# COMMUNICATION PLAN FOR PROMOTION OF JOINT INTERPRETATION AND USE OF CULTURAL HERITAGE

## within the project

# A CULTURE HERITAGE-FRIENDLY TOURISM IN CROSS-BORDER REGION BULGARIA - MACEDONIA (CB006.2.23.044)

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# COMMUNICATION PLAN

# OF THE CROSS-BORDER STRATEGY

# FOR CREATING AN ENVIRONMENT FOR TOURISM DEVELOPMENT WITH SUPPORT FOR PROTECTION OF CULTURAL HERITAGE

*Together we can interpret cultural heritage to build our future*

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

The communication plan focuses on the cooperation and the elements and ways of joint tourist interpretation and use of cultural heritage in the implementation of the *Cross-Border Strategy for creating an environment for tourism development, with support for protection of cultural heritage* (hereinafter *Strategy*) which refers to two cross-border regions: the administrative district of Kyustendil in the Republic of Bulgaria and the Northeast Planning Region in the Republic of Northern Macedonia, which include the territories of 15 municipalities.

The communication plan covers the entire period of implementation of the Strategy.

The aim is to point out to certain target groups the value and impact of the Strategy and the activities that can and should be undertaken for its successful implementation, as well as to find the elements and ways of connection / communication between key stakeholders for maintenance and development of cultural heritage.

One of the preconditions for successful and quality implementation and realization of the strategy is to inform everyone, both the parties responsible for development and all stakeholders for the values and activities in the implementation of which all key stakeholders should be connected, by identifying new models of real, applicable activities in the cultural heritage in the tourism sector, but also undertaking activities to change the actions of both the local population and the future visitors.

Therefore, this document has been developed to help the common tourist interpretation and use of ways to use heritage for tourism purposes, all through already established findings and guidelines given in the Strategy, in which the recommended intervention model for the development of cultural tourism in cross-border region is the application of the principles of interpretation of the heritage of all new services and products based on culture.

The document has been developed in accordance with the specifics of the target groups in order to strike a balance between interests, opinions and expectations regarding cultural heritage.

The communication plan proposes specific measures / activities that will primarily enable uninterrupted communication between stakeholders, which will enable the achievement of strategic goals through systematic, persistent and coordinated work for the realization of the goals and activities of the Strategy.

## 2   DEFINITIONS

The definitions and terminology used in the Communication Plan are of the same meaning as in the Strategy:

***Tourism*** – according to the World Tourism Organization, tourism means "activities for people during their stay in places outside the permanent place of residence for a period of less than one year, related to entertainment, work or other purposes".

***Cultural tourism*** – the broader and most well-known definition of this term is "tourism whose purpose is to see / visit / meet / communicate with the cultural heritage of a particular tourist place".

***Heritage*** – from the narrow (personalized) meaning that can be found in recognized international dictionaries and generally means "property that can be received from and taught to others", inheritance for larger groups of people can be understood as material and intangible values that we have acquired from previous generations and / or are worth passing on to future generations, Of course, using the word value itself already means that understanding a common heritage will not be the same for different members of a given group of people. Here, however, time acts as a corrective and naturally chooses values with greater significance. All this comes on the condition that human activity itself does not damage or destroy locations or heritage sites.

***Cultural heritage*** – in the above definition we will add the explanation that we are talking about the values of material or intangible human culture.

***Tourist product*** – a combination of all basic (accommodation, catering, transport) and additional (leisure opportunities, experiences, attractions) tourist services in a given place. When the emphasis is on cultural heritage-based services, we can talk about a product of a cultural-tourist product or a product of cultural tourism.

***Sustainable tourism*** – Lately, this term has often been misused as it is modern and gives some added value to documents, plans, strategies, projects, etc. In its simplest definition, it means tourism that does not damage its resources (especially natural and cultural heritage), while bringing economic benefits to local communities.

***„Sites" of cultural heritage*** - are all immovable sites (churches, prehistoric settlements), movable buildings (inventions from archeological excavations, exhibited in a museum) and intangible heritage (folk songs and dances).

***Interpretation of heritage*** is the translation of factual information about the heritage of a language that is interesting and understandable to the public. This means that the interpreter does not teach the public and does not inform them about a location, but delivers messages about the value of that location, entertaining the public.

# 3   PURPOSES AND MESSAGES OF THE COMMUNICATION PLAN

The communication plan is in function of „Cross-Border Strategy for creating an environment for tourism development, with support for protection of cultural heritage".

The communication plan is a tool for promoting and recognizing the benefits of improving the preconditions for tourism development based on cultural heritage in the cross-border region (Kyustendil administrative district on the part of Bulgaria and the Northeast planning region on the side of the Republic of Northern Macedonia), and between local governments, the tourism business sector and other stakeholders.

The potentials that are created through the creation of cultural-tourism products and their use is possible only through a planned and coordinated approach in the development of cultural-tourism products from all stakeholders in the region.

When defining the goals of the Communication Plan, the general and specific strategic goals of the Strategy were set and the view that the development of cultural and tourism products and initiatives should benefit the tourism sector and the culture sector, as well as the entire community in the cross-border region.

The Strategy also recommends a new innovative model for the development of cultural tourism in the cross-border region by applying the principles of interpreting the heritage of all new services and products based on culture.

For starters, it's a good idea to take advantage of existing demand and raise the level of satisfaction of tourists and visitors from the offer of designed cultural and tourist products by enriching the product applying the principles of heritage interpretation, which would encourage desire. to learn about new content and to stay at the destination longer, which would increase their consumption and at the same time expand the voice for a destination rich in cultural activities.

Following the above, the following goals of the Communication Plan are determined:

**GENERAL COMMUNICATION PURPOSE -** Raising awareness of stakeholders and the public about the importance and opportunities opened by regional connectivity and networking based on the development of a common region for cultural tourism as a benefit for all.

**SPECIFIC COMMUNICATION PURPOSES**

1) Establishment of communication to promote the role of cultural heritage for sustainable development;
2) Establishment of communication for exchange of innovative technologies and policies to promote the heritage, stimulating regional cooperation and interaction; and
3) Establishment of communication to promote and bring heritage closer to business

**<u>The main message of the communication plan is:</u>**

*Together we can interpret cultural heritage to build our future*

# 4 VALORIZATION OF CULTURAL RESOURCES AND CONNECTING STAKEHOLDERS OF CULTURAL TOURISM

In order for the Communication Plan to propose elements and ways of communication for joint tourist interpretation and use of cultural heritage in the implementation of the Strategy, the opportunities for local development in the cross-border region should be considered by valorizing cultural resources and connecting the relevant sectors of tourism - cultural business, as well as existing negative aspects and risks that affect the dynamics of development.

Opportunities can serve as a starting point for developing an environment for the use of cultural resources, and pointing out the weaknesses and risks of developing cultural resources can, if properly understood and continuously overcome and reduced, contribute to accelerating development.

The strategy analyzes in more detail the opportunities for valorization of cultural resources and the connection of related business sectors of tourism culture in the border region.

The role of the Communication Plan is to ensure communication between stakeholders in the use of opportunities, overcoming weaknesses and reducing risks.

The tables below provide a systematic overview of the Strategy findings relevant to the development of the Communication Plan:

*Table 4-1: Positive aspects of cultural heritage valorization*

| | Positive aspects |
|---|---|
| 1 | Existence and development of strategies and policies for local development |
| 2 | The need for cooperation and networking is seen |
| 3 | The importance of human resources for the development of cultural tourism, as well as the importance of professional qualification, readiness, cooperation and networking is seen |
| 4 | The need for complete research and documentation of all types of heritage sites as possible is understood |
| 5 | Estimated and observed need for maintenance, proper exposure, providing access and providing appropriate information to visitors |
| 6 | Taken into account the trends of modern tourism, as well as the demand for integrated tourism products |
| 7 | Paying attention to marketing and promotion activities, especially with reference to modern aspects such as Internet portals and social networks |

*Table 4-2: Weaknesses for the valorization of cultural heritage*

| | Weaknesses |
|---|---|
| 1 | Existence of weak intersectoral connections. Municipalities are the bearers of strategic visions for development and have the power to create conditions in which business could function, but it is not their job to develop business as tourism |
| 2 | Many of the well-planned activities and measures remain only on paper, ie. planning and strategic documents are only a recommendation |
| 3 | Businesses, including potential service providers among local communities, often overlook local development strategies and policies; do not see the "big picture" |
| 4 | Not using available funds to protect cultural objects, through cross-border or other cooperation projects |
| 5 | Lack of established ways to attract tourists to the region due to which tourist visits remain low |
| 6 | Poor condition of a certain part of the facilities which due to insufficient care has been brought to the level of inability to arrange and pack as a tourist product |
| 7 | Insufficient practical implementation of cooperation and networking between stakeholders or their implementation as needed |

*Table 4-3: Risks for successful valorization of cultural heritage*

| | Risks for successful valorization of cultural heritage |
|---|---|
| 1 | Risks from the aspect of the external environment |
| 2 | Institutional neglect of facilities<br>Neglecting the need to preserve certain cultural heritage sites on behalf of the competent state bodies in both the Republic of Bulgaria and the Republic of Northern Macedonia. The poor condition of some cultural facilities in the target region is precisely due to such institutional neglect. |
| 3 | Existence of a monopoly on the management of cultural heritage that imposes restrictions on valorization - for example the impossibility of opening private museums in the Republic of Bulgaria |
| 4 | Complicated administrative procedures for managing museum activities and other cultural activities |
| 5 | Vandalism as a risk, in all its forms. Here we are talking about looting and destroying immovable cultural and historical sites; hooliganism against well-known visitor infrastructure; transformation of samples of intangible heritage to the level of mass culture, etc. |
| 6 | External pressure for sustainable development of tourism in the region, which appears as a risk when there are great economic interests in the resources of given local communities, without caring for these communities or their natural or cultural heritage |
| 7 | Development of unsustainable tourism that threatens local resources, and sometimes the lifestyle of local communities |

As can be seen from the results of the analysis of the cultural heritage of the target region contained in the Strategy, they are oriented towards the assessment of the potentials and opportunities for development of sustainable tourism, which is essential when it comes to cultural tourism.

From the above, it is clear that in essence the communication plan should be based on the development of the idea of creating a region that will contain joint programs for the development of cultural tourism.

What is currently available is organizationally covered and applies only to a specific local environment.

There are many opportunities, as well as challenges. If they are taken as a solid basis for creating further activities, but above all by surpassing each other and realistically setting priorities for the beginning of development, while using tools such as using "best practices", it is possible, in not so distant future to witness a solidly protected cultural heritage ready for presentation to the regional, European and world public, as a place valuable enough to convey the story of the development and culture of a certain population that culturally emerges it stretched over a relatively interconnected territory, while successfully preserving its uniqueness and value.

# 5 STAKEHOLDERS

The communication plan aims to define the steps for communication between the key stakeholders and their role and responsibility in the implementation of the activities envisaged by the Strategy, as well as the time frame for the realization of these steps.

As we know, one of the biggest challenges of any strategic document is its realization.

How to prevent this document from becoming just another unrealized wish list?

Above all, it is important to create preconditions for achieving the set goals.

What needs to be worked on first is to mobilize and organize the relevant social factors responsible for the care and development of local communities and their connection with those responsible for the development of tourism in the region.

Therefore, the affected parties can be divided into two target groups, namely:

1) **Internal target groups**
2) **External target groups**

Below is explained the need for this type of division of target groups in order to distinguish and determine the responsibility of each of them, but also the approach to communication.

## 5.1 Internal target groups - related to the implementation of the strategy

### 5.1.1 Public and civil sector

This group of stakeholders includes those who would have one of the main roles in implementing the strategy, and thus are the most important for the Communication Plan, and that is the local authorities.

The strategy covers the territories of 15 municipalities:

- In the Republc of Bulgaria nine (9) municipalities: Bobov Dol, Boboshevo, Dupnitsa, Kocherinovo, Kyustendil, Nevestino, Rila, Separeva Banya, Trelyano.
- In the Republic of North Macedonia six (6) municipalities: Kriva Palanka, Kratovo, Rankovtse, Kumanovo, Lipkovo and Staro Nagorichane.

Although they are not reportedly responsible for the development of tourism, they are responsible for creating local development. Given that the organizations are already well established, and at the regional level there is already established cooperation between the two countries, we believe that they would be the initial link that can be used to create further steps for the implementation of the Strategy.

Furthermore, this group includes the competent institutions for maintenance and preservation of cultural heritage and insight into the possibilities of protection and prevention of the same.

There are also educational institutions, cultural institutions, museums, theaters, libraries, cultural centers as well as health institutions that will become an increasingly important part of the development of tourist offers.

The group also includes non-governmental organizations that can play an important role in connecting the cross-border region through projects for the promotion of cultural tourism and culture in general and religious organizations in the Republic of Bulgaria and the Republic of North Macedonia given the affiliation of a certain part of the buildings - churches, monasteries and mosques - which are important for the development of cultural tourism in this region.

### 5.1.2 Economic and social partners

This target group plays an important role as a mediator between the institutions that will implement the strategy. By presenting potential customers as well as customers, these partners are potential promoters of the overall process. In order to ensure their inclusion in the public awareness campaign, it is planned to organize a series of special meetings and workshops / roundtables.

We will mention them in the group of economic and social partners:

- Business sector (travel agencies, hotels, catering, accommodation facilities, craftsmen, manufacturers, distributors, taxi services, rent car services and other interested stakeholders).
- social partners (employers' associations, trade unions, tourist clusters, business clusters, independent theater and acting groups, cultural and artistic societies, etc.).

## 5.2 External target groups - related to program promotion

### 5.2.1 Media

Given the fact that this target group will have a major impact on all other target groups, efforts from the outset will focus on establishing a positive relationship with the media in order to provide support for ideas for the development of cultural tourism as one of the branches of development of the cross-border region, but also wider information to the public.

### 5.2.2 The general public

The support from the public in the realization of the activities aimed at the development of the cultural tourism and how it is an important link in the creation of a tourist destination.

Raising the awareness of the local population about the importance of culture and its transformation into a tourist product, and how it contributes to the successful realization of the planned programs.

Campaigns to raise awareness among the general public about the importance of cultural tourism can contribute to the active involvement of individual partners in the implementation of programs and projects.

### *5.2.3   Visitors*

Communication with visitors[1], whether tourists[2] or picnickers[3], is key to the development of cultural tourism.

## 5.3   Leaders (Forerunners)

Since it is considered that most of the stakeholders have been contacted during the creation of the Strategy, and that they have seen the need for cooperation and networking, we believe that the minimum conditions for implementation are met.

However, in order to achieve the defined goals, much more is needed, in conditions when there is still no formal body for connection and coordination.

First of all, LEADERSHIP and proactivity of key stakeholders are needed, in this case tourism businesses, the Northeast region in the Republic of North Macedonia, the Kyustendil region in the Republic of Bulgaria, fifteen municipalities in the cross-border region and the cultural institutions operating in it.

Immediately afterwards, the media, educational institutions, religious institutions, the health sector, the non-governmental sector and other businesses directly related to the development of tourism in general play a key role.

However, the key driver is the people, motivated and persistent individuals with vision and commitment, ready to learn and cooperate, connecting and overcoming narrow interests, ie recognizing personal interest in the general interest, but also ready for sacrifice and patience in anticipation of results.

But of course, this does not exclude the responsibility and potential of the private sector to be the creator of positive changes, even more so because it is considered that ideal conditions for development are created when all sectors, both public and private, as well as the non-governmental sector together efforts will be directed towards a specific development goal. But practice shows that this will not happen by itself.

Therefore, if successful implementation of development documents is expected, **leading people** are needed in each of these sectors, or at least in some of them, who will create the critical mass needed to get started. There is always a need for an initial group or core of human resources to encourage change and transformation.

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[1] **Visitor** – a term that refers to any person who for any reason, other than performing an activity, visits a foreign country (or any other place in the country, which is not his place of permanent residence). According to the World Tourism Organization, visitors can be tourists and picnickers.
[2] **Tourist** - a visitor who makes at least one night in a catering or other accommodation facility outside his / her permanent place of residence
[3] **Picniker** – visitors (domestic or foreign) who do not use accommodation in the place they visit, ie. did not stay overnight (one day visitors)

## 5.4  Holders of the Communication Plan

Given that there is no common Destination Management Body in the border region, nor local or regional Destination Management Organizations, the main carriers can be the stakeholders - leaders.

For a start, an informal group of stakeholders can be identified, but the proposal is to further identify / form a Communication Body that will have the role of coordinator and promoter of the measures and results achieved from each individual action, and at the same time to identify / also form a so-called Operational Body for Cultural Tourism, which will be a body for launching important tourism projects in accordance with the strategy for cultural tourism.

Also, this Communication Plan can be used by all stakeholders who have an interest in implementing the Cross-Border Strategy for Creating an Environment for Tourism Development, with support for protection of cultural heritage.

# 6   PRINCIPLES OF THE COMMUNICATION PLAN

The communication plan is based on the following principles:

## 6.1   Principle of transparency

According to the principle of transparency, the information on the current situation, decisions and the way of working, should be available, visible and understandable to all stakeholders who will be involved in the process of development of cultural tourism.

Transparency is what should make the parties face the real situation on the ground and become more responsible, ie it is necessary to enable the principle of responsibility to be equally accepted by all stakeholders.

## 6.2   Principle of coordination

All activities to be undertaken for the successful implementation of the communication plan should be coordinated or harmonized, preferably in one center.

Coordination means the process of integrating the activities and goals of the individual stakeholders in order to more effectively achieve the goals of the communication plan.

## 6.3   Principle of responsibility

Each of the stakeholders involved in the implementation of the activities for realization of the communication plan needs to be responsible for the procedures of the designated persons for coordination and implementation of the activities, with clear responsibility for all procedures, both for the persons involved and for the managers themselves for the success or failure of the implementation of the assigned tasks.

Each of the stakeholders has its own responsibility for the successful implementation of the activities and it cannot be delegated or transferred to the responsibility of the other stakeholders.

# 7   COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

The communication plan involves the use of different communication channels to achieve the goals of the Plan and Strategy:

1) **Classic conversation - One-on-one communication**

The most common "one-on-one" communication is still considered one of the most effective ways to deliver a quality message.

All interested parties can personally request the necessary information and obtain it through direct communication with the appointed communication persons.

In the classic "one on one" communication, where communication is with a limited number of people who communicate with each other, or consists of communication when visiting events, lectures, seminars, etc., there is a possibility of very high quality information transmission, as well as collection of feedback.

2) **Telephone conversation** (Viber, Whatsup, Skype, Messenger ...) -  has effects similar to those of a classic conversation.

This way of communication consists in quickly and widely transmitting information to all interested parties. It is becoming an increasingly important channel of communication due to the dominance of communication over the Internet.

Particularly suitable way of fast and visible promotion and exchange of information and opinions.

3) **E-mail: -** Very effective one-to-one communication channel.

This communication channel is suitable for direct communication given the possibility of transferring information in the official e-mail of certain partners and is an effective way for mass transfer of content.

It is not good to use as a promotion technique given that most often this type of messaging through this communication channel, somewhere even over 95% of all sent messages, are SPAM.

As time goes on, it becomes increasingly difficult to send e-mails to multiple e-mail addresses, precisely because of the problem with filtering out SPAM messages.

4) **Classical media:**

Today, traditional media still have their importance, but for each individual media separately (individual TV station, individual magazine, radio station, etc.).

When using these channels, it is always a good idea to measure in advance what the specific benefits of such a way of communicating with a particular target group are and the message

they want to convey, given that younger generations use these media very little to gain information, when there are open channels for communication through Internet media.

5) **Internet media:** Various websites for classic media or independant network media that produce their own content or transfer other media content can also be used as communication channels.

But here, as in the case of classical media, it is necessary to measure in advance the specific benefits that can be obtained through the use of different promotion techniques through a specific media.

6) **Internet platforms (including social media):**

Internet platforms are services that do not create their own content as (online) media. They use user-generated content (UGC) and aim to achieve a certain quality of user experience when using such communication channels.

The most popular networking platforms are Google, Facebook and other social media, which are among the most visited websites in the world.

Online platforms are currently emerging as the most important channels of communication for the commercial use of promotion techniques in the context of achieving the business goals of companies.

7) **Use of websites:**

Creating a shared website or using existing affiliate websites is considered a successful way to convey information and promote.

One or more sites owned by the participating partners, or having accounts on social media controlled by them, including various types of commercial media can generate (ie. Blogs) can also represent a useful communication channel.

However, in this case, the websites of the involved partners are the most important channel for their communication and should be a central place for "collecting" the effects of various (online) promotion techniques through which they would share both with partners and so on and with target groups and the public interested in learning about their activities. Websites of partners are:

www.rcku.org.mk/cultural-heritage/

www.cci-kn.org/index.php/en/culture-tourism

Websites need to be updated regularly in order to convey the latest information.

8) **Social media**

Some of the partners, if they don't have one, will open their own Facebook page, and some of them will open their own blog. They will be used to promote the Strategy and the activities

covered by it. If the need arises, it is possible to open Twitter and other accounts on social networks.

**9) <u>Flyers / Leaflets / Brochures / Posters</u>**

Creating and printing flyers / leaflets / brochures / posters is an easy way to give the most necessary information to potential partners and the general public.

They will provide basic information about the available programs that support the development of cultural tourism, the received projects, inform about the time frame, planned measures, end users, support amounts, contact information and other relevant information.

Flyers / leaflets / brochures / posters can be distributed as soon as all the details of the specific program are known.

They would be prepared and shared at various events, fairs, through institutions, etc..

**10) <u>Press conferences</u>**

The press conferences are intended for representatives of the print media, radio and television.

Their main goal is to provide journalists with important information about the process of connecting regions in joint action programs, on ways to communicate and present, on intentions for joint presentation, on promoting certain decisions, programs, on publishing public calls, etc.

In addition to regular press conferences (related to certain important dates or events), in some cases emergency press conferences may be held to convey important information.

The aim is to share information through the media on the importance of the Strategy for Development of Cultural Tourism and the undertaken actions for its implementation, as well as bringing the overall process closer to stakeholders, potential partners, the general public, in order to ensure what is possible greater support for its implementation.

**11) <u>Seminars and workshops</u>** for employees of cultural institutions, employees of institutions in charge of providing advisory services related to the fields of culture and tourism.

The goal is to prepare all employees in these institutions for all segments of the implementation of the Strategy.

They would be educated on ways of communicating with each other, ways of exchanging and transmitting information, publishing information, on the existence of specific programs to support the development of cultural tourism and ways to provide support funds through them and for the transmission of information to potential users.

They would also be responsible for distributing promotional materials through their offices and would be available to provide information to potential customers.

At the same time, they would be a link for receiving feedback from potential customers, in order to strengthen specific campaigns that would be conducted as part of the promotion activities.

**12) <u>Presentations at fairs, events, etc.</u>**

The presentation of the joint cultural and tourist products obtained as a result of joint action of the parties involved in the development of cultural tourism, would be an important part of the promotional campaign of the region as a tourist destination with a developed cultural and tourist product.

The topic of the presentation, as well as its form (general or detailed information) are determined depending on the type of events, participants, visitors, etc.

# 8 ACTIVITIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF GENERAL COMMUNICATION PURPOSE

The general communication goal of the Communication Plan is to raise public awareness of the importance and opportunities opened by the regional connection and networking based on the development of a common region for cultural tourism as a benefit for all.

It is necessary for the stakeholders to jointly approach the interpretation of cultural heritage.

For the realization of the general communication purpose, the stakeholders separately or the Informal Communication Body (ICB) in the beginning, and then the Coordination Body for Development and Promotion of Cultural Tourism (CBDPCT), in cooperation with all interested parties should work on:

1) Providing a positive perception of cultural tourism through media coverage;
2) Raising awareness of the role and contribution of cultural tourism in the overall development of the cross-border region;
3) Increasing awareness and involving special target groups;
4) Communication through traditional ways of communication (direct communication, leaflets, brochures, etc.) or new ways of communication (e-mails, internet links, social networks, etc.), which provide access to information related to cultural tourism;
5) Selection of persons who will work on information and communication
6) Giving general information and contact to the parties involved in the implementation of the strategy in order to attract new partners
7) Providing information on examples of good practice and encouraging their use;
8) Providing accurate and clear information to potential users about project financing opportunities within European funds and other funds that cover activities related to cultural tourism;
9) Ensuring the implementation of appropriate measures aimed at meeting the requirements regarding information and communication in accordance with EU regulations;
10) Continuous improvement of information and communication measures based on feedback obtained through research or directly from users.

Initially, the Informal Communication Body would take on the role of coordinator and "center" for informatio.

The other stakeholders for the development of cultural tourism, each within its competences would be involved in the communication and information of the stakeholders, through different information channels that are available to them, which would create a base of new partners, but also base of "potential tourists".

Based on the above, the following measures are envisaged for achieving the basic communication goal of the Communication Plan:

## Organizing informative events

In order to maintain a high level of information and communication, and in order to encourage continuous dialogue of all stakeholders, the Informal Communication Body in cooperation with stakeholders at the beginning, and then the Coordination Body for Development and Promotion of Cultural Tourism would organize a series of informative events (conferences, seminars, workshops, info-days, round tables, panels, festivities, fairs, etc.) throughout the calendar year. These activities can be initiated and organized by each of the stakeholders separately.

The stated activities would be aimed at introducing, informing and educating the general public and other target groups about the benefits of cultural tourism and presenting development funds and opportunities and ways to use them.

| Activity | Organizing informative events |
|---|---|
| Target group | The general public, the business sector, decision makers, the media, information carriers, users and potential partners |
| Indicative time frame | continuously |
| Source of funding | Local, national and EU funds |
| Indicator | Number of events, number of participants |
| Competent for implementation | – Informal Communication Body (ICB) in cooperation with stakeholders / Coordination Body for Development and Promotion of Cultural Tourism (CBDPCT)<br>– Stakeholders separately |

## Creating web pages or using already created pages from stakeholders

Nowadays, when connecting via e-devices, websites are the main source of information and means of direct communication between stakeholders.

Until the creation of a website for the Coordination Body for the Development and Promotion of Cultural Tourism, the already active pages of the partners can be used to convey information of common interest. Significant information about the already held events and their results, information about the opportunities, ways to report and participate in the information events, information about the decisions made by the competent institutions related to opportunities for using development funds, directions. and development measures, documents important to the business community, etc. would be regularly published on them.

| Activity | **Creating web pages or using already created pages from stakeholders** |
|---|---|
| Target group | Users and their partners, the general public, information carriers, business sector, decision makers, potential customers |
| Indicative time frame | Continuously |
| Source of funding | Local, national and EU funds |
| Indicator | Number of posts |

| Competent for implementation | – Informal Communication Body (ICB) in cooperation with stakeholders / Coordination Body for Development and Promotion of Cultural Tourism (CBDPCT) <br> – Stakeholders separately |
|---|---|

## Development and distribution of informative and promotional materials

Information materials are essential for the successful dissemination of targeted messages and play an important role in communicating with target groups.

In order to successfully present the activities, projects and events that aim to promote the opportunities for development of cultural tourism, it is especially important to emphasize the creation of information and promotional materials.

Informative materials include manuals, brochures, posters, summaries of good practices, leaflets, etc.

Promotional materials include folders, notebooks, pens, T-shirts, badges, bags, umbrellas, portable media with inserted information, banners, etc.

The distribution of the materials would be done within the information events.

| Activity | **Development and distribution of informative and promotional materials** |
|---|---|
| Target group | Users and their partners, the general public, information carriers, business sector, decision makers, potential customers |
| Indicative time frame | Continuously |
| Source of funding | Local, national and EU funds |
| Indicator | Number of prepared materials |
| Competent for implementation | – Informal Communication Body (ICB) in cooperation with stakeholders / Coordination Body for Development and Promotion of Cultural Tourism (CBDPCT) <br> – Stakeholders separately |

## Conducting media and information campaigns

Conducting media and information campaigns, paid advertising on local, regional and national televisions and radios, local, regional and national print media and on Internet portals would be aimed at raising awareness of the importance, opportunities and contribution of cultural tourism to the development of th cross-border region.

As part of the advertising activities, TV and radio announcements can be created that would be shown on local, regional and national televisions and radios.

In the print media of national, regional and local nature, informative content and materials would also be presented and promoted.

Internet banners would be prepared for internet portals.

Advertising and informing through the print and electronic media is an important part of conveying messages to the general public, and includes the creation, production and production of TV videos, advertisements, informative posts, press conferences, media workshops, etc..

Each of the stakeholders can also conduct individual media campaigns within their competencies and interests.

| Activity | Conducting media and information campaigns |
|---|---|
| Target group | Users and their partners, the general public, information carriers, business sector, decision makers, potential customers |
| Indicative time frame | Continuously |
| Source of funding | Local, national and EU funds |
| Indicator | Number of campaigns, number of ads |
| Competent for implementation | – Informal Communication Body (ICB) in cooperation with stakeholders / Coordination Body for Development and Promotion of Cultural Tourism (CBDPCT)<br>– Stakeholders separately |

## Conducting research, analysis and evaluation

The informal body together with the stakeholders with the intention to achieve better planning and implementation of communication activities, within the possibilities would conduct research, analysis and evaluation of the same.

The Informal Communication Body, and later the Coordination Body for Development and Promotion of Cultural Tourism would conduct an evaluation of the results of the implemented measures and activities for information and communication.

The results obtained would be used to determine the efficiency of the activities and the tools for optimizing the activities for the future time periods.

The results would be available on the websites that would be created or on the ones already created by the stakeholders.

Public examinations would be for topics related to planning communication activities, in order to obtain as much information as possible to develop better communication with different target groups.

This would be done in order to prepare the best possible quality questions for evaluation, to determine the methodology and the subject of the research.

Each of the stakeholders can carry out these activities within their competences and interests.

| Activity | Conducting research, analysis and evaluation |
|---|---|
| Target group | Users and their partners, the general public, information carriers, business sector, decision makers, potential customers |

| | |
|---|---|
| Indicative time frame | Once a year |
| Source of funding | Local, national and EU funds |
| Indicator | Number of conducted surveys, analyzes and evaluations, number of published results of conducted surveys, analyzes and evaluations |
| Competent for implementation | – Informal Communication Body (ICB) in cooperation with stakeholders / Coordination Body for Development and Promotion of Cultural Tourism (CBDPCT)<br>– Stakeholders separately |

## Sharing information related to evaluation results

The informal communication body, ie the Body for Coordination for Development and Promotion of Cultural Tourism, should provide the sharing of information related to the results of the evaluations, in order for them to be visible and available in one place, which would raise the level of use of information from all parties involved.

To this end, this information would be published on the website of the Coordinating Body for Development and Promotion of Cultural Tourism, ie at the outset on one of the websites of one of the stakeholders agreed upon by the members of the Informal Communication Body.

The communication tools that would be used to share the information related to the results of the evaluations can include: posts on the websites of the other stakeholders, inscriptions in newsletters, posts in print media, presentations at public events, etc.

Each of the stakeholders can carry out these activities within their competences and interests.

| Activity | **Sharing information related to evaluation results** |
|---|---|
| Target group | Users and their partners, the general public, information carriers, business sector, decision makers, potential customers |
| Indicative time frame | Continuously (as needed) |
| Source of funding | Local, national and EU funds |
| Indicator | Number of announcements, number of events |
| Competent for implementation | – Informal Communication Body (ICB) in cooperation with stakeholders / Coordination Body for Development and Promotion of Cultural Tourism (CBDPCT)<br>– Stakeholders separately |

## Collection of feedback on the success of the implemented measures for promotion and visibility

The Informal Communication Body, ie the Body for Coordination for Development and Promotion of Cultural Tourism should continuously monitor the results of the implemented information and communication measures by monitoring the number and quality of published articles in print and electronic media, both locally and nationally in both countries.

Monitoring and collection of information will be the basis for evaluation or assessment of the results achieved from the implementation of the communication activities.

Each of the stakeholders can carry out these activities within their competences and interests.

| Activity | **Collection of feedback on the success of the implemented measures for promotion and visibility** |
|---|---|
| Target group | the general public, information carriers, the business sector, decision makers, the media |
| Indicative time frame | Continuously |
| Source of funding | Local, national and EU funds |
| Indicator | Number of articles, number of media publications |
| Competent for implementation | – Informal Communication Body (ICB) in cooperation with stakeholders / Coordination Body for Development and Promotion of Cultural Tourism (CBDPCT)<br>– Stakeholders separately |

### Using social networks ( WhatsApp, Instagram, Twiter, Facebook, etc.)

The informal communication body should open a user profile on one of the social networks in order to establish a new way of communication with the target groups.

Social networks, as very dynamic and easily accessible communication tools, should provide a simple and quality connection to the target groups. It would also help to convey key messages to the general public and other target groups through minimal investment.

The body should also develop an Action Plan for the use of social networks and guidelines for members within the same for the use of networks, in order to ensure the dynamic presence of social networks after the establishment of the functionality of the new communication channels.

Each of the stakeholders can carry out these activities within their competences and interests.

| Activity | **Using social networks ( WhatsApp, Instagram, Twiter, Facebook, etc.)** |
|---|---|
| Target group | the general public, information carriers, the business sector, decision makers, the media |
| Indicative time frame | Continuously |
| Source of funding | Local, national and EU funds |
| Indicator | Number of posts, number of friends on social networks |
| Competent for implementation | – Informal Communication Body (ICB) in cooperation with stakeholders / Coordination Body for Development and Promotion of Cultural Tourism (CBDPCT)<br>– Stakeholders separately |

**Participation in the communication activities of the body for communication / coordination**

In order to be successful in presenting and raising the importance of the established body for communication / coordination, it is necessary to involve all stakeholders in the implementation of the activities.

Their participation would give more importance to all activities that would be implemented, and at the same time would expand the circle of stakeholders who are able to share information.

| Activity | Participation in the communication activities of the body for communication / coordination |
|---|---|
| Target group | the general public, information carriers, the business sector, decision makers, the media |
| Indicative time frame | Continuously (as needed) |
| Source of funding | Local, national and EU funds |
| Indicator | Number of events |
| Competent for implementation | – Informal Communication Body (ICB) in cooperation with stakeholders / Coordination Body for Development and Promotion of Cultural Tourism (CBDPCT)<br>– Stakeholders separately |

# 9 ACTIVITIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF SPECIFIC COMMUNICATION PURPOSES

In order to achieve the specific communication goals, measures are envisaged that refer separately to each specific goal, and at the same time are complemented by the activities for achieving the general communication goal.

## 9.1 Establishing communication for promoting the role of cultural heritage for sustainable development

To achieve this specific goal, the following measures have been identified that are in line with the Strategy:

1) Connecting stakeholders and identifying key stakeholders for promotion
2) Increasing the level of awareness about cultural tourism
3) Developing human resources for sustainable tourism in the region
4) Increasing the awareness of visitors
5) Development of guidelines / strategies / plans

### 9.1.1 Connecting stakeholders and identifying key stakeholders for promotion

Connecting stakeholders and identifying key stakeholders responsible for promoting sustainable development is the first step - activity. The activities of this measure complement the measures envisaged for achieving the general goal of the communication plan. See Annexes *Table 11-1 Connecting stakeholders and identifying key stakeholders for promotion*

### 9.1.2 Increasing the level of awareness about cultural tourism

Increasing the level of awareness of cultural tourism among potential users of cross-border regions, both locally and nationally, primarily for the importance, opportunities and access to certain funds open to local and regional development through the development of cultural tourism, can be realized through the following activities.

#### 9.1.2.1 Organizing information workshops

These activities would primarily be aimed at raising public awareness of workshop visitors about the importance and opportunities that would be achieved through the development of cultural tourism and would mean benefit for the entire cross-border region, as well as targeted thematic networking and education of potential partners.

The information workshops would be held either with the participation of all target groups, or thematically for a specific target group, while taking into account the regional dimension of the event, as well as the places where they will be held.

Such workshops would also be organized to inform and attract partners for specific projects developed by the Operational Body for Cultural Tourism.

| Activity | Organizing information workshops |
|---|---|
| Target group | Possible customers and partners |
| Indicative time frame | Continuously |
| Source of funding | Local, national and EU funds |
| Indicator | Number of workshops, number of participants |
| Competent for implementation | – Informal Communication Body (ICB) in cooperation with stakeholders / Coordination Body for Development and Promotion of Cultural Tourism (CBDPCT)<br>– Stakeholders separately |

### 9.1.2.2 Conducting public consultations for the interested public

Public consultations with the interested public would be one-day or multi-day events that would provide advice on specific programs and ways to apply and provide funding from them. The counseling would focus on how to turn a particular idea into a project proposal and how to find the right program to apply to, following the prescribed application steps.

These consultations can also be used to create the preconditions for making / revising key decisions made by national, regional or local authorities for the development of cultural tourism. As a communication tool, such public consultations with the interested public would be a transparent and clear kind of two-way communication with the citizens, and at the same time it will indicate the high degree of openness of the authorities in the decision-making process.

Such counseling could also be organized as e-counseling.

| Activity | Conducting public consultations for the interested public |
|---|---|
| Target group | Possible users, information carriers, business community, decision makers |
| Indicative time frame | Continuously |
| Source of funding | Local, national and EU funds |
| Indicator | Number of public consultations held, number of held e-consultations |
| Competent for implementation | – Informal Communication Body (ICB) in cooperation with stakeholders / Coordination Body for Development and Promotion of Cultural Tourism (CBDPCT)<br>– Stakeholders separately |

### 9.1.3 Developing human resources for sustainable tourism in the region

Communication and sustainable development can not be achieved without adequate human resources among stakeholders. Having in mind the negative demographic trends not only in the border region but also in the whole country, this measure stands out as the most priority.

A measure that can ensure the realization of both the Communication Plan and the Strategy. See Annexes *Table 11-2 Developing human resources for sustainable tourism in the region*.

### 9.1.4 Increasing visitor awareness

Increasing the awareness of the visitors for the sustainable development of the cultural heritage and support for their active involvement in the processes for sustainable development of the cultural heritage in the region. Communication with visitors is the key source of information in the process of creating tourist products.

#### 9.1.4.1 Organization and maintenance of workshops and other activities related to strengthening the awareness of visitors

These workshops would include visitors who would be animated to attend workshops or would like to be covered by other activities through which they would receive information and support for their involvement to achieve sustainable development.

| Activity | **Organization and maintenance of workshops and other activities related to strengthening the awareness of visitors** |
|---|---|
| Target group | Users and theirs |
| Indicative time frame | Continuously |
| Source of funding | Local, national and EU funds |
| Indicator | Number of public events held, number of held e-counseling |
| Competent for implementation | – Informal Communication Body (ICB) in cooperation with stakeholders / Coordination Body for Development and Promotion of Cultural Tourism (CBDPCT)<br>– Stakeholders separately |

### 9.1.5 Development of guidelines / strategies / plans

Clearly established rules for acting in a given situation would contribute to the smooth transmission of information and the collection of feedback and opinions that would be further used as a basis and guidelines for taking further steps to communicate or improve already established.

It is necessary to raise awareness and mutual information on the need to integrate the development of sustainable tourism based on the cultural heritage of the border region in all planning and strategic documents in relation to the territory.

This is especially important for the sustainable development of cultural heritage.

They need to be continuously monitored and, if necessary, upgraded or changed, which would improve the overall communication process.

It should be emphasized here that mutual understanding and implementation largely depend on the way of communication between stakeholders, things that need to be translated into the relevant documents.

| Activity | **Development of guidelines / strategies / plans** |
|---|---|
| Target group | All stakeholders |
| Indicative time frame | Continuously (as needed) |
| Source of funding | Local, national and EU funds |
| Indicator | Number of documents prepared |
| Competent for implementation | – Informal Communication Body (ICB) in cooperation with stakeholders / Coordination Body for Development and Promotion of Cultural Tourism (CBDPCT)<br>– Stakeholders separately |

## 9.2 Establishment of communication for exchange of innovative technologies and policies to promote the heritage

Communication for the exchange of innovative technologies and policies to promote heritage, which stimulates regional cooperation and interaction is crucial if the goals of the Strategy are to be achieved. This is primarily due to the insufficient readiness of stakeholders and the lack of experience related to the interpretation of inheritance, as an innovative model proposed in the strategy.

Measures to achieve this goal should provide a common tourist interpretation and use of cultural heritage in the cross-border region.

To achieve this specific goal, the following measures have been identified that are in line with the Strategy:

1) Conducting scientific research and organizing information on the cultural heritage of the region
2) Mapping the region
3) Development of interpretive cultural-tourist products and services

### 9.2.1 Conducting scientific research and organizing information on the cultural heritage of the region

Scientific research and the organization of cultural heritage information in the border region are an important precondition for planning and promoting the sustainable development of cultural heritage.

All information collected must be digitized and organized in a way that allows easy access and use of information archives and databases by all stakeholders. Also to complete the overall digitalization of the already created funds and archives of the cultural heritage in the region. See Annexes *Table 11-3 Conducting scientific research and organizing information on the cultural heritage of the region*.

### 9.2.2 Mapping the region

Possessing digital information and mapping the region in order to present it as a common environment for the development and promotion of cultural tourism is an indispensable measure without which communication cannot be imagined today. See Annexes *Table 11-4 Mapping the region.*

Maping has been singled out as a special measure in terms of its importance to communication.

### 9.2.3 Development of interpretive cultural-tourist products and services

Communication activities related to heritage interpretation should take into account the definition of heritage interpretation - *translation of factual information about the heritage of a language that is interesting and understandable to the public. This means that the*

*interpreter does not teach the public and does not inform them about a location, but delivers messages about the value of that location, entertaining the public.*

The Annexes provide activities that should contribute to the development of interpretive cultural- tourism products, *Table 11-5  Development of interpretive cultural-tourist products and services.*

## 9.3 Establishment of communication to promote and bring heritage closer to business

The business sector has a significant role to play in the valorization of cultural heritage. Communication with the business sector is vital to the socio-economic benefits of cultural tourism in the broadest sense of the word. To this end, the measures envisaged to achieve this goal should be focused on communication and cooperation between the public and business sector, as well as in building the capacities of the business sector to use a sustainable way of potential offered by cultural heritage.

To achieve this specific goal, the following measures have been identified that are in line with the Strategy:

1) Ensuring effective cooperation and communication
2) Providing information and marketing of tourism services and products based on the cultural heritage in the region
3) Development of a tourist cultural agenda for the target region
4) Offering an integrated product

### 9.3.1 Ensuring effective cooperation and communication

Ensuring efficient cooperation and communication, transparency of processes and procedures as well as a unique approach in the implementation of all communication activities undertaken by the partners involved in the body for communication / coordination, can be realized through the following activities.

#### 9.3.1.1 Creating a network of persons for information and communication

In order to better coordinate and implement the planned activities, all interested partners should appoint persons for information and communication as their representatives in the body for communication / coordination, which persons would jointly form the "information and communication network".

The network would provide the necessary level of communication for smooth communication activities at the body level for communication / coordination.

Regular network meetings would enable timely, coordinated and quality planning of the schedule for the implementation of communication activities.

Within the network, meetings would be held regularly and experiences and good practices would be exchanged. The goal is to promote a single approach and equalize the communication activities of the partners within the body for communication / coordination.

| Activity | **Creating a network of persons for information and communication** |
|---|---|
| Target group | Partners members of the Informal Communication Body in Cooperation |

| | |
|---|---|
| | with Stakeholders / Coordination Body for Development and Promotion of Cultural Tourism (CBDPCT) |
| Indicative time frame | Continuously |
| Source of funding | Local, national and EU funds |
| Indicator | Number of meetings held |
| Competent for implementation | – Informal Communication Body (ICB) in cooperation with stakeholders / Coordination Body for Development and Promotion of Cultural Tourism (CBDPCT)<br>– Stakeholders separately |

### 9.3.1.2 Organizing and holding workshops / seminars / conferences to strengthen the capacity of persons for information and communication

Special workshops / seminars / conferences would be organized and held as a key communication tool for strengthening the capacities of the persons in charge of information and communication.

Continuous capacity building in order to further disseminate information and gain new knowledge contribute to the most efficient use of funds and will enable the adoption of knowledge and skills necessary for efficient performance of activities in the field of information and communication.

| | |
|---|---|
| Activity | **Organizing and holding workshops / seminars / conferences to strengthen the capacity of persons for information and communication** |
| Target group | Persons for information and communication |
| Indicative time frame | Continuously / at least once a year |
| Source of funding | Local, national and EU funds |
| Indicator | Number of workshops / seminars / conferences |
| Competent for implementation | – Informal Communication Body (ICB) in cooperation with stakeholders / Coordination Body for Development and Promotion of Cultural Tourism (CBDPCT)<br>– Stakeholders separately |

### 9.3.1.3 Communication via institutional email lists

The Communication / Coordination Body would prepare a list of e-mails from all members within the partner stakeholders that are part of the bodies in charge of conducting the activities.

In this way, all information, results achieved from the communication would be the easiest and fastest to share. In this way, information about the planned and implemented activities, meetings, research results and analyzes, conclusions, etc. would be shared..

Continuous communication would enable the promotion of the awareness for cooperation between the members of the bodies, their greater organization and coordination, and in addition it would encourage the communication for exchange of experiences and knowledge.

| Activity | **Communication via institutional email lists** |
|---|---|
| Target group | Persons for information and communication |
| Indicative time frame | Continuously / at least once a year |
| Source of funding | Local, national and EU funds |
| Indicator | Number of workshops / seminars / conferences |
| Competent for implementation | – Informal Communication Body (ICB) in cooperation with stakeholders / Coordination Body for Development and Promotion of Cultural Tourism (CBDPCT)<br>– Stakeholders separately |

### 9.3.2 Providing information and marketing of tourism services and products based on the cultural heritage in the region

In order for tourism products and services based on cultural heritage to become competitive, it is necessary to provide information on cultural tourism in the region, as well as professional marketing of cultural tourism products in the border region. Communication should ensure cooperation between the public and business sectors. Here the business sector must and can be fully expressed through innovation and business entrepreneurship. See Annexes *Table 11-6 Providing information and marketing of tourism services and products based on the cultural heritage in the region.*

### 9.3.3 Development of a tourist cultural agenda for the border region

According to the Strategy, the analysis of the current cultural agenda of the target region shows that most events are focal. Also, according to the Strategy, a review of the national cultural calendars of both Bulgaria and North Macedonia shows that more than 1/3 of all events claiming to be touristy are folklore, followed by almost 1/4 of food and beverage festivals. In the target cross-border region there are some proven events from both groups that can develop into tourist events, but this must be done extremely carefully. From a marketing point of view, there is no point in creating products or services that are identical or at least similar to those in competition - and this is exactly what is happening nationally at the moment. Folklore festivals are organized in an almost identical way, as are food and beverage festivals where they display stands with appropriate products followed by a folklore program, which is rarely territorially defined; so in all parts of the country folklore is being shown everywhere.

This must be taken into account when developing activities and when developing the cultural agenda of the border region. See Annexes *Table 11-7  Development of a tourist cultural agenda for the border region*.

### 9.3.4   Offering an integrated product

Businesses must cooperate with each other in creating and offering tourist products, including cultural and tourist products, but also with the public and civil society in order to create integrated tourism products. Several identified activities in accordance with the Strategy are given in the Annexes *Table 11-8   Offering an integrated product of sustainable tourism based on the cultural heritage of the region*

### 9.3.5   Reconstruction, preservation and maintenance of cultural heritage sites in the region

In the efforts to reconstruct, preserve and maintain cultural heritage sites in the region, the business sector must be involved through business agreements that will, on the one hand, ensure the economic benefits and sustainability of the cultural heritage. Several identified activities in accordance with the Strategy are given in the Annexes Table 11 9 Reconstruction, preservation and maintenance of cultural heritage sites in the region.

### 9.3.6   Placement of cultural heritage sites in the region in a condition suitable for tourist visits

These activities are closely linked to the previous and key roles that cultural institutions and local authorities have to play, providing the conditions for placing cultural heritage sites in the region in a condition suitable for tourist visits, as well as the business sector, which with its business activity will contribute to the valorisation of cultural heritage. Several identified activities in accordance with the Strategy are given in the Annexes Table 11 10 Placement of cultural heritage sites in the region in a condition suitable for tourist visits

# 10 IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING INDICATORS

## 10.1 Implementation

Implementing the Communication Plan in establishing two key activities:

1) Developing partnerships
2) Establishment of a Network

without which it is impossible to start implementing the measures and activities of the Strategy.

### 10.1.1 Developing partnerships

In the tourism sector, the ability to work in a team is especially important, because the product being sold is complex. Many service providers participate in its formation, and creating a conducive environment for its development involves other stakeholders outside the business sphere. The need for partnership is of great importance in the development of regional products, as is the case with the target cross-border region.

Establishing different communication channels and respecting the principles of communication are key to the development of partnerships.

### 10.1.2 Establishment of a Network

Establishing a network, formal or not, helps strengthen the links between different participants and facilitates communication - especially with the opportunities that exist today (mailing lists, web forums, Facebook groups, etc.).

In the future, if sustainable tourism and especially cultural tourism really become the regional property of all stakeholders, it is worth considering establishing a formal structure that would coordinate and manage its development, would be the bearer of various brands and quality systems and more.

Cooperation with neighboring regions and countries provides opportunities for attractive diversity of cultural and tourist products. This is especially important for experiences with cultural heritage interpretive products. Exchanging experiences with people working to achieve similar goals in other regions, even remote ones, helps to avoid some "growth" errors and provides innovative ideas. Maintaining contact with national and even international institutions related to sustainable tourism guarantees that the participants' acquaintance with the legal and regulatory matter is regularly supplemented and provides a better opportunity for them to lobby at higher levels to achieve the common goals of the region.

Again, establishing different communication channels and adhering to the principles of communication are key to network development.

In the process of Implementation of the Communication Plan, it is recommended to initially use the established communication channels between the stakeholders. The first activities to harmonize with the priorities of the strategy in order to create preconditions for their implementation.

## 10.2 Monitoring

Monitoring, as stated in the Strategy itself, is a process of continuous monitoring and tracking of the progress and development of certain processes, in order to see if the expected results and set goals are achieved.

It is necessary to regularly monitor and evaluate the activities envisaged in the Communication Plan by the holder of the communication plan, and in coordination with the stakeholders.

### 10.2.1 Indicators

The implementation of the plan can be monitored through input indicators, output indicators and result indicators.

#### 10.2.1.1 Input indicators

Input indicators should be defined in the annual list / annual activity plan taking into account the set goals for a certain period. Input indicators can be: number of announcements, number of articles in the media, number of printed promotional material, number of developed tourist packages, number of promotions on TV / radio channels, number of announcements on internet media...

#### 10.2.1.2 Output indicators

Output indicators are measured each year and can be: number of participants in certain events: conferences, seminars, workshops, trainings, number of visitors to the website, number of visits to a particular cultural event...

#### 10.2.1.3 Result indicators

The results indicators measure the level of customer satisfaction with the information / services they receive: availability and quantity of information, availability of the destination, comparative assessment between the information and the field offer. This measurement can be carried out by means of a special survey (eg submission of special questionnaires).

### 10.2.2 Monitoring Models

There are different monitoring models that are applied according to certain situations and processes. One of the most objective methods is monitoring based on a system of preliminary (initial) indicators that can be objectively determined. For the purposes of the Communication Plan, we propose that the success of the implementation be done in the manner shown below on a periodic annual basis.

The tables for the measures and activities through the text and the annexes also point out indicators for the same.

Below is an example of a table of activity monitoring indicators with several examples according to the Strategy.

| | *Indicator* | *Initial value* | *Target value* | *Value* | *Sources of confirmation:* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Percentage of tourist events that enriched the cultural agenda of the region | 20 | at least 50% | 29 | programs of tourist events, photos and videos, media coverage including social networks, virtual tours |
| | Number of developed interpretive services of cultural tourism | 0 | at least 10 interpretive presentations; | 6 | interpretive programs, travel offers, websites of local suppliers and / or tour operators and travel agents |
| | | 0 | at least 5 interpretive paths | 5 | |
| | | 0 | at least 5 interpretive exhibitions | 7 | |
| | A number of new marketing measures implemented to sell the region's cultural tourism product | 0 | at least 20 new types of printed materials and souvenirs; | 20 | copies of printed and video materials and souvenirs; protocols for their distribution; Facebook statistics |
| | | 0 | at least 5 new videos; at least 5,000 followers on the region's Facebook page | 4 | |
| | | 0 | | 5800 | |

## VII. Conclusions / recommendations

The communication plan primarily provides guidelines for creating preconditions for the establishment of partnerships and networking necessary to ensure the development of cultural tourism and cultural heritage in the cross-border region, and thus creating preconditions for increasing the quality of interpretation and presentation of cultural resources and products, as well as their promotion under organized joint management by stakeholders from both the public and private sectors.

If the set goals are achieved, everyone will benefit, primarily the tourism and cultural sector, and accordingly all sectors related to them in the given territory.

For the tourism sector, the reward will be to raise the overall image of the destination where the planned visitors will be kept, to stimulate activities for active tourist stay, which in general will encourage consumption and extended stay of guests throughout the year.

The reward for the cultural sector will be the promotion of the resources within their competence, through a larger number of visitors, which means increased income, and thus opening new opportunities for the development of the cultural product, which will also become available and close to the local population itself.

At the same time, the active involvement of the cultural sector in this process will enable the cultural goods and cultural heritage to be used in a sustainable way.

For all the other sectors related to the two listed above, both public and private, the award will be an incentive to enhance exchange cooperation, joint performance, promote and manage resources, exchange good practices, exchange goods and create awareness of progress. and the well-being of the region.

The implementation of the initiatives for cooperation and the planned activities primarily depends on the will for involvement and cooperation of all stakeholders and individuals both locally and regionally in the border region.

In order for the initiatives to come to life, all key carriers need to pool their own resources and participate as equal partners in the implementation process.

Take a look at this, which is for the realization of the active use of the provided financial resources, borrow the concurrent program of the club holders, which are exported from the coordinates and are fully used with the non-required financial publications and programs.

Finally, regarding the readiness to reach an agreement on cooperation, as well as the commitment of stakeholders in the implementation of the activities proposed in this plan, we emphasize the need to establish mechanisms for continuous monitoring, control and audit of activities within the regular meetings that will be organized between the parties involved.

# 11 ANNEXES

## ANNEX 1 Establishing communication for promoting the role of cultural heritage for sustainable development

The specific goal Establishing *communication to promote the role of cultural heritage for sustainable development (cultural tourism, urbanism and cross-border development)* ) can be realized through measures and key activities. The measures and key activities are given in the tables below.

*Table 11-1 Connecting stakeholders and identifying key stakeholders for promotion*

| Measure | *Connecting stakeholders and identifying key stakeholders for promotion* | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Explanation / concept | In order for the planned activities and plans to remain not only as documents for recommendations but also to be successfully implemented, it is necessary to properly address the key stakeholders who will be further responsible for the implementation of the identified measures and activities. | | | |
| Key activities | Holders | Monitoring (measuring results) | Priorities and time frame | Funding / resources |
| Confirmation of the Strategy as a framework for conducting tourism policy in the defined area | Municipalities in the defined area | Plan of activities and realization | All activities can be prioritized | Calculation according to the activities |
| Forming an informal body for communication in cooperation with stakeholders | Key and interested entities from the public and private sector | Plan of activities and realization | Two months since the adoption of the Strategy | Calculation according to the activities |
| Establishment of a Coordination Body for Development and Promotion of Cultural Tourism (CBDPCT) | Key and interested entities from the public and business sector | Plan of activities and realization | Year of established cooperation | Calculation according to the activities |
| Use of existing resources and entities to establish a body for launching important tourism projects in accordance with the strategy for cultural tourism - Operational body for cultural tourism (OBCT) | Regional and municipal authorities Possibility to include the main entities from the tourism sector | CBDPCT Work plans and projects | Created OBCT Within a year of adopting the strategy | Calculation according to the activities |
| Appointment of responsible persons for communication with CBDPCT and OBCT | Key and interested entities from the public and business sector | List of persons for communication | Priority Within a year of adopting the strategy | Calculation according to the activities |

*Table 11-2 Developing human resources for sustainable tourism in the region*

| Measure | Implementation of measures related to providing an appropriate environment for the development of sustainable tourism based on the cultural heritage of the target region – ***Developing human resources for sustainable tourism in the region*** | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Explanation / concept | The measures for development of the cultural tourism given by the Strategy need to be elaborated thoroughly and to be realized | | | |
| Key activities | Holders | Monitoring (measuring results) | Priorities and time frame | Funding / resources |
| Preparing interpreters who will offer new interpretive services to cultural tourism | Key and interested entities from the public and private sector | CBDPCT OBCT Work plans and projects | continuously | Calculation according to the activities |
| Organizing trainings for local interpreters | Key and interested entities from the public and private sector | CBDPCT OBCT Work plans and projects | continuously | Calculation according to the activities |
| Providing high quality of all tourist services that are part of the integrated product of cultural tourism of the whole region | Key and interested entities from the public and private sector | CBDPCT OBCT Work plans and projects | continuously | Calculation according to the activities |
| Developing partnerships, cooperation and networking of the tourism sector | Key and interested entities from the public and private sector | CBDPCT OBCT Work plans and projects | continuously | Calculation according to the activities |

*ANNEX 2 Establishing communication for the exchange of innovative technologies and policies to promote heritage, which stimulates regional cooperation and interaction*

Communication for the exchange of innovative technologies and policies to promote heritage, which stimulates regional cooperation and interaction can be realized through tasks and key activities. Tasks and key activities are given in the tables below.

*Table 11-3 Conducting scientific research and organizing information on the cultural heritage of the region*

| Measure | Implement measures related to the direct use of cultural heritage for tourism purposes - ***Conducting scientific research and organizing information on the cultural heritage of the region*** | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Explanation / concept | The measures for development of the cultural tourism given by the Strategy need to be elaborated thoroughly and to be realized | | | |
| Key activities | Holders | Monitoring (measuring results) | Priorities and time frame | Funding / resources |
| Complete archeological research or finalization of the research that has already started for certain immovable buildings in the territory | Cultural institutions other stakeholders | Plan for activities and relization | continuously | Calculation according to the activities |
| Detailed targeted research of the region's intangible cultural heritage | Cultural institutions Key and interested entities from the public and private sector | CBDPCT OBCT Work plans and projects | continuously | Calculation according to the activities |
| Complete digitalization of the already created funds and archives of the cultural heritage of the region | Cultural institutions Regional and municipal authorities Possibility to include the main entities from the private sector of tourism | CBDPCT OBCT Work plans and projects | continuously | Calculation according to the activities |

*Table 11-4 Mapping the region*

| Measure | *Mapping the region* | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Explanation / concept | Mapping the region in order to present it as a common environment for the development and promotion of cultural tourism | | | |
| Key activities | Holders | Monitoring (measuring results) | Priorities and time frame | Funding / resources |
| Development of GIS models of cultural heritage and accompanying tourist infrastructure and tourist offer | Municipalities in the defined area CBDPCT OBCT | Plan of activities and realization | All activities can be prioritized | Calculation according to the activities |

*Table 11-5 Development of representative cultural and tourist products and services*

| Measure | Implementation of measures related to the presentation of cultural heritage - *Development of representative cultural and tourist products and services* | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Explanation / concept | The measures for development of the cultural tourism given by the Strategy need to be elaborated thoroughly and to be realized | | | |
| Key activities | Holders | Monitoring (measuring results) | Priorities and time frame | Funding / resources |
| Developing interpretive presentations for certain cultural objects | Key and interested entities from the public and private sector | CBDPCT OBCT Work plans and projects | continuously | Calculation according to the activities |
| Developing new cultural events for tourism purposes only | Key and interested entities from the public and private sector | CBDPCT OBCT Work plans and projects | continuously | Calculation according to the activities |
| Developing interpretive cultural and tourist routes in the region | Key and interested entities from the public and private sector | CBDPCT OBCT Work plans and projects | continuously | Calculation according to the activities |
| Developing interpretive exhibitions and informative materials on the cultural heritage of the region | Key and interested entities from the public and private sector | CBDPCT OBCT Work plans and projects | continuously | Calculation according to the activities |

*ANNEX 3 Establishing communication to promote and bring heritage closer to business*

Communication to promote and bring heritage closer to business (building a high level of awareness of the potential of sustainable and culturally-oriented tourism activities, etc.) can be realized through tasks and key activities. Tasks and key activities are given in the tables below.

*Table 11-6 Providing information and marketing of tourism services and products based on the cultural heritage in the region*

| Measure | Implementation of measures related to providing an appropriate environment for the development of sustainable tourism based on the cultural heritage of the target region – ***Providing information and marketing of tourism services and products based on the cultural heritage in the region*** | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Explanation / concept | The measures for development of the cultural tourism given by the Strategy need to be elaborated thoroughly and to be realized | | | |
| Key activities | Holders | Monitoring (measuring results) | Priorities and time frame | Funding / resources |
| Providing information on cultural tourism - Tourist information centers | Key and interested entities from the public and private sector | CBDPCT OBCT Work plans and projects | continuously | Calculation according to the activities |
| Professional marketing of cultural tourism products of the region | Key and interested entities from the public and private sector | CBDPCT OBCT Work plans and projects | continuously | Calculation according to the activities |
| Integrating the development of sustainable tourism based on the cultural heritage of the region in all planning and strategic documents regarding the territory | Key and interested entities from the public and private sector | CBDPCT OBCT Work plans and projects | continuously | Calculation according to the activities |

*Table 11-7 Development of a tourist cultural agenda for the target region*

| Mesure | Implementation of measures related to the direct use of cultural heritage for tourism purposes - Development of a tourist cultural agenda for the target region | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Explanation / concept | The measures for development of the cultural tourism given by the Strategy need to be elaborated thoroughly and to be realized | | | |
| Key activities | Holders | Monitoring (measuring results) | Priorities and time frame | Funding / resources |
| Turning existing cultural events into tourist ones | Key and interested entities from the public and private sector | CBDPCT OBCT Work plans and projects | continuously | Calculation according to the activities |
| Developing new cultural events for tourism purposes only | Key and interested entities from the public and private sector | CBDPCT OBCT Work plans and projects | continuously | Calculation according to the activities |

*Table 11-8 Offering an integrated product of sustainable tourism based on the cultural heritage of the region*

| Measure | Implementation of measures related to the presentation of cultural heritage – Offering an integrated product of sustainable tourism based on the cultural heritage of the region | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Explanation / concept | The measures for development of the cultural tourism given by the Strategy need to be elaborated thoroughly and to be realized | | | |
| Key activities | Holders | Monitoring (measuring results) | Priorities and time frame | Funding / resources |
| Targeting the target groups to be offered the product | Key and interested entities from the public and private sector | CBDPCT OBCT Work plans and projects | continuously | Calculation according to the activities |
| Websites creation and their maintenance | Key and interested entities from the public and private sector | CBDPCT OBCT Work plans and projects | continuously | Calculation according to the activities |
| Printing materials for promotion | Key and interested entities from the public and private sector | CBDPCT OBCT Work plans and projects | continuously | Calculation according to the activities |
| Using Internet portals and social networks to promote an integrated tourism product | Key and interested entities from the public and private sector | CBDPCT OBCT Work plans and projects | continuously | Calculation according to the activities |

*Table 11-9 Reconstruction, preservation and maintenance of cultural heritage sites in the region*

| Measure | Implementation of measures related to the direct use of cultural heritage for tourism purposes - Reconstruction, preservation and maintenance of cultural heritage sites in the region | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Explanation / concept | The measures for development of the cultural tourism given by the Strategy need to be elaborated thoroughly and to be realized | | | |
| Key activities | Holders | Monitoring (measuring results) | Priorities and time frame | Funding / resources |
| Improving the condition of exposed objects of cultural heritage where necessary | Key and interested entities from the public and private sector | CBDPCT OBCT Work plans and projects | continuously | Calculation according to the activities |
| Ensuring constant and appropriate maintenance of cultural heritage sites that are currently in (relatively) good condition | Key and interested entities from the public and private sector | CBDPCT OBCT Work plans and projects | continuously | Calculation according to the activities |

*Table 11-10 Placing cultural heritage sites in the region in a state suitable for tourist visits*

| Measure | Implementation of measures related to the direct use of cultural heritage for tourism purposes - Placing cultural heritage sites in the region in a state suitable for tourist visits | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Explanation / concept | The measures for development of the cultural tourism given by the Strategy need to be elaborated thoroughly and to be realized | | | |
| Key activities | Holders | Monitoring (measuring results) | Priorities and time frame | Funding / resources |
| Exposure of movable material objects from the cultural heritage | Cultural institutions Key and interested entities from the public and private sector | CBDPCT OBCT Work plans and projects | continuously | Calculation according to the activities |
| Socialization of immovable tangible objects of cultural heritage | Key and interested entities from the public and private sector | CBDPCT OBCT Work plans and projects | continuously | Calculation according to the activities |

*ANNEX 4*

**List of websites for access to municipalities in the cross-border region and links to specific parties or documents related to culture and tourism**

| | Municipalities of Kyustendil region Republic of Bulgaria | Web site | Pages / documents for culture and tourism |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | |
| | Bobov dol | http://new.bobovdol.eu/ | When searching the official website, there is no easily visible information about culture and tourism or there is no separate information about culture and tourism. There are some strategic priorities http://new.bobovdol.eu/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=6&Itemid=8 |
| | Boboshevo | https://obshtina-boboshevo.eu/ | Tourism and culture https://obshtina-boboshevo.eu/%D0%BA%D1%83%D0%BB%D1%82%D1%83%D1%80%D0%B0-%D0%B8-%D1%82%D1%83%D1%80%D0%B8%D0%B7%D1%8A%D0%BC/ |
| | Dupnitsa | http://www.dupnitsa.bg/ | When searching the official website, there is no easily visible information about culture and tourism or there is no separate information about culture and tourism There is a plan for the development of Dupnitsa http://ipgvr.dupnitsa.bg/ |
| | Kocherinovo | http://www.ob- | part education and culture |

| | | kocherinovo.bg/ | http://www.ob-kocherinovo.bg/Table/%D0%9E%D0%B1%D1%80%D0%B0%D0%B7%D0%BE%D0%B2%D0%B0%D0%BD%D0%B8%D0%B5-%D0%B8-%D0%BA%D1%83%D0%BB%D1%82%D1%83%D1%80%D0%B0/ |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Kyustendil | http://www.kustendil.bg/ | For tourism - information and rules for the tourism sector http://www.kustendil.bg/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=140&Itemid=0 culture information http://www.kustendil.bg/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=105&Itemid=0 |
| | Nevestino | http://www.obshtinanevestino.kncity.info/ | Tourism, a special subpage http://www.obshtinanevestino.kncity.info/index.php/municipality/turizam |
| | Rila | http://www.grad-rila.bg/ | Tourism http://www.grad-rila.bg/turizam culture http://www.grad-rila.bg/kultura |
| | Sapareva Banya | http://saparevabanya.bg/ | There is a section on tourism on the official website / five separate segments on tourism |
| | Treklyano | http://www.trekliano.eu/ | When searching the official website, there is no easily visible information about culture and tourism or there is no separate information about culture and tourism. Development plan http://trekliano.eu/plan-za-razvitie.html |

Note: the link through which the websites of the municipalities are most easily accessible is through the website of the National Association of Municipalities - http://www.namrb.org/members and http://www.namrb.org/chlenove

| Municipalities Northeast planning region Republic of North Macedonia | Web site | Pages / documents for culture and tourism |
|---|---|---|
| | | |
| Kriva Palanka | https://www.krivapalanka.gov.mk/ | When searching the official website, there is no easily visible information about culture and tourism or there is no separate information about culture and tourism |
| Kratovo | https://www.opstinakratovo.gov.mk/ | Tourism http://www.opstinakratovo.gov.mk/?page_id=1186 culture http://www.opstinakratovo.gov.mk/?page_id=96 |
| Rankovtse | https://rankovce.gov.mk/ | As under the profile of the official website of the municipality, there is a page text for cultural heritage https://rankovce.gov.mk/kulturno-nasledstvo/ |
| Kumanovo | https://kumanovo.gov.mk/ | When searching the official website, there is no easily visible information about culture and tourism or there is no separate information about culture and tourism |
| Lipkovo | https://komunaelikoves.gov.mk/faqja/ https://komunaelikoves.gov.mk/mk/ | Tourism Development Strategy until 2019 http://www.komunaelikoves.gov.mk/wp-content/uploads/turizem/Strategjia-mk.pdf |
| Staro Nagorichane | http://www.staronagoricane.gov.mk/ | Information on culture and tourism is not easily visible during the search or there is no separate information on culture and tourism |

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