

Summary of the Conception for development of cultural resources in the region Haskovo – Kirklareli

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The Conception was elaborated based on studies of the state of cultural - historical heritage in Haskovo region and Krklareli Province. The studies describe sites and events reflecting the cultural - historical heritage in the cross - border region, which are assessed according to the methodology for the assessment of cultural and historical tourist resources. A survey of 218 respondents – tourist and visitors of the cultural attractions in the region was conducted, in order to complement the information in the studies and the analysis of the situation in the region. The survey included questions about : how to obtain information about the visited tourist attractions, how the trip was organized, was a tour guide used during the trip, motives and objectives of the trip, preferred type of tourism, favorite places and attractions, information on the target group - age and gender profile, permanent residence and others. **One of the interesting findings is that the largest target group consists mainly of women between 25 and 65 years old living in Bulgaria.** So for greater success in attracting tourists and visitors is important marketing and promotional activities to be directed to this target group.

According to a Study published in the tourist site of Bulgaria, **the target groups for the Bulgarian part of the cross-border region are tourists from Greece and Turkey. Similar data for Turkey shows that tourists from Bulgaria and Germany are the one visiting the Turkish part of the region.** There is potential to improve the number of tourists, visiting archaeological sites, natural landmarks and rural tourism from Romania, United Kingdom, Austria, France, the Netherlands. The fastest and easiest way to attract tourists is through the publication of information on the Internet targeted to the seeker and his tongue. The delivery of this information is done by loading Popular keywords in the web pages of the tourist attractions.

Main activity that can be used as an opportunity for improved selection of tourist sites to visit are the **keywords to optimize your web pages for search engines.** In many ways, the right keywords define the success of marketing efforts, so it is important to be chosen carefully. The right choice of keywords multiplies the conversion rate. The following keywords¹ are used in the sites of Haskovo and Kirklareli and other sites with information about the region: *kambanaria (bell), svetilishta (shrines), Aleksandrovo, vazrozhdenski kashti (renaissance houses), kreposti (fortresses), sveta bogoroditsa (saint Mary), tsarkva (church), pametnitsi (monuments), grobnitsa (tomb), monument, turizam (tourism), muzei (museums), ekskurzii (tourist trips), Tatul, pochivki (holidays), Perperikon, pochivka bg (holiday bg), muzei (museum), pochivka na more (sea holiday), tombstone.*

¹ The keywords are in Bulgarian language that is why they are given in Latin letters with their translation in English language in brackets.

Originally keyword selection is based on a combination of research competitors, target group analysis and keywords that are currently used by tourism businesses in the region. Based on research of competitors based on the popularity of keywords and the competition out ahead in search engine results, we suggest using the following keywords: *Haskovo hoteli (Haskovo hotels), hotel in, hotel online, tatil sepeti, tatil, hotels, travel inn, hotel rooms, turkey holidays, cheap holidays, Haskovo info, Holidays, vacation rentals, holiday rentals, vacation packages, otel, erken rezervasyon, kemer otelleri, termal oteller, oteller, national landmarks, cheap vacations, late rooms, cheap accommodation, hotelbooking, hotel websites, cheap rooms, cheaphotels, Kirklareli, all inclusive holidays, direct holidays, holiday lettings, hoteli v Haskovo (hotels in Haskovo), zabelezhitelnosti v Haskovo (attractions in Haskovo), ucuz tatil, haskovo (хасково), reservation hotel, hotel book, cheap motels, hotel search, booking hotel online, svilengrad.*

As a result of the SWOT analysis for keywords, the following conclusions were made:

- **Strengths:** higher than the current number of monthly searches.
- **Weaknesses:** high or medium competition.
- **Opportunities:** new previously unused keywords in different languages make it possible to attract new visitors. Targeting visitors of species so far undeveloped types of tourism allows to drastically increasing the additional visitors to the region.
- **Threats:** possibility some of them not to work as planned and to lose part of the resources used for their marketing and advertising.

Based on studies and assessed sites from the first part of the study, 5 tourist routes were elaborated with the Conception. The purpose of these routes is attracting tourists and supporting the development of tourism in the region. They include major regional cultural - historical, architectural, ethnographic sites and events in the assessment is found to be in the stage of full tourist use. This means that the state of these tourist resources allows them to be included in the tourist routes and comply with current travel preferences. In order to preserve longer at this stage of development, to support their sustainable development, to eliminate the change of sites upon the tourist flow and to use in the most effective way the developed potential, is necessary to be provided technical assistance and overall marketing strategy for promoting it at the market.

Proposals for the marketing approaches/main tools that can be used to reach customers in the process of selling a product, and distribution channels, primarily include innovative methods that enable lower cost to reach a large number of users of the target groups. These methods include:

- Integrating keyword search engine optimization of websites of municipalities, districts and tourist attractions.



- Actively engage with social media and advertising through them.
- Distribution of promotional materials of visitors to the region, urging them not only to visit the region again, but to share with friends and family.
- Reciprocal promotion of advertising and marketing materials with other tourist destinations that share the same target groups.

Unique proposals that can increase access to tourism markets include:

- Packages with lower prices than competing destinations, including additional discounts to the initially low rates between 2 to 5 bGN per attraction.
- Five routes in the region Bulgaria - Turkey, which include cultural attractions.
- Reciprocal promotion of tourist offer in casinos.
- Special offers aimed at women between 25 and 65 years old and living in Bulgaria.
- Propose a tour guide who to reveal the secrets of the region for a fee between 5-10 BGN.

Unique proposals together with the five tourist routes are key marketing opportunities. Other marketing opportunities are the following measure:

1. Measures for effective restoration and transformation of tourist resources in tourist sites.

General measures for all resources in the assessment stage of development, applicable at the national, regional and local level:

Measure 1. Creation of central public register of immovable monuments of cultural heritage and tourism operators.

Measure 2. Elaboration of a list with measures for preservation, research, conservation and restoration of sites, their socialization and advertisement.

Measure 3. Regular updating of the data available for anthropogenic resources.

Measure 4. Periodic assessment of anthropogenic resources and application of controlled and timely interventions for their good management .

Measure 5. Urgent applying of advanced and cost-effective measures for monitoring and conservation of monuments that have basic infrastructure for it (electricity, etc.).

Measure 6. Elaboration of strategy about tourist, as part of the regional and municipal strategies through mandatory participation by respondents and dialogue with all legal persons/stakeholders carrying out tourist activities in the region.

Measure 7. Realization of the idea of carrying capacity - management of tourist flows and the implementation of planned economic effects.



Individual measures for each resource in the assessment stage for development, locally applicable:

Measure 1. Development of interpretative and animation programs, socialization of cultural and historical sites, upgrading of exposures, the introduction of technical means for tourist interpretation and more.

Measure 2. Improving and enforcing product of the educational, scientific and educational tourism by utilizing the potential and opportunities offered by the educational system and cognitive trips for students in the cross-border region.

Measure 3. Increasing and improve the effectiveness of the museum network, offering additional information and links of the artifacts to sites of study, where they were found .

Measure 4. Enriching the cultural calendar of the region.

Measure 5. Increasing the number of innovative events/festivals/attractions.

Measure 6. Restoration of traditional production techniques, crafts and customs.

Measure 7. Interpretation of rituals and festivals, celebration of traditional holidays

Measure 8. Encouraging implementation of significant cultural events of local, regional, national and international significance and their inclusion in ready tourism products offered by tour operators on preferential terms.

