinema theatres and negotiate conditions for airing the especially open-air cinemas
 - to show them on on-board airplane screens

The advertising channels

Generally, these are the media, through which the tools are able to promote the products

The channels, which can be used for promoting the touristic offers of the two municipalities are:

- Print materials: Brochures and leaflets
- Mass media – radio and TV, print media
- Outdoor
- Internet
- Informational centers and desks
- Events
- Word-of-mouth

The cross-analysis in the table below indicates the relevant approaches to the use of advertising channels:

RELEVANCE OF ADVERTISING CHANNELS FOR ADVERTISING TOOLS

Advertising channels	Advertising tools	Advantages and disadvantages
Informational centers and hotel receptions desks	Brochures and leaflets	Impactful and giving much information
Internet <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Own web-sites • Specialized touristic web-sites • Social media 	All kind of adverts combining vision and sound in various creative forms; commercial information	Impactful and most informative – combines commercial information with emotional advertising Most used channel by the now-a-days tourists Very cheap
Radio	Radio advertising of events Announcements	Not expensive; impactful media; high emotional involvement
National TV channels	General image making advertising; PR activities	Very expensive
Local cable TV	Suitable for all kind of information and advertising tools	Affordable prices
Print media	PR articles	Losing its importance; used mainly by older tourists
Events	PR activities	Impactful – create word-of mouth advertising; relatively expensive
Word of mouth	Non-structures, informal messages	Very impactful, but hard to control

Suggestions for new advertising tools and channels

During the research with the experts from the two municipalities several new ideas for new advertising tools and channels came out:

- On-line advertising channel airing information through the hotels – in every hotels there are screens in the entrance halls and /or
- Specially designed and organized meetings and workshops of businessmen from both sides
- Virtual tour – it could be a powerful teaser provoking interest of the tourist It can be very short up to 3 min.
- Web-site or interactive platform - an interactive platform or as minimum a website for the region in 7 languages: Romanian, Bulgarian, English, Russian, German, French, Spanish.

The website will be an indispensable tool for promoting the cultural heritage, but also for direct sales of touristic products.

- On-line bulletin disseminated to the key players in the process of providing and promotion of touristic services
- On-board airline magazines and electronic screens

Indicative time frame for implementation of the common advertising plan

The communication mix can be implemented according to the following sample plan:

Activities	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Establishing a cross-border team for common advertising					
Functioning of the team					
Developing the regional marketing concept and elaboration of the set of cultural offers					
Promotional activities for involving stakeholders					
Sharing of best practices among entrepreneurs in cultural tourism					
Advertising of the region with 3D films					
Internet advertising on touristic sites					
Elaboration of own regional site or interactive platform					
Meetings, conferences, fairs, expositions					
PR activities					
Catalogs, brochures					
Marketing research					
Monitoring of the execution					

The above types of communication activities should be detailed in an “action plan” that would define specific actions consistent with allocated budget, concrete tasks and responsible people

● CONCRETE MEASURES, MARKETING AND ADVERTISING APPROACHES FOR PROMOTION OF THE CULTURAL HERITAGE OF THE REGION

● Variants of realization of the common advertising plan

Based on the conducted research with decision makers and advertising specialists from both municipalities it can be concluded that the major problems and barriers before the accomplishment of the advertising plan is the organizational and managerial aspect of the initiative. Even the insufficient financial resources are a problem that can be overcome if there will be a will for common action and appropriate organization.

There could be **three levels of involvement** of the two partnering municipalities in the process of common advertising and respectively **three variants** of accomplishment of this activity:

- The municipalities include in their promotional activities advertising of touristic offers from the partnering municipality without
- elaboration of common products, marketing and advertising approaches
- applying a common action plan
- serious mutual obligations and responsibilities
- The municipalities elaborate and follow a general common plan for advertising but do not do any reporting and or monitoring and organizational arrangements – i.e. appointing a special team for the execution of agreed plan;
- The municipalities establish a joint team for common actions at each of the two municipalities. It will meet periodically and report to the both municipalities

It is very important to identify the specific responsibilities that have to be attributed to each of the key players in providing the tourist services

The advertising, no matter how genuine and innovative it could be, cannot compensate the lack of necessary activities or malfunctions of the other players.

• **Concrete measures, marketing and advertising approaches for realization of the common advertising plan**

In order to accomplish successfully the Common Advertising Plan a number of activities, defined into the following measures and concrete steps have to be undertaken:

Measure 1: Create structural conditions for developing joint marketing and advertising activities

The concrete steps to achieve that are:

- Establish a joint, cross-border team – Joint Marketing Team
- It should consist of minimum 2 people from each side – 1 person, dealing with organizational activities, another with the promotional activities
- Involve the most professional and involved employees from the municipality.
- Provide them with sufficient technical, human assistance and financial support
- Elaborate an organizational action plan for common actions, defining:
 - distribution of the responsibilities
 - way of communication
 - frequency of meetings and procedures for conducting of the meeting
 - common decision making procedures
 - procedures for generating ideas and their realization, etc.
 - exchange of good practices
 - procedures of monitoring and reporting
- Allocate funds for organizational and promotional activities of the Joint Marketing Team
- Prepare and sign agreement for common actions
- Involve representatives of all stakeholders

Establishment of social enterprises for execution of the marketing of touristic services by the two municipalities separately also worth to be considered an option for a stable structure. The idea of that was perceived positively by the interviewed decision makers from the two municipalities. If managed appropriately by correct and enthusiastic people, it can give significant stimuli for developing of the tourism in a professional and sustainable way.

It will create also opportunities for:

- valorization of many extra-efforts input by the staff involved in the promotional activities and organization of cultural events and stimulating their involvement
- developing and promoting new touristic products and services.

Measure 2: Undertake marketing activities based on systematic and integrated approach

Step 1: The joint marketing team has to develop several actionable documents:

- a common marketing strategy, including a communication plan based on the current common advertising plan,
- a business plan
- an action plan for realization of the marketing strategy

Step 2: Design a common integrated touristic offer with several special focuses - presenting the cultural heritage and modern approaches and events

- Define the way of marketing and advertising of each product groups – sightseeing tours, cultural events, etc.
- Identify and design touristic products that can be elaborated and offered jointly – as one integrated product – e.g. package vacations splitting the time between the two locations. At first sight it will diminish the number of overnights if there will be no new tourists attracted by the means of more intensive advertising

Part of the offered at the moment cultural touristic products are suitable for joint integrated offers, while others not.

Increase of the number of overnights can be achieved only with preliminary designed accommodation packages, otherwise the touristic visits to the neighboring municipality should be realized in the time frame of one day.

Step 3: reconsider and adapt the existing advertising tools and channels

- Translating them into more languages
- Unifying the approach in them
- Exploit more intensively the communication potential of the created for this trans-border cooperation project 3D films
- Organize a cocktail for presenting the videos
- Connect with all cinema theatres and negotiate conditions for airing the especially open-air cinemas

Step 4: Elaboration of a new advertising tools

- a free on-line channel designed to provide information to all hotels
- web-site or interactive platform for sharing experience and selling ticket for various cultural and other touristic products and services. It should be in 7 languages: Romanian, Bulgarian, English, Russian, German, French, Spanish. The website will be an indispensable tool for promoting the cultural heritage (*See in the attachment the proposed structure of the website.)
- On-line bulletin for communicating with key stakeholders in providing tourists services

Measure 3: Create high level of involvement of all stakeholders in the marketing activities

The way of involving each of the four groups of shareholders into the process of implementation of the strategic plan for common advertising requires different approaches:

Stakeholders	Forms of involvement
Tourists – existing and potential visitors	On-line and offline advertising Focus groups – for generating ideas and pre-testing advertising concepts
Current providers of tourist products and services	Business meetings with each subgroup Conference Workshops, seminars, round tables, focus groups Trainings of their personnel
Local authorities	Cocktails, workshops, seminars, round tables, trainings
Investors	Business meetings and round tables; conference
Media partners	Cocktails, round tables

- Prepare a data base of representatives – e-mail list and inform them regularly – it is proven that the still the most often used.
- Inform and involve all interested parties in applying the common advertising plan A very short news-letter sent regularly once per month will be an appropriate format for informing and maintaining the feeling of being connected.
- Organize a meeting and/or roundtable for involving the representatives of all interested local for the region stakeholders
- Organize a creative workshop for generating ideas among all providers of the cultural products and services.
- Apply systematic approach in cooperation with media partners – local, national and international
- Organize a workshop with media partners
- discuss periodically with them the extended opportunities for common advertising of activities of the two municipalities
- establish relationships with various face-book groups

Make use of these activities turning them into PR publications and posts in the social media.

Measure 4: Support all entrepreneurs, especially the micro and small size businesses in the field of cultural tourism.

- Create a network and conditions for exchange of ideas and best practices as well as of establishment of a spirit of partnership
- Organize seminars and trainings with focus on start-ups
- Create stimuli for young entrepreneurs

Measure 5: Establish a system for collecting of marketing information

As the conducted for the purposes of this advertising plan research showed, there is no sufficient statistical and no any marketing information, collected in both municipalities. Now-a-days, with the modern means of communication and marketing approaches, it is indispensable marketing decisions to be taken on the base of reliable empirical data. Conducting marketing research is not necessarily an expensive activity – with appropriate approach and design, it can be organized at very reasonable, even low cost. It is rather a question of modern culture and policy of the institutions and organizations to obtain feed-back from the users of provided products and services.

It is absolutely necessary to create more useful and actionable data base of information so as to monitor the processes and take adequate decisions. That can be done through developing a unified approach toward the process of collecting and utilization of the information:

- Elaboration of an indicator and analysis model so as to collect a unified data which will enable creation of an integrated data base. Thus, the provided information could be more usable and decision-making oriented

- Conducting regular analysis of the collected statistics and elaboration of regular reports
- Conducting marketing research on periodical basis for:
- pre-testing of product and advertising concepts
- monitoring of the accomplishment through measuring customers' satisfaction

The research can give valuable feed-back from the tourists regarding

- Their level of satisfaction
 - Intention to re-visit the visited resort
 - Evaluation of attended events
 - Ideas for improvement of the quality of the touristic products and services
 - Propensity to recommend the visited resort and used products
- Conducting of in-depth, qualitative research with representatives of different target group – focus groups, in-depth interviews and even regular face-to-face interviews can reveal much more regarding the attitudes, stereotypes of perception an emotional triggers and barriers of the users than quantitative surveys conducted with self-administered questionnaires.

Measure 6: Maintain stable level of performance

The performance should be considered on three levels:

- promotional (advertising) activities
- the quality of the touristic products
- organizational activities of the Joint Marketing Team

The following measures have to be undertaken so as to achieve a stable level of performance:

- Elaborate standards of quality for each designed product
- Improve the quality of the human resources involved in tourism in the area
- Apply monitoring of performance and regular reporting and analysis of the achieved vs. planned results.

• MAIN CONCLUSIONS & SUGGESTIONS

The conducted for the purposes of elaboration of this strategic document research and analysis show that:

- Both municipalities have potential and willingness to carry out part of their advertising activities according to a common advertising plan. The idea to elaborate such plan is timely and would contribute to put advertising onto a higher level of development as professionalized activity within the contexts of common marketing planning.
- The cultural tourism is very well established in both municipalities in terms of existing traditions, municipality support, availability of experienced and devoted municipality specialists, media channels and partners. Yet, it has much of undeveloped potential.
- Part of the offered at the moment cultural touristic products are suitable for joint integrated offers, while others not.

- Increase of the number of overnights can be achieved only with preliminary designed accommodation packages otherwise the touristic visits to the neighboring municipality should be realized in the time frame of one day
- The internet advertising is the most suitable and used channel for advertising of touristic products since their usage is not spontaneous but planned, and, in many cases mediated by tourist agencies or operators, who also get informed from internet sources. Now-a-days it becomes more and more important on-line services to be accessible through mobile applications.
- The innovative approaches and advertising tools are very welcomed by the tourists: the new 3D videos will definitely increase the interest to both municipalities. The way they are shown to the public – on the big wall of the Mill makes them even more impressive. Going out of internet amplifies their effect, but, still, the internet will be the channel of most significant importance for this tool. Another impactful channel – presenting them on-board of the airplanes will even increase of the popularization of the 3D videos
- Two new advertising channels of communication will be very relevant and useful to convey the information about the touristic products and services to more tourists
- a free on-line channel designed to provide information to all hotels
- web-site or interactive platform for sharing experience and selling ticket for various cultural and other touristic products and services.
- In order to ensure stability of common advertising activities it is necessary to establish a Joint Marketing Team, which has to act in a consistent way within long-term time frames. The team has to receive all kind of support from the two partnering municipalities, so as to accomplish its functions.
- The success of the activities, envisioned in the common advertising plan would be feasible only under the condition of involving all stakeholders of the cultural tourism in the process of their designing, scheduling and accomplishment.

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