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COOPERATION STRATEGY BETWEEN THE PARTNERS WITHIN THE PROJECT "NEW DESTINATIONS IN CROSS- BORDER TOURISM" e-MS code: ROBG-471

March, 2022



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I. INTRODUCTION

The Cooperation Strategy was developed within the project ROBG-471 "New Destinations in Cross-Border Tourism", co-financed by the European Union through the Interreg V-A Romania-Bulgaria Program, Priority Axis 2 - Green Region, Specific Objective 2.1. To improve the sustainable use of natural and Cultural heritage and resources, Co-financing Contract № 94477 / 21.08.2018.

The project is implemented by the Municipality of Varshets, Bulgaria as the Lead Beneficiary together with the Oltenia Museum - Craiova, Dolj County, Romania, as Beneficiary 2.

The Cooperation Strategy (the "Strategy") was developed jointly by the members of the project team.

This document is a strategy to promote the cultural and historical heritage in the cross-border region of Dolj - Montana.

The strategy will support the sustainable use of the common cultural and natural heritage of Oltenia and Varshets within a cross-border tourism concept, through joint promotion, innovative multimedia and interactive equipment, public awareness raising, cultural exchange and joint heritage research.

The strategy will promote the common tourist product called "Cross-border tour of museums", which includes the three sections of the Oltenia Museum - Craiova, the historic buildings of Craiova and Varshets, as well as the newly built Paleopark and Information Center with exhibition space, Varshets .

The development of the Strategy is a necessary condition for the realization of the potential of the cross-border region Craiova - Varshets for sustainable development of cultural, scientific / academic and spa tourism. Tourism is a key sector for the development of the target region, as said in strategic and program documents at various levels of government. The territory is rich of a number of cultural locations and sites, natural resources and developed tourism infrastructure.

The developed strategy corresponds to:

- ✓ The National Strategies for Sustainable Development of Romania and Bulgaria;
- ✓ Objectives and activities on the main priorities of the EU for sustainable development of European tourism, as well as national priorities for the development of cross-border tourism;





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- ✓ The National Strategic Documents for Tourism Development in Bulgaria and Romania;
- ✓ Developed development strategies in Montana district, Dolj district and Varshets municipality;
- ✓ Cross-border cooperation policies.

II. OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE OF THE STRATEGY

The objectives of the Strategy are in line with the main and specific objectives of the ROBG-471 project "New destinations in cross-border tourism", namely:

The main goal of the project is to promote cooperation between institutions and people through the use of cultural and natural resources in a sustainable tourist way in the border area of Dolj - Montana.

The project provides:

- ✓ General tourist products / services: Cross-border tour of Oltenia Museum, Craiova and "Paleopark and Information Center with exhibition area, Varshets"; Concept for scientific / academic tourism; Balneo-climatic tourist destination; Information Center.
- ✓ Modern, innovative, interactive platform for presenting and promoting the cross-border heritage of Craiova-Varshets;
- ✓ Increasing the number of tourist nights in the cross-border area.

The aim of this strategy is to analyze the means of promoting cultural and natural heritage in the cross-border region of Craiova-Varshets and to provide an overview of the possibilities for implementing modern methods of visualization, advertising and dissemination.

Through the development of the Strategy, the authors set themselves the following tasks:

- ✓ To analyze the current situation in the destination Craiova - Varshets;
- ✓ To analyze and present the available mechanisms for promotion and to study the possibilities for introduction of new and modern solutions, which will have a deeper impact and will reach more people and institutions;
- ✓ To provide guidelines for better visualization and promotion of heritage through the introduction of modern information technologies;



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- ✓ To explore the means of promoting heritage through attractive local museum exhibitions, joint or temporary exhibitions and to look for ways to improve their impact;
- ✓ To analyze and present a concept for the development of scientific/academic tourism in the cross-border area.

III. SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS. PRESENTATION OF ROBG-471 PARTNERS "NEW DESTINATIONS IN CROSS-BORDER TOURISM". TOURIST POTENTIAL

3.1. MUNICIPALITY OF VARSHETS

Varshets Municipality is located in Northwestern Bulgaria on a territory of 240294 sq.m. It is part of the Montana District, Northwest Planning Region (Level 2). The municipality is located on the northern slopes of the Western Balkan Mountains, in a beautiful natural environment with mineral springs. Part of the Vratsa Balkan Nature Park falls within its borders. Varshets municipality consists one town - Varshets, which is the municipal center and 8 villages. The town of Varshets has a population of 5365 according to NSI data from 2020, and the municipality - 6784 inhabitants. Varshets is one of the oldest resorts in Bulgaria. Varshets is developed around the mineral springs in the area, and its history is related to balneotherapy.

3.1.1. BALNEARY TOURISM

Varshets is known as a balneology resort and SPA both in the country and abroad, famous for its specific climatic conditions and mineral springs, which help to treat many diseases.

The healing factors act here in a complex way - the air is clean and the water is healing. The lack of limestone makes it one of the softest waters in Bulgaria. The water is alkaline, contain sodium sulphate, with low mineralization (195 mg/l). The water temperature at the springs is + 37,9°C, and at the balneary centres + 36,4°C, clear, colourless, with a slight smell of hydrogen sulphide, with moderate alkaline reaction (pH 8.7), hardness 0,3 H (German degree), flow rate 15 l/sec.

Varshets is especially suitable for the prevention and treatment of chronic occupational poisonings and for people working in an ionizing environment. The following methods are used in the treatment: Hydrotherapy, climatotherapy, physiotherapy, kinesiotherapy, reflexology, inhalation therapy, manual therapy, psychotherapy.





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The greatest richness of the Varshets town are the mineral springs with healing effect along with the proximity to secular forests, bizarre rock formations, beautiful and diverse mountain landscapes that make Varshets an attractive destination for health tourism - balneology, SPA and WELLNESS.

The town of Varshets offers a variety of accommodation - guesthouses, SPA and balneological hotels of three and four stars, where you can use mineral pools, SPA and other relaxing treatments. They are equipped with medical offices, physiotherapy and kinesiotherapy rooms, mineral baths, sleep therapy rooms, relaxation and aromatherapy. A few kilometres from Varshets, in the “Minkovi Bani” area, Spanchevtsi village, SPA procedures can be performed and the swimming pool with mineral water can be used.

After warm and relaxing SPA procedures, tourists can take a short or long walk on the alleys of the park or on the marked ecological routes:

- *Ecological route “Varshets - Ivanchova Polyana - Corner of Paradise - White Water” (6 km)*
- *Ecological route “Varshets - Vodopada area (Waterfall)” (4 km)*
- *Ecological route “Varshets - Zanozhene neighbourhood - Chukata area - Spanchevtsi village - Klisurski Monastery” (13 km)*
- *Ecological route “Varshets - Zanozhene neighbourhood - Zeleni del area - Todorini Kukli Peak” (25 km)*
- *Cognitive route “Gray Eagle in the Vrachanski Balkan National Park” - Dolno Ozirovo village, Varshets municipality - Izvora area (5 km)*

Park areas and alleys

A great place for walking, recreation and sports is Varshets Forest Park, which is the second largest artificial park in Bulgaria, with an area of 80 ha. The town’s forest park is one of the greatest treasures of Varshets resort, preserved over the years. It was created at the beginning of the last century (1911 - 1912) by the voluntary work of the locals under the leadership of the first Bulgarian balneologist Dr. Damian Ivanov. Afforestation has been done with conifers as well as other valuable plant species.

Alley with plane trees it is a pedestrian area, about 2 km long. The trees are almost 100 years old and their large crowns form a tunnel from the centre of Varshets to near the edge of the town. It is a traditional place to walk since the beginning of the last century. On both sides of the boulevard are some of the most beautiful villas in the





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town, built in the early twentieth century. In the chic wooden houses, tourists can enjoy the talent of local craftsmen and artists and take with them a beautiful painting from Varshets, an icon, a souvenir.

“*Garden of the Sun*” Park was arranged in 1934. Its alleys have the shape of the sun’s rays, built of a special stone that reflects sunlight.

New Park, located between The Alley with plane trees and the „St. Mina” sanatorium is the perfect place to enjoy the sun while your child has fun in specially designed playgrounds.

Ivanchova Polyana is a forest glade located at the highest point of the park and joins the secular forests on the Koznishki side of the Balkan Mountains. People still believe that washing with morning dew before sunrise in Ivanchova Polyana is healing.

For many years, the group of friends and people with similar views in Varshets have cared for and maintained what they have created with their skilled hands in the area. *Corner of Paradise* above the Ivanchova Polyana forest glade. The place is really a corner of Paradise, which has already become an emblematic tourist spot for Varshets and has wooden benches, tables, shelters, gazebos, two grills, a swing, toilet, signs.

Above the Zanozhene neighbourhood of Varshets is the beautiful area *Vodopada (Waterfall)*. There, nature offers us unique views and coolness in the summer months. Above the waterfall is a vast meadow overlooking the peaks of the Balkan Mountains and especially the peak of Todorini Kukli. The waterfall can be reached both by car and on foot, on beautiful paths and along the town. By choosing the walking option you will have the opportunity to capture the authenticity of the locals, because there are animal farms nearby, offering great authentic photos, capturing nature and people.

3.1.2. CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL TOURISM

Archaeological discoveries

Varshets developed around mineral springs, and its history is related to balneotherapy. The oldest written document preserved about its existence dates from the sixth century, in the Byzantine chronicles under the name of the MEDECA fortress (Medicus-healer) the only settlement with such a name in the Roman Empire. The name seems to have existed before it, judging by the objects found from the Roman period, 1st - 3rd centuries. Medical and pharmaceutical tools and a plate for the production of





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medicines were found in the Kaletu area, where the ruins of the ancient fortress still exist. During the excavations for the construction of the town's mineral baths, the following were found: remains of Roman baths: pipes and small hexagonal plates - the floor of a mineral basin, etc., objects, a lead pipe with the Latin inscription "Imperator - Caesar Nerva Traianus Augustus", old masonry and charred beams, which speak of the ancient traditions of dealing with the mineral waters of Varshets. The coins thrown for health on the ancient pavement are found only in Asclepioni (the image of snakes and temples) and they also show that there was a sanatorium bath at the temple of Asclepius - the god of health, the patron saint of healing, a symbol of rejuvenation. Moreover, a sculptural composition of the Thracian deity Telesphorus - the minor child-God, symbol of Varshets - the town of health, was found here.

Material monuments of cultural and historical heritage

Seven Christian churches and two monasteries, cultural and historical sites - four Roman forts and the "Banite" Architectural Ensemble (the Baths) have been built and function on the territory of Varshets municipality.

"Banite" architectural ensemble - "Garden of the Sun" Park

The complex includes several buildings - architectural monuments of culture in the late European Baroque style, placed in the *Garden of the Sun* established in 1934. The name of the garden comes from its alleys, placed in the form of sunlight, built of a special material that reflects sunlight. Here is the monument of Dr. Damyan Ivanov - the first balneologist to transform the town of Varshets at the beginning of the last century into an elegant European resort.

The old mineral bath was designed by Architect Neshev and was built in 1910. The building occupies an area of 1320 square meters. The red stone baseboard and the style of the late Secession windows make a great impression. The two side columns of the front look like two pseudo-towers. The façade is decorated with a wreath of olive branches on two rows.

The new mineral bath was built in 1930 on an area of 732 square meters according to a project of Architect Radev. It is in line with the style of the old bath, but it is cosier. There are terraces for heliotherapy and a huge clock on the central façade. The roof is decorated in the four corners with sculptures of boys bathing riding huge snails - a symbol of rapid recovery. Images of nymphs-demigods represent the living force of nature. They guard this "temple of health" in which the miraculous mineral water gushes in a basin with Romanesque mosaics.





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Bansko Casino is the first in Bulgaria. It was built in 1924 and was electrified in the 1930s. In the years before World War II, the casino attracted wealthy Bulgarians and foreign guests arriving on the Danube. It was also visited by Prince Kiril, which is why it is also called the “Royal Casino”.

Churches in Varshets - attractive places of worship for relaxation and walking

Church of St. Georgi”- *Varshets* is an impressive basilica with a cross dome, with two bell towers and a large dome in the middle. Its construction began in 1902, and the iconostasis was completed in 1906. The temple was declared a cultural monument of local importance. The sculpture of the iconostasis is the work of a local master, and the icons were painted by the famous academician Ivan Stefanov, originally from the village of Dolna Byala Rechka. The style of the paintings is purely Slavic.

Church of St. Ascension”- *Zanozhene* neighbourhood, *Varshets* was built in 1872. It was painted by Petar Samokovets in 1873.

Church of “St. Dumitru”- *Dolna Byala Rechka* village is a single-nave basilica. It was built from donations in 1934. In 1880 a chapel was built here. There are no frescoes, but the iconostasis and icons date back to the 18th century.

Church of “St. Paraskeva”- *Draganitsa* village is a small church with a single nave, an open pronaos and a central bell tower. It is one of the oldest in the area - it was built in 1865. Nearby are the ruins of an ancient fortress - part of a medieval defence system..

Church of the “Assumption of the Mother of God” - *Cherkaski* village is a single-nave basilica. Its construction began in 1865 on the site of an older church, but was stopped several times and the building was demolished and rebuilt. The church was finished and sanctified after the Liberation. In 1974 it was completely renovated. There are no paintings on the walls, but of great value is the icon of St. Mother of God with the Infant, dating from the seventeenth century.

The Church of the Archangel Michael - *the village of Spachevtsi* was built on the site of other churches that have been demolished or burned over time.

Klisurski Monastery „St. Kiril i Metodiy” is the spiritual centre of north-western Bulgaria and is the fourth largest and most visited in Bulgaria. It is located 85 km from Sofia, between *Varshets* and *Berkovitsa*. The monastery dates from 1240. In the middle of the 19th century, it was rebuilt from ashes with donations from the local population. In 1891 the church was officially consecrated by the Metropolitan of Vidin. The iconostasis in the temple of the monastery was declared a cultural monument.



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Guests of Varshets can get acquainted with the cultural and historical heritage of the region by visiting:

Municipal Museum - Varshets, founded in 1999 after an idea of the local ethnographer Yordanka Kostova. It has become a real treasure of local history and culture. The building that houses the museum was built in the 1930s as a private house with unique architecture. The exhibition includes 4 sections: “Antiquity”, “Archaeological discoveries and coin collection”, “Balneology” and “Ethnography”.

The Town Art Gallery has 664 canvases and 27 sculptures in wood, clay and plaster.

Tourists and guests of the municipality can get acquainted with living, various authentic customs, local folklore and gastronomy, to become part of the excitement of holidays included in the municipal cultural calendar.

The holiday of the resort, the mineral water and the Balkan Mountains is the traditional holiday of the resort, which every year pays homage to the healing mineral water and the beauties of nature, which is held in July and August. The festival includes numerous events that last almost a month, among which the most attractive are: The ancient ritual for unlocking the sacred springs - a procession of the gods of health; on Crafts Alley - sculptors, ceramic artists, potters, skilled masters in lace and tapestries exhibit their works in the open air.

Epiphany is celebrated annually on January 6. The ritual of saving the Holy Cross and the Great Epiphany, which has already become traditional for Varshets, is organized by the Municipality of Varshets and the church board of St. George Church. Residents and guests of the resort town can see the unique "men's dance" in the icy waters of the river Botunya.

The celebration of the vine-growers and winemakers - Trifon Zarezan takes place annually on February 14th.

Flowers - a celebration of flowers, nature, beauty and health.

Goatmilk Memories Festival is an independent, non-commercial cultural festival, during which meetings and conversations take place in the memory and remembrance of people, which are usually difficult to meet in the same place.

The “Winter, stars and wine” celebration took place for the first time in Varshets resort in 2020. The holiday is part of the events included in the project “Improving the





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winter tourist offer in the municipalities of Varshets and Sokobanya”. It is jointly implemented by the partners and is funded through the cross-border cooperation program between Bulgaria and Serbia.

“Dimitar Peev” National Marching Band Competition for Students annually promotes the work of students’ marching bands, being performed by students studying the art of music. The aim of the competition is to involve the young generation in Bulgarian culture.

“Colourful Necklace” International Folklore Festival aims to promote the folklore richness and cultural traditions of the countries of the European region, as well as to strengthen the cultural relations between Bulgaria and European countries. It is held annually in July.

Varshets Community Centre - a place for culture and entertainment

“Hristo Botev - 1900 town of Varshets” House of Culture was founded on 04/06/1900. In 1935 the construction of a community center building with a large hall, a small hall, dressing rooms, a library, a reading room and other premises began. There are six amateur groups at the Chitalishte: a mixed choir for school singing and church singing; three-part female choir "Stefan Kanev"; dance group "Folklore wrist"; amateur theater group "Medeka"; Varshets Vocal and Instrumental Orchestra and Varshets Brass Band.

“Probuda 1934” House of Culture - Zanozhene neighborhood opened in 1934. Today it has a rich library (nearly 11,000 volumes), a concert hall with 250 seats, a small hall with 50 seats, a party club with 70 seats, a film library and a music library, an information center with internet. The main activities are in the field of culture, youth activities and sports. Numerous artistic groups with a bright presence in the local cultural life operate at the Chitalishte.

Ancient theatre or amphitheatre is built in the most attractive place - in the town park and has over 400 seats. Provides an excellent opportunity for events from the cultural calendar of the Municipality of Varshets. Every year the stage is used for summer cinema screenings.

3.1.3. ACADEMIC TOURISM (CONFERENCES)

Varshets offers good opportunities for the development of academic / conference tourism through a well-developed and well-maintained tourist infrastructure - accommodation and meals, attractions, gyms and playgrounds, marked and signposted ecological routes.





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*SPA Hotel ATA ***** has 158 beds (69 rooms) and offers therapy for tired feet, specific purification therapy, specific moisturizing therapy, sauna, steam bath, fitness, two mineral pools, one indoor and one outdoor, jacuzzi. The hotel has a classic restaurant, lobby bar, aqua bar, piano bar and 2 conference rooms - a large one with 120 seats and a small one with 60 seats.

*SPA Hotel Medicus ***** has 96 beds (48 rooms) and offers its guests various therapies for face and body, massages, fitness, mineral pools, one indoor and outdoor, sauna, steam bath, jacuzzi, relaxation area, treatment procedures, classic restaurant, pool bar, large conference room with a capacity of 75 seats and a renovated conference room with a capacity of 30 seats, both rooms are equipped with multimedia equipment and monitor, being very suitable for conferences or team building.

*SPA Hotel Sunny Garden **** has 82 beds (35 rooms), thermal / indoor area, outdoor pool, sauna, steam bath, Turkish bath, area for therapies and spa massages, classic restaurant, lobby bar, summer garden and a Vienna lounge, a modern conference room with 60 seats, tables can be placed in different configurations, multimedia projector and high-speed wireless internet. The room is suitable for conferences and training.

*“Tintyava” Balneohotel **** has 90 beds in 40 rooms and 5 suites, hydrotherapy - indoor/ with mineral drinking water/ and outdoor/ swimming pool, various bathrooms, underwater massage, it has a conference room with up to at 60 seats. The room is equipped with a flipchart, screen and multimedia equipment.

*The Chinarite (Platani) complex *** has 30 rooms/ 60 beds located in 8 double rooms of standard category and 14 apartments, classic restaurant, doctor’s office, physiotherapy, kinesiotherapy, mineral baths, sleep therapy room and relaxation room and aromatherapy, conference room with 30 seats. The conference room has complete technical equipment: projection screen, multimedia presentation equipment, other additional equipment / flipchart, whiteboard and others.

*The holiday complex “Minkovi Bani” *** offers hotel accommodation /23 beds/ and 18 detached chalets /62 beds/ classic restaurant, 3 mineral water pools, sauna, steam bath, laconium, relaxation cabins, jacuzzi for two people, tangentor, massage, tennis, football, volleyball, billiards, conference room with 100 seats.



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Varshets offers its guests many opportunities for sports and team building events.

The attractive ice rink is a place for sports and recreation with skates and rollers. The facility is a fenced Teflon layer of 300 sqm, which can be used as a skating rink at any time of the year.

The specially arranged place for skateboarding is *an attractive playground* for skateboarding and roller-skating enthusiasts.

Another attraction is *the rope park* which is built in the area of Varshets Park. It has 45 elements of variable difficulty, divided into three lines. It is the longest in Bulgaria and is suitable for young people and adults and has a separate section for children. It can be used by both locals and town guests looking for a fun and extreme experience, as well as companies for their team building events.

The bike path is 2227 meters long and 2 meters wide. It is located on the central boulevard “Republika” and connects the centre of Varshets with the Zanozhene neighbourhood.

For lovers of mountain tourism and ecotourism, in the municipality of Varshets there are ecological routes mapped, marked and signalled of different lengths and difficulties.

The multifunctional sports Hall in Varshets has a sports field for volleyball, basketball, handball, tennis. It also has a swimming pool, fitness centre and seating area. One of the important segments of the tourist offer of Varshets is the organization of sports and entertainment camps for athletes of all ages (children, young people, adults). The hall has all the necessary auxiliary equipment (locker rooms, bathrooms, fitness), which ensures the necessary conditions for training and preparation for participation in sports competitions.

In the city park there is a sports complex with fitness centre, a football field with the possibility to play also tennis, and a playground for volleyball and basketball.

The Varshets Paleopark is a new unique attraction, arranged by the ROBG-471 project “New destinations in cross-border tourism”, co-financed by the European Union through the European Regional Development Fund within the Interreg V-A Romania-Bulgaria Programme.





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The paleopark has an area of 1 hectare and recreates the natural environment of 2.5 million years ago near Varshets and the Balkans, from the time of the fossil fauna found and presents the most attractive species of vertebrates of the time, discovered in the fossiliferous deposit near Varshets. The deposit in the vicinity of the town of Varshets, which includes fossils of fauna and flora, has been known since the early 90s.

To date, about 140 species of ancient vertebrates have been discovered in the fossiliferous deposit, identified and (mostly) described by specialists: 8 species of reptiles and amphibians, 74 species of birds, 37 species of small mammals (insectivores, rodents and rabbits) and 21 species of large mammals. More than 1700 bone remains of birds and over 1,000 remains of large mammals (predators, paricopitate and perysidactyls) were collected from the deposit. This faunal wealth places the deposit near Varshets on the first place in terms of the number of vertebrate species encountered between the deposits of the Villafranchian period (the end of the Pliocene beginning of the Pleistocene) in Europe.

The park and the museum exhibition will show to the visitors that this area was inhabited by very different animals from today: rhinos, ancient wild horses and paricopy, cheetahs, hyenas, cats with sword teeth, large vultures, eagles, hawks, as well as bustards, black grouse, larks, small sunset and many other extinct bird species. There were encountered antelopes and large lizards - monitor lizards, along with those considered to be typically northern birds, such as tundra partridges.

The exhibition complex of paleopark is represented by: the exhibition center-hall and the outdoor park with sculptural reconstructions.

The exhibition hall covers a project area of 300 sqm. It includes an exhibition of the fossil remains of the deposit, a diorama, multimedia with videos and animations representing the deposit, moulds of skulls and parts of the main skeleton, and attractive species found in the deposit. The exhibition consists of 10 showcases containing separate bones and moldings of the most impressive remains, the originals of which are stored at the National Museum of Natural Sciences of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences. The most attractive species discovered in the deposit are presented on separate plates with illustrations and text. Diorama with an area of about 12 square meters restores the natural environment of the last 2.5 million years around the site - vegetation, relief, the main species of vertebrates. It presents a model of the maps - the specific geomorphological formations that form the modern landscape in the deposit area. In the cinema section, with the help of multimedia equipment, two films





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related to the deposit are broadcast: a scientific one and an animated film - a presentation that recreates the life of that time and the formation of the deposit.

In the natural park on the Paleoparc territory are located sculptural reconstitutions in eight compositions, recreating scenes from the natural environment from 2.5 million years ago around the deposit.

3.2. THE MUSEUM OF OLTENIA, CRAIOVA

3.2.1. THE MUSEUM OF OLTENIA - HISTORY-ARCHAEOLOGY DEPARTMENT

The Museum of Oltenia in Craiova was established on the 1st of April 1915, as a result of the passion and dedication of some important families from Craiova.

The History and Archaeology Department of the Museum of Oltenia operates in the building of the former “Madona Dudu” School. The construction of the building was completed in 1906, according to the plans of the architect Francisc Billek.

The permanent exhibitions offer the chance to visit a modern museum that relies on the exhibition and capitalization of an impressive cultural heritage, wanting to provoke visitors to dialogue and interactivity.

Visiting the basic exhibitions is a virtual foray through the history of Oltenia, related to the period between Prehistory and the twentieth century, transposed into a museum concept to European standards.

The History - Archaeology Department is fitted with equipment - interactive totem, virtual assistant and interactive table - purchased within the ROBG-471 project - “New destinations in cross-border tourism”, co-financed by the European Union through the European Regional Development Fund under the Interreg VA Romania-Bulgaria Program, Priority Axis 2 - A Green Region, Specific Objective: 2.1 To improve the sustainable use of natural heritage and resources and cultural heritage.

At the same time, the History-Archaeology Department (New Body) has a conference room with a capacity of 90 seats, equipped with audio-video system and wireless internet.





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An annual national conference called “Oltenia. Cultural Interferences” is organized, attended by specialists and researchers in the field of archeology, numismatics, medieval, modern and contemporary history, from numerous museums, cultural institutions and universities throughout the country and abroad. Thematic excursions are organized during the conference, both in Oltenia and in Bulgaria.

3.2.2. MUSEUM OF OLTENIA - BĂNIEI HOUSE

Băniei House is a monument of medieval architecture and the oldest civil construction in Craiova, being built at the end of the 15th century by the boyars of Craiova.

Starting with 1967, the Băniei House became the headquarters of the permanent exhibition of the Ethnography Department of the Museum of Oltenia, holding a patrimony of over 12,000 artifacts. Numerous ethnographic cultural assets are classified in the legal categories TREASURE and FUND of the National Cultural Heritage. At the same time, the Ethnography Department holds in its patrimony cultural goods included in the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Heritage of Humanity.

The Ethnography Department is fitted with equipment - interactive totem, virtual assistant and interactive table - purchased within the ROBG-471 project - “New destinations in cross-border tourism”, co-financed by the European Union through the European Regional Development Fund under the Interreg VA Romania-Bulgaria Program, Priority Axis 2 - A Green Region, Specific Objective: 2.1 To improve the sustainable use of natural heritage and resources and cultural heritage.

Since 1975, the Ethnography Department of the Museum of Oltenia in Craiova organizes annually the “Oltenia Craftsmen Fair”, a cultural event of national prestige.

3.2.3. MUSEUM OF OLTENIA - NATURAL SCIENCES DEPARTMENT

The headquarters of the Natural Sciences Department of the Museum of Oltenia in Craiova is located in one of the most beautiful historical buildings in the center of Craiova - the “Ramuri” Palace, built in 1920 according to the plans of the architect Constantin Iotzu.

During the period 2005-2012, the building was modernized and the permanent exhibitions were organized with the financial support of Dolj County Council.





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Visitors can admire the main exhibitions: Oltenia - Terra fossilis - at the ground floor, Physical-geographical conditions and ecosystems of Oltenia, as well as the Collection of minerals and rocks on the first floor; Our Universe and Solar System on the second floor. At the latter floor, there is a Planetarium, which works on the basis of a modern technology and represents a point of great attractiveness and spectacularity of the museum.

The Natural Sciences Department is fitted with equipment - interactive hologram, interactive totem, virtual assistant and interactive table - purchased within the ROBG-471 project - "New destinations in cross-border tourism", co-financed by the European Union through the European Regional Development Fund under the Interreg VA Romania-Bulgaria Program, Priority Axis 2 - A Green Region, Specific Objective: 2.1 To improve the sustainable use of natural heritage and resources and cultural heritage.

The Natural Sciences Department has a conference room with a capacity of 70 seats, equipped with audio-video system and wireless internet.

Every year, the specialists of the department organize the international conference "Museum and Scientific Research", with the participation of renowned researchers from the country and abroad. During the conference, thematic excursions are organized to objectives of scientific interest, but also cultural-tourist both in Oltenia and in Bulgaria.

3.2.4. ART MUSEUM

The sumptuous palace of Jean Mihail, located in the center of Craiova, at Calea Unirii, no. 15, is considered one of the most beautiful monuments of civil architecture. Built between 1898-1907 by the architect Paul Gottereau at the request of Constantin (Dinu) Mihail, the palace is a wonderful example of eclectic European architecture and French academism.

From August 1954, the palace became the host of Craiova Art Museum. Over the years, the museum's patrimony has been enriched by acquisitions of the municipality and donations of the collections owned by personalities of those times (Nicolae Romanescu, Cornetti, Glogoveanu), now numbering thousands of pieces of art of world value.

The museum has valuable works by famous artists such as Constantin Brâncuși, Constantin Lecca, Theodor Aman, Nicolae Grigorescu, Ștefan Luchian, Nicolae Tonitza, Corneliu Baba, Ion Țuculescu, Karl Storck or Dimitrie Paciurea, etc.





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3.2.5. UNIVERSITY OF CRAIOVA

The monumental building of the headquarters of the University of Craiova, located in the city centre, at A. I. Cuza, no. 13, it was originally built to serve as a Palace of Justice. The architect Ion Socolescu was the one who designed it in 1890 in neoclassical style, in the spirit of French academism.

Today, six faculties operate in this building: the Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, the Faculty of Letters, the Faculty of Sciences, the Faculty of Social Sciences, the Faculty of Horticulture and the Faculty of Theology.

In the patrimony of the University of Craiova there are two other historical buildings where have the headquarters the Faculty of Mechanics and the Faculty of Agronomy.

The Faculty of Mechanics is based in the former premises of the “Ștefan Velovan” Normal School, designed by the architect Băicoyanu and built between 1898-1901. The Faculty of Agronomy holds, starting with the year 1949, the building from Libertății Street, no. 19, a massive building, built through the efforts of some teachers led by professor Elena Gheorghiu

3.2.6. MADONNA DUDU CHURCH

Madonna Dudu Church is a historical monument located in the center of the city, in the immediate vicinity of the History-Archaeology Department of the Museum of Oltenia in Craiova.

The church was named after the miracle-working icon of the Mother of God which, according to the legend, was found in a mulberry tree on the site where the altar was later built.

The church, dedicated to the “Assumption”, was built in Brancoveanu style between 1750-1756 on the initiative of Constantin Fotescu and Hagi Ion Gheorghe, being for the first time documented in 1758.

3.2.7. “SFÂNTUL DUMITRU” METROPOLITAN CATHEDRAL

“Sfântul Dumitru” Metropolitan Cathedral is the oldest church in the city of Craiova. It is believed that the first founder of the church would be the “ban” Barbu Craiovescu.

The first documentary mention of the church dates from 11 November 1645. It certainly existed before the reign of Matei Basarab, who rebuilt it in 1651.





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Inside the cathedral are the relics of Holly Hierarch Niphon, Patriarch of Constantinople, of Saints Serghie and Vah, and of Holly martyr Tatiana.

3.2.8. ALEXANDRU AND ARISTIA AMAN LIBRARY

“Alexandru and Aristia Aman” County Library, located at Kogălniceanu Street, is the first public library to operate in Craiova, existing due to the generous donation that the Aman family made to the city community. The library has important heritage values: manuscripts, old Romanian books, rare foreign books, bibliophile books.

3.2.9. NICOLAE ROMANESCU PARK

Nicolae Romanescu Park is the largest natural park in southeastern Europe and one of the most representative monuments of landscape art in Romania.

It was built at the initiative of the Craiova mayor Nicolae P. Romanescu (1854-1931), according to the plans of the French architect Jules Édouard Redont. The project was awarded at the International Exhibition in Paris (1900) with the Gold Medal, a medal in the patrimony of the Museum of Oltenia.

The construction of the park began in 1901 and was inaugurated in 1903, in the presence of King Carol I and the royal family.

The total area of the park is over 96 ha and was made in the romantic style, a synthesis of landscape architecture and painting.

Within the arranged ensemble, there are elements such as watercourses over 1970 m long, alleys almost 27 km long, the monumental entrance, Romanescu monument, Bibescu House, Iron Kiosk, the Enchanted Castle, lake and pier, impressive Suspension Bridge, the waterfalls, the Zoo, the Hippodrome, the Velodrome, the Summer Theatre and numerous statues and statuary groups.



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3.2.10. BOTANIC GARDEN

The Botanic Garden of Craiova bears the name of the one who had the initiative to establish it in 1952, respectively the university professor Alexandru Buia, based on some 50-year-old initial plans of the French landscape architect Emile Redont.

Currently, the surface is about 12.8 ha, being arranged 3 artificial lakes with an area of about 0.3 ha.

The Botanic Garden is known both nationally and internationally, being included since 1974 in the International Association of Botanic Gardens.

The Botanic Garden has recently become a place for walks and relaxation for the people of Craiova, with the redevelopment of the spring of 2016, generously offering the inhabitants of Craiova a well-deserved recreational refuge in the middle of nature.

3.2.11. “MARIN SORESCU” NATIONAL THEATRE

“Marin Sorescu” National Theatre was founded in 1850. The current building of the Craiova theater, a real symbol architectural of the city, created by the architect Alexandru lotzu, was inaugurated on 21 April 1973 .

With a history of 170 years, awarded over time on all meridians of the world, “Marin Sorescu” National Theatre in Craiova is present among the major international theaters, with which it participated in the most important festivals.

A member of the European Theatre Convention (ETC) since 1995, Craiova National Theatre is the first theatre in a country in Central and Eastern Europe to be part of this international guild association.

An important moment in the history of the theatre is the founding of the International Shakespeare Festival in 1994.

IV. SWOT ANALYSIS OF THE CRAIOVA-VARSHETS TOURIST DESTINATION

In order to analyze the current situation of the cross-border tourist destination Craiova - Varshets, a SWOT analysis was prepared, which outlines the four aspects of the future development of the destination, namely:

Strengths - characteristics that can be relied on to succeed. The key, most appropriate and strongest are those that have the potential to become long-term sustainable competitive advantages;



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Weaknesses - internal characteristics that are a barrier to the success of the project, business or direction of development. Weaknesses of less importance or intensity can be overcome in the long run, but the important ones strongly influence the main strategic commitments and ambitions;

Opportunities - external aspects that have a positive impact on the speed of implementation and attractiveness of the endeavor, but generally have a limited impact on the strategic commitments themselves;

Threats - aspects that can potentially limit or bring additional risks to the venture.

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Valuable cultural and historical heritage of international importance; ✓ Rich natural resources, availability of mineral waters in Varshets; ✓ Well-developed tourism - cultural, balneological and SPA, rural, ecological; ✓ Appropriate conditions for sports, recreation, active recreation and healthy lifestyle; ✓ Built transport connectivity and accessibility - land, river and air; ✓ Proximity to international airports - Craiova and Sofia; ✓ Determination of local authorities for the sustainable development of tourism; ✓ Well-built tourist infrastructure, including accommodation; ✓ The price range is reasonable and affordable for all age groups; ✓ Diversity of cultural events; ✓ The museum expositions in the cross-border region are diverse and tell about a rich variety of stories, interpreting the past and the present history; ✓ The museums from the cross-border destination Craiova - Varshets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Insufficiently modernized specific tourist and transport infrastructure; ✓ Insufficient promotion and awareness of the tourist offer in the cross-border region; ✓ Insufficient capitalization of natural and cultural resources; ✓ Insufficient application of innovative multimedia tools in the field of tourism; ✓ Insufficiently well-developed academic/scientific/conference tourism; ✓ Lack of well-trained staff employed in the tourism sector; ✓ Insufficient use and management of existing attractions; ✓ Some of the museum specialists have difficulties with IT devices and IT-related activities; ✓ Some of the museum workers and most of those working in the tourism sector are experiencing foreign language problems; ✓ Due to various external factors, the tourism industry in the cross-border region is weakening, leading to fewer visitors to museums and cultural and natural heritage sites;



<p>have unique artifacts and manage cultural monuments that can not be seen elsewhere;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The staff of the Oltenia Museum has experience and a high level of qualification in various fields; ✓ Oltenia Museum publishes scientific articles and conducts research activities to enrich the museum collections; ✓ Oltenia Museum applies modern ICT (implementation of holograms, virtual assistants, speaking totems); 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Museums and other tourist attractions operate under budget constraints imposed by local or municipal authorities, which prevents them from investing in IT and modernization; ✓ Insufficient participation in professional organizations and networks at national, cross-border and international level;
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The common heritage and the close proximity between the two destinations in the cross-border region make it possible to establish a common tourist route and joint activities between museums, cultural institutions and tourist sites; ✓ Ability to identify new markets and target groups; ✓ Opportunity for development of academic / scientific tourism; ✓ Development and implementation of additional programs and competitive tourist products in order to extend the tourist season; ✓ Opportunity to finance projects from the EU, the European Commission and other donors for investment and development of cultural institutions, museums and specific tourism infrastructure; ✓ Use of modern social media to present and promote the heritage among young people from the cross-border region; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Reduced ability to buy and relax tourists as a result of the economic crisis; ✓ Deterioration of stability in the region as a result of military conflicts, refugee crises; ✓ Negative impact on the sustainable development of tourism following the Covid 19 pandemic; ✓ The real competition that is created with the development of active competitive destinations; ✓ The language barrier hinders tourism activities in the cross-border region; ✓ Insufficient national funding makes it difficult to maintain the highest possible level of quality and efficiency in museums and cultural institutions; ✓ Demographic, social and financial factors that prevent the local population from visiting museums and tourist attractions; ✓ Destruction and / or poor maintenance of the cultural and historical heritage due to insufficient financial



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Using modern ICT-related promotion mechanisms to attract more visitors; ✓ Development of new tourist attractions; ✓ Use of modern technologies to develop attractive events, products, promotional materials or souvenirs; ✓ Using holographic systems and displays to present local heritage in a new way, as well as to present artifacts and objects from other museums and destinations in the cross-border region and the world; 	<p>resources, lack of interest from the state and / or local authorities, vandalism;</p>
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The presented SWOT analysis clearly outlines the main threats and weaknesses of the cross-border destination Craiova - Varshets. The efforts of partners, local authorities and institutions are aimed at tackling the lack of joint promotion and awareness of the cross-border tourism proposal, integrating innovative multimedia tools into cross-border cooperation, overcoming the insufficient capitalization of natural and cultural resources, creating new destinations and thus increasing the number of cross-border tourists. Both cross-border areas share common historical and cultural values and each represents a potential demand for tourists and visitors to promote sustainable development.

The modern tourism is closely linked to the development and growing number of new destinations. The further development of Varshets is closely related to tourism and the identification of new markets abroad, which is why the diversification, integration and promotion of tourist packages is an important goal.

On the other hand, the population of Craiova and Dolj has developed an increased demand for spa and leisure services in recent years, which is barely met by local resorts in neighboring Romanian counties. It can be concluded that the project partners, as well as all parties involved in tourism development are making efforts to apply modern information and communication technologies in tourism (including museum) activities to attract new visitors and tourists.



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Based on the analysis, some concrete solutions can be proposed to improve the activities of museums, tourist centers, cultural institutions and other entities in the tourism sector in the cross-border destination.

The identified measures and actions aim to promote the created common tourist product "Cross-border Museum Tour" within the project ROBG-471 "New destinations in cross-border tourism", as well as its development / expansion into an integrated tourism product, including opportunities for practice of different types of tourism.

V. MARKETING, ADVERTISING STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

5.1. CREATING A MARKETING COOPERATION PLATFORM

Objective: To create a platform "Cross-border Museum Tour +" to improve cooperation between cross-border destinations in order to turn the border from a dividing line into a place of integrated development, using human, natural and cultural-historical resources.

The Cooperation Platform will develop and enrich the joint tourist product "Cross-border Museum Tour" (<http://newdestinationsrobg.ro/>), developed under the ROBG-471 project "New Destinations in Cross-Border Tourism", co-financed by the European Union through the European Regional Development Fund. development within the Interreg VA Romania-Bulgaria Program.

The platform will be a tool for developing common policies, exchanging experiences and sharing data in the field of tourism, culture and museums.

The platform will be a tool for promoting history, culture and art, for sharing experiences in the fields of education, youth and business.

5.2. MARKETING OBJECTIVES

Three strategic goals have been defined, which we will be guided by in the further development of tourism and marketing of the two cross-border destinations Craiova and Varshets:

- ✓ Increasing the number of tourists visiting destinations;
- ✓ Increasing the attractiveness of the two tourist destinations;
- ✓ Improving the overall experience of tourists visiting destinations.





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5.3. TOURIST TARGET SEGMENTS

5.3.1. Types of tourists

2 categories of tourists are defined:

1. Tourists from the country - this includes tourists from Bulgaria and Romania who have a cultural and cognitive interest in the destinations. They need accommodation, their removal can be by personal transport or organized by specialized transport.

2. International tourists. For travel they use international transport: air transport, passenger ships, tourist buses, own cars. They may need accommodation in the destination in hotels, rooms, boarding houses.

5.3.2. Tourist profiles

7 target segments are defined for both destinations

5.3.2.1. Young people without children

Characteristics: 25-30 years old, highly educated, rich in money, poor in time (with high purchasing power), traveling in pairs, in middle or senior management positions, very busy, severe stress at work.

Motives for the trip: Gaining new experience, "recharging the batteries", maintaining good relationships and quality time spent together, exploring new cultures (new attractions), culinary temptations, spa and wellness holidays.

Travel behavior: They organize the trip online, the reservation is made in advance, they like to discover new destinations and cultures, travel all year round, want to try local food and wine and have fun like locals, stay in local accommodation (hotels, houses) for guests).

Expected benefits: Unique experience (factor of authenticity and surprise), availability of the destination online (internet portal, news, overview of activities in the destination), Wi-Fi connection and high speed internet, rich offer (sports, culture, leisure, events), price-quality ratio, fast and quality availability.



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5.3.2.2. *Families with young children*

Characteristics: 30-45 years old, families with one or more children, secondary or higher education, employed in secondary or higher positions, moderate purchasing power, rational spending, but willing to spend more on family and children, work-life balance.

Motives of the trip: Spending time with family, children come first, but at the same time are committed to their partner, discovering new destinations and cultures, prefer active recreation.

Travel behavior: They are informed by the Internet, travel once or twice a year depending on the children's holidays, sometimes parents go on short breaks out of season without children, like to see sights and get involved in local events, travel easily affordable destinations, stay in middle class hotels or guest houses.

Expected benefits: Rest and family reunification, creating unique memories for the whole family, safety is one of the priorities and therefore they choose well-known destinations and are loyal to them when they are satisfied, animation programs, value for money, family orientation values.

5.3.2.3. *Couples with grown children*

Characteristics: 45-65 years old, couples with children who already live separately from them, still work, usually in positions of responsibility, earn above average income, feel young and very active, holistic lifestyle (healthy eating, activity, quality of life).



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Motives of the trip: Longevity, revitalization of body and mind, new rejuvenating experiences, special interests, exploring new cultures and attractions, culinary temptations, spa and wellness holidays.

Travel behavior: Loyal tourists, willing to rediscover old interests and find new ones, travel all year round, prefer not to be at the peak of the season, often book at the last minute, like to discover new things (food, wine, sports, physical activity) , do not like to waste time.

Expected benefits: Destination with history, authenticity, high quality service, sense of comfort and luxury, renewal of body and mind, variety of activities (sports, culture, art, relaxation), availability of the destination online (internet portal, news, review of the activities in the destination).

5.3.2.4. *Families with older children*

Characteristics: 35-45 years old, families with teenagers, secondary or higher education, usually occupied in responsible positions, moderate purchasing power, realizing that children grow up want to spend more time with them, family values.

Motives of the trip: To spend more time with their grown children, to teach them family values, to do something together, to discover new destinations, an active vacation with lots of fun.

Travel behavior: They prefer to travel to nice places - a combination of family atmosphere and fun, vacation is a compromise between young and old, most trips are during the active season, according to children's vacations, sometimes parents go on short breaks out of season without children.

Expected benefits: For parents - joint activities with children, for children - joint activities, controlled environment, entertainment, quality service tailored to the needs of children and parents, value for money, sports activities, excursions.

5.3.2.5. *Adventurers*

Characteristics: 15-35 years old, different social status (students, young employees, unemployed), limited budget and low purchasing power, adventurous and nomadic lifestyle, have free time.

Motives of the trip: Affordable prices, discovering new destinations in a unique way, exploring natural resources, authentic experiences, learning about cultural heritage and local traditions, inclusion in events and entertainment.



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Travel behavior: Long-distance travel to a distant destination, cheap transport (train, stop, low-cost aircraft), prefer cheaper accommodation, flexible routes, traveling alone or in small groups, internet is the main source of information.

Expected benefits: Opportunity to travel with different transportation, opportunity for low-budget accommodation and services, fun activities tailored to the culture of travelers.

5.3.2.6. *Third age*

Characteristics: 60+ years old, retired, moderate purchasing power (limited budget), but have savings that are willing to spend on travel, in relatively good health, traveling in pairs or small groups, secondary or higher education.

Motives for travel: Although adults, looking for new experiences, activities and entertainment, love to return to places they visited in their youth, looking for famous and safe destinations, travel to enjoy life.

Travel behavior: Informed about brochures or travel agencies, travel organized and stay in middle class hotels, travel in groups and tour many places or one place for a longer stay, experienced tourists but do not travel often, participate in activities with low intensity (sightseeing).

Expected benefits: Safe activities, entertainment tailored to their taste, gastronomy and wine, organized excursions, a variety of appropriate activities (relaxation, sports, culture and art).

5.3.2.7. *Business travel*

Characteristics: Individual travel, 25-65 years old, higher education, various professional positions, from senior to lower management, rely on high technology when traveling, high purchasing power, moderate costs.

Motives of the trip: Traveling on business, participating in congresses, conferences and other business events, combining work and pleasure, the trip is a reward for hard work or incentive for valuable employees, meeting new people, exchanging information and experiences, exploring new destinations.

Travel behavior: Travel alone or with colleagues, travel throughout the year to participate in congresses, conferences, exhibitions and other events, require a high level of service and value for money, rarely organize their own trips, others do it for them, enjoy are on gastronomic offer and entertainment.



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Expected benefits: Fast and quality accessibility to the destination, high level of technological equipment, congress centers and sufficient capacity for accommodation, high level of organization and service, hotel facilities (hotels, restaurants, bars), expansion of the business network.

5.4. PRIORITY PRODUCTS

The logic behind the selection of priority products was to ensure cross-border cooperation and to create a product that would ensure synergies between the participating stakeholders on both sides of the border.

The products to be developed through a joint approach between the parties are:

- ✓ Events and culture;
- ✓ Business events;
- ✓ Health and Wellness;
- ✓ Short breaks;
- ✓ Tourist tour

5.4.1. EVENTS AND CULTURE

PRODUCT CHARACTERISTICS		
<p>Cultural tourism is a trip outside the place of residence of a person for a period longer than 24 hours in order to feel a certain cultural content. Cultural events as a product give tourists an additional reason to visit the destination.</p> <p>Events can be a deciding factor in deciding a destination. Events, festivals and cultural events provide a great opportunity for differentiation and can influence a higher percentage of visits.</p> <p>Events can have a significant impact on the management of the destination, as well as to improve the image of both domestic and target foreign markets - through PR, articles and reports in specialized magazines and Internet portals.</p> <p>By types of events have different sub-products: 1) Architecture, museums, galleries, archaeological sites, 2) Cultural events (theater, film festivals, exhibitions), 3) Music events (concerts, festivals, competitions), 4) Sports events (by type sports), 5) Special interests (Gastronomy, art).</p>		
Market potential	Necessary tourist infrastructure	Key success factors
- In Europe, 42% of all tourists consume a certain cultural product during their	- Quality visitor management system; - International attractive events;	- Specially developed routes; - Available information on the Internet;



<p>trip and stay in the destination; - 40% of all cultural trips are mostly short, lasting up to 4 days</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Places suitable for events; - Improving the production and distribution creativity of crafts and indigenous products; - Plenty of entertainment, recreation and sightseeing; - Innovative interpretation of cultural content - interpretation and visitor centers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Connection between the most important natural and cultural sites; - Use of modern methods of interpretation of cultural content; - Diversity of the accommodation base; - Qualified personnel; - Image of the destination.
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5.4.2. BUSINESS EVENTS

PRODUCT CHARACTERISTICS		
<p>Current trends in tourism are expressed in the growing importance of specific types of tourism. One of the forms of these types of tourism is scientific / congress tourism. The creation and development of this type of tourism is a result of the need for people to cooperate, exchange information and experience. The desire of contemporaries to think and work together gives rise to the creation of more harmonious and balanced relationships - science / conference tourism. The rich variety of tourist resources in the cross-border area creates favorable conditions for the development of this type of tourism.</p> <p>The development of scientific / conference tourism has a high social, political and economic effect. Participants in international events are grouped in time and place to achieve certain goals, using a range of specific scientific / conference services. The main tourist services here are of secondary importance, but the requirements for their quality are significant.</p>		
Market potential	Necessary tourist infrastructure	Key success factors
<p>According to experts, Bulgaria is one of the leading countries in the world in the concentration of natural, historical and cultural values and landmarks of international</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Quality system for conference tourism management; - Well-built transport infrastructure; - Presence near international airports; - High quality hotel accommodation; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Natural and geographical conditions and anthropogenic resources can be successfully used to increase efficiency by reducing seasonality in tourism; - The forums achieve higher occupancy of the



<p>importance, which is an extremely important prerequisite for the successful launch and entry into international congress / conference tourism markets.</p>	<p>- Implementation of high-tech equipment in conference halls;</p>	<p>hotel base, especially out of season; - Improving staffing; - Diversity of cultural events; - Presence of cultural, historical and natural landmarks.</p>
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5.4.3. HEALTH AND WELLNESS

PRODUCT CHARACTERISTICS		
<p>Health tourism is a complex tourist product that includes a large number of specialized facilities and services. The main motivation for travel is the need to strengthen health and improve quality of life. Spa / wellness and health tourism are closely linked.</p>		
<p>The wellness product implies a proactive, integrated approach that should improve the quality of life and health of guests in the destination. It deals with disease prevention, resulting in intangible results. Wellness and spa destinations are built on the concept of overall well-being, and the main task is to improve health, both psychologically and emotionally and physically. This is achieved through specially designed treatments, trainings and courses, as well as through the promotion of a long-term sustainable healthy lifestyle. In the profile of the behavior of the product subspecies, users of SPA / Wellness have a great need to combine it with cultural events and gastronomy.</p>		
Market potential	Necessary tourist infrastructure	Key success factors
<p>Today, Wellness and Spa is one of the fastest growing tourism products in the world;</p>	<p>- Health - specialized clinics, rehabilitation facilities and (non) invasive medical treatments; - Wellness - wellness hotels, meditation spaces, oriental techniques, swimming pools with mineral water; - Providing unique experiences in nature.</p>	<p>- Pure natural environment; - Quality food and beverages; - Specialized support; - Certificates of quality and professionalism; - Product knowledge management.</p>



5.4.4. SHORT BREAKS

PRODUCT CHARACTERISTICS		
<p>Short breaks in the form of special interests are closely linked to the individual, special interests ("niches") of tourists visiting the destination. Tourists travel mostly to enjoy a special interest, whether it is a hobby, physical activity or interest in a particular topic or destination.</p> <p>Of particular interest is the recreational activity, which takes place in an unusual or wild environment and is associated with a high level of participation of tourists in activities and most often takes place outdoors. The user expects to experience a certain level of (controlled) risk and / or excitement, while on the other hand, peace of mind in which he wants above all to test his abilities in the preferred activity.</p> <p>As a product, this is usually the third holiday of the year or an additional activity during the main holiday and lasts between 3 and 5 days when it comes to the third holiday and the day when it comes to completing the main holiday.</p> <p>It includes the following "soft" activities: camping, cycling, fishing, hunting, horseback riding and bird watching.</p>		
Market potential	Necessary tourist infrastructure	Key success factors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In the region, the average tourist who travels for a short vacation is a foreigner aged 25-45 years, average or higher income, who stays 2-5 days; - The average travel costs per person are 300 euros; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Plenty of resources and facilities for outdoor activities; - Diverse offer of the accommodation base; - Information boards and alarms; - Excursions with a guide; - Marketing infrastructure - online and offline content aimed at different segments in accordance with their interests; - Local transport. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hospitality of the locals; - Type of products in accordance with the needs of the market; - Offers availability and modularity (opportunity for tourists to fully organize their trip themselves); - Transport accessibility; - Image of the destination, authenticity; - Advertising in specialized magazines

5.4.5. TOURIST TOUR

PRODUCT CHARACTERISTICS
<p>The tourist tour as a product has two main forms, ie two main subgroups:</p> <p>1. Individual tour - an individual tour in a certain area with a personal vehicle (private, rented or public transport).</p>



2. Group tour - Travelers who want to explore new areas by communicating with people with similar interests.

The tour is defined as moving around a certain space in order to discover and get acquainted with different characteristics of this area or to follow a certain thematic route (culture, nature, gastronomy).

The tourist tour is one of the oldest tourist concepts, from which tourism eventually developed (large tours in Europe between the 17th and 19th centuries). The tour should connect segments of the offer and pack individual elements into a meaningful and attractive product, but also connect with global commercialization systems specializing in these products.

Market potential	Necessary tourist infrastructure	Key success factors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - About 43 million of all trips are tourist, ie. 15-20% of the European market is for rest and relaxation; - Tourism can connect all countries in the region and increase the synergies of tourism. Tours can include the best experiences in the region. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Quality road infrastructure; - River ports; - Long-distance connectivity; - Signs and brands; - Quality and interpretation of cultural content; - Quality places to eat. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Type of products according to market needs: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cultural tours; 2. Tours in nature; 3. City tours; 4. Mixed tours; 5. Gastro tours; - Access to basic services; - Quality of tourist guides; - Promotion of possible routes; - Cooperation with travel agencies; - Value for money; - Authentic experiences.

5.5. STRATEGIC MARKETING OBJECTIVES AND MEASURES

5.5.1. Strategic marketing goal 1: Increasing the number of tourists visiting destinations.

MEASURE: COOPERATIVE MARKETING
SHORT DESCRIPTION
Cooperative marketing includes cooperation agreements with tour operators and other stakeholders in selected target markets in order to carry out joint promotional actions.



The main goal is to multiply the available (limited) promotional budget by joining forces with partners who are interested in promoting the "Cross-border Museum +" cooperation platform in order to sell more arrangements.

KEY ACTIVITIES

- ✓ Creating an attractive advertising campaign for both traditional and digital media;
- ✓ Advertising campaign of the tour operators, dedicated to "Cross-border tour of museums +", in mass and specialized media;
- ✓ Increasing the number of pages dedicated to "Cross-border tour of museums +" in the main brochure of tour operators;
- ✓ Presentation of products of special interest offered by the destination in the brochure of tour operators;
- ✓ Direct email to current tour operators' clients to submit special offers for "Cross-border Museum Tour +".

CONTRIBUTION TO THE PURPOSE

Cooperative marketing will reach a large number of potential tourists and raise awareness of destinations through traditional and digital promotional activities carried out by tour operators.

MEASURE: EDUCATIONAL TOURS

SHORT DESCRIPTION

Educational trips are trips for travel agencies from the target markets, but also for organizers of congresses, incentive companies and other travel agents. Educational trips are usually organized by national, regional or city tour operators in cooperation with local entrepreneurs and tour operators who can contribute financially or by providing services (eg accommodation, transport, food, etc.). Each trip should focus on one group (Travel agencies, tour operators or organizers of congresses and events) due to different interests and needs. In order to facilitate adequate learning experience, the size of the group should be limited to a maximum of 15 people per trip.

KEY ACTIVITIES

- ✓ List of traveling participants;
- ✓ Getting to know different local stakeholders, to analyze the interests and opportunities to join the program;
- ✓ Planning educational trips for maximum experience;



- ✓ Coordinating the content and organization of educational trips with tourist products;
- ✓ Realization of the educational trip;
- ✓ Feedback and measurement of effects (acquired knowledge of the destination, sales development).

CONTRIBUTION TO THE PURPOSE

Educational trips should make travel agencies and tour operators more willing to include the cross-border destination in their tourist offer, thus finding potential travelers and therefore increasing the number of arrivals.

MEASURE: CAMPAIGN IMAGE

SHORT DESCRIPTION

The Cross-Border Tour of Museums + platform should implement an image campaign through traditional media that communicate and support the chosen positioning. The focus of the image campaign is mainly on advertising sites in traditional media in selected target markets, as well as advertising in print and electronic media.

KEY ACTIVITIES

- ✓ Hiring an agency;
- ✓ Create a short campaign, indicating the main objectives;
- ✓ Determining the start and end date of the campaign;
- ✓ Defining the main messages with key products and brand;
- ✓ Creation of advertising materials;
- ✓ Creating content (videos);
- ✓ Starting the campaign;
- ✓ Monitoring the results of the campaign;
- ✓ Adjust the campaign according to the monitoring results.

CONTRIBUTION TO THE PURPOSE

The image campaign aims to promote the cross-border tourist destination and make it recognizable.

MEASURE: DIGITAL CAMPAIGN

SHORT DESCRIPTION



The digital online campaign will be year-round, focusing on the main tourist products and reporting on all activities related to the destination. It will combine SEO, AdWords and a social media campaign.

KEY ACTIVITIES

- ✓ Hiring a digital specialist to create and implement a campaign;
- ✓ Development of social media accounts (Instagram, Twitter and Facebook);
- ✓ SEO and Google AdWords campaign;
- ✓ Defining the main messages with key products and brand;
- ✓ Creating content (videos);
- ✓ Linking content to the website and all social media accounts;
- ✓ Starting the campaign;
- ✓ Monitoring the results of the campaign.

CONTRIBUTION TO THE PURPOSE

The digital campaign will send relevant marketing messages, ensure better visibility and increase website / social media account traffic and increase the number of tourists with its call to action.

5.5.2. Strategic marketing goal 2: Increasing the attractiveness of the two tourist destinations

MEASURE: DESTINATION BRANDING

SHORT DESCRIPTION

Destination branding is a process of developing a unique brand identity of a tourist destination that will distinguish it from competitors. Brand creators will assess the current perception of the destination and develop a combination of a brand element that will identify and differentiate the destination by building a positive image. As a result, the destination brand will provide: differentiation of the destination from the competition, a consistent appearance that all stakeholders can constantly use and is a way to present the uniqueness of the destination to tourists.

KEY ACTIVITIES

- ✓ Presentation of the current image of the destination among locals and guests;
- ✓ Identification of unique characteristics of the destination (natural and architectural landmarks, events, gastronomy, etc.);



- ✓ Development of a platform for branding a destination (a set of elements of the brand that will represent the destination in the best way and will create the desired image);
- ✓ Providing detailed guidelines for the use of the brand;
- ✓ Creating a book of standards;
- ✓ Monitoring the results of the campaign.

CONTRIBUTION TO THE PURPOSE

Destination branding is an essential step in creating a new tourism product because it will provide a means of raising awareness of the destination and a basis for communication.

MEASURE: ADVERTISING MATERIALS

SHORT DESCRIPTION

Advertising materials are material support for the brand. Made in various shapes and sizes and distributed at fairs and exhibitions, at special presentations to potential tourists and tour operators. All promotional materials must comply with the brand guidelines, use the identified symbols and provide added value.

KEY ACTIVITIES

- ✓ Determining the set of advertising materials;
- ✓ USB, containing TV commercials, brochures, photos and videos, music, pre-prepared texts for journalists, contact information;
- ✓ Brochures should be highly emotional, attractive and with innovative designs, shapes and sizes;
- ✓ Limited number of posters that are updated every year with quality photos;
- ✓ Unique souvenirs;
- ✓ Local products with a regional brand;
- ✓ Hiring a professional to create the design of advertising materials;
- ✓ Distribution of advertising materials;

CONTRIBUTION TO THE PURPOSE

The promotional material has a dual role: to remind stakeholders of the destination, to create awareness and to have a functional purpose in everyday life.

MEASURE: DIGITAL TOOLS



SHORT DESCRIPTION
The digital toolkit is a set of online customer contact points, mainly websites and social media accounts, that are used to communicate with travelers and establish the online presence of the destination. The main goal of social media is to create a digital connection with travelers and allow them to establish direct communication with the destination, ask a question and receive information about the destination in real time
KEY ACTIVITIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Hiring a professional to develop a web page / mobile application or other digital application; ✓ Collection and provision of information about the content of the website / mobile application; ✓ Launch the web page / mobile application, using the latest trends and the best examples; ✓ Monitoring of traffic and visits; ✓ Creating social media accounts (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram); ✓ Creating content and sharing it regularly; ✓ Expanding the digital community; ✓ Community governance; ✓ Monitoring the presentation and results on social media (likes, comments, shares ...).
CONTRIBUTION TO THE PURPOSE
The digital toolkit is designed to create digital brand awareness and provide online support as part of an integrated marketing strategy.

5.5.3. Strategic Marketing Goal 3: Improve the overall experience of tourists visiting destinations.

MEASURE: VALUE DESIGN
SHORT DESCRIPTION
Value design is a product development initiative that defines a complementary set of experiences related to each of the identified primary tourism products.
KEY ACTIVITIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Research and systematization of the most attractive places and activities in the destination for tourists during the season; ✓ Creating different tour options in terms of theme and duration;



- ✓ Providing all important information in one place both online and on paper;
- ✓ Facilitating communication between travel agencies and local stakeholders;
- ✓ Informing about the offer of the representatives of tour operators and agencies;
- ✓ Encouraging tour operators and agencies to actively offer the destination;
- ✓ Creation of integrated products - all options in different variants, optimal duration, places to visit, food, accommodation ...
- ✓ Providing information to extend the trip to neighboring destinations (accommodation, places to see, events to visit);
- ✓ Integration of the entire offer in a new web page and printed materials;
- ✓ Promotion through PR, advertising campaign.
- ✓ Monitoring the presentation and results on social media (likes, comments, shares ...).

CONTRIBUTION TO THE PURPOSE

Value design will contribute to the full experience of the guests, as it will provide all the necessary information and create packages ready for sale.

MEASURE: MEDIA LIBRARY

SHORT DESCRIPTION

The media library is a simple, explanatory and attractive overview of tourism products, which will be available in priority target markets, shown through photos, videos and innovative VR experiences. Through innovative ways of presenting a destination, potential guests will be able to connect and get to know the destination even before they visit it.

KEY ACTIVITIES

- ✓ Selection of primary tourist products and experiences to be displayed in the media library through photos, videos and VR;
- ✓ Selection of the top 5-10 experiences to be translated into VR;
- ✓ Hiring a professional photographer / video company / VR manufacturer;
- ✓ Access to photos, video and desired effects / messages, as well as 360-degree photos / videos;
- ✓ Create photos, videos and 360-degree photos / videos;
- ✓ Seek feedback and make changes if necessary;
- ✓ Upload photos, videos and VR experiences to the media library;
- ✓ Develop smart links that direct visitors from a web page / social media to VR videos.



CONTRIBUTION TO THE PURPOSE

The media library ensures that travelers get acquainted with the main tourist products and experiences and helps them to visualize the experience and inspires them to visit the destination.

MEASURE: PRINTED MATERIALS

SHORT DESCRIPTION

Preparation of 2 types of basic printed materials in selected languages - "Enjoy" is a general and separate brochures for destinations that are aimed at people to plan their trip. The brochures offer offers, resources and attractions, while those for individual destinations present detailed descriptions of available tours, calendar of events, road maps. The materials are distributed through tour operators and agencies, as well as at TICs in destinations.

KEY ACTIVITIES

- ✓ Creating a common brochure - "Enjoy" - to raise awareness;
- ✓ Creating separate brochures for each destination to help people plan their trip;
- ✓ Inclusion of examples of different tour options related to the main motives and interests, as well as according to the seasons;
- ✓ Provided key information about the service, offering options based on duration, what to see, how to have fun, etc .;
- ✓ Clear and concise description of each tour;
- ✓ Distribution of brochures.

CONTRIBUTION TO THE PURPOSE

Printed materials help build brand awareness and recognition and are often used to attract customers and ultimately to book a trip / excursion / tour.

Project ROBG-471 “New destinations in cross-border tourism”

is co-financed by the European Union through European Regional Development Fund under the Interreg V-A Romania-Bulgaria Programme.



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