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# STRATEGY FOR DEVELOPMENT OF TOURISM IN THE EAST PLANNING REGION WITH ACTION PLAN (2016-2025)



NATURE  
CONSERVATION  
PROGRAMME

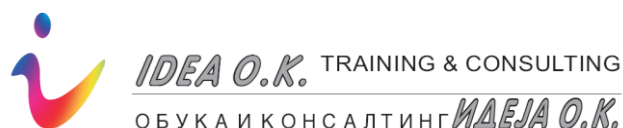


Centre for Development  
of the East Planning Region

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# CONTENTS

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<b>1.</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>2.</b>	<b>METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH IN PREPARATION OF THE STRATEGY FOR DEVELOPMENT OF TOURISM IN THE EAST PLANNING REGION WITH ACTION PLAN (2016-2025) .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>3.</b>	<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>4.</b>	<b>PROFILE OF THE EAST PLANNING REGION WITH REFERENCE TO DEVELOPMENT OF TOURISM.....</b>	<b>9</b>
4.1	General data.....	9
<b>5.</b>	<b>ANALYSIS OF POTENTIAL SEGMENTS OF TOURIST MARKET IN THE REGION .....</b>	<b>12</b>
5.1	Analysis of natural resources as regional tourist attractiveness.....	12
5.2	Analysis of cultural-historical resources as regional tourist attractiveness.....	13
5.3	Analysis of demographic resources and settlements.....	15
5.3.1	Demographic resources in EPR .....	15
5.3.2	Settlements as a tourist resource in EPR .....	16
5.4	Analyses of receptive factors.....	17
5.5	Tourist sales.....	20
5.6	Tourist markets.....	21
5.7	Remaining significant segments.....	23
5.7.1	Transport infrastructure.....	23
5.7.2	Communal infrastructure .....	25
5.7.3	Energy infrastructure .....	26
5.7.4	Telephony and internet.....	26
5.7.5	Health insurance and health protection .....	26
<b>6.</b>	<b>SWOT ANALYSIS – GENERAL CONCLUSIONS .....</b>	<b>27</b>
6.1	Strengths of EPR for development of tourism.....	27
6.2	Weaknesses of EPR for development of tourism .....	28
6.3	Opportunities of EPR for development of tourism.....	29
6.4	Threats for development of tourism in EPR.....	29
<b>7.</b>	<b>COMPETITIVENESS OF THE EAST PLANNING REGION.....</b>	<b>31</b>

7.1	EPR competitiveness in the regional context .....	31
7.2	EPR Competitiveness in a national context.....	32
<b>8.</b>	<b>VISION, PRINCIPLES, STRATEGIC AREAS, STRATEGIC PRIORITY TARGETS AND MEASURES FOR DEVELOPMENT OF TOURISM IN EPR .....</b>	<b>34</b>
8.1	Vision .....	34
8.2	Principles on which development of tourism in EPR shall be based.....	34
8.2.1	Sustainable tourism .....	35
8.2.2	Profitability .....	35
8.2.3	Selective (priority) investments .....	35
8.2.4	Target marketing.....	35
8.2.5	Public Private Partnership .....	36
8.3	Strategic areas, strategic priority targets and measures .....	36
8.3.1	Development of human and institutional capacities.....	37
8.3.2	Tourist infrastructure .....	37
8.3.3	Tourist offer.....	38
8.3.4	Marketing and branding.....	38
8.4	Process of identifying strategic areas and targets.....	39
8.5	Strategic map of EPR for development of tourism 2016-2025 .....	41
<b>9.</b>	<b>TOURIST ZONING OF EPR .....</b>	<b>43</b>
9.1	Principles of tourist zoning .....	43
9.2	Tourist subregions within EPR.....	43
<b>10.</b>	<b>FORMING TOURIST PRODUCTS AND OFFERS .....</b>	<b>45</b>
10.1	Principles of forming tourist products and offers.....	45
10.2	Thematic tourist products and offers.....	46
10.3	Cultural tourism.....	46
10.3.1	Ethno tourism .....	46
10.3.2	Rural tourism .....	47
10.3.3	Religious – monastic tourism.....	49
10.3.4	Mountain tourism .....	50
10.3.5	Tracking .....	50
10.3.6	Mountaineering .....	51
10.3.7	Winter (winter-sports) tourism .....	51
10.3.8	Bath – wellness spa tourism.....	52

10.3.9	Jeep safari, off-road, moto tourism .....	52
10.3.10	Mountain biking.....	53
10.3.11	Geotourism.....	53
10.3.12	Lake tourism.....	54
10.3.13	Summer bathing tourism and water activities .....	55
10.3.14	Hunting tourism .....	56
10.3.15	Fishing tourism .....	56
10.3.16	Paragliding .....	57
10.3.17	Adrenalin parks .....	57
10.3.18	Zip-lines.....	57
10.3.19	Aerotourism and gliding.....	58
10.3.20	Mountaineering .....	58
10.3.21	Other tourist activities.....	59
10.4	Integrated tourist products and offers.....	59
10.4.1	Tourist routes .....	60
10.4.2	Proposed thematic tourist routes in EPR.....	62
10.4.3	Proposed integrated tourist routes in EPR.....	62
10.4.4	Proposed remaining tourist products .....	63
10.4.1	Proposed key projects for development of tourism in EPR.....	63
<b>11.</b>	<b>REALIZATION OF STRATEGIC AND ACTION PLAN OF EPR..</b>	<b>66</b>
11.1	Tourist destination.....	66
11.2	Organization for management of tourist destination.....	66
11.3	Awareness of the importance of tourism in EPR.....	69
<b>12.</b>	<b>PLAN FOR MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF STRATEGIC GOALS .....</b>	<b>71</b>
<b>13.</b>	<b>ACTION PLAN FOR DEVELOPMENT OF TOURISM IN EPR 2016-2025.....</b>	<b>74</b>
13.1	INTRODUCTION .....	74
13.2	GOALS OF THE ACTION PLAN.....	75
13.3	ACTION PLAN FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STRATEGY FOR DEVELOPMENT OF TOURISM IN THE EAST PLANNING REGION IN THE PERIOD 2016 – 2025.....	76
13.4	SOURCES FOR FINANCING THE ACTION PLAN.....	97
13.5	COST - BENEFIT ANALYSIS.....	98
13.5.1	Methodological approach in the Cost - Benefit Analysis (CBA)	98

13.5.2	Inputs for Cost - Benefit Analysis .....	98
13.5.3	Cost-Benefit Analysis - calculations .....	100
<b>14.</b>	<b>EXAMPLES OF PROJECT CARDS AS PRIORITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT OF TOURISM IN EPR PROJECT CARD 1.....</b>	<b>106</b>
<b>15.</b>	<b>ATTACHMENTS.....</b>	<b>122</b>

### ABBREVIATIONS

<b>AR</b>	Agency for roads
<b>APSTRM</b>	Agency for Promotion and Support of Tourism of the Republic of Macedonia
<b>GDP</b>	Gross Domestic Product
<b>GPS</b>	Global Positioning System
<b>EC</b>	European Commission
<b>LSU</b>	Local Self-Government Unit
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>EUR</b>	Euro
<b>L</b>	Lake
<b>BMI</b>	Balanced Map of Indicators
<b>IPA</b>	Instrument for Pre-Accession
<b>IPARD</b>	Instrument for Pre-Accession for Rural Development
<b>EPR</b>	East Planning Region
<b>PPP</b>	Public-Private Partnership
<b>km</b>	Kilometer
<b>M</b>	Meter
<b>MAFWM</b>	Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management
<b>NGO</b>	Non-Governmental Organization
<b>NI</b>	No Information
<b>OMD</b>	Organization for Managing Tourist Destination
<b>RM</b>	Republic of Macedonia
<b>RTO</b>	Regional Tourist Organization
<b>V.</b>	Village
<b>Sim.</b>	Similar
<b>FDI</b>	Foreign Direct Investments
<b>TBD</b>	To be defined
<b>CD of EPR</b>	Center for Development of the East Planning Region
<b>3G</b>	Third generation of mobile communication technology
<b>4G</b>	Fourth generation of mobile communication technology
<b>Cca</b>	Approximate value
<b>CFCD</b>	Central Finance and Contracting Department
<b>SDC</b>	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
<b>SWOT</b>	(Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) Structural method for planning which is used for evaluation of internal factors (strengths and weaknesses) and external factors (opportunities and threats)

## TERMINOLOGY

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**Authenticity** – genuine, real

**Attractive tourist resources** – traits (characteristics) of natural and anthropogenic tourist resources to attract tourists and with their help to satisfy the needs of the tourists (recreational and cultural)

**Booking** – registered arrival of guests in some hotel, reservation of some tourist arrangement or a seat in some transportation means or accommodation capacity

**Domestic tourist** – a person with permanent place of living in the Republic of Macedonia, who is temporarily staying outside of his/her place of living and makes at least one overnight stay in a catering or other facility for overnight stays

**Holiday-maker** – visitors (domestic or foreign) who are not using an overnight stay i.e. did not spend the night in the place which they visited (one-day visitors)

**Visitor** – a term referring to any person who, due to any reason, aside from performing an activity, is visiting a foreign country (or any other place in the country which is not his/her permanent place of living). According to the World Tourist Organization, visitors can be tourists or holiday-makers.

**Spa tourism** – modern form of bath tourism which includes health and recreational bath activities

**Foreign tourist** – person with permanent place of living outside of the Republic of Macedonia who is temporarily staying in the Republic of Macedonia and spends at least one overnight stay in a catering or other facility for accommodation

**Strategy** – complex of coordinated actions for implementing set goals for a previously determined time period; programs or actions directed in a certain direction for the purpose of reaching desired goals

**Subregions** are defined as areas of EPR with certain natural, demographic or cultural singularities, but also lots of similarities with other areas in the region

**Tourism** – sum of relations and occurrences related to the activities of the people who are travelling and staying outside of their permanent place of living, who spend their free time due to business or other reasons (according to the World Tourist Organization)

**Tourist** – visitor who spends at least one overnight stay in a catering or other facility for accommodation outside of his/her permanent place of living

**Tourist agency** – economic company which mediates with services of third companies and those services are necessary for travel and stay of tourists, or those exact services are offered in a new combination as “personal services” – tourist arrangement

**Tourist attraction** – attractive element in some tourist destination. It represents a natural or cultural entity, occurrence, manifestation or event which motivates future tourist to come. The tourist attraction is the base for development of tourism.

**Tourist destination** – in the wider sense every destination in tourist travels (from a hotel and place to a country). In this study this term most often refers to a place, location or the East Planning Region as a tourist destination.

**Tourist infrastructure** – all built capacities of the tourist offer in a certain tourist destination so that it could function as such in the wider sense, and in the narrow sense, infrastructural capacities which are necessary for development of tourism in some area (hotels, restaurants)

**Catering facility** – business unit in which the guests are provided with catering services in food, beverages, accommodation and other services usually provided in catering facilities

**Tourist demand** – quantity of products and services which could be sold on the tourist market under certain conditions and under a certain price, for which there is an objective demand (users)

**Tourist offer** – quantity of products and services which are offered on the market at a certain price and which are intended for meeting tourist needs

**Tourist promotion** – total activities which are directed towards attracting tourists in a certain area and forms of persuasion for the visitors to buy certain products and services in the place where they are staying and through which they are travelling; the promotion consists of different forms of communication with the potential buyers.

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**Tourist package – arrangement** is previously agreed combination of at least two of the following services which are sold or given on sale so that the total service lasts longer than 24 hours or it includes accommodation with overnight stay, i.e. accommodation:

a) transport,

b) accommodation and

c) other tourist services which are not included in transport and accommodation but which are significant within the tourist package-arrangement;

**Tourist region** is a geographical and functional spacious area which covers several tourist places with common name, which natural and created tourist values is the base for forming independent tourist offer, which presents an opportunity for forming tourist arrangements by the tourist agencies.

**Tourist resources** – natural or anthropogenic goods which could be used for development of tourism (valorized).

**Tourist place** is an area or a destination which as an organizational and functional tourist unit possessing natural, cultural, historical and other landmarks significant for tourism, communal, traffic and tourist infrastructure, as well as objects and other facilities for accommodation and stay of tourists;

**Fitness** – health, good condition (being “fit“means being in good condition). In tourism fitness centers are usually within the hotels. They are equipped with modern exercising equipment and with other accompanying amenities for recreation and relaxation (saunas, solariums, massage rooms, etc.).

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

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The Strategy for development of tourism in the East Planning Region 2016-2025 is a complete document of the Council of the East Planning Region, which provides a clear vision on how the tourist industry can increase its economical and social influence in the region.

This vision is: The East Planning Region should create several respectable tourist destinations in the following years, which products will be based upon the natural and cultural heritage in the region and upon the tradition of the people living here; products recognizable for their quality and completely adjusted to the requirements and needs of modern tourists.

For the purpose of reaching this vision the Strategy provides:

- Long-term frame which takes into consideration new and current trends
- Strategic areas upon which the focus is placed on development of tourism in EPR
- Strategic priority aims and key indicators with target values of the performance, as this should be the impetus in reaching the vision;
- List of measures which should be involved in short-term and medium-term plans of the municipalities and other involved parties in the East Planning Region on state level
- Guide for the economy and other involved parties for the priorities of the East Planning Region in development of tourism
- Review of the policies of the Council of EPR and LSU with reference to development of tourism in the region.

The goal of this Strategy is to provide directions for utilization of the existing potential in the region for development of the tourist industry, taking into consideration all limitations existing in the East Planning Region.

Success depends upon the activities of both sides, the sides of offer and demand in the tourist equation. The challenges for development of tourism lie in: domestic tourist market, visits by foreign tourists (incoming tourism), development of tourist offer, receptive factors, tourist infrastructure, and attitude towards tourism. The main challenge is improvement of competitiveness of EPR with reference to the neighboring regions.

The focus of the Strategy is towards utilization of the potential of adjacent emitting areas and fast-growing tourist markets, for increasing tourist sales in EPR.

The realization of the goals and measures, which are part of this Strategy, depend upon the inclusion of a large number of involved parties, beginning with the Council of EPR, LSU from the region, the Agency for Support and Development of Tourism of RM, relevant ministries and agencies, the tourist industry in general and the economy in the region, as well as the population living in EPR. Additionally, the coordination and management of activities should be implemented by the Organization for Managing Tourist Destinations.

In the period of realization of this Strategy, the East Planning Region should note a rise in tourist consumption. The accomplishment of this goal will have a large significance for the demographic and socio-economic conditions and trends in the region.

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## 2. METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH IN PREPARATION OF THE STRATEGY FOR DEVELOPMENT OF TOURISM IN THE EAST PLANNING REGION WITH ACTION PLAN (2016-2025)

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The process of preparation of the Strategy for development of tourism in the East Planning Region with Action Plan (2016-2025) is closely related to the process of preparation of the Study for the condition of potentials for development of tourism in the East Planning Region<sup>1</sup>. The preparation of the Strategy began in the period of preparation of the final draft version of the Study. The obtained results along with derived positions, conclusions and recommendations of the Study, became the database for preparation of the Strategy.

The approach **bottom up**<sup>2</sup> was used in preparation of the Strategy. Such methodological approach implies inclusion of factors in all phases and at all levels of preparation and establishment of connections and relations in building synergies on vertical and horizontal level among each factor of the region, beginning with the citizens, and up to the central government. In order to ensure the active utilization of such methodological approach, the communication and cooperation between the members of the team and the interested parties were observed.

The process itself was implemented through: 1) organizing a forum – round table meeting for development of tourism (May 2015), 2) workshop for strategic planning and determining activities for the Action Plan (June 2015) and 3) Regional Conference – public discussion for finalization of the Strategy (September 2015). Additionally, consultations were conducted with the Center for Development of the Region, the Council and the remaining factors/involved parties. The goal of the forum, the workshop and the conference was to include the factors and to generate data, positions and ideas from them and to implement those in development of the document. Consultations referred to obtaining additional information, positions and ideas from the participants in the workshops and

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<sup>1</sup> The Study for the Condition of Potentials for Development of Tourism in the East Planning Region was the first project task from the project titled “Preparation of the Strategy for Development of Tourism in EPR with Action Plan 2015 -2024”, which is a program activity which is implemented within the Program for Nature Conservation in Macedonia, financed by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), and coordinated by Helvetas Swiss Intercooperation and Pharmahem. The strategic partner of the Program is the Center for Development of the East Planning Region. The preparation of the Study lasted 12 months, in the period from June 2014 – June 2015.

<sup>2</sup> **Method bottom up.**

This method is an instrument for facilitation of the application of the participative developmental approach which includes all members of the region perceived as a community. This instrument is used for communicating information, identifying necessities and establishing a base for regional action. The approach bottom up actively includes the entities from the region in the process of planning and decision making related to their development. The inclusion of regional factors includes the population in entirety (through their representatives), economic and social interesting groups, as well as representative public and private institutions.

This approach guarantees that the strategic priorities at national level are reflected in the regional initiatives with their simultaneous adjustment to regional and local necessities.

The method bottom up signifies that local/regional factors participate in the decision for the strategy and in the selection of priorities to be developed in their region. Experience has revealed that the approach bottom up should not be considered as an alternative or contrary to the approach top-down from the national authorities, but rather as a combination and interaction with them, for the purpose of achieving better general results.

through them from the local population, for more comprehensible utilization of the regional capacities, knowledge and skills in defining the Strategy.

The methodological approach implies utilization of comprehensible analyses of the area of the region made in the Study, from the aspect of characteristics of natural, cultural and remaining resources, analyses of existing values, infrastructural conditions and conveniences and other criteria upon which in a dialogue with the interested parties, the possible priorities and areas of action were defined, along with strategic goals and measures for intervention.

In the process of preparation of the Strategy we used classical scientific methods (analyses, synthesis, deduction, etc.) on one part, and relevant specific methods for more certain analyses, pursuant to the necessities, as well as good practice in preparation of this type of strategic documents.

The following documents were used as additional sources of information in the process of preparation of the strategic plan:

- National Strategy for Development of Tourism of RM 2009-2013
- National Strategy for Rural Tourism of RM 2012-2017
- National Program for Development of Agriculture and Rural Development 2009-2013
- Spatial Plan of the East Planning Region, 2013-2030, Expert Elaborate – Tourism
- Strategy for Regular Regional Development 2009-2019 (Revised version from 2014)
- Program from Development of the East Planning Region 2009 - 2013
- Program from Development of the East Planning Region 2015 -2019
- Strategic documents of the municipalities
- Other

Due to such particularity, the methodological approach was based upon the principles of gradation and sequence in realization of activities and analysis of results, but also the principles of interdisciplinarity in preparation of both documents.

Additionally, at the beginning and during the process of preparation of the Strategy, the principles for its realization were defined, and they are as follows:

- Transparency
- Participation
- Adherence to legal framework

The principles of transparency and participation in the process were observed through:

1. Open approach in the work (public)
2. Possibility for complete involvement in the process
3. Offered participation to all involved parties
4. Standardization and coordination
5. Defining common proposals and conclusions

Aside from using data from the Study and relevant documents, other activities were also carried out and the following results were obtained:

- Prepared Profile of EPR for development of tourism based upon the existing documentation and statistics, but also on the basis of data and recommendations from the prepared Study for the condition of potentials for development of tourism in the East Planning Region.

- Prepared SWOT analyses for development of tourism in EPR, analyses of competitive regions in Macedonia and abroad, as well as positioning of EPR with reference to tourism.
- Defined vision of the Strategy for development of tourism (2016 – 2025).
- Defined strategic framework, through defining the areas of intervention, strategic priority goals, key indicators of the performance and proper measures (strategic map of development of tourism in EPR and Balanced map of indicators of the development of tourism in EPR);
- Developed model of growth pursuant to the proposed measures;
- Prepared tourist zoning of EPR;
- Defined measures and activities for implementation of the Strategy
- Prepared Plan for monitoring and evaluation of strategic goals and indicators;
- Prepared Action Plan with particular measures/projects with included cost benefit analyses as part of the Strategy.

Figure 1 shows the process of preparation of the Strategy for development of tourism in the East Planning Region with Action Plan (2016-2025)

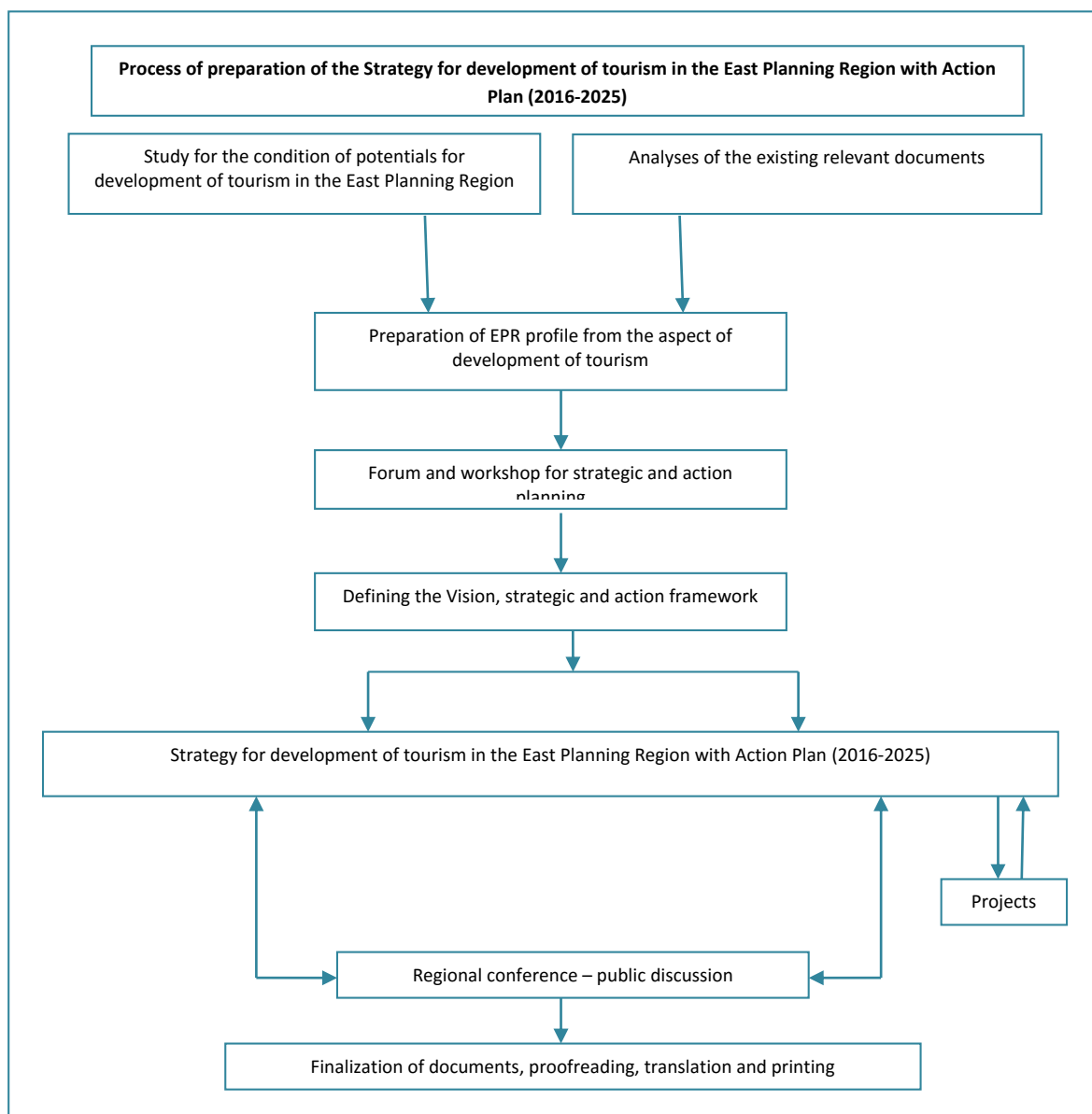


Figure 1

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## 3. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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The Council for Regional Development of the East Planning Region is dedicated to sustainable development of the tourist sector in the region. The success of this strategy is related to:

- Creating good cooperation with the central authority for the purpose of ensuring that the national priorities in the development of the tourist sector are also achieved through active support of the tourist industry in the region.
- Increasing tourist benefit from economic activities;
- Identifying and realization of key tourist investment.

In order to achieve the aforementioned, the Strategy identifies the following four strategic areas, each with its own strategic priority goals, measures and activities.

- Strategic area 1: Development of human and institutional capacities
- Strategic area 2: Tourist infrastructure
- Strategic area 3: Tourist offer
- Strategic area 4: Marketing and branding

Strategic map of the EPR for development of tourism provides the strategic goals in every area along with relevant measures for their actualization.

The activities which are part of the measures are included in the Action Plan for implementation of the Strategy for development of tourism in the East Planning Region 2016-2025. The activities within the measures are divided in three categories: initial activities (2-3), short-term (3-5 years) and long-term (5-10) years.

The balanced map for estimation of EPR for development of tourism is the tool which enables monitoring and evaluation for achieving the set strategic goal.

One of the goals of this Strategy and of the Council of the East Planning Region is the most balanced distribution of benefits from tourism in the region. In that sense, the Strategy is in accordance with Program for equal regional development of the East Planning Region 2015-2019.

Tourist sector in EPR is faced with many challenges:

- Insufficient knowledge of the domestic tourist market regarding the region;
- Preference for foreign destinations (outgoing tourism);
- Lack of investment in EPR;
- Insufficient infrastructural construction and connection.

Even though it contains excellent tourist potentials and attractiveness, tourist sales in EPR are far below its possibilities. Thus, in the period of 2006-2014, this region was visited by nearly 140,000 tourists with around 300,000 overnight stays and these visits and overnight stays were concentrated in only few destinations.

In the context of the above said, the goal of the Strategy is to help the Council for development of EPR to raise the question and the necessity for development of tourist sector in the region at a central level, for the purpose of providing financing of priorities for development of tourism in EPR.

The Council is aware of the challenges of EPR regarding the development of tourism and it is ready to cooperate with the involved parties in EPR in actualization of the measures and activities referring to EPR, which affect the development of tourist sector in the region.

## 4. PROFILE OF THE EAST PLANNING REGION WITH REFERENCE TO DEVELOPMENT OF TOURISM

### 4.1 General data

The East Planning Region covers an area of 3.537 km<sup>2</sup> or 14.2% from the territory of the Republic of Macedonia and geographically it is located in the basin area of the river Bregalnica. The east borders of the region share the border with the Republic of Bulgaria, north border with the Northeast Planning Region, west with Vardar Planning region, and south with the Southeast Planning Region. The largest length in the Region is in the direction east-west with 90 km, and the largest width in meridian direction (North-South) is 70 km.

The region includes 11 municipalities (Berovo, Vinica, Delchevo, Zrnovci, Karbinci, Kochani, Makedonska Kamenica, Pechevo, Probishtip, Cheshinovo–Obleshevo and Shtip), which are further divided to 217 populated places, 209 of which are categorized as rural settlements.

**Table 1:** Municipalities in the East Planning Region<sup>3</sup>

	Municipality	Area km <sup>2</sup>	Per capita/km <sup>2</sup>	Populated locations	Participation (in %) of the urban population in the total population
1	Berovo	598	23	9	50.2
2	Vinica	433	46	16	54.5
3	Delchevo	422	41	22	65.7
4	Zrnovci	56	58	3	
5	Karbinci	229	18	29	
6	Kochani	360	106	28	74.4
7	Makedonska Kamenica	190	43	9	63.5
8	Pehchevo	208	27	7	58.7
9	Probishtip	326	50	36	66.8
1	Cheshinovo-0	132	57	14	
1	Shtip	583	82	44	91.3
	<b>Total</b>	<b>3.537</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>217</b>	<b>66.3</b>

Even though the rural municipalities are quite present in the East region, the largest part of the population lives in urban areas, which reveal unequal distribution of population within the region.

The population density in the East Planning Region is 50 inhabitants per square kilometer, which basically makes the entire region a rural environment, with the exception of the town Shtip. The number of residential units in 2013 is 72 248, while the average size of one family was 3.1 member.

Few conclusions for the possibilities for development of tourism in EPR are presented below:

<sup>3</sup> Source: State Statistical Office of the Republic of Macedonia.

1. Dynamic relief structure enables development of many economic branches, including tourism. Abundant natural resources provide opportunity for further economic development and particularly for tourism they provide a comparative advantage in the processes of creating authentic tourist packages and offers.

2. Developed irrigation infrastructure enables irrigation of part of the agricultural areas, which would increase the contribution of agriculture in the total economy of the region, as well as introduction of new economic branches.

3. The region has poor road and railroad infrastructure.

4. The region has a low level of GDP, insufficient industry development, unused tourist capacities and low average salary.

5. According to the economic activity, larger part of the population is unemployed, which indicates the impossibility of the region to hire the entire active population. On the other hand, in case of growth of tourism, the region has a work force which could meet the necessary market of labor for the sector itself with certain additional qualifications.

6. Bad economic conditions, in which people live, insufficient development of the industry, possibilities for better life and better education, are only part of the reasons which cause greater migration, i.e. emigration of population from this region.

7. From educational aspect, the region offers relatively good opportunities for education since a large number of high schools are operating, along with the University "Goce Delchev" with the Faculty for Tourism and Business Logistics. The opportunities for general high school education are relatively good, but the opportunities for vocational high school education, which is related and provides personnel for the necessities of tourism, are very poor. There are only two municipal high schools in the region, which provide professional work force in the area of tourism and catering and one private high school, which offers concentration in hotel tourism. Also, the popularity of this vocational high school is not at a desired level. This is confirmed with the fact that the total number of high school students in the academic concentrations related to tourism is around 200 students in the entire region, which is far from meeting the needs of qualitative and professionally trained work force, if we take into consideration that the region places organized development directions for tourism. Intensified measures are necessary for improvement of the situation in this domain by improving the statute and the reputation of the vocational high schools. This is possible to perform by increasing the number of schools which offer concentrations in tourism, by improving the syllabus/curriculum in the vocational high schools, the enrollment policy and the policy for stimulating the young population to enroll in such schools. Additionally, other measures are necessary which would increase the motivation of the students for enrollment in the vocational high schools. One of the desirable measures is direct connection with the tourist sector and its inclusion in the preparation of the syllabus, as well as in the recruitment of students as future personnel in the business facilities, which provide tourist and catering services.

8. The tourist industry is one of the less developed branches in the region, as a result of its insufficiently used capacities.

9. Through mobilization of the endogenous potential and creation of synergy between the factors of the region, it could enable gradual development of tourism through the entire region. The development of tourism has the need to create its own chains of supply and chains of values which would have positive influence on the development of the remaining part of the economy. All of this would contribute towards reduction of negative migration trends by enabling economic environment for recurrent return of depopulated population, as well as immigration of new population in this region. Reducing the migration process is especially important for the region if we take into consideration that tourism is a labor-intensive activity which requires large workforce.



The development of tourism has a large significance for the region as it could offer employment for many people. This sector is client oriented and aims towards different target groups and its effects could be as the ones from exporting. Aside from the existing infrastructure and offer, tourism is dependent upon the cooperation with partners outside of the region and certainly from foreign partners. The favorable internal factor is inexpensive labor, vicinity to the European markets. Favorable external factors are the readiness of domestic and foreign partners to invest in the tourist industry in the region, such as the accession of Bulgaria and Romania in EU, due to which we expect a tendency for gradual increase of the price of tourist and catering services in these countries.

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## 5. ANALYSIS OF POTENTIAL SEGMENTS OF TOURIST MARKET IN THE REGION

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### 5.1 Analysis of natural resources as regional tourist attractiveness

EPR has numerous and various **natural values**: geological, relief, climate, hydrographic, biological and soil. However, these values and occurrences, with few exceptions, are not of national or wider importance in the sense of rarity and uniqueness. The most characteristic natural values of EPR are the mountains, ravines, **Lesново crater**, and the total volcanic relief in its surrounding, **badlands with Kukulje**, fine climate, **rich geothermal basins, clean rivers and brooks, Kaliman and Berovo Lake**, dense **forest complexes, flora and fauna in the region**. The rare natural phenomena, areas and facilities are proposed for protection, so that parallel to the tourist development of EPR, we should also take care of those unique values which could easily be endangered or destroyed (Kukulje, badlands, ravines, rare and endemic species of animals and plants, etc.).

From the aspect of natural resources and values, which are estimated and valorized in detail in the Study, the following have the largest tourist potential:

- **Osogovo Mountains** with certain localities on them: Ponikva, Carev Vrv-Ruen, Gorna Cera, Gratche, the ravine of Zletovska Reka;
- **Maleshevo Mountains** in the section around Berovo Lake, the spring section of Bregalnica, Bregalnica waterfalls and the forest zone from there to Berovo;
- **North side of Plachkovica**, with Turtel, Lisec and Chupino, then the foot towards Zrnovci, Morodvis, Vinica to the ravine of Osojnica;
- **Lesново peak and crater** with remaining volcanic relief around Probishtip and Zletovo;
- **Lake Kalimansko** with developed coastal line, island Kalata, Istibanjska ravine, etc.;
- **Mountain Golak** with the surrounding of Delchevo, hunting ground with the same name, Lake Sandanski, Kukulje, cave Konjska Dupka, paleontological locality at the village Stamer;

According to the type and structure of the localities, mountain tourism has the largest potential, in several forms:

- **Mountain wellness-recreational stay** (all year round, any season) in: east part of the Maleshevo Mountains around Berovo Lake and the adjacent localities, Ograzhden with Suvi Laki, higher part of Plachkovica, medium-high mountain part of Osogovo, highest part of the mountains Golak and Obozna.
- **Summer sports-recreational mountain tourism** (tracking, walking, mountaineering, recreation, wild tourism and eco tourism): in previously named locations.
- **Winter-sports mountain tourism**, recreational for beginners in skiing and for children: Ponikva, above Berovo Lake, Plachkovica/Turtel-Chupino, highest part of Golak;
- **Winter-sports high mountain** (skiing, snowboarding, etc.): Carev Vrv with Kitka and Kalin Kamen (municipality Kriva Palanka).
- **Low mountain region** (500-1500 m) with possibilities for tracking, mountbiking, jeep-safari, paragliding, geotourism, mountaineering, adrenalin parks and similar activities. Especially suitable locations are Lesново peak and crater with the entire paleovolcanic area, western

parts of Plachkovica (from Shtip to Vrteshka with Kamnik, Radanjska Reka, Kozjachka Reka, and other), Golak, Bejaz Tepe, Osogovo above Kochani, Orizari and Makedonska Kamenica.

Aside from mountain tourism, a large potential in the region from the aspect of natural values lies within the following:

- **Spa-tourism** in Kezhovica – Shtip, village Istibanja – Vinica and village Dolni Podlog – village Banja. All given localities have geothermal waters with great quality, and they also have excellent position and availability.
- **Lake tourism** on Lake Kalimansko with excellent position, transit location, developed coast, unique and single island (Kalata) and good gravitation circumference. Also, the potential of lake tourism should be maximally used at the lake Gratche at Kochani.
- **Landscape** (with gastronomic and manifestation-traditional) tourism related to rice and rice fields in Kochansko Pole, etc.

The area of EPR offers possibilities for numerous types of tourism related to natural values, but they cannot be the pillar of tourist development (hunting and fishing tourism, aero-tourism, and other). Actually, hunting tourism in the sense of elitism and sustainability is suitable and necessary for the region, but it could not generate high total financial effect.

Mountain (wellness, recreational and winter-sports) and spa-tourism have the possibility to increase the average number of overnight stays since they usually include few days. Other tourist activities, if they are well organized and included in the offer, present a great base for extending and increasing the tourist stay.

The above said envisages numerous activities for arranging and reactivating the existing tourist localities, as well as construction of several new localities on the area of EPR. In that sense, greater investments and dedication are necessary, but the return effect will be noticeable and long-term.

## 5.2 Analysis of cultural-historical resources as regional tourist attractiveness

The analyses of the cultural values and tourist valorization of more than a hundred activities, made in the Study of the condition of potentials for development of tourism in the East Planning Region revealed that the region possesses rich and various cultural–historical and archeological heritage and values. Archeological localities, museums, churches, monasteries, mosques, monuments and memorial landmarks, festivals and other manifestations possess impressive potential for development of cultural tourism. Also, if they are wisely and creatively used as a whole or if they are used with one of its part, segment or meaning, they could contribute to the development of integrated tourist products.

From the aspect of estimation of their tourist connection, accessibility, equipment, amenities, particularity and seasonality, a large number of them are distinguished as attractions with highest potential. Based upon the prepared maps with concentration of attractions, it is obvious that the presented localities from the area of cultural heritage are usually located around or in the town centers. Such positioning additionally increases tourist offer of urban settlements and it represents a great advantage for development of the tourist sector in them.

The following localities are highly appraised attractions:

- **Archeological localities:** Bargala–Karbinci, Crkvishte-Morodvis, Vinichko Kale and Isar – Shtip are few localities with highest appraisals according to the valorization. The remaining localities are insufficiently researched and insufficiently presented, and marked. Largest number of

localities lack quality presentation, signage, interpretation, promotion, and in their vicinity there is lack of accompanying infrastructure such as information centers, souvenir shops, organized parking places and toilets.

- **Museums:** Museum in Shtip, Museum in Berovo, Delchevo, Vinica, Kochani, Museum of IMRO activists from Shtip and Shtip area, Novo Selo, Shtip are highly appraised due to the quality of institutions and their presentations or their significance, as well as their accessibility. However, some need addition or renewing of collections and funds, which is especially present at memorial houses and homes (e.g. Memorial home of Razlovechko uprising in Razlovci – Delchevo). The lack of promotional activities and promotional materials is also noticeable.
- **Events:** “Chetrse” – Shtip, Makfest – Shtip, Pijanec–Maleshevo wedding - Delchevo, Pastrmajlija event – Shtip, Days of fashion in Shtip, Ethno-fest Berovo, Istibanjsko zhivozdravo – Vinica, Days of rice – Kochani, Drama amateur festival, Festival of wind orchestras – Pehchevo are highly appraised. The key characteristics for all of them are that they are already established and relatively well promoted, and the locations where they take place are easily accessible for the visitors. The possibility for their further promotion and for creating a tourist product from them is envisaged in creating basic and accompanying activities, which would prolong their duration and this would prolong the stay of tourists.
- Additionally, these events should be promoted outside of the country. Part of the manifestations in EPR have the potential to become generators of a large number of visitors, but greater investments are necessary in the program part, as well as change in the approach in their organization, mainly in the part of management and logistics, by hiring a professional personnel and professional promotion. Such changes would lead to making them recognizable and to creating a brand of the manifestations which realistically should bring a more serious numbers of tourists – visitors of such events. More serious mapping of the global map of events is especially important through their membership in international organizations. Other manifestations from the valorization which have local significance are especially interesting for creating integrated tourist products by combining them with other activities and contents in the region. It is possible to combine them with activities and offer within the villages, i.e. rural and religious tourism.
- **Churches and monasteries:** St. Virgin Mary – Novo Selo, St. Nicholas – Shtip, Lesnovo monastery, St. Arhangel Mihail – Berovo, the Birth of Virgin Mary – Berovo, St. Georgi - Gorni Kozjak, St. Virgin Mary – Balaklija in Delchevo, St. Vasilij Veliki – Ponikva, St. Nicholas –Shtip. St. Georgi and St. Pantelejmon – Kochani, Assumption of Virgin Mary – Berovo, St. Arhangel Mihail – Dramche are sacred objects which are separated as attractiveness with highest potential according to the valorization, primarily because of the cultural – historical value and the religious significance, as well as their accessibility. It is noticeable that this heritage is distributed everywhere – in the urban centers, rural settlements and in the rural uninhabited environments. Parts of these attractions are already mapped on the national tourist offer and as such they are established as locations which attract a large number of visitors (for example, Lesnovo monastery, St. Arhangel Mihail – Berovo and other). These cultural – historical resources have the largest potential for development of religious and cultural tourism. These localities require additional efforts for their further promotion and provision of logistics, which would provide additional services for the visitors (accommodation for the localities where accommodation is not possible, food, souvenirs, etc.). The religious object which have a regional significance require increased promotion and their use in creating tourist products, in combination with natural resources and resources of rural environment. With their diligent and creative utilization and implementation into the tourist products, it is possible to make

autochthonous and competitive tourist offer in the part of rural tourism, ethno tourism and eco tourism.

- **Islamic cultural historical and religious heritage:** Sultan's bridge Emir Khuchuk – Shtip, Clock tower – Shtip, Husamedin Pasha Mosque - Shtip, Kadin Aga Mosque – Shtip, Besistan – Shtip, Mosque Sultan Fatih Mehmed in Delchevo are monuments of culture from the Ottoman period, which have the largest potential for development of tourism in the region. The largest numbers of these attractions are located in Shtip and this is why they can easily constitute a separate tourist product – tour as part of the tourist offer of the cultural – historical or urban tourism, if they are used in combination with the remaining attractions dating from different periods and belonging to other civilization values. The religious objects have the potential for development of religious tourism.
- **Monuments and memorial landmarks:** they are very important in the East Planning Region but at the moment, we could not say that they represent a large potential for development of tourism. This anthropogenic heritage could be used in creating different thematic or integrated tourist products and offers.

## 5.3 Analysis of demographic resources and settlements

### 5.3.1 Demographic resources in EPR

Since tourism is a labor-intensive sector, which includes or could include large population, the demographic resources are especially important for development of tourism. According to the statistical data, in 2013 177 988 inhabitants lived on the area of EPR, which means that the population density was 50, 3 inhabitants per square kilometer. Pursuant to the density of the population, the region has conditions for development of all spheres of living, including tourism. However, a great concern is the fact that EPR has a high rate of **mortality** (between 10, 1 and 10, 8 permille), mainly as the result of the aging of the population. This is partially the reason, along with the emigration of the women population, making the birth rate low. The variation of the municipality birth rate is significantly emphasized. The highest rate (16, 1 permille, 2012) is noticed in the municipality of Karbinci, and the lowest in the municipality of Pehchevo (5, 1 permille). Therefore, there is a tendency of **negative natural increase**, which began in 2005, and it is still present, and according to all indicators it will continue in the following period. All of this points out to the conclusion that the East Planning Region has unfavorable demographic characteristics, and according to the projections the region is expected to have 164 514 inhabitants in 2020 (Jakhimovski and other, 2015).

The information regarding the age structure of the population reveals that the aged population above 65 is more dominating compared to the young population, which causes concerns. Today, the ratio of the population of the age up to 40 years old and above 40 is almost the same, which points out that the average old age is significant. According to the demographic projections of Jakhimovski and other (2015), in 2024 the participation of the population up to 40 will be 43%, and above 40 will be up to 57%, which will influence the working contingent in tourism as well. The reason for increasing the average old age, i.e. the participation of the elderly population, aside from the low birth rate, is the migration of the younger population from the region towards Skopje and abroad (mainly due to economical necessities). If the economical performances of the region are strengthened, this trend is expected to reduce, and even stagnate. Tourism should provide solid impulse in that direction.

The increase of the participation of population with completed high school and university education is significant for development of tourism, which is necessary for increasing tourist activities and offers in the region. The growth of Shtip into a regional university center has a great contribution towards this.

Moreover, due to migration from villages to towns, from 1960s the participation of the urban population (66%) has increased significantly, compared to the rural population (34%) in the region. This has caused a large demographic and a socioeconomic imbalance.

### 5.3.2 Settlements as a tourist resource in EPR

The East Planning Region has a total of 217 settlements. Of those, 8 are urban, and 209 are rural settlements, and up to 136 villages are hill-mountain. All of those settlements are a very important factor for development of tourist activities envisaged with the Strategy. This is especially directed towards rural settlements, which are the base of rural tourism, but also for many other types of tourism closely related to natural and cultural values richly present in the region. Aside from their main residential function, the recreational-tourist function of rural settlements is increasing more and more. Recreational tourist function implies temporary stay of the urban population in a rural area which is located near the town. Tourist function is a temporary stay in the rural area by visitors coming from distant locations (Chomik 2001).

However, the condition of settlements in EPR, similar to the population causes concerns. Namely, due to the turbulent migration from the villages to the town, especially in the 60s and the 70s of the last century, the population was drastically reduced in many populated places. Thus, according to the census in 1961, on the area of EPR there were 45 village settlements with more than 500 inhabitants, and only 16 settlements with less than 100 inhabitants. In 2002 only 21 settlements had over 500 inhabitants and up to 66 settlements below 100 inhabitants. According to the data from the census in 2002, compared to 1961, 16 settlements were depopulated, and up to 2015 this number grew to 22 (site data). The similar, less favorable situation is present in the villages with less than 50 inhabitants, and there are 60 of those in the region, or 27.6% from the total number. Even though they have an extraordinary natural position, picturesque and landscape attractiveness, i.e. the attractiveness for tourists, today they are populated by elderly population, which could not be the base for offering necessary tourist activities and services. Also, the first villages to be depopulated by the time span of the Strategy (year 2025) are 23 villages with up to 10 inhabitants. According to the survey data, some of them have only 1-2 inhabitants.

**Table 2** Number of hill-mountain settlements in EPR and number of inhabitants according to the censuses in 1961 and 2002.

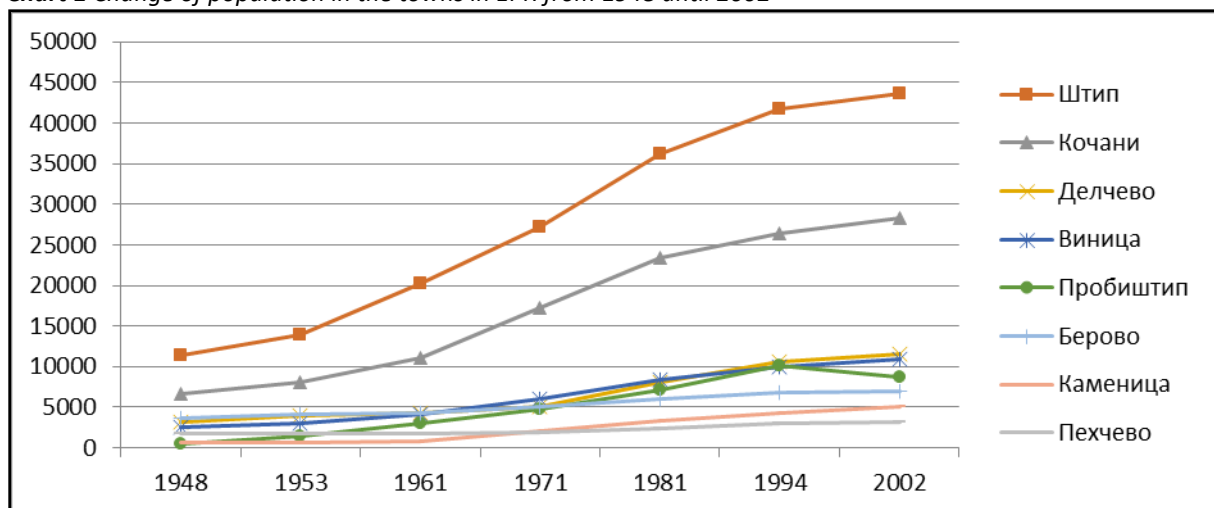
	Depopulated	From 1 to 100 inhabitants	101 – 300 inhab.	301 – 500 inhab.	501 – 800 inhab.	801 – 1000 inhab.	1001 – 2000 inhab.	2001 – 3000 inhab.	3001 – 5000 inhab.	5001 – 10000 inhab.	over 10 001 inhab.	TOTAL
Number 1961	6	16	43	26	21	9	12	1	1	0	1	136
Number 2002	8	66	25	16	8	5	3	2	1	1	1	136
Settl. 1961	0	973	8631	10352	13627	8219	16394	2242	4289	0	20269	84996
Settl. 2002	0	2003	4408	6132	5386	4363	3887	4316	3237	7002	43652	84386

The only way to slow down the demographic deterioration of settlements, especially villages, is tourism. In that sense, it is necessary to pay attention to 40 villages in the region, which according to the census from 2002 have over 300 citizens (pursuant to the site prospects from 2015, the number of such villages today is 30-32). From the aspect of tourist offer, we could divide these settlements into:

- Independent tourist villages with complete tourist offer (accommodation, food, recreation, cultural activities, etc.)
- Tourist villages with partial tourist offer accompanied by other segments of the tourist demand (villages near lakes, baths, mountain centers, etc.: Zrnovci, Cera, Lukovica, Novo Selo, Banja)
- Villages with manifestation tourist cultural offer (bazaars, fairs, festivals, rural celebrations, art colonies, etc.: Istibanja, Razlovci, Dramche, Rusinovo...)
- Transit tourist villages (villages next to roads: Krupishte, Obleshevo, Zvegor, Smojmirovo...)
- Picnic tourist villages (villages near city centers: Lesново, Ratevo, Polaki, Zletovo)
- Villages which could provide different services (hunting, fishing, sports, religious activities, outdoor classes, etc.: Cheshinovo).

Towns in EPR, a total of 8, are also a very significant tourist resource. This refers especially to larger towns in the region: Shtip with 43 652 inhabitants and Kochani with 28 330 inhabitants (according to the census from 2002). The remaining towns are significantly smaller, and the third town in size, Delchevo, has only 11 500 inhabitants, while the smallest town, Pechevo, has 3 237 inhabitants. It is significant to note that these towns are also affected by the emigration processes: from smaller to larger towns in the region, especially towards Shtip, and then the capital city Skopje and abroad.

**Chart 1** Change of population in the towns in EPR from 1948 until 2002



The upcoming census will provide a clear perspective of the condition of towns in EPR, but certain surveys, site prospects and analyses indicate a cause for concern. However, the largest part of the population is emigrating from towns in EPR into Skopje and abroad and this occurs for economical reasons. Part of that population would return to their home towns if the economic conditions improve, including through development of tourism.

## 5.4 Analyses of receptive factors

The base of the tourist economy is the catering industry (capacities in hotels and restaurants). The economic function of tourism is meaningless without accommodation facilities and capacities in the catering industry. The capacities of the catering industry are the main criterion for tourist development of tourist locations (municipalities, regions and states). After the tourist resources, the capacities of the catering industry are the most significant part of the tourist offer. They have a decisive role in achieving the economic effects.

One of the main deficiencies for significant development of the tourist sector in EPR is the insufficient number of facilities for accommodation, rooms and beds. From the total of 383 accommodation capacities<sup>4</sup> in the Republic of Macedonia in 2010, the East Planning Region has only 23 (or 6, 88%).

**Table 3** Capacities for accommodation, per regions, per year

	Number of rooms								
	RM	VPR	EPR	SWPR	SEPR	PEPR	POPR	NEPR	NPR
2006	26.503	553	716	16.400	2.095	3.502	987	276	1.974
2007	26.246	553	670	16.166	2.062	3.452	990	289	2.064
2008	25.952	550	588	16.154	2.095	3.053	1.020	291	2.201
2009	26.390	508	598	16.369	2.152	3.102	1.080	297	2.284
2010	26.189	554	533	16.013	2.105	3.390	1.011	292	2.291
2011	26.448	589	544	16.033	2.277	3.330	1.018	302	2.355
2012	26.877	689	599	16.035	2.298	3.497	1.014	306	2.439
2013	26.887	690	620	16.050	2.346	3.322	1.072	300	2.487
2014	27.422	666	637	16.304	2.374	3.431	1.111	298	2.601
	Number of beds								
2006	71.021	1.647	1.973	42.425	5.937	10.231	3.069	734	5.005
2007	70.898	1.647	1.876	42.451	5.910	10.012	3.039	803	5.160
2008	69.097	1.504	1.729	41.703	5.893	8.993	3.046	800	5.429
2009	69.561	1.360	1.718	42.103	5.750	8.999	3.182	805	5.644
2010	69.102	1.496	1.591	41.458	5.724	10.229	3.057	633	4.914
2011	69.737	1.701	1.606	41.454	6.069	10.165	3.058	645	5.039
2012	70.287	1.829	1.721	41.458	6.088	10.310	3.059	653	5.169
2013	70.297	1.819	1.826	41.411	6.298	10.001	3.153	647	5.142
2014	71.225	1.677	1.869	42.025	6.277	10.055	3.330	648	5.344

Source: State Statistical Office.

The East Planning Region, together with Vardar and Northeast Planning Region are regions where the number of rooms is far below a thousand, and the number of beds is below two thousands. From the total number of 27.422 rooms in the Republic of Macedonia in 2014, there are only 637 or 2, 23% rooms in the East Planning Region, from the total number of rooms in the country. The accommodation capacities in the country in 2014 had 71 225 beds, of which only 1.869 or 2, 6% in the East Planning Region (Table 2). Also, we could notice that in the period of 2006-2014 there was a tendency to reduce the number of rooms and beds up to 2010, and then their number began to grow again. According to the Census of the catering industry from 2008, the accommodation capacities in the country had 5 444 employees, and the East Planning Region had only 265 people or 4, 87% from the total number.

**Table 4** Capacities in the catering industry in EPR per municipalities in 2008

	Total 1 (1=2+3)	Catering facilities (2)	Accommodation facilities (3)	Structure in %
<b>TOTAL RM</b>	<b>5.226</b>	<b>4.740</b>	<b>486</b>	<b>100,00%</b>
<b>TOTAL EPR</b>	<b>395</b>	<b>362</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>7,56%</b>
Berovo	41	36	5	<b>0,78%</b>
Vinica	38	35	3	<b>0,73%</b>
Delchevo	42	39	3	<b>0,80%</b>
Zrnovci	5	5		<b>0,10%</b>

<sup>4</sup> Capacities for accommodation in the catering industry: status 01.08 2010, Statistical overview: Transport, tourism and catering 8.4.11.02 689 / State Statistical Office of the Republic of Macedonia, Skopje, July 2011.



Karbinci	2	1	1	<b>0,04%</b>
Kochani	77	69	8	<b>1,47%</b>
Makedonska Kamenica	37	34	3	<b>0,71%</b>
Pehchevo	16	15	1	<b>0,31%</b>
Probishtip	19	15	4	<b>0,36%</b>
Cheshinovo - Obleshevo	7	7		<b>0,13%</b>
Shtip	111	106	5	<b>2,12%</b>

Source: State Statistical Office.

However, we must note that the statistical data should be taken into consideration with great doubt. Namely, the highest number of small accommodation facilities: villas, apartments, etc., are not statistically registered. Thus, the tourist portal for booking [www.berovobooking.com](http://www.berovobooking.com), which unfortunately is the only portal of this type in EPR, on 15.08.2015 offered 35 accommodation facilities in Berovo and around Berovo Lake with around 600 beds, contrary to only 5 accommodation facilities present in the statistical data. Simultaneously, in almost every municipality of EPR there are weekend settlements, i.e. weekend houses, which could be adapted for accommodation of tourists by the interested owners with certain financial aid and investment. The following table provides data for the accommodation facilities in EPR obtained by May 2015 from different sources: internet pages, data from the municipalities, then from the Agency for Spatial Planning and other.

**Table 5** Accommodation capacities in EPR, status May 2015

	Berovo	Kochani	Delchevo	Shtip	Vinica	Probishtip	Karbinci	Pechovo	Makedonska Kamenica	Zrnovci	TOTAL
Facilities	47	11	4	5	4	5	4	3	4	2	<b>89</b>
Rooms	256	125	127	116	113	48	26	19	19	7	<b>856</b>
Beds	577	345	328	262	243	103	98	46	45	19	<b>2066</b>

Source: Different sources: internet pages, data from the municipalities, Agency for Spatial Planning of RM

The following important characteristics are that the accommodation and catering facilities are barely present on the tourist internet portals as the fastest and most effective method of advertising. Thus, on the popular world giant [booking.com](http://www.booking.com), which offers booking and which makes large tourist sales, on 15.08.2015 there were only 13 accommodation facilities in the entire region present, 7 in Berovo, 3 in Vinica, 2 in Kochani and 1 in Shtip. As a comparison, there were 350 accommodation facilities present in Ohrid, 195 in Skopje, 25 in Bitola, 22 in Struga, etc. Actually, the potential interested visitors are not even nearly informed whether and where they could find accommodation within EPR, knowing that internet is most often used as the only, easiest and fastest source of tourist information.

From a statistical point of view, the condition is somewhat better with reference to the capacities in the catering industry (restaurants, taverns, barbecue restaurants, etc.) Compared to year 2006, in 2013 there is an increase of the number of business units for 13%, the number of seats for 18%, and the largest increase is in sales for 96% (Table 3).

**Table 6** Catering industry in RM, per regions, per years

	Business units		Seats		Sales in thousands of denars	
	RM	EPR	RM	EPR	RM	EPR
2006	2.058	147	122.115	7.929	6.196.799	290.091
2007	2.006	125	134.954	6.654	7.169.204	310.629
2008	2.035	139	121.091	6.710	8.125.392	357.699
2009	1.967	146	110.354	6.954	7.636.016	359.370

2010	1.914	131	115.309	6.789	7.352.408	383.928
2011	1.950	172	117.006	8.559	7.816.343	485.896
2012	1.949	162	118.755	8.857	8.166.264	529.148
2013	1.957	166	120.063	9.357	8.419.069	567.727

Source: State Statistical Office.

## 5.5 Tourist sales

Despite the insignificant accommodation capacities and number of beds, in the period 2006-2014, the East Planning Region almost doubled the number of tourists and the number of overnight stays of the tourists. The trends of arrivals and overnight stays of tourists in the East Planning Region in the period 2006-2014 are presented in the Chart 2 and Chart 3.

The increase of tourist sales is evident, but it is still insignificant with reference to other economic sectors in the region. The charts offer the conclusion that the East Planning Region is a region with an increased number of domestic and foreign tourists, as well as the total number of overnight stays. The average stay of domestic guests in the period 2006 – 2014 is decreased from 2, 4 to 1,9 nights/tourist, while the stay of foreign tourists remains almost unchanged, around 2, 5 nights/tourist.

Chart 2

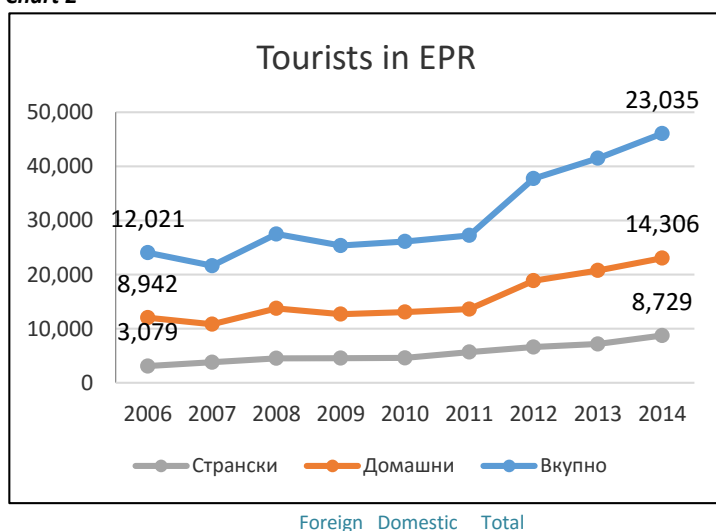


Chart 3



Source: State Statistical Office.

Such conditions in the tourist economy of the East Planning Region indicate that tourism, despite its versatile resource abundance, had no significant role in the present economic development of the region. The reasons are numerous and various and they relate to: modest accommodation and other catering capacities available in the region, insufficient number of tourist products and absence of tourist promotion – the most significant tourist resources are not known to both foreign and domestic tourists. Without good promotion and catering capacities and well created tourist product there is no tourism. Therefore, the strategic mission of business entities should be a tourist product of high quality, which will be based upon natural and cultural heritage, local products and hospitality, and as such it could attract new guests and meet their needs. Should the offer of the region fully meet the requirements of modern tourists and travelers which are transiting through this region, this will create all preconditions for increasing tourist sales (number of tourists and overnight stays) with a growth much larger than what is expected on state level. This will create conditions for new employment and improvement of living conditions for the local population.

The neighboring planning regions, Southeast and Vardar region made greater sales in the catering industry than the East Planning Region in 2013 (Table 4).

**Table 7** Catering industry in RM, neighboring regions of EPR, 2013

	RM	VPR	EPR	SEPR	NEPR
Business units	1.957	192	166	176	164
Workers	12.770	1.123	867	1.771	725
Seats	120.063	11.811	9.357	11.569	11.361
Total in thousands of denars	8.419.069	585.143	567.727	779.222	355.897
Drinks in thousands of denars	2.021.646	184.798	184.360	204.799	138.646
Food and beverages in thousands of denars	4.290.109	327.979	336.844	318.981	208.747
Overnight stays in thousands of denars	1.700.913	62.420	33.200	203.251	6.296
Other sales in thousands of denars	406.401	9.946	13.323	52.191	2.208

Source: State Statistical Office.

## 5.6 Tourist markets

Tourist attractiveness of EPR for development of tourist products, as well as the existing difference between market segments, provides an opportunity for increasing the participation of EPR on the tourist market. Covering the market with different products provides greater sales, greater profit, greater market participation and economy in the range of marketing. These benefits must be compared to the costs which would be created by multiple segmentation, which are increased due to the innovation of products, promotion, marketing research and expenses for managing a greater number of products.

From the aspect of market segmentation of the East Planning Region, based upon the movement of tourists and overnight stays (Chart 2 and Chart 3), focus should be placed upon retaining and attracting new segments of domestic tourists, as well as its internationalization.

The long term growth of the domestic market is of strategic importance for development of tourism in the East Planning Region. The activities of the domestic market should be adjusted to the domestic guest. The adjusted offer contributes towards development of consumers' loyalty and constant expansion of new segments of market demands.

The East Planning Region possesses a potential for increased attraction of foreign tourists, taking into consideration the insufficiently developed and promoted offer in accordance with the world trends related to the growth of segments seeking attractive, well-preserved, unpolluted, safe and creative destinations.

The monthly statistics for accommodation provide the following data for foreign tourists in EPT in the period 2012-2014 (Table 6).

**Table 8** Foreign tourists in EPR in the period 2012-2014

	Country of origin	Number of tourists	Number of tourists %	Number of overnight stays	Number of overnight stays %	Overnight stay/tourist	Overnight stay/tourist
	<b>TOTAL EPR</b>	<b>22.484</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>55.607</b>	<b>100,00%</b>	<b>2,47</b>	<b>100,00%</b>
1	Bulgaria	3.777	16,80%	6.701	12,05%	1,77	71,74%
2	Germany	1.598	7,11%	4.886	8,79%	3,06	123,63%
3	Serbia	2.095	9,32%	4.286	7,71%	2,05	82,72%
4	Italy	937	4,17%	2.747	4,94%	2,93	118,54%
5	Turkey	1.312	5,84%	2.643	4,75%	2,01	81,45%
6	Holland	1.076	4,79%	2.587	4,65%	2,40	97,21%
7	Greece	718	3,19%	2.072	3,73%	2,89	116,68%

8	Slovenia	648	2,88%	1.978	3,56%	3,05	123,42%
9	Czech Republic	560	2,49%	1.946	3,50%	3,48	140,51%
10	Poland	1.277	5,68%	1.733	3,12%	1,36	54,87%
11	Romania	423	1,88%	1.731	3,11%	4,09	165,46%
12	Great Britain	515	2,29%	1.668	3,00%	3,24	130,96%
13	Belgium	516	2,29%	1.424	2,56%	2,76	111,58%
14	Kosovo	415	1,85%	1.288	2,32%	3,10	125,49%

Source: State Statistical Office.

Table 6 reveals that in the period 2012-2014, the largest number of foreign tourists in EPR arrived from Bulgaria, Serbia, Germany, Turkey and Poland. The average stay of tourists in EPR in this period is 2,47 overnight stays/tourist. The highest stay is evident among tourists from Romania, and the lowest by tourists from Poland and Bulgaria.

Based upon the number of tourists and overnight stays according to the data presented in Table 8, it can be concluded that:

**Primary markets** for the East Planning Region as a tourist destination are: Bulgaria, Serbia, Turkey, Germany and Italy.

**Secondary markets** for the East Planning Region as a tourist destination are: Holland, Greece, Slovenia, Czech Republic, Poland and Romania.

**New markets** for the East Planning Region as a tourist destination are: Great Britain, Belgium and Kosovo.

The monthly statistics for accommodation in EPR in the period 2010-2014 provide the seasonal distribution of domestic and foreign tourists per month, and the number of overnight stays.

**Table 9** Tourists and overnight stays of tourists in EPR, per months, in the period 2010-2014

	Domestic tourists				Foreign tourists			
	Tourists	Tourists %	Overnight stays	Overnight stays %	Tourists	Tourists %	Overnight stays	Overnight stays %
<b>Total</b>	56.574	100,00%	103.312	100,00%	32.742	100,00%	80.028	100,00%
<b>M01</b>	4.952	8,75%	10.169	9,84%	1.457	4,45%	3.834	4,79%
<b>M02</b>	3.773	6,67%	7.099	6,87%	1.507	4,60%	3.800	4,75%
<b>M03</b>	4.382	7,75%	6.937	6,71%	2.040	6,23%	5.243	6,55%
<b>M04</b>	4.349	7,69%	7.020	6,79%	2.677	8,18%	5.980	7,47%
<b>M05</b>	5.248	9,28%	8.710	8,43%	3.073	9,39%	8.113	10,14%
<b>M06</b>	4.842	8,56%	9.336	9,04%	3.485	10,64%	7.428	9,28%
<b>M07</b>	3.929	6,94%	8.685	8,41%	3.528	10,78%	8.468	10,58%
<b>M08</b>	5.162	9,12%	10.415	10,08%	3.469	10,59%	8.823	11,02%
<b>M09</b>	4.851	8,57%	9.003	8,71%	4.089	12,49%	9.210	11,51%
<b>M10</b>	5.460	9,65%	9.720	9,41%	2.933	8,96%	6.942	8,67%
<b>M11</b>	4.866	8,60%	8.001	7,74%	2.561	7,82%	7.521	9,40%
<b>M12</b>	4.760	8,41%	8.217	7,95%	1.923	5,87%	4.666	5,83%

Source: State Statistical Office.

The number of domestic tourists is the highest in October, and the lowest in July, while the highest number of overnight stays by domestic tourists was made in August, and the lowest in February. Most foreign tourists arrived in EPR in September, and the least in February.

## 5.7 Remaining significant segments

### 5.7.1 Transport infrastructure

#### 5.7.1.1 Road infrastructure

The road infrastructure in the East Planning Region consists of 1187 km local roads, 177 km A state roads and 302 km regional roads. The main roads are the state road A3 (Veles - Shtip - Kochani - Delchevo – Border with Bulgaria) and the state road A4 (Sveti Nikole - Shtip - Strumica). These roads connect EPR with the rest of the country and with the Republic of Bulgaria.

The existing condition of the quality of the road infrastructure is severely poor, which is due to insufficient maintenance and investment.

Local roads are also in severely poor condition. A large part of the local roads are of improper quality, and the quality of certain sections of the local road network is so poor that it represents a potential danger for normal traffic operation.

Large part of the state and regional roads do not provide proper connection for part of the municipalities with the main traffic corridors in the country.

The current condition of part of the state A roads and regional roads is not in accordance with the standards for safe traffic operation, and as such they could not contribute towards development of tourism.

State roads reveal investments. The construction of highway on part of the state road A3 Sveti Nikole - Shtip is currently underway, as well as the construction of highway Miladinovci-Shtip, which will connect this region with modern road connection with Skopje. Simultaneously, there is reconstruction and superstructure of the section Veles – Kadrifakovo from the state road A4. In the future, by the end of 2017 it is planned for the line of the express road Veles – Shtip to be constructed with section from A3 in the direction Shtip – Kochani. The construction of these transport corridors will contribute towards the overall development of the region, including the tourist sector.

The regional road network remains a challenge. As we mentioned before, it is insufficiently maintained and incompletely constructed. Part of it contains dirt roads, such as: P 2334 Argulica - Burchilevo; Kuchichino - Vidovishte; Kalimanci connection with 2345 and P 2336 Kukovo - Mechkuevci; Petrushino – Zarpinci.

Part of the regional road network which was planned was never constructed. From the aspect of development of tourism, investments are necessary in these regional roads. Here is the list of regional roads which should be constructed:

- P 1309 Ponikva - Zletovo (Probishtip)
- P 1310 Berovo - Radovish
- P 1210 Makedonska Kamenica (Sasa) - Toranica (Kriva Palanka)
- P 2341 Gabrovo–Border with Bulgaria
- P 2342 Pishica - Zhiganci
- P 2431 Prnalija - Shipkovica (Karbinci–Radovish via Plachkovica)
- P 2346 Connection with P1304 - Razlovci–Trabotivishte

From the aspect of development of tourism, it is necessary to have an accelerated construction of regional roads. This will facilitate access to the region, but it will also create opportunities for making integrated tourist products based upon interregional tourist offer and cooperation.

Improvement of road infrastructure is exceptionally significant for development of tourism in EPR. It is necessary to facilitate access of tourists to the region and to provide tourist services. Improper local and regional roads have negative effect on the existing potentials of the present facilities dealing with tourism, primarily because of the fact of complicating the transport of tourists and increasing the cost of the total expense related to transport and maintenance of the facilities. Additionally, the poor road infrastructure also complicates the plan for development of tourist sector in the municipalities in the region which have the potential to do so. The construction of local roads is especially important (especially the roads passing through the Osogovo region). This is significant not only from the aspect of facilitating the access to the tourist attractiveness, but also for increasing the potentials for mobility of people, equipment and goods. The high concentration of the population in the urban environments is an unfavorable factor for development of tourism in the region, especially in rural and unpopulated locations. This situation requires necessity of engaging a work force from the towns for the necessities of tourist infrastructure outside of the urban centers.

Even though EPR shares a border with the Republic of Bulgaria of around 100 km, there is only one border crossing on its territory (Delchevo). The plans for opening other border crossings are still not effectuated. Complete modernization of the existing border crossing and opening of the planned border crossings has priority meaning for the necessities of the development of tourist sector in EPR. Border crossings are the gates of the region which will facilitate the access for the foreign guests.

### 5.7.1.2 Railroad infrastructure

The development of railroad network in the East Planning Region could be estimated as insufficient, as the services provided by the Macedonian railroads are limited. Part of the railroad line Veles-Kochani passes through the East Planning Region in the length of 70 km, and it ends as a dead end. The railroad network in this region has a very small density of 17.3 km per 1000 km<sup>2</sup>, and the length of the railways per 100 thousands of inhabitants is 9.56 km, which is far below the national average of 33.9 km and it does not provide adequate service for the municipalities of the region. Only Shtip and Kochani as municipal centers are connected with railways lines, and there is only a passenger train going to Kochani.

The existing railroad infrastructure is in a very poor condition and it is necessary to carry out urgent reconstruction for the purpose of providing fast and safe transport and passengers and goods.

New trains should be provided in the period 2016 -2018 and this should improve the image and the situation with the railroad traffic in EPR to a certain extent, provided they pass through the railways in the region.

The poor condition of the railroad network is a negative factor for development of tourism and investments are necessary for improvement of the existing network and for its extension. The improved railroad network will have positive effects in the connection of the region with the neighboring Vardar region (one of the most significant regions from the aspect of railroad network since the key railways in the country pass through this region) and with Skopje as the main emitting area, especially from the aspect of encouraging economic growth through investments.

### 5.7.1.3 Air traffic

EPR is relatively close to the international passenger airport in Skopje “Alexander the Great”, even though at present the access to the airport is not simple and fast. With construction of the highway Miladinovci – Shtip in 2017, this situation is expected to be resolved.

There is only one sports airport near Shtip in the East Region and one airfield for economic aviation “Lakavica” which are insufficiently used. This infrastructure could be used for development of tourism primarily in creating tourist offer in the part of extreme sports.

## 5.7.2 Communal infrastructure

### 5.7.2.1 Water supply network

The length of the water supply network in the East Planning Region is 384 km and it is primarily located in the urban centers of the municipalities. According to the data from the Census in 2002, 94.4% from the households in this region have been supplied with drinking water. The coverage of population with drinking water in the urban areas ranges from 90% in Shtip to a 100% in Vinica. The same indicator ranges from 10% to 80% in rural environments.

During the summer period, in many populated locations there is the problem of shortage of drinking water. This problem is the result of several factors such as: high average consumption per capita, loss of water in the supply systems for more than 50% due to their obsolescence (mainly older than 20 years), insufficient volume of reservoirs, water treatment stations and other facilities. The problem of providing sufficient quantities of drinking water in this region could be solved with better exploitation of accumulation lakes which are located in this region and with reconstruction and repair of the existing water supply systems and reservoirs for reducing water loss. The problem with water supply for the municipalities of Probishtip, Shtip and Karbinici will be resolved by putting the water supply system Zletovica into operation.

The obsolete water supply network which is simultaneously characterized by lack of sufficient capacities and lack of drinking water in the summer months represents a serious problem for development of tourist infrastructure in the region and measures are necessary to influence the improvement of the situation.

### 5.7.2.2 Sewage and draining and treating waste waters

The condition of the systems for draining waste waters is unsatisfactory. The draining systems are characterized by releasing part of the waste water during transportation, which increases the risk of polluting the soil and the underground waters.

The collector network is primarily located in the urban centers of the municipalities and it is 250 km long. The population in urban environments is covered with sewage network in the range between 80% and 100%. Parts of the rural populated places do not have drainage systems and the population solves this problem with the help of septic tanks. In some villages there is partial sewage. Rural environments in EPR are covered with drainage systems in the range from 0% to 80%.

The coverage of population with waste water treatment plants in the East Planning Region is 7, 7% (12, 7 % at the level of the Republic of Macedonia). There is only one waste water treatment plant in the region which is located in Berovo with capacity of 14.000 PE.

According to the Plan for management of the basin of the river Bregalnica<sup>5</sup>, waste water treatment plants are planned for construction for Shtip, Kochani and Orizari, Vinica, Makedonska Kamenica, Pehchevo, Delchevo, Zrnovci, Karbinici, Kosovo and Cheshinovo.

The nonexistence of developed drainage and collector network will have a negative effect on the tourist sector, especially in the part of construction of tourist infrastructure for accommodation and catering capacities and in the part of construction of toilets of the tourist attractiveness with high rate of visitation, located outside of the urban populated places or outside of the populated places. For these reasons, modernization and extension of the drainage systems for waste waters and construction of waste water treatment plants has priority importance.

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<sup>5</sup> Prepared and supported by MESP and MAFWM, financed by SECO.

### 5.7.3 Energy infrastructure

The energy potentials of EPR are not large. There are three small hydro-power plants – Kalimanci, Zrnovci and Berovo Lake, and two are in the phase of construction – Pehchevo and Berovo. Also, the construction of small HPPs in the hydro system Zletovica is planned in the future. From the total electricity consumption in the region, the locally produced energy is only 2MW, which leads us to the fact that the region depends upon import of electricity. The consumption in 2009 was 164 GWh, while in 2012 it was 155 GWh, which represents a reduction of 5,5%.

In order to reduce energy dependency of the region, alternative sources of energy should be used. The region has energy potentials from wind, sun and biomass. Sunny days/hours amount to 2300 per year and they should be utilized. As an example we could use the fact that there are already mini plants with photovoltaic collectors with small installed capacity at the village Krupishte. Also, it is necessary to build power generators operating on wind.

### 5.7.4 Telephony and internet

The territory of EPR is completely covered with wired and wireless telephony and internet. There are three national and more regional service providers. Wireless telephony and internet services are provided with 3 G and 4 G technology.

According to the data from SSO for 2014, the number of households in the region with internet access was 59%. The same percentage implies for the number of households which had broad internet connection.

The coverage of the region with modern ICT is a positive factor as it enables easy access to communication and internet services everywhere in the region, but it is also a good base for creating different promotional, informational – service applications which could help in the promotion of the region and in the provision of information and services for tourists and tourist workers.

### 5.7.5 Health insurance and health protection

The availability of health services from primary and ambulant – specialist consultant health protection in EPR is at the average national level, while the higher levels of health protection are less available and services offered in other regions must be used. The medical care in the East Planning Region is organized through the network of general hospitals.

According to the data of SSO for 2014, the number of personal physicians in the primary healthcare in EPR is 122, which is 0,79 physician on 1000 insured people. The number of gynecologists in the primary health protection at the level of the region is 15, which is 0,19 physician on 1000 insured people.

The construction of a new clinical center in Shtip has been announced, which according to the planned, it should be the most modern health institution in the Republic of Macedonia, and its construction should begin in October, 2015 and finished by the end of 2018. Such institution will improve the logistic and human potentials for provision of health protection of the region in many ways, which in turn will also have positive effects on development of the tourist sector.

However, the key problems lie in shortage of developed network of the primary health protection in rural environments, especially in the tourist destinations. From the aspect of development of tourism, this reduces the attractiveness of the region since access to health services is reduced, and this increases expenses and reduces the efficiency of this type of services both for citizens and tourists. Here we arrive at the conclusion that it is necessary to strengthen the primary health protection on the territory of tourist destinations in the region.



## 6. SWOT ANALYSIS – GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

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During the preparatory activities for creation of this Strategy, as part of two events (Forum: Developing directions of tourism in the East Planning Region, held on 26.05.2015 and the Workshop for establishing strategic framework and determining activities for the Action plan held on 05.06.2015) two sessions were organized for preparation of SWOT-analysis, i.e. analysis of strengths and weaknesses (internal factors) of the region and opportunities and threats from the environment (external factors) for development of tourism and implementation of this strategic document. The analysis was made with active participation of the involved parties which attended the above mentioned events. The analysis includes the perspectives of clients and their expectations, the perspective of the internal processes, i.e. provision of services by the involved parties for meeting clients' expectations, the perspective of strengthening the capacities of the involved parties for provision of services and financial perspective for implementation of measures and activities for development of tourism.

The obtained results from the SWOT analyses are presented in Attachment 1.

Opportunities, threats, strengths and weaknesses of tourism in the region are determined by the development of the economy in the region and in the Republic of Macedonia, the readiness, vision, and dedication of the key involved parties, as well as of the surrounding of the sector's location.

### 6.1 Strengths of EPR for development of tourism

The detected **strengths of EPR** from the aspect of development of tourism are numerous and provide a base to influence the further development of this industry, if used properly.

The location of the region and its dynamic relief structure are its strengths. The region borders with the Republic of Bulgaria, and by that with the European Union. The length of the border is 100 km. Four out of eleven municipalities are located along the border (Berovo, Pehchevo, Delchevo and Makedonska Kamenica). The dynamic relief structure provides diversity of the landscapes.

Additional strength is the concentration of the attractiveness on a small area represented by numerous natural attractiveness, thermal waters and cultural and historical heritage.

Tradition and natural beauty enabled the region to become distinguished (especially its subregions) which managed to create their own image. There are distinguished tourist locations in the region. This image, the positioning of the region and its resources are a solid base for initiating more serious steps for development of tourism.

Healthy food, acceptable prices, hospitality of the people from the region, as well as the new and unique products provide value to the existing tourist offer, but simultaneously they provide conditions for development of new and more specific offer.

Cheap and qualified work force enables good competitiveness on the market.

There is a certain number of university graduated personnel with practical knowledge for the work in tourism which could initially take on the challenge in creating high quality and competitive tourist offer and services. The existence of the Faculty of tourism at the University "Goce Delchev" is a strength which could provide additional highly qualified work force and become directly involved in creating development solutions. Additional support in development of tourism could be provided by identified educated personnel in public administration.

The endogenous potential of the region, present through climatic and soil conditions for production and offer of local organic food could add value to the autochthonous tourist offer.

The process for renovating the accommodation capacities and the process of revitalization of old handcrafts has already begun in the region, and there is also cooperation between domestic and regional TA (Bulgarian, Greek and Serbian). An entrepreneurial spirit is also detected within part of the population and this could improve the situation with direct investments in tourism.

The stable macro-economical surrounding is favorable for tourism, as well as the advantage that the Republic of Macedonia is a candidate for EU and NATO membership.

## 6.2 Weaknesses of EPR for development of tourism

Identified **weaknesses of EPR** for development of tourism are primarily in the organization of tourism. There is no identified strategic direction for development of tourist activities on local and regional level and there is marginalization of less attractive municipalities.

There is no cooperation in the region with the neighboring regions for mutual development of tourist offer, while the tourist agencies are not interested for bringing tourists in the region.

The region is facing insufficiently educated personnel for work in tourist facilities. This is confirmed by the small number of vocational high schools with concentration in tourism and catering and poor enrollment. At present, there are 200 high school students studying to work in the tourist sector, which is far from meeting the needs of this activity.

The condition of the accommodation facilities is poor in the larger part of the region, and in certain parts it is missing. Greater part of the existing accommodation capacities requires improvement of infrastructure and improvement in delivery of services. Additionally, there is almost no marketing and promotional activities related to tourism and its potentials. Everything that has been done so far in this direction has primarily been the activity of the public sector.

The quality of the offer and services has expressed seasonality and there is no clearly defined and diverse non-accommodation offer.

The natural and cultural historical potential are not sufficiently utilized, and what is being utilized is not placed in the function of sustainable development. The existing tourist localities are not properly maintained. Insufficient tourist signage and inexistence of toilets near the tourist attractiveness is evident.

The local population is lacking education for preserving natural beauties, the waste treatment is poor and inappropriate, and this contributes towards degradation of natural resources.

Low accumulation of personal capital and low profitability do not enable financing of development. Additionally, low investments in innovations and the modernization of tourist infrastructure are a weakness which prevents development, primarily in the part of creating integrated and an actual offer.

Management efficiency is at a very low level; usually one person performs several functions. Management has insufficient knowledge of markets, marketing, sale and procurement. Therefore, it is necessary to strengthen the capacities for planning and modernizing production.

The vulnerability of the sector from the changes of the conditions of foreign markets is noticeable, while low salaries and improper working conditions do not provide motivation for the workers.

There are no active business associations in the region. This results in low connection between the business entities, the independent appearance on the market, and large mutual mistrust.

There are small numbers of examples in EPR of developing private brand, prepared programs for development and vision for the future, as well as lack of business plans and private information base.

Even though the region borders with neighboring state, member of EU, there is only one border crossing towards (Delchevo). This greatly reduces the attractiveness of the region for the neighbors and their tourists, and it also limits the flow of passengers. Additional limitation of transport and transit, and consequently for transit tourists, is the poor condition of the traffic infrastructure.

### 6.3 Opportunities of EPR for development of tourism

The established **opportunities of EPR** for development of tourism are seen in the advanced and sustainable management of natural attractiveness and cultural and historical heritage.

The concentration of attractiveness on a relatively small area, thermal waters, as well as the vicinity of the Region to EU, the vicinity to the airport and the relative vicinity to Skopje as the largest emitting area for potential tourists in EPR, present an opportunity which should be used for increasing the number of tourists. This is however possible with exploitation of the strengths of the region in the processes of creating attractive thematic and combined tourist offers. The institutions for higher education could play a key role in this segment.

Greater FDI with orientation of the country towards EU and using the candidate status.

The increased knowledge of the need for strong business associations and greater mutual cooperation is an opportunity for mutual appearance on the market and successful solution of problems which tourism is facing in the region.

Creating local and regional brands is an opportunity for development towards more profitable forms of operation.

Utilization of EU and domestic funds could influence the improvement of the general image from the aspect of development of tourism. Here we have reconstruction or construction of public tourist infrastructure, improvement of the conditions for retraining and additional training of unemployed population, revitalization of old handicrafts, etc.

Numerous legal regulations, measures and programs have been adopted, which should contribute towards creation of favorable business climate on a macro level. The purpose is to reduce barriers and encourage development.

State aid represents an opportunity for using funds from budget sources, especially for the associations experiencing difficulties in the operation.

The determination and the efforts for attracting foreign investors (for example, in tourist zones) is an opportunity for development of the industry.

Opening the border crossing towards the Republic of Bulgaria will improve the attractiveness and the accessibility to the region, and it will also improve the flow of passengers and transit tourists.

### 6.4 Threats for development of tourism in EPR

Established **threats for development of tourism in EPR** could be recognized in the regional incompatibility and marginalization of the less attractive municipalities (which show no visible signs of a solution to such situation).

Strong competition coming from abroad and from the neighboring regions. This threat will continue to increase if no integrated measures for development of tourism are taken, for creating an authentic offer, with inclusion of the remaining sectors from the economy of the region.

The pollution of the environment and devastation of cultural heritage are a real threat for the rating of the region as a tourist destination.

Unfinished transition, privatization of capital, as well as shortage of investments do not enable more dynamic development of the tourist sector, which necessitates serious investments in the tourist infrastructure. Here the most visible is lack of funds for revitalization of rural architecture, which is a threat which leads to extinction of rural tourism which could be one of the generators of development of tourism in the region.

The unemployed population is a serious threat which results in increase of migration of the population, especially among the young people. Tourism as a labor intensive activity requires a wide corpus of qualified work force and with increased migration the region and this sector could be left without this key resource. On the other hand, more serious investment in tourism could cause an adverse, positive effect.

The political situation of the country and its surrounding represents a real threat which reduces the attractiveness of the country (including EPR) as a possible tourist destination.

The economy in the country as a whole is vulnerable due to its small scope, and the competitiveness of tourism is primarily based upon cheap labor, which will not be accessible in the long term.

Due to low income, the popularity of tourism is low, which is reflected in the employment plans of the young and education people.

The lack of vision among a large number of business entities is a special threat on a short and medium term, considering the upcoming process of tourism restructuring.

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## 7. COMPETITIVENESS OF THE EAST PLANNING REGION

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Defining a clear and recognizable tourist product in every tourist destination, among other, contributes for detecting other destinations from the immediate surroundings, which develop analogue tourist products and which could impose themselves on the tourist market as serious competitors. Taking into consideration the basic components of the detected tourist product of the East Planning Region, we could make the following conclusions from the Study for the conditions of the potentials for development of tourism in EPR:

### 7.1 EPR competitiveness in the regional context

From the aspect of competitiveness of tourism, EPR is not in a very favorable position. Namely, in the neighboring regions in Macedonia and in Bulgaria there are already internationally recognizable tourist centers, with longer tradition, built infrastructure, developed marketing, profiled market and other advantages. Especially popular are the mountain tourist centers Bansko and Borovec in Bulgaria, which are only 50-100 km away from EPR. Aside from them, the mountain-recreational tourist product of the East Planning Region faces several competitive tourist destinations on the domestic market, among them we should mention Mavrovo, Popova Shapka, Pelister, Kozhuf and Krushevo. Almost all mentioned domestic competitive destinations have better conditions for skiing, especially from the aspect of the length of the paths, infrastructure facilities, as well as an opportunity for turning towards several market segments. On the wider regional, i.e. international tourist market, Ponikva and Berovo lack any chances without large changes in the appearance on the market. For example, the performances of tourist products of Bansko and Borovec in Bulgaria (adjacent to the East Planning Region) and Kopaonik (Serbia) are simply out of competition. Also, the announcement for the fast reconstruction on a new and ultra modern ski center Brezovica on Kosovo will strongly increase the competition in this part of the Balkan Peninsula.

The condition with other types of tourism is similar. Thus, bath tourism is incomparably better developed in Velingrad and Sandanski in Bulgaria, and it will take a lot of time for EPR to approach their level. This southwest part of Bulgaria is also more developed from the aspect of rural tourism, sports and recreational tourism, adventure, etc.

The monastery product in the East Planning Region is facing strong competition in its immediate surroundings. In that context, largest attention deserves the following monastery complex: St. Joakim Osogovski by Kriva Palanka; St. Spas in Gevgelija; St. Georgi in Negotino; Introduction of Virgin Mary - Eleusa (Veljusa, Strumica); St. Leontij - Vodocha, Strumica. Some of the monastery complexes in the Republic of Macedonia have been placed in the function of tourist development long ago. Aside from St. Kliment Ohridski – Plaoshnik and St. Naum Ohridski, St. Jovan Bigorski, St. Georgi Victorious – Rajchica, St. Virgin Mary Kalishka, St. Prechista by Kichevo, Zrze and Treskavec by Prilep, and other. In this context we should also take into consideration Rilski Monastery in Bulgaria, which is a leader in religious (monastery) tourism in wider regional frames.

However, despite the strong competition, EPR could have its own advantages, if it approaches towards true and integral tourist development. One of the largest advantages of the region is the insufficiently developed, almost nonexistent tourism, compared to the mass, overcrowded tourism in the neighboring regions in Bulgaria and Skopje region. Namely, modern tourists are interested in so called “sustainable tourism”, “ecotourism”, discovering unknown “new” destinations. Rice fields landscapes, tame and almost untouched mountain locations, quietness, tranquility, pristine nature, clean air, unique tradition is what the tourist want and expect from EPR.

Here we should mention the opportunity for tourist connection of the East Planning Region with neighboring regions (Northeast Planning Region, Vardar Planning Region and Southeast Planning Region, and even the neighboring regions in Bulgaria), have a great potential. This is especially referring to connecting the neighboring regions in the Republic of Macedonia, where there are resources similar in character which could be combined in certain itineraries, routes and tours at international level. Among them are archeological localities, rural and urban architecture, manifestations, and certainly, largest number of facilities pertaining to religious tourism. The benefits of EPR would be a great promotion on Balkan and international level, where the region positions itself on the tourist market, which on the other hand could aid in additional modeling of certain products.

## 7.2 EPR Competitiveness in a national context

With area of 3.537 square kilometers and nearly 180.000 inhabitants, the East Planning Region represents only one part of the total tourist offer of the Republic of Macedonia, i.e., a small fragment of the receptive area in our country. According to this wider approach, the domestic and international tourist clientele perceive the East Planning Region as a partial tourist destination, located in the east part of our country, participating with 14, 2% from the territory, i.e. with only 8, and 8% of the total population.

Compared to other mountain regions, the East Planning Region offers insufficiently recognizable and less distinguishable tourist product with less quality, which reflects upon the competition of this region on the tourist market. On the other hand, some single locations within the region deserve attention, primarily for their micro spatial basis, which provides combination of respectable natural and anthropogenic values with noticeable attractive power and high level of competitiveness. In the context of the necessity from a regional approach towards the tourist development, the East Planning Region should be imposed as a special spatial unit, especially in the perception of domestic tourists. With a distance of only 100-150 km from Skopje, 50-100 km from the Corridors 10 and 8, the East Planning Region is in immediate vicinity to the largest emitting zones in the Republic of Macedonia. Also, this region could build an image of a spatial unit with special tourist product among guests visiting from the Republic of Bulgaria. Namely, the East Planning Region borders with Bulgaria and it is normal to expect increased number of tourists from this neighboring country – member of EU. In this context we must emphasize once more the generally accepted opinion that the opening of the border crossing Klepalo at Berovo will place this region even closer to the second most significant emitting zone and it will enable increased inflow of tourists.

The achievements in the last few years point out to the fact that the modest international competitiveness of the Republic of Macedonia is almost entirely based upon the attractiveness of the tourist offer of only two single destinations with clear market determination – Ohrid and Skopje. According to the statistical data, these two destinations offer the largest concentration of qualitative accommodation capacities and every year they generate largest part of the foreign tourist sales in the country. However, the presence of foreign tourists in Ohrid and Skopje should be observed as a possibility for their attraction. If the region offers qualitative product (which essentially is not similar, i.e. it is not competitive with the products of our two main destinations), then it is completely natural to expect from foreign tourists, especially those who visit our capital city, to spend part of their time on the territory of the East Planning Region. This requires an integral destination approach within the Macedonian tourist market, which will position EPR as special, distinguishable and attractive. This is a situation where its tourist offer will have to slowly compete with the offer of the competitive regions in the country, and especially the offer of the mountain regions located in the immediate surroundings. However, at this moment there is an actual problem with competition. It arises from the danger in the process of positioning the East Planning Region as an integral tourist destination, to face a large difficulty to precisely differentiate its rival destinations. The integral destination approach towards development of tourism in the East Planning Region offers numerous contents, greater

quality for lower prices and more opportunities for an active and interesting holiday. In the wider selection of attractive components, tourists have a better opportunity to find their own affinities and to satisfy their needs. Thereto, such model strongly affirms less attractive municipalities, which would have minor chances for success with a possible independent appearance on the market. Thus, they are stimulated towards intensive development of a new selective offer, which most often contains only complementary characteristics (it will connect to the existing one), but in the integral appearance on the tourist market it obtains a totally different qualitative dimension.

One of the basic characteristics which in a positive sense influence the development of tourism in the East Planning Region is the large concentration and variety of tourist resources on a relatively small area. According to all relevant criteria, distances between attractive elements on the entire territory of the region are small, which enables visiting more attractive units within a short period of time. Hereupon, the variety of these values provides a solid degree of content of tourist offer. According to such spatial basis, the region could impose itself and be an integral tourist destination. Actually, the spatial basis enables the region to form complex tourist products and to become part of actual relations with similar destinations, especially from the immediate surroundings.

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## 8. VISION, PRINCIPLES, STRATEGIC AREAS, STRATEGIC PRIORITY TARGETS AND MEASURES FOR DEVELOPMENT OF TOURISM IN EPR

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### 8.1 Vision

Transformation of the tourist sector in EPR in a flexible and efficient economic activity which will meet the determinations and needs of factors and which will manage to position the region higher on the tourist map is not possible without activities and investments in improvement of institutions, infrastructure, human resources, educational potentials, establishing high standards for quality and creating more opportunities and equal conditions for participation in the activity, as well as development of potentials of all participants. Such transformation should be implemented through organized and coordinated implementation of activities and with involvement of all interested parties in the efforts for development. Their inclusion is due to coordination of activities and sharing responsibility during implementation of developing strategic goals. Hereupon, such transformation should be implemented in the direction of creating opportunities for investments, removing identified internal weaknesses of the sector and mobilizing strengths for utilization of the existing opportunities.

The vision for development of tourism in the East Planning Region in the period until 2025 is as follows:

**In the following few years the East Planning Region should create few respectable tourist destinations, which products will be based upon natural, movable and immovable cultural heritage of the region and upon tradition of the people living here; products recognizable for their quality and completely adjusted to the requirements and needs of modern tourists.**

The vision for development of tourism in EPR has been prepared and defined as the result of the participation of the involved parties in the process of strategic planning, the results of the analyses of the conditions in the activity and the key developing and strategic documents which were used in the analyses and in evaluating the future desired condition.

The accomplishment of the vision is related to building a functional system for regional development of tourism based upon solid principles and institutionally supported by relevant institutions at a local, regional and national level. Its accomplishment is a long term process which requires consistency and continuity of the policies for regional development of tourism built upon the principles for development of tourism in EPR, dedication from many actors and investing necessary efforts for meeting the strategic goals.

Such approach would enable the tourist sector in EPR to grow into an industry which creates tourist products with high quality, pursuant to the expectations and needs of the performers of this activity.

### 8.2 Principles on which development of tourism in EPR shall be based

The following guiding principles were identified and widely accepted by the participants in the process of preparation of the Strategy and they will be observed in the implementation of the strategic priority targets and future management of the development of the tourist sector in EPR:

- Sustainable tourism,



- Profitability,
- Selective (priority) investments,
- Target marketing, and
- Public Private Partnership (PPP).

### 8.2.1 Sustainable tourism

Tourist development is facing two main challenges: how to generate maximum income for the local population and business, both for the region as a whole and on the other hand, how much and how could the cultural and natural resources of the region be utilized and valorized without being destroyed or damaged. The Strategy should establish a base for forming a single policy on a regional level, which should balance the often opposing interests of the business, the government and the community and to guarantee sustainability of development. The acceptance of this concept is one of the basic principles of the future tourist development<sup>6</sup>.

The key aspects of the policy for sustainable tourism include: land utilization, management of the physical environment, conservation and revitalization of the locations with natural and cultural heritage, development of products mobilized by the market and investing in human resources.

### 8.2.2 Profitability

For years the tourist industry in Macedonia has a very low return on investments. Business must provide corresponding profit in order to ensure continuous development through investments. Profitability should be improved by increasing the utilization of funds within the tourist sector – for example, increasing the index of utilization of accommodation capacities or increasing the number of visitors per attraction. Profitability could be aided by introducing a greater efficiency – for example, mutual marketing, or ensuring that the increase of the quantity of sales is not achieved on the basis of competitive strategies of low prices.

### 8.2.3 Selective (priority) investments

Future investment strategies will have to be very selective and clearly focused. The necessity of careful selection and prioritization of future uncertain national and EU programs is more than vital. Therefore, prioritization of investments is required for the purpose of overcoming duplication of efforts.

### 8.2.4 Target marketing

It must be emphasized that this must be a clear guiding principle. In this direction, as a result of the continuous changes of the IT capacities, the existing development and the fast changes of mechanism for supply of information transform into a norm. It must not be assumed that in the future the selection of markets, products and segments will be the same as today. Constant process of revisions is necessary in order to establish the adequacy of tourist products within the region and the type of tourist demand. The changes which could occur in other regions could lead towards unattractiveness of the tourist products much faster than suppliers anticipate. The fundamentals for the future success would be external overview of tourist industry and good awareness of trends and new products.

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<sup>6</sup> Chamber of Commerce for tourism in 2014 signed the Global Ethical Codex in Tourism from the private sector, and the private sector through the Chamber is obligated to observe and promote the 10 principles for sustainable and responsible tourism (Attachment).

### 8.2.5 Public Private Partnership

In the tourist world it is generally accepted that successful tourist destinations are those destinations where there is a built partnership between the public and private sector. As a first step in establishing the PPP in the East Planning Region, the focus could be placed upon tourist marketing and questions related to strategic planning and development. Thereto, an effective two way process should be developed, which will provide a balance of the risk between the public and the private partner.

## 8.3 Strategic areas, strategic priority targets and measures

Strategic areas are areas where the Strategy will intervene. They represent the central area of the Strategy and they arise from the strategic questions and problems. Strategic areas define the areas for intervention and in each one of those areas strategic targets and measures are defined. The regular choice of strategic areas is critical for defining strategic targets, their direction and planned effects through the realization of defined measures and activities. Here we conclude that the success of the implementation of the strategic plan depends upon clear and regular identification of strategic areas.

Identification of strategic areas is carried out through the process of analysis of the available strategic and program documents from national, regional and local importance, analyses of statistical data and knowledge and conclusions, as well as developed attitudes of involved parties of all three sectors, obtained at regional meetings and workshops for strategic planning.

This process resulted in identification of four segments which dictate the development of tourist sector and they are as follows: capable and skillful people and efficient institutions, functional and modern infrastructure, clearly defined and competitive tourist offer and organizing and branding the individuality of tourist products and efficient promotion. Such conditionality of works imposed the definition of four strategic areas:

- Strategic area 1: **Development of human and institutional capacities**
- Strategic area 2: **Tourist infrastructure**
- Strategic area 3: **Tourist offer**
- Strategic area 4: **Marketing and branding**

Strategic goals transform strategic questions and problems into a certain strategic area of directed and planned processes for achieving desired results for their solution. The targets which are attained through specifically designed and directed activities have the intention of making positive influences and changing the situation.

The measures are specific in comparison with the strategic targets and they are actions which are crucial in importance in the process of taking actual activities for achieving strategic goals and implementation of the Strategy. As such, these measures are measurable and based in time. They are in consistency with the strategic targets and they are designed to operationalize them. Each strategic target has defined several measures. Each measure will be achieved through implementation of a series of activities (actions) which are additionally defined in the Action Plan.

We should keep into consideration that strategic areas and formulated strategic targets should not be observed separately. They are interdependent and impose coordination and parallel action in all four areas if a visible effect is to be achieved in a relatively short period of time.

EPR will achieve its vision for development of tourism focusing through implementation of the following strategic priority targets:

### 8.3.1 Development of human and institutional capacities

Defining strategic targets and proper measures in this area was made for the purpose of establishing an institutional base and creating a capacity within human resources as a key precondition for implementation of the strategy. Analyses have revealed that in EPR there is no institutional organization for development of tourism, while the existing human resources in all three sectors (public, private and civil) operating in this area do not possess the desired knowledge and skills for provision of support of the tourist sector and direct coverage in it, for improving its position and performances. Strategic targets should act on institutional level and organizational strengthening of all subjects, which have an influence on the tourist sector, for their better connection, networking and cooperation in the domain of designing tourist products and offer and its management. Institutional and organizational strengthening and management with tourist offer and destinations is possible only if human resource capacities for management and provision of services are improved.

Below we present the defined strategic priority targets and proper measures for each target separately.

- **ST1:** Building institutional capacities for management of EPR as a tourist destination.

The following measure has been identified for implementation of this strategic target:

**Measure 1:** Building institutional capacities for management of tourist destinations in EPR.

**Measure 2:** Promoting cooperation and support of the involved parties in the tourist sector.

- **ST 2:** Developing skills and knowledge of the working force for the necessities of the tourist sector in EPR.

The following measures have been identified for implementation of this strategic target:

**Measure 1:** Strengthening human capacities of the institutions for development of tourism in EPR.

**Measure 2:** Strengthening human capacities in the tourist sector.

**Measure 3:** Building the capacity of the population in EPR for development of tourism.

### 8.3.2 Tourist infrastructure

Strategic targets for tourist infrastructure are designed on the basis of the questions arising with reference to identified problems and weaknesses in that area. The solution of the identified problems and weaknesses in the part of the tourist infrastructure are the second precondition for development of tourism in the region as the modern and functional infrastructure play a key role in attracting tourists. The formulation of strategic goals is in the direction of defining measures and activities which will improve the basic tourist infrastructure in the part of the approach and mobility of tourists, accommodation and catering capacities in the region and the general appearance on the market and capacity for accepting tourists at tourist attractiveness. Hereupon, tourist infrastructure should be established on local authentic values and protection of cultural heritage, and its development should not cause any destruction of the environment and reduction of the quality of natural resources.

Strategic priority targets and appropriate measures for each target separately are defined below.

- **ST 1:** Enabling better approach and movement of tourists in EPR.

For implementation of this strategic target the following measures have been identified:

**Measure 1:** Provision of access to tourist attractiveness in EPR

Measure 2: Provision of tourist signalization

- **ST 2:** Provision of accommodation and catering capacities which will attract tourists in EPR.

For implementation of this strategic target the following measures have been identified:

**Measure 1:** Construction and reconstruction of accommodation and catering capacities in EPR.

**Measure 2:** Construction of new and reconstruction of the existing communal infrastructure of tourist localities in EPR.

- **ST 3:** Infrastructural arrangement of regional tourist attractiveness (localities).
- **Measure 1:** Reconstruction and conservation of regional tourist attractiveness (localities).
- **Measure 2:** Electrification and illumination of regional tourist attractiveness.

### 8.3.3 Tourist offer

The strategic goals related to creating clear, defined, recognizable, autochthonous and competitive tourist offer are the answer to problems and weaknesses related to this key element, which dictates the development of tourist sector in EPR. The tourist offer is an integral part of the tourist system and it includes the tourist product as its most important segment, through which it represents itself and positions itself on the market. However, tourists have different motivations and needs. Therefore, products of modern tourism should appear in many shapes. The analyses have shown that there is not sufficiently visible, clear, defined and positioned tourist product in EPR. The present practice regarding tourist offer could be presented as uncoordinated and unorganized activity in forming tourist products and offer. From the aspect of common regional offer, there is no practice at all. All of this creates negative events in the tourist sector, which result in slow development. Long-term planning of development of tourism imposes the need of creating tourist offer by increasing the number and type of tourist products and improving their quality. Creating diverse tourist offer in EPR is the third precondition for development of tourism.

Strategic priority targets and appropriate measures for each target separately are defined below.

- **ST 1:** Developing tourist products which will attract tourists in EPR  
For implementation of this strategic target the following measures have been identified:  
**Measure 1:** Support of involved parties in development of tourist products in EPR.  
**Measure 2:** Development of tourist products based on natural heritage in EPR.  
**Measure 3:** Development of tourist product based upon cultural-historical heritage in EPR.  
**Measure 4:** Development of tourist products based upon traditions in EPR.  
**Measure 5:** Designing tourist packages in EPR.
- **ST 2:** Optimizing mutual benefit of the population and the business sector through tourism.  
For implementation of this strategic target the following measures have been identified:  
**Measure 1:** Provision of integral protection of natural and cultural heritage.  
**Measure 2:** Building a tourist chain of values in EPR through different types of tourism.

### 8.3.4 Marketing and branding

Formulating strategic targets in the strategic area of marketing and branding is the result of the attitudes and conclusions obtained from the involved parties and from the conducted analyses,

for the purpose of finding sustainable solutions which will improve the situation in the part of promotion of the region and its tourist offer. In order to be positioned on the market the tourist product should be analyzed and based upon its analyses, well constructed and creative promotional actions should be taken for its placement. Opportunities for creating a brand from certain tourist products should also be considered here, since this also contributes towards making the tourist product or destination to become distinguishable on the market. The conducted analyses indicate that in this part activities occur spontaneously in EPR. It is necessary to provide integrated solutions for promotion and marketing of the region and its values. Also, it is necessary to identify tools and methods of promotion of tourist potential, contents, products and services which are present and which the region offers. Additionally, improved marketing of tourism in EPR should offer appropriate and efficient solutions for promotion of authentic values and opportunities for holiday and recreation which the region has, by offering ways of turning this region into a distinguishable region for stopping, holiday and relaxation, but also a desired tourist destination. Following the philosophy for identification of strategic areas, promotion of the region and branding its autochthonous offer is the fourth precondition and segment which should be satisfied in order to generate positive changes and results in development of tourism.

Here are the defined strategic priority target and appropriate measures for each target separately.

- **ST 1:** Creating a positive image for the East Planning Region as an attractive geographical – tourist area.

For implementation of this strategic target the following measures have been identified:

**Measure 1:** Branding tourist products in EPR

**Measure 2:** Marketing tourist destination in EPR

## 8.4 Process of identifying strategic areas and targets

Identifying strategic areas and strategic goals for encouraging development of tourism in EPR is the results of the analyses of available statistical data and relevant national, regional and local documents of strategic importance, as well as information and conclusions obtained from the participation of the involved parties from the local government, private and non government sector in the process of strategic planning. The process of strategic planning is realized with the utilization of few instruments for participating strategic planning: 1) forum for development of tourism, 2) workshop for strategic planning and determining activities for the Action plan, 3) direct and indirect consultations with the Center for development of the region, the Council and the remaining factors/involved parties and 4) regional conference – public dispute for finalizing the Strategy.

Also, in the process of identifying strategic areas and formulating strategic targets, the following have been studied in detail:

- Program for development of EPR, 2015-2019.
- Study of the condition with the potentials for development of tourism in the East Planning Region.
- Spatial plan of RM: Development of tourism and organization of tourist areas - 1998.
- “Global study for tourism in the Republic of Macedonia”– 2003.
- National strategy for development of tourism 2009-2013.
- Strategy for balanced regional development of the Republic of Macedonia 2009-2019.
- Action plan for implementation of the Strategy for regional development for the period 2013 –2015.
- National development plan
- Strategic documents of the municipalities

- Other.

When identifying strategic areas and strategic priority goals for development of tourism in EPR, the following qualitative assumptions were taken into consideration as a base:

- Determinations of the Government of RM for development of the economy and in that framework, development of tourism in the Republic of Macedonia and in the mountain regions, including the EPR.
- Method of valorization of the natural and cultural heritage in the region.

The accomplishment of these two previous long term determinations is in the function of a balanced regional development as tourism is a significant multiplier in development of economy (contributes in development of traffic, agriculture, handcraft and other economic activities).

Moreover, in the process of identifying the strategic targets, the following quantitative assumptions were used:

- The rate of growth of tourist sales until 2019 should reach 12% per year, and in the period 2019-2025 it should reach 17% per year<sup>7</sup>. These rates of growth are considered optimal for development of tourism in this region. The smaller growth in the period until 2019 is related to the improper tourist infrastructure, promotion and tradition of the population for development of tourism. These negative trends are thought to be surpassed in the period of 2015-2019, while the interest of the population for development of tourism will be very large. In this period it is realistic to expect completion of the construction of the highway Skopje – Sveti Nikole and the express highways Veles-Shtip, Shtip – Kochani and Shtip – Radovish, which will help for EPR to become closer to the main emitting region of RM, the city of Skopje, and also to the west part of Macedonia.
- Number of tourists from 23.035 (14.306 domestic and 8.729 foreign) in 2014 should increase to 35.511 tourists (21.610 domestic and 13.902 foreign) in 2019 and 53.134 tourists (33.035 domestic and 20.099 foreign) in 2024.
- Number of overnight stays from 49.221 (27.277 domestic and 21.944 foreign) in 2014 should increase to 78.639 overnight stays (43.243 domestic and 35.395 foreign) in 2019 and 113.316 overnight stays (62.824 domestic and 50.492 foreign) in 2024.
- Number of beds from 1.869 in 2014 should increase to 2.4308 beds in 2019 and 3.177 beds in 2024. The largest number of beds is projected with construction of new hotels of a family type. Construction of spa-centers with a large number of beds in Shtip and in Kochani, as well as large number of hotels at Ponikva and Osogovo.
- The number of employees in the catering and accommodation facilities from 1.4779 in 2008 should increase to 1.920 in 2019 and to 2.510 in 2024. (The number of employees in other sectors will also be large with the help of the multiplicative effect of tourism).

The anticipated effect from development of tourism and implementation of the targets for development of tourism in the East Planning Region were also taken into consideration when selecting the strategic targets:

- Preservation of natural and cultural-historical heritage

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<sup>7</sup> The predictions for growth of tourist sales at the level of the Republic of Macedonia range above 10%. However, starting from the fact that tourism in the East Planning Region is insufficiently developed, it is proposed for that rate of growth to be slightly greater. Such comparisons are based not only on the attractiveness of tourist resources and opportunities for development of alternative forms of tourism, for which there is very large interest globally, but also on the fact that the number of visitors will certainly be greater with construction of road infrastructure, with opening of the border crossing towards Bulgaria at Berovo and if new accommodation capacities are built in the region.

<sup>8</sup> An increase of 30% in the period of 2015-2019 with reference to 2014 and an increase of 70% in the period of 2019-2024 with reference to 2014.

<sup>9</sup> Source: SSO, according to the Census of Catering, 2008.

- Increased development of small and medium enterprises
- Improvement of traffic, communal and telecommunication infrastructure
- Growth of life standard
- Prevention of migrations and departure of working force

Previous qualitative and quantitative assumptions which were used for formulation of strategic targets for development of tourism in the East Planning Region are realistic and they reflect tourist potentials of the region and the modern trends in development of tourism.

## 8.5 Strategic map of EPR for development of tourism 2016-2025

Strategic map of EPR<sup>10</sup> for development of tourism presents the cause-effect connection of strategic priority targets in achieving the vision for development of tourism in EPR until 2025. Their connection and mutual relations in the implementation of the Strategy are presented through these four strategic areas (Figure 1):

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<sup>10</sup> Adapted by Kaplan, R. and Norton, D., *The Balanced Scorecard, Measures that Drive Performance*, Harvard Business Review (1992)

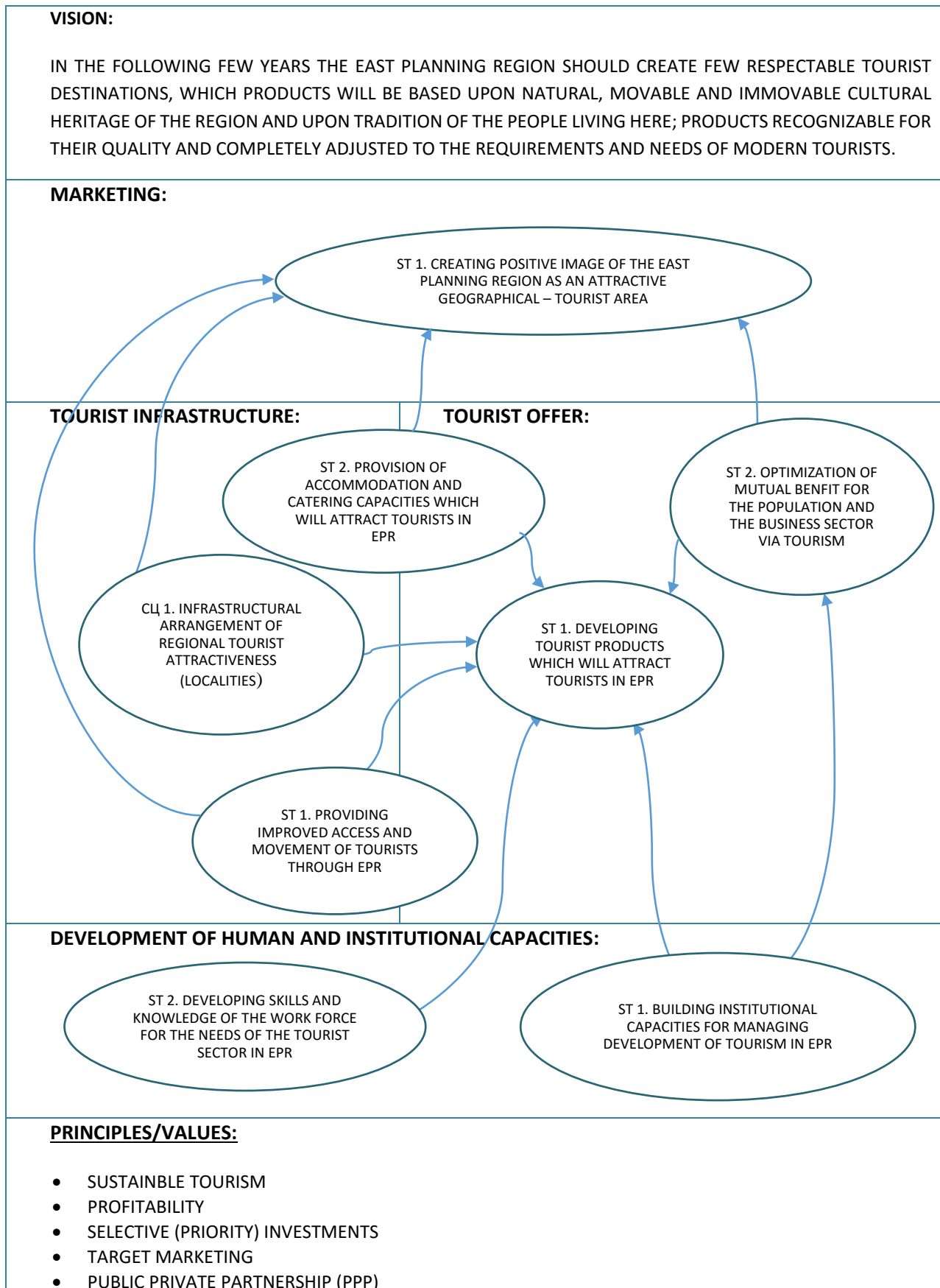


Figure 1 Strategic map of EPR for development of tourism 2016 - 2025



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## 9. TOURIST ZONING OF EPR

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### 9.1 Principles of tourist zoning

The area of the East Planning Region is very diverse in geographical-tourist, cultural-historical and traditional ethnological aspect. In that sense, several tourist subregions (areas) could be distinguished in the region. The following are considered as basic principles for determining these subregions:

- Affiliation to clearly determined relief-geographical area (mountain, valley, field),
- Relationship of demographic features and characteristics (origin of population, type of settlements),
- Similarity of historical, cultural and traditional values,
- Representation, compactness and similarity of prominent tourist values, motives and attractions,
- Gravitational-infrastructure connection and affiliation,
- Governing mutual interests, targets and motives.

The first tourist subregions (tourist zones) in this part of Macedonia are defined earlier by A. Stojmilov (1974). In a tourist sense, their integrality enables better planning, organization and management of tourist development. Here, pursuant to the new conditions, certain modifications have been made, as stated below.

### 9.2 Tourist subregions within EPR

Pursuant to the existing natural, demographic and cultural resources, there are actually 6 developing “overmunicipal” tourist regions, areas or subregions in EPR, each with its own particularity and characteristics, such as:

- Shtip area (shopping, bath-spa, hunting, cultural);
- Kochansko Pole (rice, gastronomic);
- Osogovo area (winter-sports, mountain eco tourism);
- Pijanec area (lake, hunting, folklore, customs);
- Maleshevo area (sports-recreational, wellness, gastronomic);
- Plachkovica area (recreational, mountain, eco-tourism).

**Shtip area** subregion towards west with main center in the town Shtip. Its main advantages are the town Shtip as an administrative, educational, cultural, health and other center. There is a good potential for development of shopping tourism (especially textile and shoes), cultural tourism (spiritual and religious tourism, museums and archeological localities), the bath Kezhovica with its potential, hunting tourism (hunting ground Patrik and other in the vicinity) and wine tourism with the few wineries (Shtip Ezimit, Vinal-Imako and the winery Anevski together with several wineries in the surrounding municipalities). Aside from the municipality of Shtip, the municipality of Karbinci is gravitationally related to this subregion. Good traffic connections with Skopje and with other regions and regional centers are favorable for tourism.

**Kochansko Pole**, with the main center in Kochani, and the following municipalities: Kochani, Vinica, Cheshinovo-Obleshevo, Zrnovci and part of Probishtip. The main tourist attraction and the main unique potential in this subregion is rice and everything related to rice (tradition, customs, way of living, etc.). The field with its geographical characteristics, population and rice fields, is a unique landscape of this type on the Balkans, especially in the months of May-June. Aside from the rice, an

important tourist resource is geothermal energy and the opportunity for construction of 2 larger spa centers, in the village Banja and Istibanja.

**Osogovo area subregion** again with the main center Kochani and other centers such as Probishtip and Makedonska Kamenica (with appropriate municipalities). The main potential here is the mountain itself, the winter center Ponikva and the future center for winter sports at Carev Vrv. The remaining parts of the mountain are suitable for eco-tourism, due to their pristine and well preserved nature. The village Cera should be a good center of eco tourism with its environment, since a greater part of its infrastructure is already created.

**Pijanec area subregion** with centers Delchevo and Makedonska Kamenica. The main tourist potential here is Lake Kalimansko, which could attract a significant number of tourists if it is arranged and if the oscillation of the water is reduced. This especially if we take into consideration that the vicinity of the eco-mountain areas of Osogovo and Golak. The construction of the main high way Kochani-Delchevo would be of special importance for tourism, while the old road through the ravine would obtain a tourist function.

**Maleshevo area subregion** with the main center Berovo and second center Pehchevo. Berovo Lake and the eco-areas at Maleshevo Mountains and Ograzhden is an excellent, but still not sufficiently utilized tourist potential. Here we have sufficient accommodation capacities, but the offer of the subregion itself should be increased, or in combination with the neighboring tourist regions. Tourist settlements around Berovo Lake, then Ravna Reka, Ablanica, Svi Laki, etc., should be additionally arranged, complemented with necessary activities, categorized, presented and prepared into a complete offer for a few day stay with many different activities.

**Plachkovica area subregion**, without any dominant center, however, it covers parts of several municipalities: Karbinci, Zrnovci, Vinica and Berovo. The mountain offers excellent opportunities for mountain recreational tourism, wellness, tracking, mountain biking, speleological attractiveness, paragliding, etc.

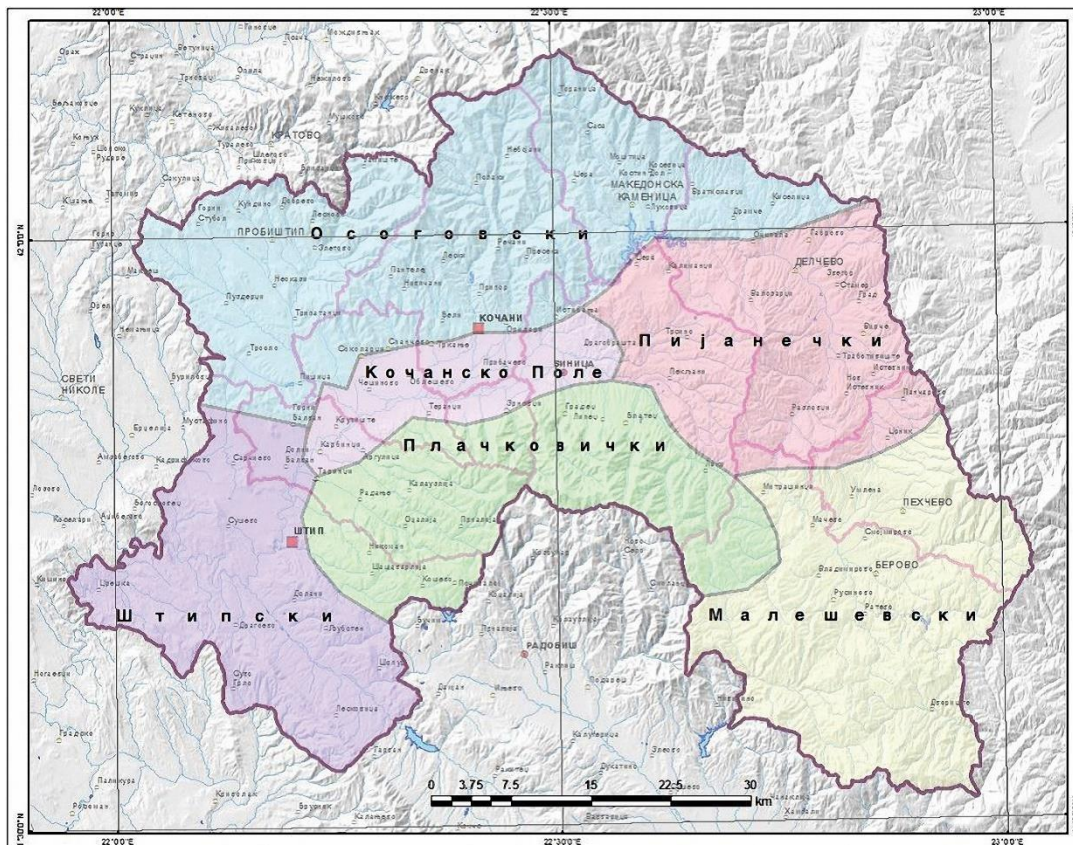


Figure 2 Cartographic presentation of tourist subregions in EPR

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## 10. FORMING TOURIST PRODUCTS AND OFFERS

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### 10.1 Principles of forming tourist products and offers

In the process of positioning EPR as an integral tourist destination, the largest weakness appears in the creation of a complex tourist product. The main problem arises from the fact that it must inherently incorporate all original and derived elements of the entire tourist offer of the region, which have expressive heterogeneous and often times incompatible nature. Actually, the desire to encompass as many municipalities as possible could lead to making that product unrecognizable on the market. Hereupon, creating a product with too many components and too many carriers of offers could cause reduction of the possibility for their optimal harmonization. This will finally result in unwanted distancing of the products from the tourists, which are not in the position to recognize the attractive attributes of all components.

The cultural-historical and natural heritage is the basis which is primarily used for the tourist offer of a certain location, region, state or the wider area. In that sense, the East Planning Region of the Republic of Macedonia is abundant in different amenities, which were insufficiently presented and poorly visited by now. Taking into consideration the specific geospatial, demographic, cultural and other aspects into consideration, one of the most adequate initial ways of tourist activation of this region is through establishing unique and distinguishable tourist products based on already known and recorded cultural resources.

In the process of creating, organizing and primarily in implementation of the routes and the tours, few recommended elements should be included, for the purpose of making the trip as convenient as possible for the visitors. Here we would mention the following recommendations to be taken into special consideration:

- Time period, i.e. the duration of one tour or route
- Optimal length of one route/tour
- Time spent at one place/location/monument
- Type of a break
- Type of a monument being visited
- Attractiveness of the location

The attractiveness of the location is the base for creating one tourist product based on one or more similar cultural-historic monuments. Several important benchmarks should be taken into consideration when creating this category: possible natural value of the location, uniqueness, esthetic value, architectural historical or artistic value, educational value, social value, rarity/representation, evocative effect (whether it relates to legends, myths, stories), whether it meets certain targets (for example pilgrimage), etc.

It is recommendable once a certain route and/or tour is created, it must have previously strictly determined itinerary with rare exceptions. No improvisations are allowed within the routes and the tours. There could be an alternative for a certain destination, but it is not recommendable to refer the people to another destination than the one which is written on the itinerary. There could be optional excursions only if there is one route/tour consisting of few days, but even then for every destination the optional excursions must be known ahead of time and opportunities for their realization should be created.

## 10.2 Thematic tourist products and offers

Thematic tourist products and offers include promoting, visiting, sightseeing and using the amenities, attractions and values which are similar in their characteristics and features, and which belong to one or more similar categories. Such examples are the tourist products from one area of the cultural tourism, or solely from the spiritual tourism, or a combination of products and offers from archeological and spiritual tourism, combination of tracking and mountaineering, etc.

Further in the text we have presented tourist products and offers of the most available and most prospective types of tourism in EPR.

## 10.3 Cultural tourism

Cultural tourism will be beneficial for EPR since it could strengthen local economy, it could promote protection of cultural heritage, increase the consumption of visitors, provide employment, increase pride and awareness of the local population for the heritage that they possess, etc. Cultural tourism could also cause damage from increased visit, overuse, and improper use of protected cultural heritage without taking into consideration of its value, which could lead to permanent damage.

The strategy is in accordance with the four targets of cultural tourism: cultural heritage to be accessible for the public, the local population and the visitors; to develop and conduct tourist activities by observing cultural heritage, local cultures and ways of living; to create a dialogue and balance between conservative interests and the tourist industry for the importance of cultural heritage, including the necessity of achieving sustainable future for them; and to contribute towards long-term and careful use of cultural heritage by adopting strategies and protection and conservation.

### 10.3.1 Ethno tourism

Ethno-tourism is a specialized type of cultural tourism and it could be defined as every excursion which is focused on the works of the people, and not on nature, and which is trying to enable tourists to understand the way of living of the local population.

Except its relation to the tradition of certain environments through national, spiritual and material heritage created and increased for centuries in the past, ethno – tourism is additionally related to enjoying natural beauties and everything related to them.

The East Planning Region has preserved customs and old handcrafts and this provides excellent opportunity here for development of ethno-tourism.

Ethno-tourism is a category in tourism which is closely related to rural environment which has still managed to preserve part of the tradition. The village is the most confident keeper of tradition, through domestic creations, handmade objects, handicrafts, gastronomy, folklore and music. In EPR every part is characterized with local landmarks and its characteristic tradition and they have the capacity to formulate and represent themselves in different forms for the purpose of attracting larger number of tourists from the country and abroad. The national works from the region could be actively included in promotion of tourist values of the region. For example, the manifestation “Pijanec-Maleshevo wedding”, an event which takes place in Delchevo is an excellent base for creating a tourist product in the part of such thematic tourism. During this event, couples crown their love through traditional rituals and customs and the couples are chosen through a selection, and at least one of the partners should come from Malesh or Pijanec. This manifestation represents historical customs of the wedding ritual with a focus on the

authentic presentation of elements which were characteristic of the wedding in the past. This manifestation contains elements of religious rituals and customs and music (vocal and instrumental) which create complete visual – musical show where the visitor-tourist is offered an opportunity to participate and to have direct experience of the spiritual and cultural heritage in the region.

Another event with a large potential is the **Ethno festival Berovo** which takes place every year on August 27 and 28. During this manifestation the tradition of the Maleshevo region and Berovo is being presented through a range of integrated promotional events, such as the promotion of traditional products, folklore, cultural heritage, local specialties, handmade objects, souvenirs, musical tradition, etc. The event itself transforms Berovo into a true ethno town, and through a range of integrated promotional events it treats the rich tradition of this region and represents the tourist potentials. The festival has international character and as such it has the potential to attract different target groups.

**Kochani's rice days** – Kochani is an event through which potential tourists have direct opportunity to face the tradition of the agricultural activities, religious rituals and folklore customs related to harvesting of the rice – symbol of Kochani area. This manifestation is traditional and it takes place every year on the rice fields in the village Dolni Polog, Kochani area. It is a blend of tradition and modern artistic expression, which reveals the passage of rice culture from the soil to the table. The manifestation reveals the authentic way of manual reaping of the crops with a sickle, accompanied by all other customs. This celebration is accompanied by many other events such as book promotions, art exhibits, fair of handicrafts and traditional meals, ensemble performances from other towns and states, etc.

Similar manifestation is the **First rice harvest – Cheshinovo Obleshevo** which takes place on September 21 (Little Virgin Mary). This provides opportunities for creating tours related to such holiness.

It is necessary to create ethno exhibits, ethno village, etc., which will create tourist tours attractive for tourists, and this will additionally increase the value of the region as a location with unique cultural experiences.

Measures for renewing and preserving the old handicrafts and the old customs which are characteristic of EPR are also necessary.

### 10.3.2 Rural tourism

Village or rural tourism relates to rural areas which are the main receptive areas for rural tourism, while the main emitting areas are the large towns and the highly urbanized environments. Primary motives which attract the tourists to come to the villages are the nature and the cultural heritage, as well as gastronomy, special interests (picking healing plants, climbing, walking, ethno tours, education, etc.). Rural culture is the key component of the offered tourist product in rural tourism.

Agro-tourism and eco-tourism are often related to rural tourism.

Agrotourism implies staying at a village with active participation in all agricultural activities or for educational purposes. Eco tourism implies staying in preserved nature.

In the East Planning Region there are many villages which have the potential for possible development of rural tourism, but it is necessary to create rural committees for development, their education, developing infrastructure, clustering and their well-developed marketing promotion.

The following ten villages obtained the highest number of points in the valorization process: Zrnovci, Lesnovo, Zletovo, Istibanja, Rusinovo, Vladimirovo, Ratevo, Pantelej, Shtalkovica and Cera. These villages should be selected as pilot projects for development of rural tourism<sup>11</sup>.

In the process of defining tourist products and creating tourist offer for rural tourism, the following should be taken into consideration:

- Rural tourism is an alternative to mass tourism. Considering the fact that rural tourism generates tourists with special interests, which are interested in the culture, tradition and the environment, destinations which offer vacation in rural tourism will not suffer negative consequences which are felt by tourist destinations on the mass market.
- Sustainable rural tourism is a sustainable approach towards the economical development. It could have an important role in the regional economic development and expanding the benefits for the undeveloped regions.
- Strategy for mutual planning – partnership between private and public sector in performing the targets for development of rural tourism.
- Coordination of standards – this offers the opportunity for coordination of standards for accommodation, offer of facilities, activities, providing information, services of a tourist guide and customer care.
- The balance between the forces of progress and stagnation – towards those who are included in rural tourism the principle of "carrot and stick" could be applied. Stimulations in the form of credits and subsidies could be offered for those who are developing their products on a higher level. The ones who are dealing with rural tourism and who are not managing to elevate their standards could be excluded from the tourist offer in the region.
- The role of the institutions – Institutions will have the benefit of using the opportunities for employment created by rural tourism. This includes women, children and people with disability.

### 10.3.2.1 Approach in creating tourist products in rural tourism

The following strategic approaches towards rural tourism have been chosen:

- Organization and cooperation – In view of the fragmented nature of tourism in general (especially rural tourism), good organization is of essential importance to provide basis for development of rural tourism and its successful management.
- Creating connections and networks of companies (clusters). It is difficult to survive in isolation in rural tourism. Therefore, it is necessary to create connections and networks between those who are operating in tourism and in the catering industry. For example, in close cooperation between the owner of the rural household and the local craftsman, it is possible to offer packages for learning old handcrafts, etc. It is important to learn that the prospects of reaching vitality in rural tourism will be higher through a cluster "group" of the rural companies in tourism. Naturally, this would imply inclusion of the entire village in order to build a critical mass of facilities (for example, accommodation, activities, cultural attractions, shops, information for the public). In such a way, the users could make life easier and simultaneously the tourist companies could benefit from the movement of consumers from one activity and object to another.
- Zone approach – A strategy which takes into consideration the natural and cultural advantages of each destination could be considered as zone approach towards rural tourism (for example: Area A Tourism on a rural farm, Area B – activities on a mountain, Area C – wine tours, etc.)

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<sup>11</sup> Study for the condition of the potentials for development of tourism in EPR.

- Development of products of rural tourism.

The following steps are necessary for creating complete use of the potential of rural tourism and for creating sustainable product of rural tourism:

- Market research is necessary – in order to develop a tourist product it is necessary to learn about the market demand, and equally important, about the motivation and the preferences of the market. Based upon this information, taking into consideration the available resources, the products of rural tourism could be properly developed.
- Market segmentation – Market segmentation will be necessary. This implies recognizing different categories of potential visitors from key markets (for example, family, elderly people above 60, young people below 30, active tourists, tourists with special interests, etc.) Each of these visitors probably has different motivations and preferences and the proper offer should be shaped pursuant to them.
- Introducing quality marks – Primarily, the quality of products of rural tourism will have to be developed with highest standards to meet the needs of consumers and to encourage them to come again, which is important for provision of long term sustainability. Marking or providing marks could be used as quality assurance.
- Trade - Sale of local specific products (for example wine, food, handmade creations, and knitwear) will provide a greater degree of experience for tourists and branding the destination itself.

### 10.3.3 Religious – monastic tourism

The East Planning Region is abundant in monasteries and churches which represent a significant cultural heritage from different periods. A greater number of them contain masterpieces of paintings, icon painting, architecture and iconostasis.

In the past years an increase of monastic male and female communities has been noted.

The development of monastic tourism in the East Planning Region depends upon the interest of tourists for visiting monasteries, but it also largely depends upon the monks' permission for visiting. The monasteries always welcome tourists with religious motives or tourists who are fond of cultural heritage. However, the life and order of the monks should not be interrupted at any time. At the moment there are relatively little monasteries where there is an active monk's life and they are: Lesново monastery – St. Arhangel Gavril – male monastery, St. Spiridon – female monastery and St. Arhangel Mihail in Berovo – male monastery, etc. Other valuable or popular monasteries often times celebrate religious holidays and lunches are being organized with the worshippers.

No organized accommodation of the tourists within the monasteries has been noted.

This type of tourism is possible as a combination with some other type of tourism, i.e. organized visit of other monuments of culture. In the vicinity of the East Planning Region there are many known and attractive monasteries located on the territory of other regions, so in that sense it is good to consider creating a route which would include several monasteries from different regions.

During the workshops which were organized in the process of preparation of the Study, a large number of participants, representatives of the municipalities of the East Planning Region, announced that monastery tourism has a very large potential for development in this region. However, this does not depend solely on the attractiveness of the monastery or the churches, but also on a large number of other factors, which were elaborated within the valorization which was performed and presented in the tables with single grades and ranging of churches and monasteries.

### 10.3.4 Mountain tourism

Mountain tourism implies a wide spectrum of tourist activities which take place on the mountain. If we take into consideration that 56% of the area of EPR belongs to the mountain area and that there are up to 9 mountains of which one is higher than 2000 m, the importance of mountain tourism for this region becomes clear. The mountains differ in heights – from low mountains up to 1500 m (3), to medium height 1500 to 2000 m (5) and Osogovo Mountain with over 2000 m, and they also have great differences with reference to values, climate, waters, forestation and other biodiversity. Aside from that, some mountain parts are scarcely populated, far from the city centers, but their natural values are preserved (Ograzhden, SE part of Plachkovica, west part of Maleshevo Mountains). Actually, among the main types of tourism (lake, lowland, urban, etc.); in the EPR the highest perspective is present among the mountain tourism. Almost all 6 mountains higher than 1500 m have the opportunities for development of different mountain tourist activities, which are presented in detail further in the text.

### 10.3.5 Tracking

The area of EPR provides excellent conditions for development of tracking-tourism. There are most various natural amenities: mountains, ravines, canyon parts, waterfalls, dense forest areas, belvederes, etc. Pursuant to the measurements and the analyses, on the area of EPR there are marked or tracking paths or they could be marked in total length of over 600 km. These paths are mainly mountain narrow forest paths, then narrow so called goat paths, and at some locations there are wider and clearly set dirt or macadam paths.

It is necessary to mark numerous tracking paths in the following period, especially on the mountains Osogovo and Plachkovica. Also, it is necessary to place signalization, information tables, presentation and promotion of paths and their conditions (type of terrain, denivelation, springs, i.e. drinking water, danger from wild animals), etc. It is advisable to have an internet page with a map and information for the tracking-paths, as well as proper brochures, maps and guides. It would be especially useful if the tracking-paths and their amenities are available in electronic format for GPS devices, for facilitated tracking. The main problem for tracking tourism in EPR is lack of appropriate accommodation facilities in the mountains, especially with reference to mountain homes, small motels, homes, etc. This is considered a loss not only for the tourists but also for the municipalities and the entire region. Therefore, methods should be found for construction, change of use or adaptation of suitable facilities in the mountain homes. The optimal number is 8-10 mountain homes in the area of EPR with 300-500 beds. However, it is necessary to find the best possible way for management and maintenance of the homes. If the current one day tours are replaced with two day or three day tours by establishing a network of facilities for overnight stays, then tracking tourism in EPR will increase multiple times. At the beginning the weekend houses could be used as facilities for overnight stays, as well as properly equipped village houses and households which are prepared to host tourists. The following problem is lack of information boards, markings and road signs, which should be at least in Macedonian and in English. Also, there are no proper descriptions, maps and information on the internet, and not even more modern amenities (coordinates, GPS lines, etc.). All of this conditions poor visitation and poor utilization of tracking as a very good form of tourism in EPR.

According to the estimations for the optimal capacity of tracking-tourism in EPR of around 5-20 participants per tour and on the average around 10-20 tracking routes in the region per day, we arrive at the conclusion that tracking tourism could be practiced by 30 000 to 50 000 tourists per year, and more than half of them are usually interested in two-day tours. This would result in nearly 60 000 to 80 000 overnight stays in previously provided/built facilities, or a financial effect of around 1, 0-1, 5 million Euro per year.



### 10.3.6 Mountaineering

In view of the characteristics of the terrain, mountaineering is an important tourist activity in EPR. In mountaineering, one of the main targets is climbing some impressive or high peak, as fast as possible. The best opportunities for mountaineering are offered at Osogovo Mountains, (Ruen, 2252 m and Carev Vrv, 2085 m), Plachkovica (Lisec, 1754 m), Vlaina (Kadiica, 1932 m), Maleshevo Mountains (Chengino Kale, 1745 m) and other. A large disadvantage for mountaineering is lack of proper mountain home in the vicinity of the highest peaks, or proper signalization along the paths or on the peaks. This should be a priority in the following period until 2025. Also, maps and brochures for mountaineering should be prepared, with all necessary information, and a modern web-portal for mountaineering in the region.

### 10.3.7 Winter (winter-sports) tourism

From the aspect of winter-sports tourism, the most favorable conditions for development within EPR are present on the high mountain part of Osogovo at elevation above 1800 m, between Carev Vrv (with Kalin Kamen and Kitka) and Ruen. The area of this high mountain part is 15,5 km<sup>2</sup>, and 5,2 km<sup>2</sup> are located on 1900 m. Due to the height, the temperatures here are low (average annual temperatures is around 4-5°C), rainfalls are heavier (700-900 mm per year) and during winter time they appear as snowfall. Snow often remains from December until April, especially on the northeastern side (towards the spring part of Kamenichka Reka and Kriva Reka). Excellent and wide high mountain terrains are present on Carev Vrv and the adjacent crests, where many ski paths and other amenities could be placed (Trpevski and other, 2010). Therefore, it is necessary to prepare good feasibility study with special accent on the influence of the environment, together with NEPR i.e. the municipality of Kriva Palanka (as the northern part of Carev Vrv belongs to this municipality). From a technical aspect, proper infrastructure, access, locations and other should be constructed first. Moreover, it is necessary to form and prepare ski paths, snowboard paths, sledging paths and other winter-sports activities. According to the detailed analyses, nearly ten ski paths with a total length of around 24 km could be placed here at the average denivelation of 300-500 m. In the part which belongs to EPR it is recommendable to provide accommodation capacities above the village Gorna Cera or above the village Sasa, which would attract tourists and they would stay more than one day. From the village Sasa (750 m) an easy access could be provided to the crest Kitka (1850 m) and to the ski paths south of Carev Vrv with cable cars (gondola) 6 km long. This would shorten the road to Makedonska Kamenica, from 27 km through the village Gorna Cera to only 15 km with the gondola. With reference to the complementary accommodation, by informing and encouraging the local population, the properly equipped weekend homes and houses in the village Cera and Sasa, as well as the apartments (houses) in Makedonska Kamenica should be put into function. At the same time activities should be taken for attracting investors for construction of a modern mountain home, and if possible, hotel-catering facilities of proper suitable locations above the village Gorna Cera and Kitka. Furthermore, it is necessary to create tourist maps, road signs and guides to the mentioned and other interesting localities in the area. Properly trained people should be hired as guides. The long-term goal of the locality Kalin Kamen-Carev Vrv-Gorna Cera is to grow into a winter-sports center of national importance, with ski paths, sledging paths, cable cars, hotel-accommodation capacities, accompanying amenities, etc.

At the remaining localities at Osogovo Mountains and at other mountains in EPR, the possibilities for typical winter-sports tourism and snow activities are very small, especially if we take into consideration the already clear effects of global warming. This is all due to the simple fact that Ponikva, Golak, Berovo Lake, Plachkovica are up to 300-500 m lower, their temperatures are higher, and snow remains for less than a 1-1,5 month with less quality. In that sense, Berovo Lake, Golak, Plachkovica, and to some extent Ponikva, do not offer opportunities to develop into

large winter sports ski centers, since their natural conditions do not allow that. The artificial maintenance of the snow outside of its natural season, which lasts around 2-3 months, is expensive, irrational and ineffective, and the length of the existing and new ski, snowboard and other paths and their denivelation are small. In that sense, instead of a typical ski tourism, the given locations should have emphasized recreational, wellness and even spa function, and they should be regarded as “all year” resorts with amenities for all seasons.

### 10.3.8 Bath – wellness spa tourism

The area of EPR has the largest thermal potential on the Balkans with several larger geothermal basins: Podlog, Banja, Istibanja and Kezhovica. The properties of geothermal waters are truly excellent and suitable for spa (bath) tourism, but this type of tourism is almost completely abandoned. The bath Kezhovica is not equipped and arranged to accept foreign and domestic tourists, with reference to the quality of the accommodation capacities, and the variety and level of surfaces. Before having any activities for attracting and hosting foreign tourists, the facilities of the bath must be modernized, new additional amenities should be constructed in the type of bath-spa complex (open and closed pools, children’s pool, whirlpool baths, sauna, Turkish baths, massage salons) which will be attractive not only for the people with certain illnesses, but also for those who wish to enjoy and relax in the benefits of thermal waters, especially if we take into consideration the proximity of the town Shtip and the numerous amenities which the town could offer. According to the position, the area from the village Istibanja to Vinica also offers excellent opportunities for construction of modern spa center. Actually, there are already initiatives from the municipality of Vinica for a spa center in this area. Its implementation in the future period could be an excellent base for a significant increase of the tourist visit of this area. Similar situation is present with the bath of the village Banja (municipality Cheshinovo-Obleshevo), where the ruined bath complex should be replaced with new constructions and amenities. Spa tourism on the area of EPR (in the three mentioned centers), in view of the existing condition will require significant investments in the following 10 year period. However, the return effect will be large, and with successful management, the investment will be returned in a relatively short period of time. This is very clear if we take into consideration that geothermal-mineral water is “nature’s gift” which at present is barely used.

With reference to spa-wellness tourism, the existing and future hotel-accommodation facilities in EPR should try to provide modern amenities along with wellness-spa. This in the sense of construction of smaller and bigger pool, whirlpool bath, sauna, steam bath, massage salon, fitness or only few amenities of these. The trends have revealed that any type of wellness-spa amenity with satisfactory quality significantly increases the interest for visiting such a facility compared to other facilities without such amenities (even for a higher price). Actually, the existing examples in EPR confirm this conclusion. In that sense the facilities in Kochansko Pole have the advantage of using their geothermal waters.

### 10.3.9 Jeep safari, off-road, moto tourism

If we take into consideration the size and variety of landscapes in EPR and the desire of the tourists to see more sights for the limited available time which they have, one of the most important activities should be the jeep safari tourism. Jeep tours could be half a day, single day, and sometimes two day tours. It is recommended for the daily largest distance to be up to 100 km, the maximum speed on the asphalt roads should not be more than 50-60 km/h, and from 20-30 km/h on the macadam roads (for safety reasons and in order to observe the landscapes). Also, every half an hour of a drive should be followed by a break at some well chosen or denoted location. Jeeps must be fully operational, organized, and half open during summer if possible. Jeep safari could be organized as a main activity previously arranged through tourist agencies or

complementary and optional, as part of a total offer. Jeep safari is recommended to take place on the existing asphalt local roads with partial off-road on better macadam roads. In the second case, care must be taken for the eco-component, i.e. to avoid passing through untouched, protected and valuable natural areas and higher mountain areas. An example for a half a day jeep safari could be from Shtip through the village Shashavarlija, village Prnalija, Radanjska Reka – Shtipili from Kochani through Ponikva, ravine of Zletovska Reka, village Zletovo, village Lesново, village Tursko Rudari, village Pantelej, Kochani (the same tour could also be organized from Probishtip). From the locality Berovo Lake or from Berovo, a good tour is to Pehchevo waterfalls through Parkach, then badlands at the village Crnik and Kukuljeto at the village Nov Istevnik. Off road jeep safari could take place on the mountain Mangovica, mountain Serta, lower south parts of Osogovo, Vlaina and other. It is not necessary to go through the dense forest areas due to previously mentioned eco-reasons and the possible interruptions of nature (in that case a special eco-tax could be considered or special vehicles with certain eco-standards or electro-vehicles). Jeep-safari tourism could bring in significant financial effects and it could be an excellent base for promoting the resources in EPR. In order for it to function, good organizational measures should be taken through local tourist organizations which would offer and promote such attractive and flexible offer, independently or through hotels and other tourist facilities. The region could accept around 100 jeep vehicles daily in different parts, or around 200 to 500 tourists per day or an annual financial effect of around one million euro. In this part we could also place the moto-safari, i.e. the passing through and observing the landscapes with a motor or a four-wheel motor, which could take place with personal vehicle or with a rented vehicle. The same principles apply for the moto-safari as for the jeep-safari, i.e. avoiding valuable and ecologically preserved mountain areas.

For the purpose of accomplishing the previous activities, it is necessary to map all roads and paths which are suitable for jeep and moto safari, as well as their marking i.e. signalization. The possibility for renting a jeep, motorcycle, four-wheel motor, scooter, etc., through local agencies should specifically be opened, as it is practiced almost everywhere in the developed tourist world.

### 10.3.10 Mountain biking

For the necessities of this type of tourism, the largest part of the marked paths for tracking and mountaineering could be used, except the inaccessible places and passages. In that sense, the length of the potential mountain bike paths in EPR could amount between 500 and 700 km, and the paths should be categorized pursuant to the difficulty and the conditions. The paths on the mountain crests could be used as easy paths, and the more difficult paths – to the level of downhill, the paths from the crest towards the river valleys or the valley bottoms. Best conditions for mountain biking are found on Osogovo Mountains, then Plachkovica, Maleshevo Mountains and Ograzhden. The main problem is the same as with tracking – lack of accommodations for overnight stays, unarranged paths, lack of promotion, information, inability to rent mountain bicycles, etc. In that sense measures should be taken which do not require large investments, but which will provide good effect.

### 10.3.11 Geotourism

Geotourism is often part of the activities such as tracking, mountbiking, jeep-safari and other types of nature observation, which includes visit, observation, photographing and enjoying rare and interesting geo attractions. In that sense, geotourism has the opportunity for good development in Pechevo area, through the interesting, remarkable and rare erosive forms - badlands, especially few large badlands at the village Crnik. Equally interesting are the badlands at the village Smojmirovo, i.e. the locality Parkach. The visit and sightseeing of the stone dolls and

the sight Kukulje at the village Nov Istevnik is especially impressive. The starting point for visiting these sights could be Pehchevo, Berovo or Delchevo, as they are located at a small mutual distance (8-10km). Thus, a one day route could include a relaxing visit of all mentioned attractions. In this area (Pijanec) there are also stone dolls (Kukuljeto) at 3 km SW from the village Trabatovishte, then the rocks and the cave Konjska Dupka at the village Grad near Delchevo, the cave Kiselica at the village Kiselica and the locations where fossils have been (and are found) at the village Stamer. All given locations have their values and significance, and the caves provide an adventure challenge since they are 20-50 m long. Towards north, from the aspect of geotourism, the entire valley of Kamenichka Reka is very interesting with numerous and large alluvial fans, large layers of alluvial material, landslides and other sights in the area. Makedonska Kamenica could be the starting point, with numerous attractions in its vicinity. On the west side, there is the impressive ravine Istibanja with steep rocks, steep sides and numerous segments with different shapes. On the entire area from the village Sasa to the village Istibanja the rocks occasionally reveal black layers of slates rich with ore deposits. The vicinity of Probishtip has a special geotouristic value. The unique mineral collection is located in the town itself and soon it will receive a new representative area. In the vicinity of the town there are around ten volcanic rocks, and Lesnovo crater is located at only 3 km, one of the most preserved and most interesting on the Balkans. It reveals the intense geological history of this area in the past 30 million years. At 5 km south from Probishtip, along the road towards the village Zletovo there are sights of volcanic balls or volcanic bombs, some of them perfectly rounded, and similar sights are present at the village Dobrevo. At the village Zletovo we enter towards possibly one of the most beautiful ravine in EPR, the ravine Zletovo, with its steepest and most fascinating part (to the village Kojkovo) 10 km long. Here tourists can travel on the good asphalt road and enjoy the wild nature, deep almost canyon sides, numerous waterfalls, wonderful sights towards the remains of the former volcanoes and other. On the east side of the village Zletovo there is another excellent geolocality, Ratkova Skala, which appears with large frightening rocks, composed of quartzite. Near Shtip, the most interesting geotouristic localities are Isar and the small gorge of the river Bregalnica, then the valley of Radanjska Reka, with its almost alien appearance, small but interesting canyon Kamnik, which connects to the aforementioned valley, as well as the caves under the peak Turtel.

For development of geotourism, it is necessary to prepare information tables at the mentioned geoattractions, then promotion of geoattractions through brochures and web-portals, as well as inclusion of the most interesting geo attractions in the tourist routes. Also, an excellent step in that direction would be creating and proclaiming geo parks and geoarcheological parks, which is a modern trend in Europe and in the world. Such parks indicate unique geovalues and are quite visited by tourists. Thus, Lesnovo peak and crater, Ratkova Skala, Crnichki badlands, Kukuljeto, village Sasa and Kamenichka Reka could be exceptionally well and visited geoparks.

### 10.3.12 Lake tourism

Lake Kalimansko in EPR offers conditions for typical lake tourism. Pursuant to the length of the coastal line of 40 km and its spread position, Kalimanci is among the most interesting and the largest artificial lakes in Macedonia. It offers good conditions for tours with tourist boats and rafts, and the length of its round sailing route is with excellent 22 km. Also, it is possible to organize sailing routes from Makedonska Kamenica to the village Todorovci or/and vice versa (8, 5 km), or from the village Lukovica to Makedonska Kamenica (7, 5 km). It is possible to place platforms for boats and rafts on these three given places, which would be the starting or final sailing points. The route and visit of the island Kalata would be quite interesting as it is the only island on the lake and one of the three lake islands in Macedonia. In that sense, it would be a great convenience to arrange the island (which never gets flooded) with a walking path, belvedere

and a platform for harboring small sailing objects. The lake offers enjoyment and when sailing it is possible to see different amenities along or on the coast, archeological remains, rural and traditional objects, etc. It is necessary to place information boards and signalization for all of them. Kalimanci offers the possibility of kayaking on peaceful waters, then pedaling boats and other recreational sailing activities. There are also proper conditions for a summer bathing tourism and placing and arranging several beaches. Even though the lake attracts transit tourists and passengers, there is no accommodation or food and beverage facility along the shore, which would allow the observation of the spectacular view. At present there are only 3-4 wild and unorganized parking places where one can stop but only in the direction towards Delchevo (it is dangerous to go in the opposite direction). Therefore, it is necessary to enable and stimulate tourist construction and arrangement of the coastal attractive zone. According to the performed estimations, during the summer period Lake Kalimanci would be able to host around 500-1000 tourists per day, i.e. around 30 000 during the year, which would provide a financial effect of around 1-3 million Euros.

Aside from Lake Kalimansko, certain degree of developed lake tourism is already present at Berovo Lake and at the lake Gratche. Berovo Lake provides recreation and water sports such as kayaking, boat tours around the lake (in the length of 5 km), pedaling boat, fishing and other activities. There is already a kayaking competition here. It would be a good opportunity to find a way for a tourist sightseeing of the lake with an electrical boat for a group of 4-12 tourists, picnic by boat to some locality on the opposite coast, renting rubber or wooden boats, etc. Even though it is smaller in size, Lake Gratche possesses the same opportunities as the previous lakes. Actually, the development of lake tourism is already underway here, with marked paths and facilities around the lake, renovated hotel, a beach on the lake (which should be additionally arranged), several sailing objects (a harboring platform is necessary), etc.

### 10.3.13 Summer bathing tourism and water activities

The summer bathing tourism has good conditions for development in the area of EPR. Lake Kalimansko offers especially good conveniences. The lake itself offers at least 3 parts which are suitable for arranging beaches, especially at the village Todorovci and the village Lukovica. In the summer period, the temperature of the water in the lake is usually 20-25°C, which is suitable for bathing. Also, the quality of water is satisfactory, ranging within class II (except in the bay towards Kamenica). The only problem is the oscillation of the water level due to emptying the lake in the summer period. This problem could be solved in the future period solely by construction of one smaller accumulation at Bregalnica upstream from Kalimanci to the village Ochipale, or several small accumulations of the tributaries of Bregalnica above Kalimanci.

Aside from Kalimanci, good conditions for a bathing tourism and water activities are present at the lake Gratche, especially in view of the vicinity to the town Kochani. Berovo Lake could offer water activities instead of bathing tourism because of its lower water temperatures: kayaking, rafting, pedaling boats, etc. For the purpose of promoting summer bathing tourism in EPR, it is necessary to build/renovate/upgrade pools in almost all towns except Probishtip, which already has an attractive aqua park. The experience of several years of this aqua-recreational facility reveals that a large number of tourists could be attracted for a short period of time. If we take into consideration the demographic-gravitational condition in EPR, aqua-park amenities (pools, recreation on and in water) are necessary in Shtip, Kochani and Delchevo. Care should be taken of the selection of the location, type of facilities, offered amenities, price, etc.

### 10.3.14 Hunting tourism

The area of EPR offers excellent conditions for development of hunting tourism, both for domestic and foreign tourists. However from around 40 hunting grounds in the region only few are arranged and ready for tourist function. Such is the case for two fenced hunting grounds “Polaki” and “Konche”, then the hunting ground “Golak”, etc. Actually, almost all hunting grounds may develop tourist activity, especially the mountains with large game which is in high demand and which is highly paid. According to the available data, the area of EPR is visited by around 1000-1200 foreign hunters per year for hunting tourism. In order for them to come, the hunting associations send an invitation verified by a notary to the regional center for border issues at MIA. The daily ticket for hunting usually costs 50 Euros, and when hunting a protected game, the daily ticket is from 20 Euros and 20-30 Euros for shot game. When they go hunting they are accompanied by hunting guides of the association, which take care of the shot game, they make sure that the hunters do not hunt on the same place to avoid scaring the birds, etc. Foreign hunters usually come with their own equipment, terrain vehicles and hunting weapon. Often times they take their hunting dogs with them which are being trained during the hunt. The entire community benefits from the stay of the hunters and their participation in sports tourism. They use the facilities for accommodation and they visit the food and beverage facilities in town. The largest part of these sports tourists return the following year. The best areas and existing hunting grounds for development of hunting tourism are on Osogovo Mountains (hunting ground “Polaki”), on Konechka mountain (hunting ground “Konche”), at Delchevo (hunting ground Golak), on Mangovica (the existing hunting ground should be arranged) etc. In order for the hunting ground to accomplish good results, tourist formation is necessary, construction/provision of a motel or a hunting home, hunting manifestations, competition, additional offers and activities, etc.

### 10.3.15 Fishing tourism

In view of the numerous mountain waterfalls and abundance of fish, as well as the presence of a large number of artificial lakes, EPR has quite solid conditions for development of fishing tourism. The best opportunities are offered by Lake Kalimansko, Lake Gradche, Lake Berovo, Lake Sandanski (which is actually used for that), Lake Loshana at the village Trabotivishte, Lake Pishichko (which has dried due to penetration of the dam, but it is expected to be rebuilt by 2018) then Bregalnica from Kalimanci to the entrance in Kochansko Pole, Zletovska Reka to the village Zletovo, river Osojnica through the ravine, etc. According to the Fishing base for Bregalnica catchment (2011), the area of EPR is divided in 5 fishing territories from the spring („Bregalnica 1“) to the catchment of Svetinikolska Reka („Bregalnica 5“). In the upper flows of the constant rivers there is the river trout, and lower there is common nase, chub, smelt, carp, barbel and other. Lake Kalimanci also has catfish. For development of fishing tourism at a necessary level, the following activities should be carried out in the following period: arranging the fishing territories and suitable locations for fishing, including this type of tourism in the offer of the fishing associations, agencies and other involved institutions, simplifying the procedure for issuing fishing license for more days, opportunities to buy or rent fishing equipment, setting up fishing platforms, especially on the lakes, creating complete fishing-tourist arrangements, promotion and presentation of this type of tourism, etc. In that sense, the accommodation capacities and the local tourist agencies/bureaus should cooperate with the fishing associations and more information should be shared through brochures, contacts, etc. Again we face the same problem here as well, the lack of accommodation-food and beverage capacities near the larger water facilities such as Lake Kalimansko, Pishica, Loshana and others.

### 10.3.16 Paragliding

Several places in EPR have excellent conditions for paragliding. They are Turtel and its surrounding towards Kochansko pole; village Leshki towards Kochani; Lesново towards the village Zletovo; Golak towards Delchevo and others. Turtle offers best conditions as it has an asphalt road almost all the way to the top, the area around the top is wide, the north slope is quite steep, and Kochansko pole is flattened and wide. Also, the height difference is quite large and at 5 km horizontal distance it is up to 1000 m (to the village Zrnovci, village Morodvis and village Vidovishte). Above the village Vidovishte and the village Zrnovci there are also beautiful terrains for downhill run with a paragliding from a small height (300-400 m height difference at 1,5 km horizontal distance), with a good macadam road. This area also has favorable winds blowing on the hills of Plachkovica from south to north.

There is a good and open terrain for paragliding on Osogovo, at the village Leshki (980 m) above Kochani on the road towards Ponikva. The length of the line is 6-7 km, while the denivelation is around 500 m. Around Probishtip there are good terrains for paragliding from Lesново peak and from Crni Vrv (1115 m). On the southwest edge of Lesново crater, at the locality "Belo Mesto" there is a plain with diameter of 50 m, at height of 890 m. It is possible to fly from here for 2-3 km in the direction of the village Zletovo, village Dreveno or Probishtip, at denivelation of 300-350 m. The terrain from the village Zletovo to the village Dreveno and Probishtip have a small inclination, open, tamed and suitable for landing. Similar conditions are present at Crni Vrv, but here the weather conditions could change at once. On the mountain Golak there are several places which are suitable for paragliding on the road to the recreational complex at the top Chavka, especially above Vidkovec (830 m). Here, at the distance of 2, 5 km towards northeast (towards Delchevo), the denivelation is around 250 m. It is important that all given locations offer good natural conditions and they already have some infrastructure and they are also close to the local towns (Kochani, Probishtip, and Delchevo).

### 10.3.17 Adrenalin parks

The adrenalin parks are built and arranged sports-recreational amenities on a relatively small area (usually few hundred m<sup>2</sup> up to few hectares) and at certain height above the bottom (usually from few meters to few tens of meters). They are made of different passages through ropes, rope hanging bridges, high platforms etc., which creates strong excitement, sometimes fear, and also pleasure once the path is finished. The adrenalin parks do not request large investments, and they are excessively requested by tourists who are eager for adrenalin and adventure experiences. However, they imply severe safety and other standards which must be observed. Almost every recreational tourist locality with accommodation-food and beverage capacity within EPR may set an adrenalin park for adults or children. However, this is usually done in the localities which are located in the forest area, with clean air and further away from the urban areas. With small investments in adrenalin parks (few ten to hundred thousand Euros), the offer of a certain tourist center will increase, and so will the interest for its visit.

### 10.3.18 Zip-lines

Zip-line is a tourist attraction which is similar to the adrenalin parks and in the last ten years it is becoming more requested and more present in the World, in Europe and even on the Balkan Peninsula. This attractiveness is expected to expand in the Republic of Macedonia. It represents a tight, steel rope (sometimes 2 ropes for better safety) which connects two close places at different height and it enables descending from higher to lower places and it is a true adrenalin experience. Such amenity, which does not entail large financial funds, will increase the attractiveness of several places and it will additionally attract a significant number of tourists. The

placement of zip-lines does not have a negative influence on the environment but it enables a fantastic view of the landscapes. When placing zip-lines it is important for them not to be too long (no more than 500-600 m) and to have enough, but not too large inclination, etc. There are many suitable locations for zip-lines in EPR but the most rational action would be to place them next to or near the existing, i.e. the potential attractive tourist localities at smaller altitude (places with higher temperatures in the year and with minor wind). For the beginning, the suitable traces for zip line would be the elevations and hills at Shtip, around the village Zletovo, near Kochani and Delchevo, at Lesnovo, in the ravine of Zrnovska Reka, at Badlands and Kukulje, above Kochani, at the village Grad and etc. Zip-lines may also be part of the adrenalin parks.

### 10.3.19 Aerotourism and gliding

The area of EPR has quite favorable conditions for flying and for sightseeing with light sports-tourist airplanes and gliders. One of the best aero-clubs originates from Shtip, established since 1924. The aero-club uses the sports-tourist airport in Shtip. Together with the aero-club there is also an aviation school conducting training for pilots for airplanes, pilots for gliders, modelers, parachuters and paragliders. For ten consecutive years the club is the organizer of the world's cup in rocket modeling and it also participates in the European and World's championships where it has significant success. The aero club has airplanes from the type Cesna (four-seats), Utva (two-seats) and gliders (two-seats and single seat). Two-seat gliders are used for tourists who do not have permission to fly and they are operated by a pilot. The flight might last several hours, and it is possible to fly over large distances, and the flight costs thirty Euros and it is a truly exciting experience. Since 2000 onwards there is an increased interest for flying among tourists and their number is constantly increasing. These services are used by around thirty tourists per year, and most of them are domestic tourists. As flying is related to the weather conditions, the best season for flying are spring and summer months, but it is not an exception to fly in autumn or winter. The most frequent periods for flying are the weekends. The modern world trends impose the need for new activities. The future development of the aero-club is planned to be directed towards the formation of a taxi-aviation due to the increasing interest by the business sector for traveling to famous European destinations (Tashkov and Metodijevski, 2009). In order for this type of tourism to be more present, it is necessary to increase the number and the quality of the planes (if possible to provide 2 smaller civil helicopters), then greater promotion and information, preparation of offers, web-presentation, etc. Also, an interesting opportunity would be to make a round sightseeing of EPR or to land at another sports airport in the region (even to arrange a new sports airport in Berovo) with a short visit of that part.

### 10.3.20 Mountaineering

On the area of EPR, a typical mountaineering could be practiced in the locality Ratkova Skala. There is solid rocks-quartzite, with abysses more than 150 m high. The largest height difference from the bottom of the rock to the top is 350 m, over 3 verticals. Several mountaineering directions with different level of difficulty for climbing are possible. At present the locality can be reached through a dirt road from the village Shtalkovica, but with the construction of the road Probishtip-Ponikva it will become more accessible. However, mountaineering and the increased anthropogenic influence may have a negative impact on the unique biodiversity and some endangered species of birds such as the Egyptian vulture, golden eagle, etc. Such influences and threats should be estimated by a certain study. In the wider area, especially through the ravine of Zletovska Reka there are several other locations with vertical abysses between 30 and 80 m, but their attractiveness is much smaller in terms of mountaineering. Good mountaineering directions with a height of up to 100 m could also be placed on the limestone abysses at the village Grad near Delchevo.



### 10.3.21 Other tourist activities

Aside from the given types of tourism, in the analyzed period 2016-2025 attention should be paid to the development of tourism related to riding horses, then a donkey walk, flying with a balloon, skydiving (flying with a wing), base-jumping (jumping with a parachute from a vertical rock), carting, 7D virtual walk through the region, walking with a tourist wagon – train from Veles to Kochani, etc.

In view of the numerous mines on the area of EPR, as well as the old deserted mines and pits, and pursuant to the interest of the tourists for visiting such objects, it is possible to organize visits of the mines in Sasa or Dobrevo, i.e. Probishtip. Mining dates from a very old period in this area, with certain archeological traces of mining since ancient times. However, in the process of organizing such tourist offer, care must be taken of the safety of tourists, then proper information about mining, abundance of different minerals, etc.

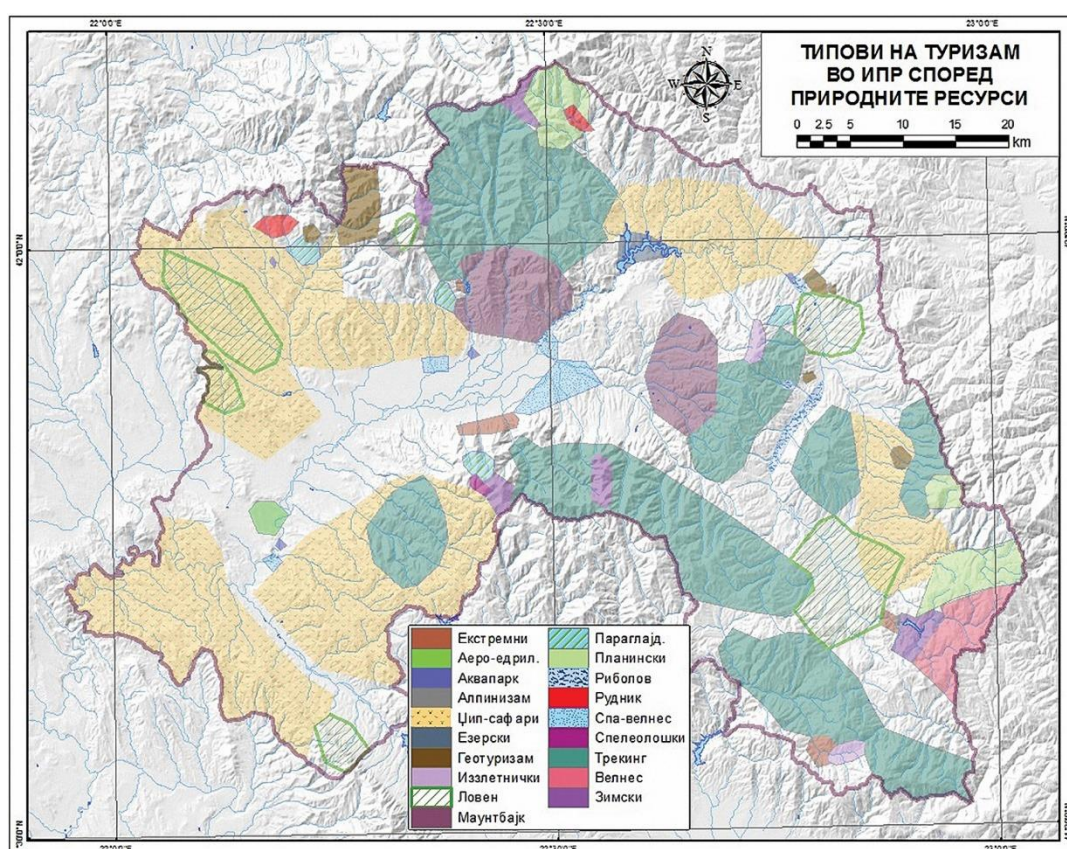


Figure 3. Map of types of tourism in EPR related to natural attractiveness (original).

## 10.4 Integrated tourist products and offers

Integrated products and offers include visit, observation, sightseeing, usage and stay at the areas, events and amenities from different tourist categories: cultural, natural, shopping, ambient and other. The integral offers also imply visiting many different tourist places around the region, but also a combination with amenities and attractions outside of the region (usually with the neighboring regions). The advantage of integrated products and offers lies in removing the monotony of only one type of activity (solely cultural, solely archeological, solely religious, etc.).

Due to its diversity (also expressed through the existence of 6 tourist subregions), EPR offers excellent conditions for creating integrated offers. Such an offer could be the visit of the Lesnovo Monastery, and simultaneously observing and learning about the intense volcanic past and the volcanoes of this area, then the visit of the adjacent village Zletovo, and also the astonishing ravine of Zletovska Reka, which resembles a canyon at certain places. Similar offers are also possible with combination of cultural amenities and attractions in the foot of the mountain Plachkovica (Morodvis, Bargala, Vinichko Kale) and a stay and a walk on the highest parts around Turtel (excellent panorama, caves, valleys, etc.). Some examples of integral products are presented through the tourist routes in the following chapter.

### 10.4.1 Tourist routes

A tourist route is a previously marked and prepared road route which has significant natural, cultural and historical values tempting for observation and examination by tourists. It is a modern form of so called non-stationary tourism which is more in demand by the tourists. The East Planning Region has a solid base and opportunity to expand tourism in this area exactly through such non-stationary type of visit, i.e. through well developed tourist routes.

For the purpose of creating the tourist routes in the area of EPR, the approach is taking into consideration the previous information based upon:

- Significant natural, cultural and historical values of the region which are insufficiently presented, utilized and valorized;
- Ecologically preserved and pristine natural environment;
- Present insufficiently utilized opportunity for development of attractive tourist products;
- Tourist sector with under-average results;
- Relatively suitable traffic position which will increase even more with the opening of the borders crossing Klepalo at Berovo;
- Existence of solid network of asphalt roads from a lower rank;
- Modernization and construction of new road directions through the region, construction of a highway to Shtip, more express roads;
- Danger of devastation of natural and destruction of cultural-historical heritage;
- Tourism as a generator of an economical growth in the East Planning Region and a factor for economic self-sustaining at certain locations, products, routes or handcrafts.

In the process of creating tourist products and routes and the estimation of natural and cultural-historical amenities, attention should be paid to the overall attractiveness, then to the offer and the interaction of the route, expressed through the following:

- Location
- Type of monuments
- Natural or cultural value of the location
- Authenticity of the location
- Conservation of the monument
- Type of visit
- Accepted capacity of the locality
- Safety of the location
- Tourist accessibility of the location
- Wider attractive zone
- Level of utilization
- Possibility for grouping in one certain tourist route
- Attractiveness of the location

Attractiveness of one location as a tourist product and part of one tourist route in EPR, and with that of the complete tourist route, should be created with estimation of the following categories:

- Natural value, uniqueness
- Esthetic value
- Architectural, historic or artistic value
- Educational value
- Social value
- Rarity, representation
- Evocative - relates to legends, myths, stories ...
- Meeting certain targets

The process of creating tourist products in EPR should also take into consideration the needs of the traveler, visitor or the tourist, his expectations and motivation to be included in some of the proposed tourist routes. Care must be taken of the importance of marketing and the way of representing tourist products in one tourist routes, for the purpose of their better positioning on the tourist market.

As part of the multidisciplinary approach in creating tourist products and tourist routes in the East Planning Region, certain European experiences should be followed which recommend paying attention to the practical development of the route, recording resources, evaluation of the amenities and all other aspects, which are part of the movement of tourists and visitors along one route.

In the process of creating, organizing but primarily implementation of the routes and tours, the few following recommended elements should be included, in order to make the trip as pleasant as possible for the visitors. Here we would mention the following recommendations which should be taken into consideration:

- Time period i.e. duration of one tour or route
- Optimal length of one route/tour
- Staying at one place/location/monument
- Type of break
- Type of monument being visited
- The attractiveness of the location

The attractiveness of the location is the basis to create one tourist product based on one or more similar cultural-historic monuments. In the creation of this category several important benchmarks must be taken into consideration among which: possible natural value of the location, uniqueness, esthetic value, architectonic, historical or artistic value, educational value, social value, rarity/representation, evocative (whether it relates to legends, myths, stories), whether it meets certain goals (for example pilgrimage), etc.

It is recommendable once a certain route and/or tour is created, it must have previously strictly determined itinerary with rare exceptions. No improvisations are allowed within the routes and the tours. There could be an alternative for a certain destination, but it is not recommendable to refer the people to another destination than the one which is written on the itinerary. There could be an optional excursion only if there is one route/tour consisting of few days, but even then for every destination those optional excursions must be known ahead of time and opportunities for their realization should be created.

Here are some examples of tourist routes of a different type. We must mention that it is necessary to prepare special study which will elaborate the most attractive and the most prospective tourist routes in the region in detail.

### 10.4.2 Proposed thematic tourist routes in EPR

**“Following the Byzantine frescoes”**, regional route along EPR, cca 200 km – from Skopje - Shtip - Skopje, in duration of 7 - 9 hours by car (automobile or bus).

Start from Skopje and travel through the highway which passes by Veles. Arrival in Shtip and panoramic sightseeing of the town with included walking tour which will include: church St. Arhangel Glavatov (14 century), church St. Arhangel Mihail - Fitija (14 century), church St. John (1350) and church St. Spas (1369). Following lunch break and refreshing with possible promotion of medieval meals, the tour continues with the visit of the fortress “Isarot” and ends with visiting the church St. Nicholas (1867), along with a Gallery of frescoes on the first floor. The tour ends late in the afternoon at the meeting point in Skopje.

The purpose of this one day tour through the eastern part of the Republic of Macedonia is the connection and the promotion of cultural-historical heritage of the Byzantine period. As an additional marketing, it is necessary to make tracing, mapping and preparation of promotional material for all locations.

**“Traces of Ottoman heritage through centuries”**, regional route along the eastern part of the Republic of Macedonia, cca 200 km – from Skopje - Shtip - Skopje, duration of 7 - 9 hours by car (automobile or bus). Starting from Skopje and travelling through the highway which passes by Veles. Arrival in Shtip and panoramic sightseeing of the town with included cave tour which entails: the bridge of Sultan Khuchuk Emir (17 century), the Clock tower (17 century), Husamedin – Pasha Mosque (17 century) and Kadin Ana mosque (19 century) and Besistan (16-17 century). Following the break for lunch and refreshing with possible promotion of Turkish meals, the tour will continue with the visit of the fortress “Isarot”. The tour could possibly be finished with a visit of the Museum of the town Shtip, to view the exhibition with accent on the Ottoman period. The tour would finish late in the afternoon at the meeting point in Skopje.

The purpose of this one day tour through the eastern part of the Republic of Macedonia is the connection and promotion of the cultural-historical heritage of the Ottoman period. As an additional marketing, it is necessary to make tracing, mapping and preparation of promotional material for all locations.

### 10.4.3 Proposed integrated tourist routes in EPR

**“Following the volcanoes on the East”**, regional route along EPR, cca 160 km – from Shtip - Probishtip - Lesnovo, duration of 9 - 10 hours by car (automobile or a small bus). Starting from Shtip and travelling through the regional road for Probishtip. Arrival in Probishtip and sightseeing of the town and visiting the mineralogical collection. Travelling to the village Dobrevno and observation of the surrounding extinguished volcanoes. Continuing to the village Lesnovo, sightseeing of the village and visiting the monastery in the village. Observation and viewing the volcanoes and the crater. Visiting the volcanic caves and locations where milling stones were extracted. Panoramic observation of volcanoes from a belvedere by the crater. Passing through Zletovo and observing the astonishing valley of Zletovska Reka to the fish pond. Lunch break. Visiting the village Zletovo. The tour finishes late in the afternoon at the meeting point in Shtip.

The purpose of this one day tour through the eastern part of the Republic of Macedonia is the connection and promotion of unique natural and the cultural-historical heritage. It is necessary to make tracing, mapping and preparation of promotional material for all locations.

**“Through the ravines of the East”**, two day regional route along EPR, cca 250 km, on the route: starting point (Shtip) - Zletovo – Zletovska Reka (stopping at the waterfalls at the village

Jamishte to the dam and Lake Knezhevsko. Then traveling to the village Zrnovci with lunch break. Short visit of the ravine of Zrnovska Reka and enjoying the impressive nature. Travelling to the village Smojmirovo and Delchevo. Accommodation in the town, sightseeing and spending the night. The following day visiting the ravine of Kamenichka Reka to the mine Sasa with sightseeing. Returning and short stop in Makedonska Kamenica. Stopping at the belvederes at Lake Kalimansko and passing through Istibanjska ravine and stopping at the village Istibanja. Passing through Kochani to the dam Gratche. Lunch break. The tour finishes late in the afternoon at the meeting point (in Shtip).

The purpose of this two day tour through EPR is the connection and promotion of unique, mainly natural, but also cultural heritage through numerous parts of the region. This provides a solid presentation of the entire region.

#### 10.4.4 Proposed remaining tourist products

**“Pastrmajlija event plus top 10”** - during the Pastrmajlija event ten best attractions in Shtip should be visited (Isar, Museum, Besistan, Museum in Novo Selo, the Bridge of the sultan Emir Khuchuk,...) To make an attempt to keep the visitors to stay for one more day.

**“Makfest plus top 10”** – during the festival, the pleasant weather could be used to organize a visit/route around Shtip.

**“Going back towards the past and towards nature”** – during the Ethno Fest Berovo, increase of activities, walks in nature. One day route with a possibility for extending it to two days.

**“3 plus 3” (three plus three)** – One day archeological/museum route, Bargala – Karbinci, Crkvishte – Morodvis, Vinica fortress and visiting the museums of Vinica, Shtip, Novo Selo, organized lunch. The route could be used for tourists who are already in the country and who appreciate archeology and museums.

**“Monasteries of the East”**- two day tour with organized visit of St. Mary – Novo Selo, St. Nicholas – Shtip, Lesnovo monastery, St. Arhangel Mihail – Berovo, The birth of Saint Mary – Berovo, St. Georgi – Gorni Kozjak, St. Mary – Balaklija in Delchevo, St. Vasilij Veliki – Ponikva, St. Nicholas – Shtip – Kochani, Assumption of Virgin Mary – Berovo, St. Arhangel Mihail – Dramche. Visiting around 10 churches and monasteries from the region for the tourists who prefer religious tourism. Possible combination with other churches or adding the attractive monasteries from Strumichko area.

**“The passage of rice”** - tourist product where a specific shape of holiday is offered, which combines observation, direct participation with activities related to rice cultivation, tasting food prepared with rice, related with the visit and enjoying natural beauties, observing wildlife (water birds and animals), visiting cultural – historical monuments and experiencing tradition.

**“Summer school of ecologists”** – project in the form of an eco – village which will improve the knowledge of the young people to preserve the environment for its sustainable utilization and simultaneously discover and learn about the life and the tradition in the rural areas.

**“Let’s keep the tradition”** – project which focuses on protection of utilization of the traditional ways of living and management, while in the function of promotion of rural tourism.

#### 10.4.1 Proposed key projects for development of tourism in EPR

The preview below presents 15 projects which are of key importance for the increase of the tourist offer, consumption and total effect of tourism in EPR. They are only a part of the large number of proposed projects, measures and activities, presented in the action plan. The stated

projects do not require extremely high funds, they could be implemented in a relatively short period of time (3-5 years) and they will have a significant total effect.

**Creation of a coordinative body/cluster for development of tourism in EPR.** The goal of this project is formation of a coordinative body with assigned task of defining and monitoring the implementation of key policies for development of tourism in EPR.

**Formation of tourist-information centers (TIC) in the municipalities.** This is a very significant project, since the tourist-information centers are a necessary link for accelerated development of tourism in the region. In that sense, the project will include identification of strategic locations for formation of tourist information centers. Afterwards, the tourist information centers will be formed, equipped and their work will be defined. The final goal is delivery of services and information to the tourists.

**Project for performing trainings for learning foreign languages for the employees in the tourist sector in EPR.** The goal is to raise the level of knowledge of English language among the tourist workers, since at present it is at a basic level. It is especially necessary for employees in the tourist sector who make direct contact with the tourists to become introduced and to learn English language.

**“Signpost to the attractiveness of EPR”.** The project should include several activities such as: Setting tourist signalization to all existing tourist attractiveness in EPR. Marking the cultural and historical objects/monuments with proper boards and signposts, in Macedonian and in English, opening hours, prices, etc., according to the EU standards for tourist signalization. Setting tourist information boards and maps in Macedonian and English language (preferably in a third world language also) at the selected important attractions in the region, with interesting and concise data for the attraction and layout of qualitative maps (for orientation and road planning). Utilization of natural materials and good protection from external influences.

**“Tourist routes through the East Planning Region”.** Project which will include preparation of a Study for creating optimal regional, national, and/or international routes which will include natural and cultural resources of EPR. Preparation of maps and brochures for the appropriate routes. Offering the routes to local and national tourist agencies.

**Training tourist guides, on a local and regional level.** Targets: organizing training and prequalification of tourist guides for the necessities of tourist development at municipal level and on the level of EPR. This is due to the fact that according to the legal regulations only licensed guides are allowed to guide groups and tourists through tourist destinations in RM.

**Project for performing trainings of the local population and the young people about how to become involved in tourism.** Education through trainings of the population on how to communicate with tourists, how to be better hosts and how to provide additional funds from tourism in EPR.

**“Park and photograph”.** Construction/reconstruction/arranging parking-extensions at attractive locations along more significant roads, by setting a belvedere, sanitary facility, benches. This is especially necessary along the Lake Kalimanci (above the dam and at the village Todorovci); at Sredorek – extension (parking space) at Zletovska Reka on the entrance of the village Ularci municipality of Cheshinovo-Obleshevo; then on the road Vinica-Berovo through the ravine of Osojnica; on the road Probishtip-Kratovo at the village Kundino; on the road to the village Lesново; on the road to Ponikva; for the village Cera, etc. In order to achieve an economic effect, it is possible and necessary to have commercial objects next to the parking-positions, such as: souvenir shops, mini restaurants, etc.

**Rural house.** Presenting the benefits of development of accommodation capacities at the population in potential “tourist villages”. Creation of standards of rural houses according to the

traditional architecture of EPR. Construction of new houses with a pool and a yard. Reconstruction or adaptation of the existing uninhabited rural houses into accommodation capacities.

**„5 new mountain homes in EPR“.** Reconstruction of 5 existing public facilities and their adaptation into mountain homes. This is especially necessary on the mountain Osogovo at the village Cera, then between Lopen and Dlgidel, in the area below the top Ruen, on the east part of Plachkovica and the mountain Vlaina. Necessity for development of tracking and mountaineering.

**“Geoparks of the East“.** Preparation of studies and establishing – proclamation of the first geoparks in EPR and in the Republic of Macedonia. Geoparks are an excellent opportunity for promotion and valorization of natural attractions in EPR. The following are especially necessary and suitable for tourism: geopark “Lesново”, geopark “Kamenica”, geopark “Zhelevica”, geopark “Turtel”, geopark “Zrnovska Reka” and geopark “Ravna Reka”.

**Preparation of promotional material for tourism in EPR.** Preparation of brochures for the most significant facilities, localities, customs, events, for the purpose of popularizing them and introducing them to domestic potential tourists. The brochures could contain legends and stories which would bring the attractions to the potential tourists in an interesting way. Creating a qualitative promotional material like promotional videos, high quality photographs, and their placement on a proper tourist portal and integration with social networks. Placement of these materials in “Public” domain, which opens the opportunity to use them for promotional goals of every interested person or a company, certainly with prior permission of the owner of these materials. This practice proved successful in many examples and it significantly facilitates the promotional campaigns of tourist agencies, hotels, restaurants, municipalities, etc.

**Tourist portal of EPR.** GIS mapping of tourist attractiveness and creation of WEB tourist portal for EPR. This portal would be useful for foreigners, for introducing them to all attractions, offers and accommodation facilities in the region, as well as interested people and companies from the region and from Macedonia, which offer some product or service related to tourism. Aside from the possibility for registration in the base, it is good practice for the base to have educational character for the potential interested parties, i.e. to offer professional literature necessary for education, for example, what are the minimal preconditions for one family to offer its home, or house for accommodation of tourists, what is necessary and how to become a tourist guide, legal regulations in the area of tourism, etc.

**E-tourist promotion of the accommodation facilities in EPR.** The purpose of this project is to increase the representation and promotion of the accommodation capacities in EPR (which at present is at a very low level) on the global internet tourist portals: Booking, Expedia, and AirBNB. According to the experiences from the region and from Macedonia, the presence of the accommodation facilities on these portals implies multiple increased visitations, especially if we take into consideration the fast and positive reactions to notes, requests and needs of the tourists. This will increase the level of services and the total effect of tourism in the region.

**„Explore the East“.** The project will animate interested subjects for the offer of bicycles, jeep-tours, minibus tours and other ways of visit and introducing tourists with local natural attractions, landscapes, culture and tradition in EPR or certain part of the region. The goal of the project is increasing the offer for the so-called dynamic tourism for which there is an increased demand among tourists, as well as reaching financial effects from the tourist activity.

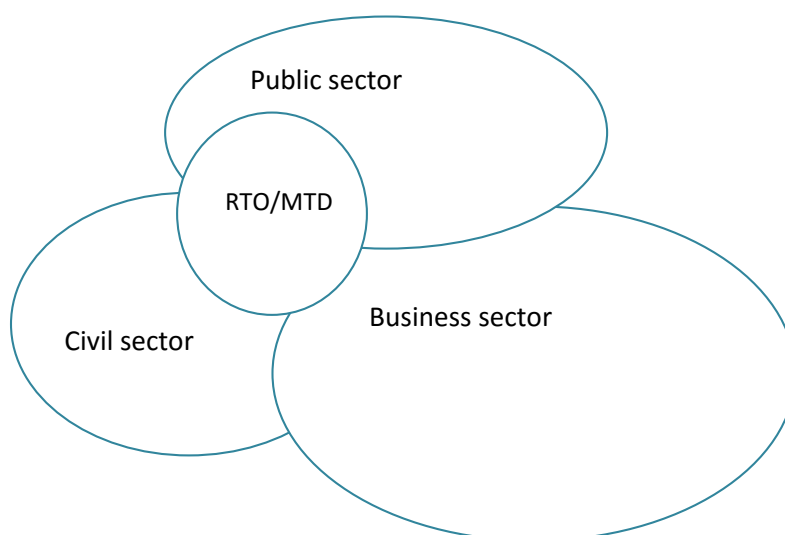
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## 11. REALIZATION OF STRATEGIC AND ACTION PLAN OF EPR

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### 11.1 Tourist destination

A tourist destination is a particular live organism where a complex tourist process takes place. It is an interaction between tourists and carriers of tourist offer. Due to the necessity of an integral approach in meeting the tourist needs and successful development of the tourist process, the tourist destination must create a specific internal structure, in which every relevant subject from the offer will take a special place and within its own capabilities, it will contribute in promotion of the quality of the destination bond. Simultaneously, a tourist destination is an open and dynamic system, which functionality depends upon the conditions which are dictated by a certain society, political, legal and economical surrounding, in wider regional, i.e. national frames. Pursuant to this, for a continuous function of the complex tourist process in the East Planning Region, a regional tourist organization (RTO) should be formed (Organization for Managing Tourist Destination- (MTD)), which will connect and involve literally all involved parties, i.e. all individuals and subjects which are interested in development of tourism (Figure 4).



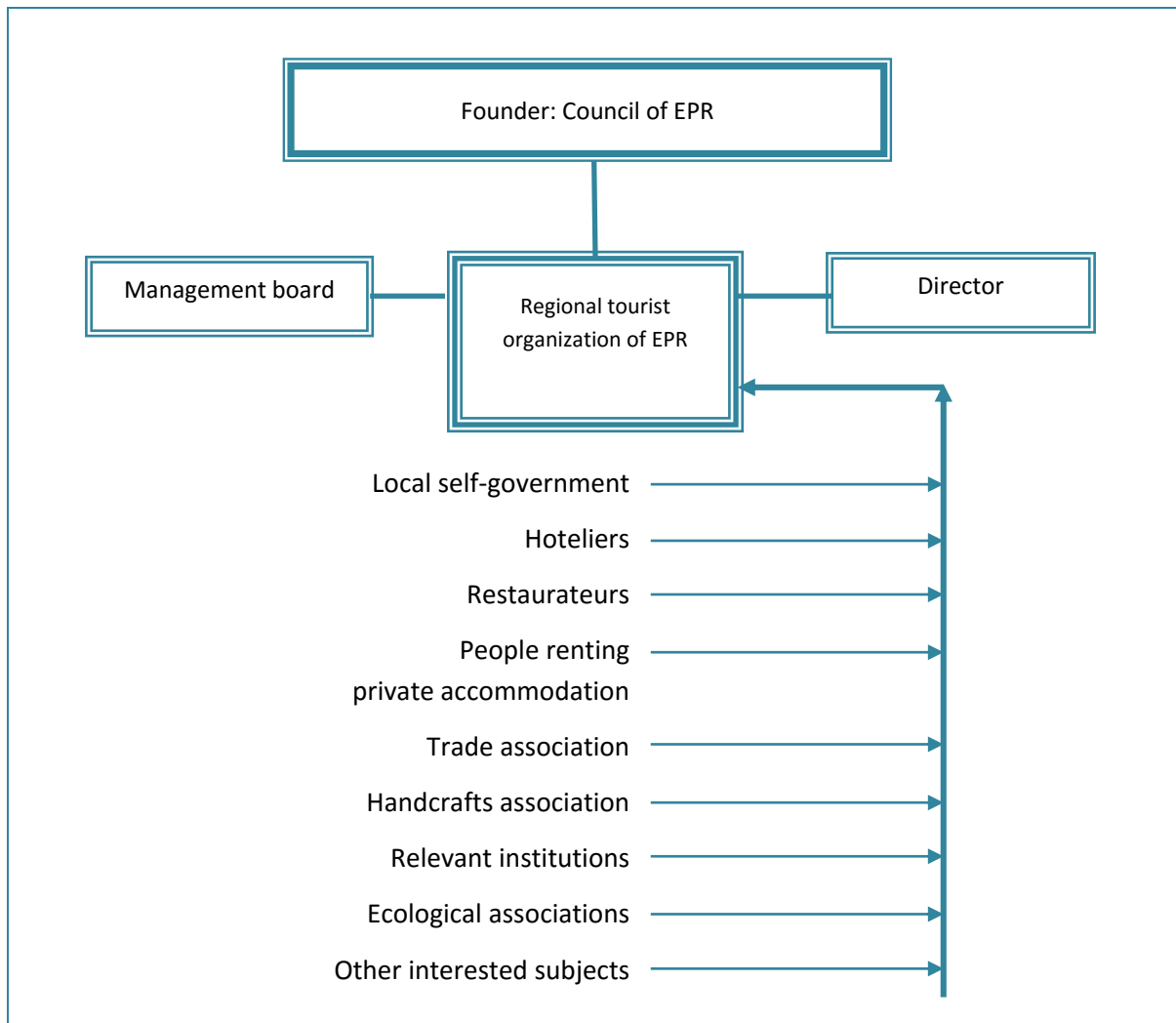
**Figure 4** Organizational position of RTO/MTD in coordination of the sectors in EPR

As presented above, the Regional Tourist Organization (RTO or MTD) should be in the middle of the developing interests of sectors which are active in the environment, to coordinate their interests and to direct and support sustainable development of tourism and its marketing.

### 11.2 Organization for management of tourist destination

The regional tourist organization is composed of many subjects. According to the proposed organizational positioning, the Regional Tourist Organization is formed by the Council of EPR, whose members have realized the importance of the phenomenon tourism and its dominant role in the total development of the region. Similar to all civil associations, RTO should also have a director, management and supervisory board, which announce the managing and the executive, i.e. the control function.





**Figure 5** Structure of regional tourist organization in EPR

*Source: Prepared by the authors*

The Council of EPR is the founder and through its representatives it is a significant factor in the structure of RTO, but it is not the only one. Its role in the development of tourism should be manifested through two types of activities: external and internal.

External activities of the Council of EPR are most often related to communication with the central government, strong lobbying at relevant state authorities, establishing different relations with other regions in the country and internationally, as well as drawing money through different donation, which could be invested into development of tourism.

Internal activities of the Council of EPR, as part of RTO, refer to the competences of the municipalities in EPR:

- Maintaining the traffic network and traffic regulation;
- Marking the attractions with tourist signs;
- Finding optimal solutions for the problems related to the increased number of vehicles during peak season or during holiday season, with the opportunity for closing certain streets for creating pedestrian zones;
- Construction and maintenance of parking places;
- Maintenance of parks, green areas and complete surrounding, for the purpose of embellishing the town;

- Maintaining street lighting, and provision of special lighting of the most important cultural and historical monuments, for increasing their attractiveness;
- Maintaining the exterior and facades in the central urban zone;
- Construction of fountains which are “attraction for attraction” and usually have large attractive power;
- Preparation of detailed urbanistic plans for the attractive tourist area and arranging the construction land;
- Construction of waste water collectors, provision of efficient communal hygiene and waste treatment;
- Construction of children’s parks, sports grounds and recreational centers;
- Registration of accommodation and catering capacities;
- Collecting and specific usage of tourist taxes;
- Forming inspection services for complete control of quality of the tourist products, with special measures for sanctioning;
- Organizing seminars and workshops for maintaining critical mass for development of tourism; and similar.

In such constellation it should be noted that the Council of EPR does not undertake direct obligation to form and shape a complex tourist offer, or to promote it on the tourist market. The RTO is in charge of these activities, which managing and advisory organs, representatives of the Council of EPR, take equal participation, together with other members.

The material base for development of tourism in the East Planning Region is composed of hotels, private accommodation facilities and catering capacities. With full respect to the present individual initiatives, it must be emphasized that it is possible to have success in this field solely with their mutual cooperation. Therefore, in the structure of RTO the necessity of their association in proper clusters (cluster of hoteliers, restaurateurs and people renting private accommodation) has been emphasized. In such a way the synergy effect of mutual action will be utilized. The association undoubtedly will contribute towards complex meeting of tourist needs, as well as towards easier accomplishment of the common goals of the entire tourist community.

The associations of hoteliers, restaurateurs, rental agents, merchants, craftsmen and people renting private accommodation represent the business interests of their members, but in accordance with the general interests of all carriers of tourist offer in the East Planning Region. These associations must be agreed on increasing the quality of their part of the product, for registering and membership, for coordination of prices, hours of operation, fluctuation of working force, etc.

The civil associations on unprofitable base are specific organizational shapes, through which the domicile population takes an active participation in the events in the destination and it protects its own interests. The most significant representatives of these associations are the cultural – artistic associations, associations of ecologists, humanitarian organizations, funds for protection of cultural and historical heritage and other non-governmental organizations. In this context, we should greet the present initiatives, notwithstanding of their success in operation and continuous function.

Aside from fostering the ideas for which they have been established, the most important role of the civil associations is to offer new ideas for development and cooperation, to organize workshops and seminars, to promote tourism in the region through membership in the networks of non-governmental organizations in the country and abroad, and also to discover sources of financing of projects, related to development of tourism in the East Planning Region.

The group of relevant institutions consists of certain subjects which have an important influence on the formation of the tourist product. For example, if RTO decides to develop religious tourism in the East Planning Region, then the Macedonian Orthodox Church will impose itself as a relevant institution; the development of archeological or historical tourism requires active

participation of the Republic Institute for Protection of the Monuments of the culture; development of sports and recreational activities is impossible without the engagement of sports clubs and associations.

With their active participation in the complex tourist process, the structure of the members in RTO of the East Planning Region is finally completed. Their organizational setting should provide free realization of few main targets:

- Shaping and permanent promotion of tourist offer;
- Fostering critical mass for development of tourism;
- Harmonization of relations between all involved subjects and coordination of activities at a destination level;
- Tourist promotion and organized appearance on the tourist market;
- Representing the strategic interests of the destination in regional, i.e. national frames;
- Developing awareness among the domicile population for the social and economical importance of tourism and its contribution towards improving the conditions for the life of the entire community.

The number of subjects taking part in the structure of RTO is not small, and it is normal to expect for their interests to be lacking or to be in mutual collision. Therefore, the necessity of the presence of such organized structure is imposed, through which all relations between the interested subjects in the complex tourist process would be articulated.

### 11.3 Awareness of the importance of tourism in EPR

The development of tourism in the East Planning Region is important for everyone who lives in this part of Macedonia, notwithstanding whether they are in the sphere of tourism or not. The initial impression is that only local self-governments in EPR and a small number of business subjects benefit from the tourist development. The fact is that the new legal decisions enable the local government to dictate the pace in a number of areas, and especially in forming a partnership with private capital. These types of initiatives could result in reconstruction of accommodation facilities; construction of new catering capacities, new sports terrains, shopping centers, amusement centers, etc.

However, the long term development of tourism does not depend solely on investments. In order to attract tourists, local leaders and literally all citizens must make drastic changes, especially in the domain of promoting public services: safety, traffic control, ambulance, health protection and street cleanliness. The entire region and especially the areas where tourist activities take place must create an image for safe, arranged and clean locations. This is a shared responsibility of all citizens of the East Planning Region.

Taking into consideration the effect of the generalization which without any exception is manifested at every modern tourist<sup>12</sup>, in all municipalities in the region there must be an aggressive internal promotion of tourism, directed towards citizens and business subjects, and especially towards retailers, craftsmen, schools, bank and postal clerks, public and private transporters, as well as the police. Through a permanent process of information, education and proper sanctioning, the region must invest efforts for establishing a completely new system of values and high degree of tourist culture within the domicile population, which will be in the function of meeting the needs of tourists at a greater level.

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<sup>12</sup> Generalization – specific phenomenon in tourism, which arises from the first impression of tourists for the destination in which they stay. The result of this phenomenon is general (positive or negative) image which the tourists obtain on the basis of one (most often the first) dominant impression.  
Source: Tuntev, Z. (2007): Hotel lexicon, FTC Ohrid, page 152.

Undoubtedly, the key benefit of development of tourism should be felt by all immediate participants in the complex tourist process: tourists, carriers of tourist offer, for example hoteliers, restaurateurs, retailers and wholesaler, people renting private accommodation, employees in the tourist agencies, cultural institutions, sports facilities, transport companies, etc. Simultaneously, this Study should result in a conclusion that the benefit of the development of tourism will be literally felt by all other economic and non economic activities in the region, notwithstanding whether they have direct participation in the tourist process.

And finally, the Strategy implies the fact that the benefits of the development of tourism should be felt by all eleven units of local self-government, civil organizations acting in the East Planning Region and also the population in the region and the state in its entirety.

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## 12. PLAN FOR MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF STRATEGIC GOALS

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Balanced map of indicators (BMI) of EPR for development of tourism is a significant tool for monitoring the implementation of the Strategy for development of tourism in the East Planning Region 2016-2025, since all strategic priority targets and measures – financial and nonfinancial – derive from the vision. The accomplishments of the benefits BMI of the East Planning Region for development of tourism is followed through reports, discussions, communication, update and action. The reports are prepared every six months according to a determined order. The director of the Center for Development of EPR and the employees who are responsible for following the implementation of the measures and activities for proper strategic priority goals, have their own role in the process of following.

The role of the director of the Center for Development of EPR is to designate a responsible person for following the implementation of the Strategy for development of tourism in the East Planning Region 2016-2025. The responsible person for following the implementation of the Strategy will perform the following activities:

- Coordination of collection of information from the involved parties;
- Consolidating the received reports in one single Report for BMI of the East Planning Region for development of tourism;
- Submitting the consolidated report to the director of the Center for Development of EPR, members of the Council of EPR and to the mayors and the councilors in the municipalities in EPR;
- Following and implementing the process of implementation of changes in IBM.
- Organizing public presentation of reports after their reviewing by the Council of EPR.

Besides monitoring, IBM of the East Planning Region for development of tourism will also be used for evaluation of the implementation of the strategic plan, for the purpose of establishing whether the planned targets of the policy were achieved efficiently and whether and how many unwanted effects occurred. Disturbing or terminating the cause-effect relation of priorities, as well as not reaching the target values of indicators for certain priorities will provide information for this and it will also reveal which changes are to be made in the strategic plan.

With the establishment of an organizational shape for development of tourism of NEPR, the role of monitoring of the Strategy will be transferred to the newly formed subject.

The balanced map of indicators of EPR for development of tourism is presented below.

**BALANCED MAP OF INDICATORS OF EPR FOR DEVELOPMENT OF TOURISM 2016-2025**

**VISION:**

**IN THE FOLLOWING FEW YEARS THE EAST PLANNING REGION WILL CREATE FEW RESPECTABLE TOURIST DESTINATIONS WHICH PRODUCTS WILL BE BASED UPON THE NATURAL, MOVABLE AND IMMOVABLE CULTURAL HERITAGE OF THE REGION AND UPON THE TRADITION OF THE INHABITANTS; PRODUCTS KNOWN FOR ITS QUALITY AND COMPLETELY ADJUSTED TO THE REQUIREMENTS AND NEEDS OF MODERN TOURISTS.**

<b>PRIORITY STRATEGIC TARGETS</b>	<b>INDICATORS</b>	<b>Starting values</b>	<b>Target values</b>	<b>MEASURES</b>
		<b>2016</b>	<b>2025</b>	
<b>MARKETING AND BRANDING</b>				
1. CREATING POSITIVE IMAGE OF THE EAST PLANNING REGION AS AN ATTRACTIVE GEOGRAPHICAL – TOURIST AREA	1. NUMBER OF TOURISTS 2. NUMBER OF OVERNIGHT STAYS 3. % FROM GDP OF THE REGION FROM TOURISM 4. SALES IN CATERING (millions EUR)	1. 23.000 2. 59.000 3. NI 4. 9,5	1. 53.000 2. 113.000 3. 10% 4. NI	4.1. BRANDING TOURIST PRODUCTS IN EPR 4.2. MARKETING TOURIST DESTINATIONS OF EPR
<b>TOURIST OFFER</b>				
1. DEVELOPING TOURIST PRODUCTS WHICH WILL ATTRACT TOURISTS IN EPR	1. NUMBER OF OFFERED TOURIST PRODUCTS 2. NUMBER OF TOURIST PRODUCTS IN THE PHASE OF PLANNING, DEVELOPMENT OR COMPLETION	1. 0 2. 0	1. 25 2. 20	1.1. SUPPORT OF INVOLVED PARTIES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF TOURIST PRODUCTS IN EPR 1.2. DEVELOPMENT OF TOURIST PRODUCTS BASED UPON NATURAL HERITAGE IN EPR 1.3. DEVELOPMENT OF TOURIST PRODUCTS BASED UPON CULTURAL-HISTORICAL HERITAGE IN EPR 1.4. DEVELOPMENT OF TOURIST PRODUCTS BASED UPON THE TRADITIONS IN EPR 1.5. DESIGNING TOURIST PACKAGES IN EPR
2. OPTIMIZATION OF MUTUAL BENEFIT OF THE POPULATION AND THE BUSINESS SECTOR THROUGH TOURISM	1. NUMBER OF RECOGNIZED TYPES OF TOURISM BY THE POPULATION AND THE BUSINESS SECTOR	NI	5	2.1. PROVIDING INTEGRAL PROTECTION OF THE NATURAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE 2.2. BUILDING A TOURIST CHAIN OF VALUES IN EPR THROUGH DIFFERENT TYPES OF TOURISM

<b>TOURIST INFRASTRUCTURE</b>				
1. ENABLING BETTER ACCESS AND MOVEMENT OF TOURISTS THROUGH EPR	1. NUMBER OF TOURISTS	23.000	53.000	1.1. PROVISION OF ACCESS TO TOURIST ATTRACTIVENESS IN EPR 1.2. PROVISION OF TOURIST SIGNALIZATION
2. PROVISION OF ACCOMODATION AND CATERING CAPACITIES WHICH WILL ATTRACT TOURISTS IN EPR	1. NUMBER OF ACCOMODATION CAPACITIES 2. NUMBER OF ROOMS 3. NUMBER OF BEDS 4. NUMBER OF CATERING CAPACITIES 5. NUMBER OF SEATS 6. NUMBER OF TOURISTS 7. NUMBER OF OVERNIGHT STAYS	1. 33 2. 640 3. 1.870 4. 166 5. 9.350 6. 23.000 7. 59.000	1. 50 2. 1100 3. 3.200 4. 200 5. 13.000 6. 53.000 7. 113.000	2.1. CONSTRUCTION AND RECONSTRUCTION OF ACCOMODATION AND CATERING CAPACITIES IN EPR 2.2. CONSTRUCTION OF NEW AND RECONSTRUCTION OF THE EXISTING COMMUNAL INFRASTRUCTURE OF TOURIST LOCALITIES IN EPR
3. INFRASTRUCTURAL ARRANGEMENT OF REGIONAL TOURIST ATTRACTIVENESS (LOCALITIES)	1. NUMBER OF INFRASTRUCTURAL ARRANGED ATTRACTIVENESS (LOCALITIES)	0	30	3.1. RECONSTRUCTION AND CONSERVATION OF REGIONAL TOURIST ATTRACTIVENESS (LOCALITIES) 3.2. ELECTRIFICATION AND ILLUMINATION OF REGIONAL TOURIST ATTRACTIVENESS
<b>DEVELOPMENT OF HUMAN AND INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITIES</b>				
1. BUILDING INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITIES FOR MANAGEMENT OF EPR AS A TOURIST DESTINATION	1. NUMBER OF ACTIVE ORGANIZATIONS FOR MANAGEMENT OF THE DESTINATION	0	6	1.1. BUILDING INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITIES FOR MANAGEMENT OF TOURIST DESTINATIONS IN EPR 1.2. PROMOTING COOPERATION AND SUPPORT OF THE INVOLVED PARTIES IN THE TOURIST SECTOR
2. DEVELOPING SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE AMONG THE WORKING FORCE FOR THE NECESSITIES OF THE TOURIST SECTOR IN EPR	1. NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES IN THE SECTOR TOURISM IN EPR	1.100	2.500	2.1. STRENGTHENING HUMAN CAPACITIES OF INSTITUTIONS FOR DEVELOPMENT OF TOURISM IN EPR 2.2. STRENGTHENING HUMAN CAPACITIES IN THE TOURIST SECTOR 2.3. BUILDING THE CAPACITY OF THE POPULATION IN EPR FOR DEVELOPMENT OF TOURISM
<b>PRINCIPLES/VALUES ON WHICH TOURISM IN EPR SHALL BE BASED:</b>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SUSTAINABLE TOURISM</li> <li>• PROFITABILITY</li> <li>• SELECTIVE (PRIORITY) INVESTMENTS</li> <li>• TARGET MARKETING</li> <li>• PUBLIC PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP (PPP)</li> </ul>				

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## **13. ACTION PLAN FOR DEVELOPMENT OF TOURISM IN EPR 2016-2025**

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### **13.1 INTRODUCTION**

The answers to present and future necessities for development of tourism in the East Planning Region are contained in the Strategy for development of tourism in the East Planning Region for the period 2016 – 2025. The Strategy contains defined vision, guiding principles for its implementation, as well as strategic priority goals and measures for achieving the planned vision.

The strategic card of EPR for development of tourism presents the cause-effect connection of strategic priority goals in achieving the vision for development of tourism in EPR by 2025.

Based upon the comprehensible analyses of each of the strategic areas in the Strategy, the strategic priority goals (strategies) have been defined for each area separately, indicators for measuring their realization, as well as proper measures for reaching target values.

The Action plan offers further development of necessary measures in activities/projects, their description, model of financing and estimation of necessary financial funds and time frame for their implementation. In view of the fact that there is no functional institutional structure for development of tourism in EPR, or a coordinated institutional cooperation between the involved parties, this document along with the Strategy will be the frame for future operational plans of involved parties, in function of planning the activities related to development of tourism in EPR.

There are 8 project cards enclosed with the Action plan as examples of project activities, which are among the most important for development of tourism in EPR.



## 13.2 GOALS OF THE ACTION PLAN

The main goal of the Action Plan for implementation of the Strategy for development of tourism in EPR for the period 2016 - 2025 is to develop key activities which should be implemented to provide successful implementation of the Strategy. Both the Strategy and the Action Plan will be the basic tools which will lead the involved parties for development of tourism in EPR in achieving their vision for development of tourism in the region.

The Action plan defines the activities for development of tourism in EPR which should be taken in the period 2016 – 2025. These activities within the measures are divided in three categories: initial activities (2-3), short-term (3-5) years and long-term (5-10) years.

These defined activities will be initiated and completed in different periods, even though their complete realization should be finished in the period planned for complete implementation of the Strategy (2025). For that purpose, towards the end of 2017, a new action plan should be prepared with a focus on the period 2019 – 2020, which will take into consideration the achievements in the period 2016-2018.

Due to the fact that this Action plan has been projected upon the assumed capacities and the available financial funds, there is a real possibility for part of the defined activities not to be implemented in the period of validity of this document, even though they have been listed. If there are conditions and foundation for their implementation, they will be placed in the following Action plan 2019 – 2020.

In view of the fact that the East Planning Region does not have a special organizational shape for development of tourism, the implementation of the Action plan at annual level will be effectuated through the annual program of the Center for Development of EPR and through the annual programs prepared for different areas of competences of the municipalities in EPR, or with preparation of special intersector program for development and management of the destination. In these programs, the activities which are proposed in the Action plan will be additionally developed into projects, which will clearly define project goals and the anticipated results, indicators, necessary expenses, as well as the responsible subjects for their realization.

The Action plan is an integral part of the Strategy for development of tourism in the East Planning Region in the period of 2016 – 2025. The process of action planning was completed in cooperation with the involved sides – participants in the planning sessions (workshops) – and through the process of public debates and consultations of the involved sides for development of tourism in EPR.

## 13.3 ACTION PLAN FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STRATEGY FOR DEVELOPMENT OF TOURISM IN THE EAST PLANNING REGION IN THE PERIOD 2016 – 2025

STRATEGIC AREA: DEVELOPMENT OF HUMAN AND INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITIES							
<b>Strategic priority goal:</b>		<b>Indicator: 1. NUMBER OF ACTIVE ORGANIZATIONS FOR MANAGEMENT OF THE DESTINATION</b>					
<b>1. BUILDING INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITIES FOR MANAGEMENT OF EPR AS A TOURIST DESTINATION</b>		<b>Initial value: 0</b>			<b>Target value: 6</b>		
<b>Measure:</b>		<b>1.1. BUILDING INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITIES FOR MANAGEMENT OF TOURIST DESTINATIONS IN EPR</b>					
Activities/Projects	Short description of the Activity/Project	Model of financing:	Investment (EUR)	Period of implementation (years)			Responsible entity
				2-3	3-5	5-10	
1. Creating coordinative body/cluster for development of tourism in EPR	Forming coordinative body which will be assigned to define and monitor the implementation of key policies for development of tourism in EPR.	Public-private	20.000	X			CD of EPR
2. Setting-up TIC in the municipalities	Identification of strategic locations for setting-up tourist information centers. Setting-up, equipping and defining the work of tourist information centers. Delivery of services and information to the tourists.	Public-private	120.000	X			Municipalities
3. Setting-up organizations for managing the destination	Selection of a model for the Organization for managing the destination according to the possibilities of EPR, their formation and putting into function. Strengthening the organization structure and professional and vocational competence of the managing capacities of the Organization for managing the destination.	Public-private	100.000		X		CD of EPR, Municipalities, Business sector
4. Setting-up Committees for tourism in the rural settlements	In view of the fragmented nature of tourism in general (especially rural tourism), good organization is essential in providing the basis for development of rural tourism and its successful management.	Public-private	100.000		x		CD of EPR, Municipalities, local communities, private sector

**STRATEGIC AREA: DEVELOPMENT OF HUMAN AND INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITIES**

<b>Strategic priority goal:</b>		<b>Indicator: 1. NUMBER OF EFFECTUATED PARTNERSHIPS AND COMMON PROJECTS</b>					
1. BUILDING INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITIES FOR MANAGEMENT OF EPR AS A TOURIST DESTINATION		<b>Initial value: 0</b>		<b>Target value: 10</b>			
<b>Measure:</b>		1.2. PROMOTING COOPERATION AND SUPPORT OF INVOLVED SIDES IN THE TOURIST SECTOR					
Activities/Projects	Short description of the Activity/Project	Model of financing:	Investment (EUR)	Period of implementation (years)			Responsible entity
				2-3	3-5	5-10	
1. Promoting and strengthening the system for communication and exchange of information with the involved sides in tourism	Elevating the cooperation of key factors in the process of implementation of the strategic plan by strengthening the system for communication and exchange of information.	Public-private	TBD	X			CD of EPR
2. Promoting cooperation and coordination of mutual activities by the factors	Establishing a system for submitting proposal and ideas for mutual cooperation, exchange of project ideas and realization of common projects and project activities.	Public-private	10.000	X			CD of EPR
3. Strengthening the capacities of CD of EPR and Organizations for managing the destination and networking, cooperation and communication with domestic subjects and international similar institutions and organizations	Building capacities of the managerial and administrative personnel in working in and working with networks and building a culture of network operation and coordination of involved parties.	Public-private	TBD		X		CD of EPR, Municipalities, Business sector

STRATEGIC AREA: DEVELOPMENT OF HUMAN AND INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITIES							
<b>Strategic priority goal:</b>		<b>Indicator: 1. NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES IN THE SECTOR TOURISM IN EPR</b>					
2. DEVELOPING SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE OF THE WORKING FORCE FOR THE NECESSITIES OF THE TOURIST SECTOR IN EPR		<b>Initial value: 900</b>			<b>Target value: 2500</b>		
<b>Measure:</b>		2.1. STRENGTHENING HUMAN CAPACITIES OF INSTITUTIONS FOR DEVELOPMENT OF TOURISM IN EPR					
Activities/Projects	Short description of the Activity/Project	Model of financing:	Investment (EUR)	Period of implementation (years)			Responsible entity
				2-3	3-5	5-10	
1. "Hospitable municipalities"	Education of the administration in the municipalities for the importance of tourism and strengthening the municipal capacities for development of tourism. Special focus upon planning the area for development of sustainable tourism.	Public	100.000	X			CD of EPR, Municipalities
2. "Knowledge from good practice"	Session visits in the countries with developed tourist tradition on local and regional level. Using European funds which provide visits and exchange of good experiences.	Public	TBD	X	X		CD of EPR, Municipalities
3. "Tourism based on information"	Initiating and organizing different types of research for the necessities of managing and marketing tourism in EPR.	Public-private	100.000	X	X	X	CD of EPR, Municipalities
4. Training of the employees, institutions from the culture and non-governmental organizations in EPR for using Creative Europe and Media from the funds of the European Commission	Trainings are used to educate people how to use the new and actual programs of the European commission, where they could obtain funds for projects related to culture.	Public		x	x		CD of EPR, Municipalities and the Ministry of Culture
<b>Measure:</b>		2.2. STRENGTHENING HUMAN CAPACITIES IN THE TOURIST SECTOR IN EPR					
Activities/Projects	Short description of the Activity/Project	Model of financing:	Investment (EUR)	Period of implementation (years)			Responsible entity
				2-3	3-5	5-10	
1. Study of the necessities for skills and knowledge for working in the tourist sector in EPR	Estimation of the necessities for training of the working force in EPR for working in the tourist sector in EPR.	Public	10.000	X			CD of EPR
2. Animation of the private sector for opportunities of tourism in EPR	Presenting the strategy for development of tourism before the business sector and organizing events for promotion of potentials for development of tourism in EPR.	Public-private	TBD	X	X		CD of EPR
3. Training of tourist guides, at local and regional level	Organizing training and additional training for tourist guides, for the necessities of tourist development at municipal level and at the level of EPR. This is due to the fact that only licensed guides can guide groups and tourists in the tourist destinations in RM. Therefore, licensed guides	Public-private	TBD	X	X		TBD

	are needed and these licenses are being issued by the Faculty of tourism.						
4. Development of curriculum and organized trainings	Based upon the study for estimation of the needs for knowledge and skills for working in the tourist sector of EPR, proper curriculums will be developed and training will be organized. The academic community of EPR should be included in the real sector.	Public-private	TBD	X	X	X	TBD
5. Learning foreign languages	Elevating the level of knowledge of English language among tourist workers. Language training for the employees in the tourist sector which have direct contact with tourists.	Public-private	10.000	X			
<b>Measure:</b>		2.3. BUILDING THE CAPACITY OF THE POPULATION IN EPR FOR DEVELOPMENT OF TOURISM					
Activities/Projects	Short description of the Activity/Project	Model of financing:	Investment (EUR)	Period of implementation (years)			Responsible entity
				2-3	3-5	5-10	
1. "For our grandchildren"	Organizing events for strengthening the awareness and animation of the population in EPR for preserving cultural and natural heritage in the region.	Public	60.000	X	X		CD of EPR, Municipalities
2. "Hospitality"	Trainings for the local population and young people for their inclusion in development of tourism. Education through trainings of the population about how to communicate with tourists, how to be better hosts and how to provide additional income from tourism in EPR.	Public	60.000	X	X		CD of EPR, Municipalities

STRATEGIC AREA: TOURIST INFRASTRUCTURE							
<b>Strategic priority goal:</b>		<b>Indicator 1: NUMBER OF TOURISTS</b>					
1. ENABLING BETTER ACCESS AND MOVEMENT OF TOURISTS THROUGH EPR		<b>Initial value: 23.000</b>			<b>Target value: 53.000</b>		
<b>Measure:</b>		1.1. PROVISION OF ACCESS TO TOURIST ATTRACTIONS IN EPR					
Activities/Projects	Short description of the Activity/Project	Model of financing:	Investment (EUR)	Period of investment (years)			Responsible entity
				2-3	3-5	5-10	
1. Preparation of planned and technical documentation	Preparation of proper plans, feasibility studies and technical projects, as well as provision on construction permits for the road infrastructure, tracking, mountain and biking paths, mini ports, cable cars and ski lifts, etc.	Public	TBD	X	X	X	CD of EPR, Municipalities
2. Construction of regional road network	Construction of regional roads: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Kochani-Delchevo,</li> </ul>	Public	TBD	X	X		AP
3. Reconstruction of regional road network	Reconstruction of regional roads: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Delchevo-Berovo-Strumica</li> </ul>	Public	TBD	X	X	X	AP
4. Construction of local road network	Construction of local roads to tourist localities and centers in the entire region (example: SRTC Ponikva).	Public	TBD	X	X		CD of EPR, Municipalities
5. Reconstruction of the local road network	Reconstruction of the local roads to tourist localities and centers in the entire region.	Public	TBD	X	X	X	CD of EPR, Municipalities
6. Constructing and arranging paths	Construction and arranging tracking, mountain and biking paths in every tourist subregion (for example the construction of paths in the Maleshevo subregion).	Public	TBD	X	X	X	CD of EPR, Municipalities
7. Construction of cable cars and ski lifts for vertical transport	For improving the mobility and connection between the localities Ponikva, Carev Vrv, Sokol, Ruen and Kalin Kamen as winter tourist centers with largest potential.	Public	TBD	X	X	X	CD of EPR, Municipalities
8. Open roads – more tourists	Preparation of tourist transport strategy for EPR, for the purpose of improving the communications factors in the entire region with bus lines, signs in English language, timetables, maintenance, opening temporary bus lines during events, etc.	Public	TBD		X		CD of EPR, Municipalities
9. Setting mini information centers with souvenirs	Setting mini information centers with souvenirs at the localities Bargala, Vinichko Kale, Isar and Morodvis. As part of the project there are small erected objects which could be called mini information centers and they could also be used as ticket offices, souvenir shops or offices for the guides.	Public	25.000	x	x		Ministry/ Institute and museum of EPR

10. "Park and photograph"	Construction/reconstruction/arranging parking extensions at attractive locations along the most significant roads, setting belvedere, toilet, benches. Especially necessary along the lake Kalimanci (above the dam and the village Todorovci); at Sredorek – extension (parking area) at Zletovska Reka at the entrance of the village Ularci municipality Cheshinovo-Obleshevo; then on the road Vinica –Berovo through the ravine of Osojnica; on the road Probishtip-Kratovo at the village Kundino; on the road to the village Lesnovo; on the road to Ponikva; for the village Cera, etc.	Public	TBD		X		CD of EPR, Municipalities
11. „Visit Kalata“	Construction of a platform, path and belvedere on the island Kalata in Lake Kalimansko. Using only natural materials fitted in the environment. Setting mobile platform for boats.	Public	TBD		X		Municipality M. Kamenica
<b>Measure:</b>		1.2. PROVISION OF TOURIST SIGNALIZATION					
Activities/Projects	Short description of the Activity/Project	Model of financing:	Investment (EUR)	Period of investment (years)			Responsible entity
				2-3	3-5	5-10	
1. Estimating the need for tourist signalization	Preparation of a study and database for necessary equipment and signage for tourist attractions.	Public	10.000	X			CD of EPR, Municipalities
2. "Compass of EPR"	Preparation of tourist-topographic maps for the existing attractions in EPR and their update. Preparation of modern map which will show the most unique and the most important locations for visiting from the aspect of cultural tourism.	Public	40.000	X			CD of EPR, Municipalities
3. "Signpost to the attractions of EPR"	Setting tourist signalization to all existing tourist attractions in EPR. Marking the cultural and historical objects/monuments, with proper boards and signposts, in Macedonian and in English, opening hours, prices, according to the EU standards for tourist signalization.	Public	150.000	X			CD of EPR, Municipalities
4. "Caves Lesnovo"	Reconstruction and construction of walking paths to the caves in the village Lesnovo, their marking, lighting and lighting of the caves.	Public	100.000	X	X		CD of EPR, Municipality M. Kamenica
5. Rural paths	Construction of walking paths for increasing the offer of rural tourism.	Public	150.000	x	x		APSTRM and MAFWM
6. Marking the paths	Marking the tracking, mountain and biking paths with color, signposts, and natural markings to facilitate following and walking on these paths.	Public	TBD	X	X	X	CD of EPR, Municipalities
7. Setting tourist info-boards and info-maps	Setting tourist information boards and maps in Macedonian and in English (if possible in another world language as well) at the selected significant attractions in the region, with interesting and concise data for the attraction and display of quality maps (for orientation and road planning). Using natural materials and good protection from external influence.	Public	TBD	X	X	X	CD of EPR, Municipalities

STRATEGIC AREA: TOURIST INFRASTRUCTURE							
<b>Strategic priority goal:</b> 2. PROVISION OF ACCOMODATION AND CATERING CAPACITIES WHICH WILL ATTRACT TOURISTS IN EPR	<b>Indicator 1:</b> NUMBER OF ACCOMODATION CAPACITIES <b>Indicator 2:</b> NUMBER OF ROOMS <b>Indicator 3:</b> NUMBER OF BEDS <b>Indicator 4:</b> NUMBER OF CATERING CAPACITIES <b>Indicator 5:</b> NUMBER OF SEATS <b>Indicator 6:</b> NUMBER OF TOURISTS <b>Indicator 7:</b> NUMBER OF OVERNIGHT STAYS						
	<b>Initial value 1: 33</b> <b>Initial value 2: 640</b> <b>Initial value 3: 1.870</b> <b>Initial value 4: 166</b> <b>Initial value 5: 9.360</b> <b>Initial value 6: 23.000</b> <b>Initial value 7: 59.000</b>			<b>Target value 1: 50</b> <b>Target value 2: 1.100</b> <b>Target value 3: 3.200</b> <b>Target value 4: 200</b> <b>Target value 5: 13.000</b> <b>Target value 6: 53.000</b> <b>Target value 7: 113.000</b>			
<b>Measure:</b>		2.1. CONSTRUCTION AND RECONSTRUCTION OF ACCOMODATION AND CATERING CAPACITIES IN EPR					
Activities/Projects	Short description of the Activity/Project	Model of financing:	Investment (EUR)	Period of investment (years)			Responsible entity
				2-3	3-5	5-10	
1. Preparation of DUP for accommodation, catering capacities and other commercial objects planned for tourism and preparation of feasibility studies and technical projects	Each of the municipalities according to their CUP, should provide DUP for construction of hotels and catering capacities, notwithstanding of the size and the capacity of the facilities. Also, other commercial facilities intended for tourism should also be planned (spa centers, aqua parks, pools, etc.) and feasibility studies and technical projects should be prepared for them.	Public	30.000	X			Municipalities
2. Construction of spa center "Kezhovica"	Reconstruction, renovation, extending the facilities in the bath "Kezhovica", modernization with spa amenities (whirlpool baths, Turkish bath, steam bath, additional pool, open pool). Improvement of the accommodation capacities in the bath, as well the level of their services.	Public-private	TBD	X	X	X	Municipality Shtip, Business sector
3. Construction of spa center "Banja"	Construction of a completely new bath-spa facility by using local thermal water: accommodation facility, indoor and outdoor pool, spa amenities, wellness amenities.	Public-private	TBD	X	X		Municipality Kochani, Business sector



4. Construction of spa center "Istibanja"	Construction of a new bath-spa facility by using the local thermal waters: accommodation facility, indoor and outdoor pool, spa amenities, wellness amenities. Promoting and offering wellness-spa products and packages.	Public-private	TBD	X	X		Municipality Kochani, Business sector
5. Reconstruction of hotel Delchevo	Investment for reconstruction of the hotel Delchevo in a modern accommodation capacity for the purpose of increasing and improving the accommodation capacities	Private	TBD	X	X		Business sector
<b>Measure:</b>		2.1. CONSTRUCTION AND RECONSTRUCTION OF ACCOMODATION AND CATERING CAPACITIES IN EPR					
Activities/Projects	Short description of the Activity/Project	Model of financing:	Investment (EUR)	Period of investment (years)			Responsible entity
				2-3	3-5	5-10	
6. Reconstruction of hotel Berovo	Investment for reconstruction of hotel Berovo in a modern accommodation capacity for increasing and improving the accommodation capacities	Private	TBD	X	X		Business sector
7. Construction of small and family hotels	Construction of small family hotels in the municipalities in EPR	Private	TBD	X	X	X	Business sector
8. Locations for camps	Projecting locations for camping and construction of proper infrastructure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rido, Todorovci – Makedonska Kamenica</li> </ul>	Public-private	TBD		X		Municipality M. Kamenica, Business sector
9. Rural house	Presenting the benefits from development of the accommodation capacities among the population. Preparation of standards for the rural houses pursuant to traditional architecture of EPR. Construction of new houses with yard and pool.	Private	250.000	X	X	X	Business sector
10. Reconstruction of rural houses into accommodation capacities	Reconstruction of existing uninhabited rural houses into accommodation capacities.	Private	40.000	X	X	X	Population, business sector
11. Construction of ethno-catering facilities	Construction of ethno facilities and change of catering facilities into ethno style will enable promotion of local products and specialties and simultaneous branding.	Private	250.000	X	X	X	Business sector
12. Construction of catering facilities through valorization of cultural heritage	Support of investments for construction of catering facilities with architectonic decisions based upon architectonic values of the most representative cultural heritage in EPR.	Public-private	250.000		X	X	MK, Municipalities, Business sector

13. Support of business sector for construction and reconstruction of accommodation capacities	Preparation of DUP by the public sector, typified urbanistic decisions, exemption from local taxes and fees, sale of land under favorable conditions, etc.	Public-private	TBD	X	X	X	CD of EPR, Municipalities,
14. Support of the population in construction and reconstruction of accommodation capacities	Preparation of DUP by the public sector, typified urbanistic decisions, exemption from local taxes and fees, sale of land under favorable conditions, etc.	Public-private	TBD	X	X	X	CD of EPR, Municipalities
15. Holiday homes as accommodation facilities	Adaptation of the existing, suitable and more modern tourist holiday homes into accommodation capacities, which will be beneficial for the owners, tourists and the wider community. Pilot project of 10 holiday homes.	Private	80.000	X	X	X	Population, Business sector
16. "5 new mountain homes in EPR"	Reconstruction of 5 existing public facilities and their adaptation into mountain homes. Especially necessary on the mountain Osogovo at the village Cera, then between Lopen and Dlgidel, in the area under the top Ruen, the east part of Plachkovica and the mountain Vlaina. Necessity for development of tracking and mountaineering.	Public-private	500.000		X	X	MK, Municipalities, Business sector

<b>Measure:</b>		2.2. CONSTRUCTION OF NEW AND RECONSTRUCTION OF EXISTING COMMUNAL INFRASTRUCTURE OF TOURIST LOCALITIES					
Activities/Projects	Short description of the Activity/Project	Model of financing:	Investment (EUR)	Period of investment (years)			Responsible entity
				2-3	3-5	5-10	
1. Preparation of planned and technical documentation	Preparation of feasibility studies, technical projects and provision of construction license	Public	TBD	X	X	X	CD of EPR, Municipalities
2. Construction of new communal infrastructure of tourist localities	Construction of new communal infrastructure of tourist localities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ravna Reka (Pehchevo),</li> <li>• Golak</li> </ul>	Public	TBD	X	X	X	CD of EPR, Municipalities
3. Reconstruction of communal infrastructure of tourist localities	Reconstruction of communal infrastructure of tourist localities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lesново,</li> <li>• Berovo Lake,</li> <li>• Ablanica,</li> <li>• Suvi Laki,</li> <li>• Ponikva</li> </ul>	Public	TBD	X	X		CD of EPR, Municipalities

STRATEGIC AREA: TOURIST INFRASTRUCTURE							
<b>Strategic priority goal:</b>		<b>Indicator: 1. NUMBER OF INFRASTRUCTURAL ARRANGED ATTRACTIONS (LOCALITIES)</b>					
<b>3. INFRASTRUCTURAL ARRANGEMENT OF REGIONAL TOURIST ATTRACTIONS (LOCALITIES)</b>		<b>Initial value: 0</b>			<b>Target value: 30</b>		
<b>Measure:</b>		<b>3.1. PROVISION OF TOURIST INFRASTRUCTURE FOR REGIONAL TOURIST ATTRACTIONS (LOCALITIES)</b>					
Activities/Projects	Short description of the Activity/Project	Model of financing:	Investment (EUR)	Period of investment (years)			Responsible entity
				2-3	3-5	5-10	
1. Analyses of the status of usage and necessities for a tourist infrastructure of regional tourist localities	Preparation of studies for estimation of the status and necessities for a tourist infrastructure of the regional tourist localities.	Public	15.000	X			CD of EPR, Municipalities
2. Designing	Creating designs and technical documentation for the tourist infrastructure of the regional tourist localities.	Public	TBD	X			CD of EPR, Municipalities
3. Construction of tourist infrastructure on tourist localities	Reconstruction and conservation of regional tourist localities. Construction of necessary tourist infrastructure of the tourist localities.	Public	TBD	x	X	X	CD of EPR, Municipalities, Business sector
4. Ground and horticultural arrangement of regional tourist localities	Creating elaborations for ground and horticultural arrangement and implementation of programs for ground and horticultural arrangement of regional tourist localities.	Public	TBD		x	X	CD of EPR, Municipalities, local communities
<b>Measure:</b>		<b>3.2. ELECTRIFICATION AND ILLUMINATION OF REGIONAL TOURIST ATTRACTIONS</b>					
Activities/Projects	Short description of the Activity/Project	Model of financing:	Investment (EUR)	Period of investment (years)			Responsible entity
				2-3	3-5	5-10	
1. Analyses of the necessities for electrification of regional tourist localities	Creating studies for estimation of the necessities for electrification of regional tourist localities.	Public	TBD	X	X	X	CD of EPR, Municipalities
2. Designing	Creating elaborations, projects and technical documentation for electrification and illumination of regional tourist localities.	Public	TBD	X	X		CD of EPR, Municipalities
3. Electrification	Implementation of a program for electrification of regional tourist localities.	Public	TBD	X	X	X	CD of EPR, Municipalities
4. Illumination	Implementation of a program for illumination of regional tourist localities.	Public	TBD	X	X	X	CD of EPR, Municipalities

STRATEGIC AREA: TOURIST OFFER							
<b>Strategic priority goal:</b> 1. DEVELOPING TOURIST PRODUCTS WHICH WILL ATTRACT TOURISTS IN EPR	<b>Indicator 1: NUMBER OF OFFERED TOURIST PRODUCTS</b> <b>Indicator 2: NUMBER OF TOURIST PRODUCTS IN A PLANNING, DEVELOPMENT OR COMPLETION PHASE</b>						
	<b>Initial value 1: 0</b> <b>Initial value 2: 0</b>				<b>Target value 1: 15</b> <b>Target value 2: 10</b>		
	<b>Measure:</b> 1.1. SUPPORT OF INVOLVED PARTIES IN DEVELOPMENT OF TOURIST PRODUCTS IN EPR						
Activities/Projects	Short description of the Activity/Project	Model of financing:	Investment (EUR)	Period of investment (years)			Responsible entity
1. Creating feasibility or pre-feasibility studies for development of tourist products.	Preparing gap analyses for the necessities of new tourist products or modernization of the existing ones. It is necessary to make researches in order to confirm which type of attractiveness is in demand and for which markets. Analysis of the demands on the markets for the recommended products.	Public	40.000	X			CD of EPR, Municipalities
2. Promoting the possibilities for development of tourist products before the potential investors.	The Council of the East Planning Region, together with the municipalities and the central government should develop policies for planning the usage of the area and providing infrastructure which will facilitate commercial investment in the development of tourist products. These opportunities should be promoted before the business community.	Public	50.000	X			CD of EPR, Municipalities
3. Subsidizing the development of tourist products.	Inspecting the possibilities and developing and establishing possible procedures for subsidizing development of tourist products. For example, preparation on DUP by the public sector, typified urbanistic decisions, exemption from local taxes and fees, sale of land under favorable conditions, etc.	Public-private	TBD	X	X		Government, Municipalities, Business sector
<b>Measure:</b> 1.2. DEVELOPMENT OF TOURIST PRODUCTS BASED UPON NATURAL HERITAGE IN EPR							
Activities/Projects	Short description of the Activity/Project	Model of financing:	Investment (EUR)	Period of investment (years)			Responsible entity
				2-3	3-5	5-10	
1. Spa center "Kezhovica"	Reconstruction, renovation, extension of the facilities in the bath "Kezhovica", modernization with spa amenities (whirlpool baths, Turkish bath, steam bath, additional pool, open pool). Improving the accommodation capacities and the level of services. Promoting and offering wellness-spa products and packages.	Public-private	TBD	X	X	X	Municipality Shtip, Business sector
2. Spa center "Istibanja"	Construction of completely new bath-spa facility by using local thermal waters: accommodation facility, indoor and outdoor pool, spa amenities, wellness amenities. Promoting and offering the wellness-spa products and packages.	Public-private	TBD	X	X	X	Municipality Vinica, Business sector

3. Spa center village "Banja"	Construction of completely new bath-spa facility by using local thermal waters: accommodation facility, indoor and outdoor pool, spa amenities, wellness amenities. Promoting and offering the wellness-spa products and packages.	Public-private	TBD	X	X	X	Municipality Kochani, Business sector
4. Mining and mines	Visiting and sightseeing mineralogical collections (Probishtip). Visiting the mines in Zletovo and Sasa. Visiting the mine Opalit in village Spanchevo.	Public-private	TBD	X	X	X	Municipalities, Business sector
5. Skin center "Ponikva"	Forming tourist offers which include few day stay and utilization of ski paths on Ponikva, tracking, mountaineering, relaxing in nature and visiting local attractions.	Public-private	TBD	X	X	X	Municipality Kochani, Business sector
6. Lesново crater	Visiting and sightseeing the volcanic relief in the area.	Public-private	TBD	X	X	X	Municipality M. Kamenica, Business sector
7. "Geoparks of the East"	Preparation of studies and establishing – proclaiming the first geoparks in EPR and in the Republic of Macedonia. Geoparks are an excellent opportunity for promotion and valorization of natural attractions in EPR. Especially necessary and suitable for tourism are the following: geopark "Lesново", geopark "Valley of Kamenica", geopark "Kukulje", geopark "Turtel", geopark "Crnik" and geopark "Ravna Reka".	Public	TBD	X	X	X	Government, Municipalities, Business sector
8. Eco-ethno parks	Construction of eco-ethno park for promotion of eco and ethno products (examples in Cheshinovo-Obleshevo).	Public - private	200.000 EUR				Municipalities, Business sector, Donators
9. Paragliding center "Turtel"	Establishing starting paragliding position at a suitable plain on the peak Turtel on Plachkovica. Providing landing positions. Defining and promoting the paragliding route Turtel.	Public	30.000	X	X	X	EPR, Municipality Zrnovci Business sector
10. Biking through the East	Developing and promoting mountain biking in EPR. Providing 50 bikes and educating the population for renting bikes to tourists. Establishing biking paths.	Public-private	TBD	X	X	X	Government, Municipalities, Business sector
11. "Going through the wild by jeep"	Pilot-project for development of jeep safari tourism in EPR, with education, selection of route and performing trial tours.	Public-private	TBD	X	X	X	Municipalities, Business sector

12. Following the traces of Sasas	Visiting the mine Sasa, observing, entering into a deserted mine, observing the water-rock, visiting old pits, archeological remains from the Sasas and their mining activities.	Public-private	TBD	X	X	X	M. Kamenica Business sector
13. Zip lines – “feel the adrenalin”	Setting 3 zip lines at chosen and attractive tourist locations in EPR with adrenalin and landscape experiences.	Public-private	180.000	X	X	X	Government, Municipalities, Business sector
<b>Measure:</b>		1.3. DEVELOPMENT OF TOURIST PRODUCTS BASED UPON CULTURAL-HISTORICAL HERITAGE IN EPR					
Activities/Projects	Short description of the Activity/Project	Model of financing:	Investment (EUR)	Period of investment (years)			Responsible entity
				2-3	3-5	5-10	
1. “Memories from the past”	Preparation of a study for preservation of cultural-historical heritage in the function of development of tourist products in EPR.	Public	20.000	X	X		CD of EPR, Municipalities
2. “Restoration and conservation”	Projects for continuous conservation and restoration of objects from profane, sacred architecture for the purpose of preserving cultural heritage and placing it into the function of tourism. Continuous program for conservation of icons, frescos which are masterpieces and attractions in churches and monasteries in EPR. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Restoration and conservation of facades from town architecture</li> <li>• Restoration and conservation of facades from sacred architecture</li> <li>• Restoration and conservation of frescoes, fresco paintings and icons.</li> </ul>	Public	TBD	x	x	x	Ministry/ Institute and museum
3. International colony of icon painting	The project envisages organization of a colony of international character for icon painting in the complex Elenec – monastery “The Cover of Saint Mary”. The complex is planning to begin with operation during summer. The project will involve people from the church and professional artists and icon painters.	Public		x			EPR/ Municipalities / NGO
4. “Old handcrafts – new opportunities”	Preparation of a study and organizing a series of workshops - how to utilize spiritual heritage to create tourist products.	Public	50.000	X	X		CD of EPR, Municipalities, Craftsmen
5. “Profane covered in silver”	Preparation of materials for training, provision of logistics for workshops and organizing series of workshops for creating tourist products which are a combination of the technique filigree and minerals and crystals as natural resources of EPR.	Public	50.000	X	X		CD of EPR, Municipalities, Craftsmen
6. Modernizing museum exhibits	Inclusion of museums in EPR in the programs of the Ministry of culture for financing the modernization of museum exhibits.	Public	TBD	X	X		Museums in EPR
7. Renovation of the Memorial-house of Razlovechko Uprising in Razlovci	The necessary renovation of the architecture of the House and renovation of the exhibits is planned as part of the project. Continuous observance of the library which operates within the House.			x			Ministry, Institute and museum, EPR

Strategy for development of tourism in EPR with AP 2016-2025

8. Further research and marking the archeological localities	Mapping the archeological localities, detailed description, their marking and management.	Public	TBD	X	X	X	Museums in EPR
9. Arranging and presenting the locality Crkvishte-Morodvis	The locality will be arranged and prepared to welcome tourists with previous signalization. At the moment the locality is in a very poor condition.	Public		x			Ministry/ Institute and museum EPR
10. Program for increasing the interaction and animation in the museums and memorial houses	Preparation for educational projects for the students pursuant to the formal education intended for the schools of RM. Preparation of educational workshops for adults and people with special needs. The last few years the Ministry of culture supports museum initiatives for this type of projects.	Public	TBD		X	X	Ministry of culture, Museums in EPR, Municipalities
11. Bargala	Arranging and equipping the locality for better treatment and hosting of tourists, setting signage and information boards.	Public	TBD	X	X	X	Museums in EPR
12. Fortress Vinichko	Arranging and equipping the locality for better treatment and hosting of tourists.	Public	TBD	X	X	X	Museums in EPR
13. Byzantine churches	Arranging and equipping the locality for better treatment and hosting of tourists.	Public	TBD	X	X	X	MOC, Municipalities in EPR, Business sector
14. "Ottoman heritage in EPR"	Ottoman heritage in the East Planning Region concentrated in Shtip. Its rich heritage offers excellent opportunity for development of one type of tourism which is specific and unique not only for the Republic of Macedonia, but also for the Balkans. It is very important to use the fact that the town Shtip together with Skopje, Bitola and Tetovo are one of the rare cities outside of the Republic of Turkey which have preserved architectonic groups dating from the Ottoman period in original or in reconstructed form.	Public-private	TBD	X	X		Municipalities, Museums in EPR, Business sector
15. "Creative industries through the prism for making souvenirs"	Preparation of a study and organizing a series of workshops "Workshops for creating and branding creative souvenirs"	Public	40.000	X	X		Chamber of craftsmen
16. "The charm of UNESCO and EPR"	Preparation of a Study, organizing a forum and workshops for creating, unifying and branding certain souvenirs which would be the brand of EPR.	Public	40.000	X	X		

17. Festival for creative industries (craftsmen, artistic designers, computer science specialists)	The organization of such festival will enable development of creativity and also the competitive spirit among the local population.	Public-private	10.0000	X	X	X	CD of EPR, Municipalities, Business sector
18. Fair – Fashion	Support in the promotion and upgrading the professional performances of the event.	Public-private	TBD	X	X	X	Business sector
19. Shopping – offer of all brands of one location	Preparation of a study of the cost effectiveness and identification of the location and construction (reconstruction) of a modern shopping facility; Preparation of an elaboration for identification of brands which would be sold on the location and provision of support for investment through facilitations provided for by law.	Public-private	TBD				Municipalities, Business sector
<b>Measure:</b>		1.4. DEVELOPMENT OF TOURIST PRODUCTS BASED UPON THE TRADITIONS IN EPR					
Activities/Projects	Short description of the Activity/Project	Model of financing:	Investment (EUR)	Period of investment (years)			Responsible entity
				2-3	3-5	5-10	
1. “Wine road through EPR”	Preparation of a plan for development of wine tourism	Public-private	TBD	X	X		CD of EPR Municipalities, Business sector
2. “Gastronomy of EPR”	Offer of gastronomic specialties	Public-private	TBD	X	X		CD of EPR Municipalities, Business sector
3. “The taste of rice”	Creating of a cook book for preparing traditional meals from rice. Organizing training for cooking traditional meals from rice.	Public	TBD	X	X		CD of EPR Municipalities, Business sector
<b>Measure:</b>		1.5. DESIGNING TOURIST PACKAGES IN EPR					
Activities/Projects	Short description of the Activity/Project	Model of financing:	Investment (EUR)	Period of investment (years)			Responsible entity
				2-3	3-5	5-10	
1. “Together for more tourists”	Joining together, coordination and mutual preparation of offers (connecting) more associations and organizations which deal with alternative tourism.	Public-private	TBD	X	X		TA, Municipalities, Business sector



2. "Tourist routes through the East Planning Region"	Preparation of a study and creating optimal regional, national and/or international tours which will include the natural and cultural resources in EPR	Public-private	TBD	X	X	X	TA, Municipalities, Business sector
3. "Following the Byzantine frescoes"	Regional route along the Eastern part of the Republic of Macedonia, cca 200 km – from Skopje - Shtip - Skopje, in duration of 7 - 9 hours by car (automobile or bus). Start from Skopje and travel through the highway which passes by Veles. Arrival in Shtip and panoramic sightseeing of the town with included walking tour which will include: church St. Arhangel Glavatov (14 century), church St. Arhangel Mihail - Fitija (14 century), church St. John (1350) and church St. Spas (1369). Following lunch break and refreshing with possible promotion of medieval meals, the tour continues with the visit of the fortress "Isarot" and ends with visiting the church St. Nicholas (1867), along with a Gallery of frescoes on the first floor. The tour ends late in the afternoon at the meeting point in Skopje.	Private	TBD	X	X		Business sector
4. "Traces of Ottoman heritage through centuries"	Regional route along the eastern part of the Republic of Macedonia, cca 200 km – from Skopje - Shtip - Skopje, duration of 7 - 9 hours by car (automobile or bus). Starting from Skopje and travelling through the highway which passes by Veles. Arrival in Shtip and panoramic sightseeing of the town with included cave tour which entails: the bridge of Sultan Khuchuk Emir (17 century), the Clock tower (17 century), Husamedin – Pasha Mosque (17 century) and Kadin Ana mosque (19 century) and Besistan (16-17 century). Following the break for lunch and refreshing with possible promotion of Turkish meals, the tour will continue with the visit of the fortress "Isarot". The tour could possibly be finished with a visit of the Museum of the town Shtip, to view the exhibition with accent on the Ottoman period. The tour would finish late in the afternoon at the meeting point in Skopje.	Private	TBD	X	X		Business sector
5. "Jewish heritage in RM"	Aside from Bitola and Skopje, Shtip is one of the rare towns in Macedonia where a large Jewish community lived for centuries. Part of this heritage is in the form of Jewish graveyard, houses where they lived, as well as the Monument of deported Jews, which is the base for a tour through the Jewish cultural heritage in Shtip. This type of heritage could be combined and coordinated with few other facilities on a national level, like the archeological locality Stobi and the Memorial museum of Holocaust in Skopje.	Private	TBD	X	X		Business sector
6. "Following the traces of the revolutionaries"	In view of the rich historical past and the events in the East Planning Region, which include the periods of the First and Second World War and the Balkans war and even earlier, then the uprisings in the period of the Ottoman Empire, excellent opportunity opens up for one interesting type of historical tourism	Private	TBD	X	X		Business sector

	which would include several locations, museums and memorial houses from this period.						
7. "Let's meet the East of Macedonia"	<p>Organizing summer school for students (cultural heritage, tourism, history, and archeology) and students who would stay and study in the region.</p> <p>Organizing school trips for children from elementary schools and high schools (to be offered during school breaks, holidays, well-planned offer).</p> <p>To create offers/packages for retired people for visiting monasteries (two-day, three-day). For example, a monastic tour (one tour only with monasteries from EPR and another tour with neighboring regions) or with other attractions.</p>	Public-private	TBD	X	X	X	Municipalities, Business sector

STRATEGIC AREA: TOURIST OFFER							
<b>Strategic priority goal:</b> 2. OPTIMIZING THE MUTUAL BENEFIT OF THE POPULATION AND THE BUSINESS SECTOR THROUGH TOURISM		<b>Indicator: 1. NUMBER OF DISTINGUISHABLE TYPES OF TOURISM BY THE POPULATION AND THE BUSINESS SECTOR</b>					
		<b>Initial value: NI</b>			<b>Target value: 5</b>		
<b>Measure:</b>		2.1. PROVISION OF INTEGRAL PROTECTION OF NATURAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE					
Activities/Projects	Short description of the Activity/Project	Model of financing:	Investment (EUR)	Period of investment (years)			Responsible entity
				2-3	3-5	5-10	
1. "For our grandchildren"	Organizing events for strengthening the awareness and animation of the population and the business sector in EPR for preservation of cultural and natural heritage in the region.	Public-private	60.000	X	X		CD of EPR, Municipalities
2. Improving the management of cultural and natural heritage in the region	Preparation of management plans for cultural and natural heritage in the region and training of administration and personnel in the cultural institutions, for increasing the efficiency in management.	Public	TBD		X		CD of EPR, Municipalities
<b>Measure:</b>		2.2. BUILDING THE TOURIST CHAIN OF VALUES IN EPR THROUGH DIFFERENT TYPES OF TOURISM					
Activities/Projects	Short description of the Activity/Project	Model of financing:	Investment (EUR)	Period of investment (years)			Responsible entity
1. Initiating investment activities	Programs for support in attracting investments in tourism	Public-private	TBD	X	X	X	Municipalities, business sector
2. Rural tourism	With the development of rural tourism there will be additional value of the local agricultural products, products of local craftsmen and gastronomic specialties.	Public-private	TBD		X		
3. "With the sign of EPR"	Building the policy of accessible prices and maximum utilization of products and services from EPR.	Private	TBD	X	X	X	Business sector
4. Introducing quality marks	The quality of products from rural tourism would primarily have to be developed with highest standards in order to meet the needs of the consumers and to encourage them for a following visit, which is important in providing long-term sustainability. Marking or placing marks could be used as quality assurance.	Public	TBD	x	x	x	CD of EPR

STRATEGIC AREA: MARKETING AND BRANDING							
<b>Strategic priority goal:</b> 1. CREATING POSITIVE IMAGE OF THE EAST PLANNING REGION AS AN ATTRACTIVE GEOGRAPHICAL – TOURIST AREA	<b>Indicator 1:</b> NUMBER OF TOURISTS <b>Indicator 2:</b> NUMBER OF OVERNIGHT STAYS <b>Indicator 3:</b> % FROM GDP OF THE REGION FROM TOURISM <b>Indicator 4:</b> EFFECTUATED SALES FROM CATERING (millions EUR)						
	<b>Initial value 1: 23.000</b> <b>Initial value 2: 59.000</b> <b>Initial value 3: NI</b> <b>Initial value 4: 9,5</b>			<b>Target value 1: 53.000</b> <b>Target value 2: 113.000</b> <b>Target value 3: 10%</b> <b>Target value 4: NI</b>			
<b>Measure:</b>		1.1. BRANDING TOURIST PRODUCTS IN EPR					
Activities/Projects	Short description of the Activity/Project	Model of financing:	Investment (EUR)	Period of investment (years)			Responsible entity
				2-3	3-5	5-10	
1. Study for branding of EPR	Preparation of the study for branding the EPR	Public	20.000	X			CD of EPR
2. Branding the regional products (food, events, manifestations)	Program for branding the EPR – practical implementation of the recommendations from the study	Public-private	TBD	X	X		CD of EPR
3. Preparation of a list of characteristic products of EPR which deserve the “Green Label”	Study for identification of potentials of the characteristic products from EPR for acquiring the “Green Label” and support in the process of acquiring such a mark	Public	20.000	X			CD of EPR
4. Preparation of the logo – symbol –distinguishable brand for textile product	Support of textile industry (cluster) in improving the new visibility and distinguishability through design and creation of logo – symbol for textile product of EPR	Private	TBD		X		Business sector
5. “EPR – The region of rice”	Creation of rice passage will bring uniqueness of the region which will be a competitive advantage before the remaining regions of RM and wider on the Balkans.	Public	TBD	X	X		CD of EPR
6. Protected geographical origin of products from EPR	The Study for identification of potentials of the characteristic products from EPR for acquiring Protected geographical origin and support in obtaining such mark.	Public-private	TBD	X	X		CD of EPR

Measure:		1.2. MARKETING TOURIST DESTINATIONS OF EPR					
Activities/Projects	Short description of the Activity/Project	Model of financing:	Investment (EUR)	Period of investment (years)			Responsible entity
1. Tourist marketing strategy of EPR	Preparation of a Marketing strategy of tourism in EPR	Public	20.000	X			CD of EPR
2. WEB tourist portal on EPR	GIS mapping of tourist attractions and preparation of WEB tourist portal for EPR. This could be used for a systematized registration of all interested people and companies, which offer some product or service related to tourism. Aside from the opportunity for registration in the base, it is good practice for the base to have educational character for the potential interested parties, i.e. to offer professional literature necessary for education. For example, what are the minimal preconditions for a certain family to offer its home, or a house for accommodation of tourists, what is necessary and how to become a tourist guide, legal regulations in the area of tourism, etc.	Public	10.000	X			CD of EPR, Municipalities
3. Promotional material for tourism in EPR	Preparation of brochures for <u>the most significant</u> facilities, localities, customs, events, for the purpose of popularizing them and introducing them to domestic potential tourists. The brochures could contain legends and stories which would bring the attractions to the potential tourists in an interesting way. Creating a qualitative promotional material like promotional videos, high quality photographs, and their placement on a proper tourist portal and integration with social networks. Placement of these materials in "Public" domain, which opens the opportunity to use them for promotional goals of every interested person or a company, certainly with prior permission of the owner of these materials. This practice proved successful in many examples and it significantly facilitates the promotional campaigns of tourist agencies, hotels, restaurants, municipalities, etc.	Public	TBD	X	X		CD of EPR, Municipalities
4. Calendar of events in EPR	Preparing and publishing calendar of events in EPR in printed and digital form. This calendar of events would contain events with largest potential for visiting by tourists, and they would be the base for creating one-day/two-day excursions to the remaining attractions, or combined tourist tours which could consider the regional principle and large part of the population would benefit from this.	Public	5.000	X			CD of EPR, Municipalities

Strategy for development of tourism in EPR with AP 2016-2025

5. „Use e-tourism“	Projects and activities for presenting and advertising the accommodation capacities on Booking.com, TripAdvisor, AirBNB and other world known e-tourist portals.	Public	TBD	X	X	X	CD of EPR, Municipalities
6. “EPR tourism on your mobile“	Creating android application which would be placed into function of tourists, offering them all necessary information depending upon their location.	Public-private	5.000	X			CD of EPR, Municipalities
7. Promotion of tourist events and products	Organizing festivals and manifestations. Participation at tourism fairs. International fairs organized by APSTRM present an excellent opportunity for international promotion of EPR at festivals, for the newly created tourist products.	Public-private	TBD	X	X	X	CD of EPR, Municipalities in cooperation with the Agency
8. Invitation to tourist agencies from the region and offer of the region	Necessary cooperation with tourist agencies from EPR for creating qualitative complete tourist product and its placement in RM and internationally. The Strategy clearly defines attractions which could be part of those products – the attractions itself or a group of attractions.	Public-private	TBD		X		Tourist agencies
9. Invitation of tourist writers for the purpose of placing the most significant attractions in foreign tourist guides	Imposing on tourist writers and presentation before them is especially important for international promotion of EPR. The most prestigious tourist writers could contribute immensely for increased visits by tourists from the wider surrounding.	Public		x	x	X	CD of EPR, Municipalities
10. Promotional documentary films about EPR and abundant movable and immovable cultural heritage	Preparing promotional documentary and tourist video postcards are especially important for promotion in RM and in international regions. Professionals from this area should be engaged. The films should be promoted at international fairs.	Public			x		CD of EPR, Municipalities

## 13.4 SOURCES FOR FINANCING THE ACTION PLAN

The Action plan could be financed with funds for equal regional development from the Budget of RM, the budget of linear ministries, budgets of the municipalities of EPR, funds from the budget of the Republic of Macedonia, funds from the business community and additional financial aid and support provided through financing project activities by other national and/or international institutions and organizations.

Aside from the financial funds which will be approved by the Council of EPR and the Councils of the municipalities in EPR, as well as the obtained funds within the tenders for submission of projects from the ministries, additional funds for financing the activities and projects which will originate from this Action plan will be requested from the following sources:

<b>Financial program</b>	<b>Institution</b>
Different programs and projects	Government of RM
Financing projects from the area of tourism	Ministries of the Government of RM Donators and international financial institutions
Infrastructure	Ministry of transport and communications Ministry of Environment Ministry of Economy Donators and financial institutions in RM
EU funds, including IPA 1 and 2	European Commission and Central Finance and Contracting Department (CFCD)
Programs and projects related to tourism	National agencies
Different types of projects	Donators in RM
Credit lines for the municipalities	For example, the Project for improving the municipal services (World Bank)
PPP	Business-sector

## 13.5 COST - BENEFIT ANALYSIS

### 13.5.1 Methodological approach in the Cost - Benefit Analysis (CBA)

For the purpose of estimating the economic and social benefits from the investments planned with the projects for development of tourism in the East Planning Region in the period 2016-2025, it is recommended to prepare feasibility studies, based upon the usage of Cost - Benefit Analysis (CBA). The essence of the CBA is estimation of the monetary equivalents of the benefits and expenses from the implementation of the planned project activities, for the purpose of deciding whether they are acceptable, useful and sustainable.

With the help of this method for estimation, the benefits which will arise (for example) from the improvements of the access to tourist attractions, the development of tourist infrastructure, the improvements in the environment, increased number of domestic and foreign visitors, development of the villages in the region, as well as their sustainability, are being reviewed against the costs related to the measure, the activities and the projects for their realization.

For the purpose of obtaining realistic quantification from the many components of the costs and benefits and to achieve generally acceptable solutions, i.e. to reach relevant conclusions about the viability and the acceptability of the project, all its advantages and disadvantages are expressed in one mutual unit, i.e. all benefits and expenses of the project are expressed in the equivalent of their monetary value. This practically means that the project will generate commercial benefits, and also benefits which could not be expressed directly in their monetary value, even though indirectly there is a proper monetary value, which the users of the benefits could consider as "good" from the project benefit. Most of the abstract benefits, for example the protection of open space at certain locations, have a limited monetary value for the public. For that purpose the economical analysis uses classic CBA for projects which allow quantification of clearly determined commercial benefits for the users of those benefits, and also a specific CBA which is being implemented on projects, for example in the area of the environment, for project activities which lack clearly differentiated commercial benefits.

In this sphere CBA should identify the benefits which are expressed as improvements in human wellbeing and expenses defined as reducing or worsening the given specific human wellbeing.

In order for the projects and the policies to be estimated as suitable, based upon the CBA, it is necessary for the social and commercial benefits to exceed the planned expenses.

### 13.5.2 Inputs for Cost - Benefit Analysis

In view of the fact that this Action plan is the first of such type in EPR, the activities and projects which are identified in it have a different degree of development by the different factors/involved parties for development of tourism in EPR. In attachment there are eight (8) so called project cards which provide more details for the projects itself. These identified projects could also be reviewed as an integrated entity of projects, integrated in the Program of the initial steps for development of tourism in EPR.

In order to make a CBA, it is necessary to have clear and real quantification of the costs and the benefits, which should be made in the process of making feasibility studies for the projects itself



or during detailed planning of project applications for the necessities of the different sources of financing.

Here will we provide one possible approach in the estimation of the justification of the so called *Program for initial steps for development of tourism in EPR*, which unites projects of development of tourist offer, tourist marketing, development of tourist infrastructure and development of human resources in EPR for development of tourism.

The analysis of the Program is based upon the identification of the key parameters for the expenses of the investment, as well as identification of all commercial and social benefits from the implementation of the program. It is planned for the projects which are part of the program to be implemented in the period of two years, whereas the projects which are planned in two phases (one phase is one year) to invest 60% of the funds in the first year and 40% of the necessary funds in the second year. Based upon these assumptions, the inputs for the expenses for implementation of the program per phase are presented below:

- Phase I: 668.000 EUR
- Phase II: 212.000 EUR

Total expenses of the Program for the initial steps for development of tourism in EPR are estimated to be 880.000 EUR (Table 10).

**Table 10**

PROGRAM FOR INITIAL STEPS FOR DEVELOPMENT OF TOURISM IN EPR			Phases of implementation of the Program/Project		Financial resources		
#	Name of the project	Category of the project:	1	2	Total	Municipalities in EPR	Donators
1	E-tourist promotion of the accommodation capacities in EPR	Tourist marketing	42.000	28.000	70.000	20.000	50.000
2	Tourist GIS of EPR	Tourist marketing	60.000	40.000	100.000	20.000	80.000
3	Geopark Lesnovo	Development of tourist offer	96.000	64.000	160.000	20.000	140.000
4	Creating a coordinative body/cluster for development of tourism in EPR	Development of human resources	50.000		50.000	10.000	40.000
5	Eco-ethno park in Cheshinovo-Obleshevo	Development of tourist offer	100.000		100.000	20.000	80.000
6	Eco-ethno camp in the village Zrnovci	Development of tourist offer	120.000	80.000	200.000	40.000	160.000
7	Tradition and skills as a tool for development of tourism	Development of tourist offer	50.000		50.000	10.000	40.000
8	Signposts to the attractions in EPR	Tourist infrastructure	150.000		150.000	20.000	130.000
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>668.000</b>	<b>212.000</b>	<b>880.000</b>	<b>160.000</b>	<b>720.000</b>

Aside from the above included projects, for the necessities of the analysis and for the purpose of including the investments of the population, repair and adaptation of 45 rural houses is assumed, which could be placed in the function of development of alternative forms of rural, mountain, hunting and agrotourism. The investments will be made by the owners of the facilities.

Inputs for estimation of commercial benefits<sup>13</sup>:

- Projected number of additional visitors in EPR as a result of the implementation of the *Program for the initial steps for development of tourism in EPR*: - 7500 visitors in the first year
- Projected number of additional stationed tourists: 20% of the projected number of visitors – 1500 tourist in the first year
- Price for overnight stay with breakfast and dinner 20 EUR/person
- Income of the local population based upon the daily expenses of the visitors (catering services and supply of other local products and services): 8 EUR/person/day.
- Income of the local population on the basis of buying souvenirs, local ecological products, using the service of local guides, and other services: 6 EUR/person/day.
- The period of realization of the projects from the program is proposed for up to 2 years.
- The period of realization of the repair and adaptation of the old rural houses, a total of 45, which could be placed in the function of development of alternative forms of rural, mountain, hunting and agrotourism, is proposed to 3 years.

### 13.5.3 Cost-Benefit Analysis - calculations

The analysis costs – benefit is based upon the estimated number of tourist visits which will be based upon overnight stay with breakfast and dinner and number of visitors on a daily base. If EPR is integrated into an integral tourist offer for the North-East, Vardar, and the South-East planning region, then it could attract domestic and foreign tourists who are gravitating in these regions. The planned additional volume of visitors in EPR is presented in Table 11.

**Table 11**

Description	Before investing	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10
Average number of overnight stays	0	1.500	3.000	4.500	5.400	6.300	6.750	7.200	7.650	8.100	8.550
Average number of visitors who are not staying overnight/per year	0	6.000	12.000	18.000	21.600	25.200	27.000	28.800	30.600	32.400	34.200
<b>TOTAL</b>	0	7.500	15.000	22.500	27.000	31.500	33.750	36.000	38.250	40.500	42.750

The presumption for the analysis is that with the implementation of the *Program for initial steps for development of tourism in EPR* it is possible to attract 7.500 new visitors in the first year or 1500 new tourists for overnight stays and meals. The current visitation of the region is 26.000 tourists per year.

If the planned activities for all 8 projects of the program are being realized and the 45 houses begin to function, then it is expected for the visitation to grow to around 9.000 new tourists per year. It is realistic to expect that this optimistic scenario, supported by the realization of the current and planned national and regional infrastructural projects, as well

<sup>13</sup> The value of the inputs is determined based on analysis of data from the current achievements in the tourism sector in EPR

as the implementation of the remaining activities and projects from the Action plan, could be realized for the period of 5-10 years, and after the first five years, following the increased promotional campaign and integration of the East Region in the wider tourist offer, the visitation should increase with around 32.000 new visitors/per year.

Total estimated costs for investing in the *Program for initial steps for development of tourism in EPR*, into projects of development of tourist offer, tourist marketing, development of tourist infrastructure and development of human resources in EPR for development of tourism will amount to around 880.000 EUR.

In the process of analysis and calculation of costs, aside from the basic investment expenses in the phases of realization, annual costs are also anticipated for maintaining up to 10% of the basic investment value in every phase.

Direct material expenses for realization of the project and the expenses for maintenance are presented in Table 12.

**Table 12**

PROGRAM FOR INITIAL STEPS FOR DEVELOPMENT OF TOURISM IN EPR			Before investing	Year									
#	Name of the project	Category of the project		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	E-tourist promotion of the accommodation capacities in EPR	Tourist marketing	0	42.000	28.000	7.000	7.000	7.000	7.000	7.000	7.000	7.000	7.000
2	Tourist GIS of EPR	Tourist marketing	0	60.000	40.000	10.000	10.000	10.000	10.000	10.000	10.000	10.000	10.000
3	Geopark Lesnovo	Development of tourist offer	0	96.000	64.000	16.000	16.000	16.000	16.000	16.000	16.000	16.000	16.000
4	Creating a coordinative body/cluster for development of tourism in EPR	Development of human resources	0	50.000	5.000	5.000	5.000	5.000	5.000	5.000	5.000	5.000	5.000
5	Eco-ethno park in Cheshinovo-Obleshevo	Development of tourist offer	0	100.000	10.000	10.000	10.000	10.000	10.000	10.000	10.000	10.000	10.000
6	Eco-ethno camp in the village Zrnovci	Development of tourist offer	0	120.000	80.000	20.000	20.000	20.000	20.000	20.000	20.000	20.000	20.000
7	Tradition and skills as tools for development of tourism	Development of tourist offer	0	50.000	5.000	5.000	5.000	5.000	5.000	5.000	5.000	5.000	5.000
8	Signposts to the attractions of EPR	Tourist infrastructure	0	150.000	15.000	15.000	15.000	15.000	15.000	15.000	15.000	15.000	15.000
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>0</b>	<b>668.000</b>	<b>247.000</b>	<b>88.000</b>	<b>88.000</b>	<b>88.000</b>	<b>88.000</b>	<b>88.000</b>	<b>88.000</b>	<b>88.000</b>	<b>88.000</b>

For establishing the commercial benefits and sustainability of the project, unit prices have been established for the planned services for the tourists and the prices for selling souvenirs and other products (Table 13).

**Table 13**

Unit prices for tourist products and services		Before investing	Year									
#	Description		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	Average price for overnight stay with breakfast and dinner		20	20	21,0	22,1	23,2	24,3	25,5	26,8	28,1	29,5
2	Unit prices for using local catering services, gastronomic specialties of the local cuisine		8	8	8,4	8,8	9,3	9,7	10,2	10,7	11,3	11,8
3	Unit prices for buying souvenirs, local ecological products, services of local guides, etc.		6	6	6,3	6,6	6,9	7,3	7,7	8,0	8,4	8,9

With such inputs it is possible to generate satisfactory income for the local population on three grounds: renting accommodation capacities, providing catering services and sale of souvenirs and providing other services for the tourists. The planned benefits are presented in Table 14.

**Table 14**

Unit prices for tourist products and services		Before investing	Year									
#	Description		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	Income from stationed tourists	0	30.000	60.000	94.500	119.070	145.861	164.093	183.785	205.035	227.950	252.645
2	Income from catering services	0	48.000	96.000	151.200	190.512	233.377	262.549	294.055	328.055	364.720	404.232
3	Income from sale of souvenirs, local ecological products, services of local guides, etc.	0	45.000	90.000	141.750	178.605	218.791	246.140	275.677	307.552	341.925	378.967
	<b>TOTAL</b>	0	<b>123.001</b>	<b>246.002</b>	<b>387.453</b>	<b>488.191</b>	<b>598.034</b>	<b>672.789</b>	<b>753.524</b>	<b>840.650</b>	<b>934.605</b>	<b>1.035.854</b>

The expenses for repair and adaptation of the old rural houses which could function for development of alternative forms of rural, mountain, hunting and agrotourism are calculated in the integral analysis - cost and benefits, since they will be paid by the owners of the facilities. It is estimated that for the period of three years it is possible to repair and adapt up to 45 rural houses (15 houses each year). Each individual repair is planned with expense of 10.000 EUR per facility. It is considered that it is realistic for these investments to develop

with a dynamic which will be coordinated with the increase of the number of visitors, especially for those who plan to spend several days in the East Planning Region. According to the existing initiatives, promotions and available financial resources, it is planned for these investments to develop with a three years dynamics. The anticipated benefits are shown in Table 15.

Table 15

#	Description	Before investing	Year									
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	<b>INCOME</b>	EUR	EUR	EUR	EUR	EUR	EUR	EUR	EUR	EUR	EUR	EUR
1	Income from stationed tourists	0	30.000	60.000	94.500	119.070	145.861	164.093	183.785	205.035	227.950	252.645
2	Income from catering services	0	48.000	96.000	151.200	190.512	233.377	262.549	294.055	328.055	364.720	404.232
3	Income from the sale of souvenirs, local ecological products, services of local guides, etc.	0	45.000	90.000	141.750	178.605	218.791	246.140	275.677	307.552	341.925	378.967
	<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>		<b>123.001</b>	<b>246.002</b>	<b>387.453</b>	<b>488.191</b>	<b>598.034</b>	<b>672.789</b>	<b>753.524</b>	<b>840.650</b>	<b>934.605</b>	<b>1.035.854</b>
	<b>EXPENSES</b>											
	<b>INVESTMENT EXPENSES</b>											
1	E-tourist promotion of the accommodation capacities in EPR	0	42.000	28.000	7.000	7.000	7.000	7.000	7.000	7.000	7.000	7.000
2	Tourist GIS of EPR	0	60.000	40.000	10.000	10.000	10.000	10.000	10.000	10.000	10.000	10.000
3	Geopark Lesnovo	0	96.000	64.000	16.000	16.000	16.000	16.000	16.000	16.000	16.000	16.000
4	Creating a coordinative body/cluster for development of tourism in EPR	0	50.000	5.000	5.000	5.000	5.000	5.000	5.000	5.000	5.000	5.000
5	Eco-ethno park in Cheshinovo-Obleshevo	0	100.000	10.000	10.000	10.000	10.000	10.000	10.000	10.000	10.000	10.000
6	Eco-ethno camp in the village Zrnovci	0	120.000	80.000	20.000	20.000	20.000	20.000	20.000	20.000	20.000	20.000
7	Tradition and skills as tools for development of tourism	0	50.000	5.000	5.000	5.000	5.000	5.000	5.000	5.000	5.000	5.000
8	Signposts to the attractions of EPR	0	150.000	15.000	15.000	15.000	15.000	15.000	15.000	15.000	15.000	15.000
9	REPAIR AND ADAPTATION OF RURAL HOUSES		150.000	165.000	180.000	45.000	45.000	45.000	45.000	45.000	45.000	45.000
	OTHER UNPLANNED EXPENSES		45.000	47.250	49.613	52.093	54.698	57.433	60.304	63.320	66.485	69.810
	<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>		<b>863.000</b>	<b>459.250</b>	<b>317.613</b>	<b>185.093</b>	<b>187.698</b>	<b>190.433</b>	<b>193.304</b>	<b>196.320</b>	<b>199.485</b>	<b>202.810</b>
	<b>RATIO COSTS/BENEFITS</b>		<b>-739.999</b>	<b>-213.248</b>	<b>69.841</b>	<b>303.098</b>	<b>410.336</b>	<b>482.356</b>	<b>560.219</b>	<b>644.330</b>	<b>735.120</b>	<b>833.044</b>

According to the scenario for investment and for benefits for the *Program for initial steps for development of tourism in EPR*, which contains projects from the development of tourist offer, tourist marketing, development of tourist infrastructure, and development of human resources in EPR for development of tourism, positive economic parameters are being generated.

The ratio cost benefits in the analyzed ten year period reveal that except in the first year when the costs surpass the income, in all following years of the period the benefits surpass the costs. This is logical if we take into consideration the fact that the first year is the period when the planned investments are being implemented. The income (benefits) from the project should realistically be expected in the following years, especially after the increased promotional campaign and the investments by the local population.

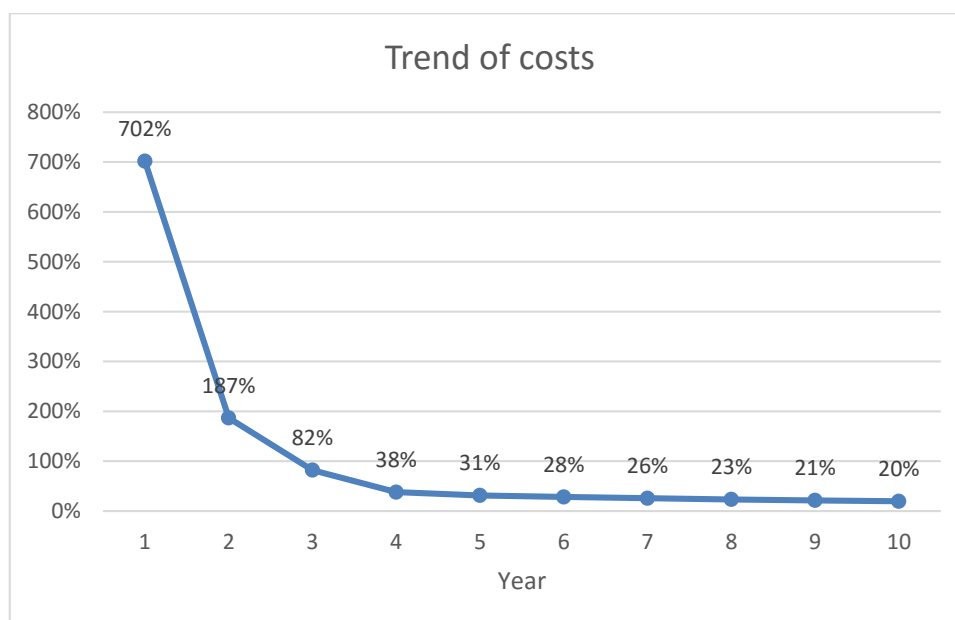
The ratio cost/income in the first year is negative because the costs are dimensioned in a way that they are 702% higher than the generated income. In all following periods the costs have a tendency to be reduced, i.e. in the second year they are at the level of 187% of the generated income, in the third year they are at the level of 82% of the income, and in the fourth year they are 38% of the income, and in the tenth year they are at the level of 20% of the generated income. In Table 16 is given ratio cost / benefits in%.

**Table 16**

Year	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
RATIO COSTS/BENEFITS %	702%	187%	82%	38%	31%	28%	26%	23%	21%	20%

The movement of costs with reference to the income for the period of 10 years is presented in Chart 4.

**Figure 4**



Key economic parameters: Net present value (NPV) and Internal rate of return (IRR) are positive and refer to the conclusion that the program is economically efficient and sustainable, as it is confirmed with the ratio cost – benefit.

Net present value (NPV) is determined with a discount rate of 5% and it amounts to 1.912.485 EUR, while the Internal rate of return (IRR) is 0,28 , i.e. greater than „0“.

Commercial benefits of the program clearly indicate its economic profitability and sustainability. The program has commercial effects and social benefits. The social benefits are the following:

- Offsetting the process of migrations village-town within the region
- Greater opportunities for self-employment through development of entrepreneurial undertakings based on development of tourism and utilization of its lucrative characteristics
- Development of local economy
- Promotion of local traditions in the sphere of gastronomy and culture
- Promotion of tourist attractions in the region.

ATTACHMENT

## 14. EXAMPLES OF PROJECT CARDS AS PRIORITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT OF TOURISM IN EPR PROJECT CARD 1

<b>Name of project</b>	<b>E-tourist promotion of accommodation capacities in EPR</b>
<b>Category of project:</b> (infrastructure, social welfare, education, communal activities, etc.)	Tourist marketing
<b>Relation of the project with development strategies of the municipality:</b> (List the strategic plans, strategic goals, priorities and actions)	STRATEGIC AREA: MARKETING AND BRANDING Strategic priority goal: 1.2 MARKETING TOURIST DESTINATIONS IN EPR
<b>Implemented by:</b> (municipality, local community, association of citizens, and other involved partner, if any)	EPR
<b>Submitted by:</b>	EPR
<b>Contact person</b> (name and surname, address, telephone, e-mail)	
<b>Date of submission:</b>	2016
<b>DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT</b>	
<b>Goal of the project: Promoting accommodation facilities on global tourist portals</b>	
<b>Anticipated results:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased visitation of EPR</li> <li>• International promotion of EPR</li> <li>• Improved tourist offer</li> <li>• Strengthened development of tourism</li> <li>• Economic development</li> </ul>	
<b>Activities:</b>	
(list the activities which are planned to reach the goals and to implement the anticipated results - in few items)	
First phase	
A1: Establishing methodological approach and preparatory activities	
A2: Selection of interested subjects which offer accommodation (as many as possible) in EPR	
A3: Workshops for introducing the interested parties to the opportunities of internet presentation and promotion (by inviting appropriate professionals from this field and subjects from the region and wider, which are experienced in this segment)	
A4: Introduction to Booking.com, Expedia, AirBNB etc.	
Second phase	
A3: Preparation for inclusion of interested subjects in promotion of e-tourist portals (preparation of contents, descriptions, photographs)	
A4: Registration and promotion of portals	
A5: Monitoring the results and providing recommendations	
A6: Holding a final conference	



<p><b>Long-term effects from project implementation:</b>          (list the effects – long-term benefits for the users)          E1: Increased offer of accommodation capacities from EPR on the internet          E2: Increased visitation and tourist sales          E3: Improved quality of services          E4: Improved tourist promotion          E5: Greater tourist development          E6: Economic development</p>
<p><b>Project users:</b>  <b>Direct users (key):</b>          EPR  <b>Indirect users:</b>          (quote the subjects which will experience indirect use/benefit from the project implementation)  <b>Tourists, owners of accommodation facilities, economy of EPR and of RM</b></p>
<p><b>Short description of the project</b> (no longer than 1 page):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Description of the background of the problem – description of the identified problem              The goal of the project is to increase the presence and promotion of the accommodation capacities in EPR (which at present is at a very low level) on the global internet tourist portals: Booking, Expedia, AirBNB. Pursuant to the experiences from the region and from Macedonia, the presence of accommodation facilities on these portals would imply large increased visitation, especially if care is taken for fast and positive reaction to comments, requests and needs of the tourists. This will raise the level of services and the total effect from tourism in the region.</li> <li>- Activities and phases from the project</li> </ul> <p>First phase</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishing methodological approach and preparatory activities</li> <li>• Selection of interested subject which offer accommodation (as many as possible) in EPR</li> <li>• Workshops for introducing the interested parties to the opportunities of internet presentation and promotion (by inviting appropriate professionals)</li> <li>• Introduction to Booking.com, Expedia, AirBNB etc.</li> </ul> <p>Second phase</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preparation for inclusion of interested entities for promotion of e-tourist portals (preparation of contents, descriptions, photographs)</li> <li>• Workshop for improving the quality of offer in the accommodation facilities, as well as the attitude towards tourists</li> <li>• Selection of most appropriate e-tourist portals pursuant to the type of accommodation facilities</li> <li>• Registration and promotion of portals</li> <li>• Monitoring the results and providing recommendations for even better ratings by tourists</li> <li>• Final conference</li> </ul>
<p><b>Necessary resources for implementation of the project:</b>          Human resources: Professionals from the area of e-tourism, consultants, owners of accommodation facilities.</p>
<p><b>Finances (total): 70.000 EUR</b>  <b>From EPR: 0-20.000 EUR</b>  <b>From external sources of financing: 50.000-70.000 EUR (donators)</b></p>

## PROJECT CARD 2

<b>Name of project</b>	<b>Tourist GIS of EPR</b>
<b>Category of project:</b> (infrastructure, social welfare, education, communal activities, etc.)	Tourist marketing
<b>Relation of the project with development strategies of the municipality:</b> (List the strategic plans, strategic goals, priorities and actions)	STRATEGIC AREA: MARKETING AND BRANDING Strategic priority goal: 1.2 MARKETING OF TOURIST DESTINATION IN EPR
<b>Implemented by:</b> (municipality, local community, association of citizens, and other involved partner, if any)	EPR
<b>Submitted by:</b>	EPR
<b>Contact person</b> (name and surname, address, telephone, e-mail)	
<b>Date of submission:</b>	2016
<b>DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT</b>	
<b>Goal of the project: Preparation of tourist GIS of EPR for improved tourist promotion of EPR in Macedonia and abroad.</b>	
<b>Anticipated results:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preparing integrated tourist GIS of EPR</li> <li>• Preparing thematic tourist maps for EPR</li> <li>• International promotion of EPR</li> <li>• Improved tourist offer</li> <li>• Increased visitation</li> <li>• Strengthened development of tourism</li> <li>• Economic development</li> </ul>	
<b>Activities:</b> (list the activities which are planned to reach the goals and to implement the anticipated results - in few items) First phase A1: Establishing the methodology and the contents of GIS A2: Mapping and preparing databases for all attractions, offers, accommodation capacities, catering facilities, and other tourist amenities in EPR A3: Preparing tourist GIS of EPR  Second phase A3: Preparing thematic tourist maps of EPR A4: Preparing web page based upon the tourist GIS of EPR A5: Establishing responsible structure responsible for updating and maintaining GIS and the portal	
<b>Long-term effect from project implementation:</b> (list the effects – long-term benefits for the users) E1: The presence of integrated GIS with all tourist amenities in EPR E2: Possibility for preparation of different thematic tourist maps E3: Establishing tourist GIS portal of EPR E4: International promotion of EPR E5: Improved tourist offer E6: Increased visitation E7: Strengthened development of tourism	

E8: Economic development
<p><b>Project users:</b></p> <p><b>Direct users (key):</b> EPR</p> <p><b>Indirect users:</b> (quote the subjects which will experience indirect use/benefit from the project implementation)</p> <p><b>Tourists, economy of RM.</b></p>
<p><b>Short description of the project</b> (no longer than 1 page):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Description of the background of the problem – description of the identified problem Geographical information systems are necessary for establishing an integral preview of tourist amenities, attractions, offers and opportunities in EPR. Also, with the help of GIS it would be possible to create qualitative tourist map for EPR or for any part of the region. The tourist GIS could be the base for a good tourist portal and an excellent tourist promotion of EPR.</li> <li>- Activities and phases from the project</li> </ul> <p>First phase</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishing methodology and contents of GIS</li> <li>• Mapping and preparing databases for all attractions, offers, accommodation capacities, catering facilities and other tourist amenities in EPR</li> <li>• Preparation of tourist GIS of EPR</li> <li>• Promotion of tourist GIS</li> </ul> <p>Second phase</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preparation of thematic tourist maps of EPR</li> <li>• Preparation of a webpage based upon the tourist GIS of EPR</li> <li>• Establishing responsible structure in charge of updating and maintaining the GIS and the portal</li> </ul>
<p><b>Necessary resources for implementation of the project:</b> Human resources: Professionals from the area of GIS, web and mapping.</p>
<p><b>Finances (total): 100.000 EUR</b> <b>From EPR: 0-20.000 EUR</b> <b>From external sources of financing: 80.000-100.000 EUR (donators)</b></p>

## PROJECT CARD 3

<b>Name of project</b>	<b>Geopark Lesnovo</b>
<b>Category of project:</b> (infrastructure, social welfare, education, communal activities, etc.)	Development of tourist offer
<b>Relation of the project with development strategies of the municipality:</b> (List the strategic plans, strategic goals, priorities and actions)	STRATEGIC AREA: TOURIST OFFER Strategic priority goal:1.2 DEVELOPMENT OF TOURIST PRODUCTS BASED UPON NATURAL HERITAGE IN EPR
<b>Implemented by:</b> (municipality, local community, association of citizens, and other involved partner, if any)	Municipality of Probishtip in coordination with EPR
<b>Submitted by:</b>	Municipality Probishtip
<b>Contact person</b> (name and surname, address, telephone, e-mail)	
<b>Date of submission:</b>	2016
<b>DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT</b>	
<b>Goal of the project: Development of eco tourism in the region</b>	
<b>Anticipated results:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• International promotion of Lesnovo, municipality Probishtip and the entire EPR</li> <li>• Preservation of nature</li> <li>• Increased visitation</li> <li>• Access to EU funds intended for development of geoparks</li> <li>• Developed eco tourism</li> <li>• Utilization of natural abundance as a resource for development of tourism</li> <li>• Educated local population for proper use of natural resources</li> <li>• Economic development</li> </ul>	
<b>Activities:</b>	
(list the activities which are planned to reach the goals and to implement the anticipated results - in few items)	
First phase	
A1: Preparation of project study	
A2: Establishing responsible structure in charge of activities around the geopark	
A3: Establishing cooperation with geoparks from Croatia, Slovenia and/or Greece for exchange of experiences and help in the process of application	
Second phase	
A3: Preparation of application for geopark Lesnovo in the European network of geoparks	
A4: Preparation and aid in the phase of evaluation by foreign experts	
A5: Creating a webpage, brochures and other promotional material	
A6: Creating a Management plan for the geopark Lesnovo	
<b>Long-term effect from project implementation:</b>	
(list the effects – long-term benefits for the users)	
E1: International promotion of Lesnovo and the entire EPR based upon the geopark	
E2: Preserved nature	
E3: Increased sale of local products	
E4: Developed tourism in the area of the geopark and the entire EPR	

E5: Economic development of the region
<p><b>Project users:</b></p> <p><b>Direct users (key):</b> Municipality Probishtip</p> <p><b>Indirect users:</b> (quote the subjects which will experience indirect use/benefit from the project implementation)</p> <p><b>Tourists, economy of RM.</b></p>
<p><b>Short description of the project</b> (no longer than 1 page):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Description of the background of the problem – description of the identified problem Geoparks are becoming recognizable European tourist areas, which increasingly attract more attention and visitation. They refer to the attractiveness of the geological, relief, climate, hydrological aspect, and also the complete nature, cultural heritage and tradition in the area. In that sense, Lesnovo with the old volcanic relief, the crater, geoformations, etc. is competent to become European geopark. If it obtains that status, it will be a branded area (with the logo of the European parks), but it will have priority in financing different projects, increased visitation, increased development of the municipality Probishtip, and the entire region of EPR. The entire procedure usually takes one to two years.</li> <li>- Activities and phases from the project</li> </ul> <p>First phase</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Making a project study for the future geopark Lesnovo (opportunities, attractions, actual steps, etc.)</li> <li>• Establishing responsible structure in charge of activities around the geopark</li> <li>• Establishing cooperation with geoparks from Croatia, Slovenia and/or Greece for exchange of experiences and help in the process of application</li> </ul> <p>Second phase</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preparation of application for geopark Lesnovo in the European network of geoparks</li> <li>• Preparation and aid in the phase of evaluation by foreign experts</li> <li>• Creating webpage, brochures and other promotional material</li> <li>• Creating a Management plan for the geopark Lesnovo</li> </ul>
<p><b>Necessary resources for implementation of the project:</b> Human resources: EPR, ecological associations, producers of eco and ethno products</p>
<p><b>Finances (total): 160.000 EUR</b> <b>From the municipal budget: 0-20.000 EUR</b> <b>From external sources of financing: 140.000-160.000 EUR (donators)</b></p>

## PROJECT CARD 4

<b>Name of the project</b>	<b>Creating a coordinative body/cluster for development of tourism in EPR</b>
<b>Category of project:</b> (infrastructure, social welfare, education, communal activities, etc.)	Development of human resources
<b>Relation of the project with development strategies of the municipality:</b> (List the strategic plans, strategic goals, priorities and actions)	STRATEGIC AREA: DEVELOPMENT OF HUMAN AND INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITIES SG1 BUILDING INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITIES FOR MANAGEMENT OF EPR AS A TOURIST DESTINATION
<b>Implemented by:</b> (municipality, local community, association of citizens, and other involved partner, if any)	EPR
<b>Submitted by:</b>	EPR
<b>Contact person</b> (name and surname, address, telephone, e-mail)	
<b>Date of submission:</b>	2016
<b>DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT</b>	
<b>Goal of the project: Strengthening the capacities of EPR for development of tourism</b>	
<b>Anticipated results:</b> (short description of the anticipated results – in few items) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Forming a coordinative body (CB)</b></li> <li>• <b>Trained members</b></li> <li>• <b>Created program for work</b></li> </ul>	
<b>Activities:</b> (list the activities which are planned to reach the goals and to implement the anticipated results - in few items) <p>A1: Selection of participants in the coordinative body from all 11 municipalities</p> <p>A2: Study trip</p> <p>A3: Training for the members of the CB</p> <p>A4: Creating a program for activities</p> <p>A5: Establishing an office</p> <p>A6: Establishing local committees</p> <p>A7: Starting the activities from the Action plan</p>	
<b>Long-term effect from project implementation:</b> (list the effects – long-term benefits for the users) <p>E1: Developed human resources in the area of tourism in EPR</p> <p>E1: Developed tourism in EPR</p> <p>E3: Economic development in the region</p>	
<b>Project users:</b> <b>Direct users (key):</b> Population from all 11 municipalities from EPR <b>Indirect users:</b> (quote the subjects which will experience indirect use/benefit from the project implementation)	

<p><b>Tourists, economy of RM.</b></p> <p><b>Short description of the project</b> (no longer than 1 page):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Description of the background of the problem – description of the identified problem EPR is facing a serious shortage of human resources in the area of development of tourism and a coordinative body must be formed in order to accomplish the implementation of the strategy for development of tourism With the formation and inception of activities of the CB, the implementation of the Strategy will begin and significant results will be achieved in development of tourism in EPR</li> <li>- Activities and phases from the project</li> <li>- Selection of participants in the coordinative body from all 11 municipalities</li> <li>- Study trip Training for the members of the CB</li> <li>- Creating a program for action</li> <li>- Establishing an office</li> <li>- Establishing local committees Inception of activities from the action plan</li> <li>- Sustainability of project activities Sustainability of the CB will be through its activities and implementation of the strategy and development of tourism. Later in the second phase this body could grow into a company for destination management.</li> <li>- Planned date of the inception and date of finalization of the project</li> </ul>
<p><b>Necessary resources for implementation of the project:</b></p> <p>Human resources: LED, business sector, employees in the cultural institutions, media, associations of citizens, etc.</p> <p>Material resources: Offices, equipment for offices, educational material and handbooks, etc.</p> <p>Technical resources: Statute, program for operation, selection of organs</p>
<p><b>Finances (total): 50.000 EUR</b></p> <p><b>From the municipal budget: 0-10.000 EUR</b></p> <p><b>From external sources of financing: 40.000-50.000 EUR (donators)</b></p>

## PROJECT CARD 5

<b>Name of the project</b>	<b>Eco-park in Cheshinovo-Obleshevo</b>
<b>Category of project:</b> (infrastructure, social welfare, education, communal activities, etc.)	Development of tourist offer
<b>Relation of the project with development strategies of the municipality:</b> (List the strategic plans, strategic goals, priorities and actions)	STRATEGIC AREA: TOURIST OFFER Strategic priority goal:1.2 DEVELOPMENT OF TOURIST PRODUCTS BASED UPON NATURAL HERITAGE IN EPR
<b>Implemented by:</b> (municipality, local community, association of citizens, and other involved partner, if any)	EPR
<b>Submitted by:</b>	EPR
<b>Contact person</b> (name and surname, address, telephone, e-mail)	
<b>Date of submission:</b>	2016
<b>DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT</b>	
<b>Goal of the project: Development of eco and ethno tourism</b>	
<b>Anticipated results:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Utilization of natural heritage as a resource for development of tourism</li> <li>• Educated local population for proper use of natural resources</li> <li>• Promotion of ethno abundance of EPR</li> <li>• Economic development</li> </ul>	
<b>Activities:</b> (list the activities which are planned to reach the goals and to implement the anticipated results - in few items)  A1: Setting 8 ethno houses A2: Promotion of the European Stork Village – Municipality of Cheshinovo - Obleshevo A3: Setting birdwatching vantage points and tourist info – boards A4: Preparation and realization of a fair for eco-ethno products A5: Organization and realization of a school for ecology A6: Preparation and creation of promotional material	
<b>Long-term effect from project implementation:</b> (list the effects – long-term benefits for the users) E1: Increased sale of local products E2: Developed tourism in EPR E3: Economic development of the region	
<b>Users of the project:</b> <b>Direct users (key):</b> Municipality and ecological associations, producers of eco and ethno products <b>Indirect users:</b> (quote the subjects which will experience indirect use/benefit from the project implementation)	
<b>Tourists, economy of RM.</b>	
<b>Short description of the project</b> (no longer than 1 page): - Description of the background of the problem – description of the identified problem	



Since 2013, Cheshinovo – Obleshevo become an European Stork Village. The Municipality has been declared as a Municipality of the year in Europe by the German foundation EuroNatur due to care for storks. The stork has turn into a trademark symbol of Cheshinovo – Obleshevo. On the other side, there is no modern and arranged space where tourists in organized manner can observe the life of storks and also to enjoy the other attractions of the municipality and the region. And finally, in EPR there is no location where tourists and other visitors could buy organic products and handicrafts in one place, and also taste traditionally prepared food.

- Activities and phases from the project

- Setting 8 ethno houses
- Promotion of the European Stork Village – Municipality of Cheshinovo – Obleshevo
- Setting birdwatching vantage points and tourist info – boards
- Preparation and realization of a fair for eco-ethno products
- Organization and realization of a school for ecology
- Preparation and creation of a promotional material
- 

**Necessary resources for implementation of the project:**

Human resources: EPR, private business sector, ecological associations, producers of eco and ethno products

**Finances (total): 100.000 EUR**

**From the municipal budget: 0-20.000 EUR**

**From external sources of financing: 80.000-100.000 EUR (donators)**

## PROJECT CARD 6

<b>Name of the project</b>	<b>Eco-ethno camp in the village Zrnovci</b>
<b>Category of project:</b> (infrastructure, social welfare, education, communal activities, etc.)	Development of tourist offer
<b>Relation of the project with development strategies of the municipality:</b> (List the strategic plans, strategic goals, priorities and actions)	STRATEGIC AREA: TOURIST OFFER Strategic priority goal:1.2 DEVELOPMENT OF TOURIST PRODUCTS BASED UPON NATURAL HERITAGE IN EPR
<b>Implemented by:</b> (municipality, local community, association of citizens, and other involved partner, if any)	EPR
<b>Submitted by:</b>	EPR
<b>Contact person</b> (name and surname, address, telephone, e-mail)	
<b>Date of submission:</b>	2016
<b>DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT</b>	
<b>Goal of the project: Development of eco and ethno tourism</b>	
<b>Anticipated results:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preservation of nature</li> <li>• Developed eco tourism</li> <li>• Utilization of natural abundance as a resource for development of tourism</li> <li>• Educated local population for proper utilization of natural resources</li> <li>• Economic development</li> </ul>	
<b>Activities:</b> (list the activities which are planned to reach the goals and to implement the anticipated results - in few items)	
<p>First phase</p> <p>A1: Creating a study for sustainability</p> <p>A2: Creating technical documentation</p> <p>Second phase</p> <p>A3: Setting wooden bungalows and infrastructure of the camp</p> <p>A4: Preparation and realization of a fair for eco-ethno products</p> <p>A5: Organizational and realization of a school for ecology</p> <p>A6: Preparation and creation of promotional material</p>	
<b>Long-term effect from project implementation:</b> (shortly list the effects – long-term benefits for the users)	
<p>E1: Preserved nature</p> <p>E2: Increased sale of local products</p> <p>E3: Developed tourism in EPR</p> <p>E4: Economic development of the region</p>	
<b>Users of the project:</b>	
<b>Direct users (key):</b> Municipality and ecological associations, producers of eco and ethno products	
<b>Indirect users:</b> (quote the subjects which will experience indirect use/benefit from the project implementation)	
<b>Tourists, economy of RM.</b>	
<b>Short description of the project</b> (no longer than 1 page):	

- |   |
|---|
| <p>- Description of the background of the problem – description of the identified problem<br/>Even though EPR is ecologically unpolluted, it is not using its competitive advantage before the remaining regions in RM. Also, the local population is lacking knowledge for nature preservation and its utilization for development of tourism and economic benefit.</p> <p>- Activities and phases from the project</p> <p>First phase</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Creating a study for sustainability</li><li>• Creating technical documentation</li></ul> <p>Second phase</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Setting wooden bungalows and infrastructure of the camp</li><li>• Preparation and realization of a fair for eco-ethno products</li><li>• Organization and realization of a school for ecology</li><li>• Preparation and creation of promotional material</li></ul> |
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<p><b>Necessary resources for implementation of the project:</b></p>
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<p>Human resources: EPR, private business sector, ecological associations, producers of eco and ethno products</p>
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<p><b>Finances (total): 200.000 EUR</b></p>
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<p><b>From the municipal budget: 0-40.000 EUR</b></p>
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<p><b>From external sources of financing: 160.000-200.000 EUR (donators)</b></p>
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## PROJECT CARD 7

<b>Name of the project</b>	<b>Tradition and skills as a tool for development of tourism</b>
<b>Category of project:</b> (infrastructure, social welfare, education, communal activities, etc.)	Development of tourist offer
<b>Relation of the project with development strategies of the municipality:</b> (List the strategic plans, strategic goals, priorities and actions)	STRATEGIC AREA: TOURIT OFFER Strategic priority goal:2 OPTIMIZING THE MUTUAL BENEFIT OF THE POPULATION AND THE BUSINESS SECTOR THROUGH TOURISM
<b>Implemented by:</b> (municipality, local community, association of citizens, and other involved partner, if any)	EPR
<b>Submitted by:</b>	EPR
<b>Contact person</b> (name and surname, address, telephone, e-mail)	
<b>Date of submission:</b>	2016
<b>DESCRIPTON OF THE PROJECT</b>	
<b>Goal of the project: Development of tourism in the villages of EPR</b>	
<b>Anticipated results:</b> (short description of the anticipated results – in few items) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Acquired practical skills</b></li> <li>• <b>The local community places its products and develops tourism</b></li> <li>• <b>Encouraged competitive spirit in the community</b></li> <li>• <b>Constant sale exhibition of handicrafts</b></li> </ul>	
<b>Activities:</b> (list the activities which are planned to reach the goals and to implement the anticipated results - in few items) A1: Organizing workshop from the area of old handicrafts (weaving, crocheting, knitting, pottery, weaving baskets) A2: Organizing cooking classes for traditional meals A3: Handbooks and promotional material A4: Organizing sale exhibit A5 :Organizing a competition for the best traditional meal	
<b>Long-term effect from project implementation:</b> (shortly list the effects – long-term benefits for the users) E1: Developed skills and preserved tradition E2: Increased sale of local products E3: Developed tourism in EPR E4: Economic development of the region	
<b>Users of the project:</b> <b>Direct users (key):</b> The population of all 10 villages best ranged according to the valorization of EPR <b>Indirect users:</b> (quote the subjects which will experience indirect use/benefit from the project implementation)	
<b>Tourists, economy of RM.</b>	
<b>Short description of the project</b> (no longer than 1 page): - Description of the background of the problem – description of the identified problem The villages in EPR do not have any organized forms of affiliation of craftsmen and handicrafts	

<p>which are slowly becoming extinct. Also, the disappearance of the elderly population will cause for many traditional meals to become forgotten. They are not used as a tool for economic development of tourism.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Activities and phases from the project<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Organizing workshop from the area of old handcrafts (weaving, crocheting, knitting, pottery, weaving baskets)</li><li>• Organizing cooking classes for traditional meals</li><li>• Handbooks and promotional material</li><li>• Organizing sale exhibit</li><li>• Organizing a competition for the best traditional meal</li></ul></li></ul>
<p><b>Necessary resources for implementation of the project:</b> Human resources: EPR, people from the rural communities interested for working in tourism Material resources: stands, equipment for the workshops, Technical resources: educational materials, handbooks and promotional materials</p>
<p><b>Finances (total): 50.000 EUR</b> <b>From the municipal budget: 0-10.000 EUR</b> <b>From external sources of financing: 40.000-50.000 EUR (donators)</b></p>

## PROJECT CARD 8

<b>Name of the project</b>	<b>“Signposts to the attractions in EPR”</b>
<b>Category of project:</b> (infrastructure, social welfare, education, communal activities, etc.)	<b>Tourist infrastructure</b>
<b>Relation of the project with development strategies of the municipality:</b> (List the strategic plans, strategic goals, priorities and actions)	STRATEGIC AREA <b>Strategic priority goal-</b> 1. Enabling better access and movements of tourists through EPR <b>Measure 1.2</b> Provision of tourist signalization
<b>Implemented by:</b> (municipality, local community, association of citizens, and other involved partner, if any)	CD of EPR in cooperation with the Municipalities
<b>Submitted by:</b>	CD of EPR
<b>Contact person</b> (name and surname, address, telephone, e-mail)	
<b>Date of submission:</b>	2016
<b>DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT</b>	
<b>Goal of the project:</b> <b>The goal of the project is to make the existing attractions in EPR accessible to tourists, and thus to increase the number of tourists/visitors.</b>	
<b>Anticipated results:</b> Increased visit of tourist attractions during the entire year by individual visitors, tourists and organized groups.	
<b>Activities:</b> (list the activities which are planned to reach the goals and to implement the anticipated results - in few items)  A1. Making an elaboration for tourist signalization of EPR, pursuant to EU standards A2. Inclusion of municipalities and relevant institutions and experts A3. Announcing public tender for preparation A4. Setting tourist signalization at certain locations A5. Preparation of promotional (printed and electronic) material with the locations	
<b>Long-term effects from project implementation:</b> (list the effects – long-term benefits for the users)  E1: Increasing the number of tourists E3: Increasing tourist sales on the territory of EPR	
<b>Users of the project:</b> <b>Direct users (key):</b> (quote the subjects which will experience direct use/benefit from the project implementation) <b>Tourists</b> <b>Indirect users:</b> (quote the subjects which will experience indirect use/benefit from the project implementation) <b>Inhabitants of EPR</b>	
<b>Short description of the project</b> (not more than 1 page):	

A large number of tourist attractions/localities in EPR do not own or they have improper tourist signalization. Therefore, they find themselves in a position not to be visited by tourists, especially those who travel independently.

For the purpose of improving this condition, a project for tourist signalization is suggested, which will be the first step and a necessity if we want to increase the number of tourists in EPR.

In order for this project to be implemented, it is necessary to obtain assistance from professionals for mapping the attractions/locations, as well as professional team for making the elaboration for EU standards for tourist signalization.

It is expected for all the municipalities in EPR to cooperate in order to provide necessary documentation when creating the elaboration.

The project will be coordinated by CR of EPR.

This project cannot include all attractions/localities, but in this phase they should be localities with regional importance.

It is planned for the marked tourist attractions/localities to print a map and to place the map on the web pages of the EPR, the municipalities and tourist agencies.

**Necessary resources for implementation of the project:**

Human resources: Coordinator CD of EPR, associates from the municipal administration of all municipalities, professionals for creation and setting.

Material resources: prepared boards, signs and signposts, proper mechanization (unless provided for with the public procurement, creating and setting them)

Technical resources: Elaboration –technical documentation, technical resources.

**Finances (total): 150.000 EUR**

**From municipal budget: 0-20.000 EUR**

**From external sources of financing: 130.000-150.000 EUR**

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## **15.ATTACHMENTS**

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**Attachment 1: SWOT analyses of tourism in the East Planning Region**

Strengths		Weaknesses		Opportunities		Threats	
<b>Internal factors</b>	Location of the region and dynamic relief structure	State of the accommodation capacities on the territory of the region (insufficient, most of them require improvements of infrastructure and services)	<b>External factors</b>	Natural attractiveness	Regional discordance		
	Personal image	Non-accommodation offer		Cultural and historical abundance	Marginalization of less attractive municipalities		
	Concentration of attractiveness in a small area	Quality of offer and services		Concentration of attractiveness in a small area	Competition		
	Natural beauties	Expressed seasonality		Location of the region - proximity to EU and relative vicinity to Skopje as the largest emitting area for potential tourists in EPR	Unfinished transition, privatization		
	Thermal waters and educated personnel for provision of health and physical therapy services	Managerial personnel		Thermal water	Lack of investments		
	Cultural and historical abundance	Informatization		Attractions of religious character	Pollution of natural environment		
	Existence of recognizable tourist locations in the region	Marketing and promotional activities		Higher education – Faculty of Tourism – Shtip	Devastation of cultural abundance		
	Local and regional manifestations	Organization of tourism		Development of traffic – Construction of Corridor 8, Highway: Skopje - Shtip, Express way: Veles – Shtip	Lack of funds for revitalization of rural architecture (threat for extinction of rural tourism)		
	Attractions of religious character	Unexploited natural potential		Active role of the local self-governments and the Council of EPR	Political – safety condition (instability)		
	Healthy food	Lack of financial funds		Active role of the state	Lack of financial funds		
	Acceptable prices	Lack of maintenance of the already existing tourist localities		Attracting new investments	Unemployment (threat for migration of the population, especially among young people)		
	Hospitality	Lack of education among the population with reference to conservation of natural beauties		New (unique) products	Lack of toilets next to the tourist attractions		
	New (unique) products	Insufficient tourist signalization		Proximity to the airport	Poor traffic infrastructure		

Univeristy "Goce Delchev" – Faculty of Tourism – Shtip	Poor traffic (road and railway) infrastructure, especially to the tourist attractions	Utilization of EU funds	Strong competition coming from abroad and the neighboring regions
Practical working knowledge for the students attending the Faculty of Tourism at the University "Goce Delchev" abroad (Germany and Spain)	Lack of toilets in the vicinity of the tourist attractions	Conditions for retraining and post training of the unemployed population	
Compulsory practical work in the catering-accommodation capacities for pupils and students in the educational institutions of this planning region	Improper and irregular waste collection in the tourist locations	Revitalization of old handcrafts	
Climate and soil conditions for production and offer of local organic food	Insufficient promotion on the internet	Opening a border crossing towards the Republic of Bulgaria	
Existence of renovated capacities for accommodation	Lack of interest among the tourist agencies for bringing tourists in the region	Attracting new investments	
Started process of revitalization of old handcrafts	Marginalization of less attractive municipalities	Greater FDI with orientation of the country towards EU, and using the candidate status	
Presence of regional package tourist offer	Undefined strategic direction for development of tourist attractions	Renovating the accommodation capacities	
Established cooperation of domestic with regional TA (Bulgarian, Greek, Serbian)	Lack of cooperation with the neighboring regions for mutual development of the tourist offer	Offer of organic food	
Entrepreneurial spirit among some of the population	Insufficiently educated personnel for performing work in the tourist facilities	Personal image	
Cheap labor	A small number of vocational high schools with concentration in tourism and poor student enrollment	Creating local and regional brands	
Educated personnel in the public administration	Poor actual support of LS for development of tourism per municipality (support is primarily declarative)		
	Lack of quality protection or geographical origin of food from this mountain region		
	Almost nonexistent cooperation with alimentary processing capacities or primary producers		

		Low level of development of handicrafts and creating handicrafts and souvenirs			
		Lack of connection with other economic sectors for development of specific and recognizable tourist offer			
		Tourist agencies do not work on incoming tourism			
		Low level of investments in tourism and low accumulation of personal capital			
		Few examples of development of personal brand			
		Lack of programs for development, vision for the future, lack of business plans and personal information basis			
		Lack of business associations, poor connection between the business entities, independent approach, large common lack of confidence			
		Vulnerability of the sector from the changes in the conditions of foreign markets			
		Management efficiency is at a very low level			
		There is only one border crossing towards the Republic of Bulgaria (Delchevo)			

## **Attachment 2: Global criteria for sustainable tourism**

### **A. Demonstrating effective sustainable management.**

- A.1. The company implemented a long-term system for management of sustainability, which is appropriate to reality and to the scope, and which takes into consideration the ecological, socio cultural, health, safety and quality issues.
- A.2. The company is acting in accordance with all relevant international or local laws and regulations (including, among other, those related to health, safety, labor and ecological aspects).
- A.3. All employees receive occasional training related to their role in the management of the ecological, socio cultural, health and safety practice.
- A.4. The user's satisfaction is measurable and corrective measures are taken when deemed necessary.
- A.5. Promotional materials are correct and complete and do not promise more than what could be obtained from the business.
- A.6. Design and construction of buildings and infrastructure:
  - A.6.1. In accordance with local plans and conditions for protected localities or localities with heritage;
  - A.6.2. Observance of natural or cultural heritage with reference to locality, design, estimation of the influence and rights to the land;
  - A.6.3 Use local proper principles for sustainable construction;
  - A.6.4 Offer access for people with special needs.
- A.7. Information for and interpreting natural environment, local culture and localities with cultural heritage.

### **B. Maximizing social and economical advantages for the local community and minimizing the negative influences.**

- B.1. The company actively supports the initiatives for social and infrastructural development of the community, including among other, education, health and health services.
- B.2. The local population is employed, including managerial positions. Training is performed as necessary.
- B.3. The business buys local services and goods, as well as according to the agreements for fair trade, when possible.
- B.4. The company offers funds for the local small entrepreneurs to develop and sell sustainable products which are based upon nature, history and culture on the location (including food and drinks, handcrafts, stage art, agricultural products, etc.).
- B.5. A codex for behavior has been prepared for activities in native and local communities, in accordance and in cooperation with the community.
- B.6. The company implemented an attitude against commercial exploitation, especially of children and adolescents, including sexual exploitation.
- B.7. The company is equal in employing women and local minorities, including managerial positions, and it also prevents children's exploitation.

- B.8. International or national legal protection of the employees is observed, and the employees obtain at least the minimum allowed salary.
  - B.9. The activities of the company do not disturb the provision of basic services, such as water, energy or sanitary services in the neighboring communities.
- C. Maximizing the advantages for cultural heritage and minimizing negative influences.**
- C.1. The company follows established directives or code of behavior for visiting the cultural or historically sensitive localities, for the purpose of minimizing the influence by the visitors, and maximizing their entitlement.
  - C.2. The historical and archeological artifacts are not sold, changed or revealed, unless permitted by law.
  - C.3. The business contributes towards protection of local, historical, archeological, cultural and spiritual important properties and localities and does not prevent access to them for the local population.
  - C.4. The business uses elements of local art, architecture or cultural heritage in its activities, design, decorations, food or shops; simultaneously observing the rights of intellectual property of the local communities.
- D. Maximizing advantages for the environment and minimizing the negative influences.**
- D.1. Conservation of resources
    - D.1.1. The shopping policy is in favor of ecological products for construction, capital merchandise, food and similar expendables.
    - D.1.2. Measuring the purchase of goods for consumption and goods for one use, while the business actively searches for methods to reduce their use.
    - D.1.3. Energy consumption should be measured, sources are pointed out and measures should be adopted for general reduction of consumption, while encouraging the use of renewable energy.
    - D.1.4. Water consumption should be measured, sources are pointed out and measures should be adopted for general reduction of consumption.
  - D.2. Reducing pollution
    - D.2.1. Releasing carbon dioxide and methane from all sources under control of the company shall be measured and procedures for their reduction shall be implemented and compensated as a method of reaching climate neutrality.
    - D.2.2. Waste water, including grey water, is processed effectively and it is reused where possible.
    - D.2.3. Implementation of a plan for solid waste management, with quantitative targets for minimizing the waste which is not recycled or reused.
    - D.2.4. Using harmful substances, including pesticides, colors, products for pool disinfection and cleaning materials is minimized; when possible they are replaced with harmless products; each use of chemicals is properly observed.
    - D.2.5. The business implements a practice for reduction of pollution from noise, light, running waters, erosion, compounds which destroy the ozone and soil and air pollutants.
  - D.3. Conservation of biodiversity, ecosystems and landscapes.

- D.3.1. Wild animals are only taken from the wild, consumed, presented, sold or traded internationally, only with a strict legal regulative, for the purpose of making their use sustainable.
- D.3.2. No wild animals are kept in captivity, except for properly regulated activities, while live samples of protected species are kept solely by authorized and properly equipped persons for their care.
- D.3.3. The business uses local types for restoration and creating panoramas and undertakes measures to avoid introduction of a foreign type.
- D.3.4. The business contributes for support of conservation of biodiversity, including support of protected localities and locations of high value in terms of biodiversity.
- D.3.5. Interactions with the wild world must not give unwanted effects upon the existence of the populations in the wild; every disruption of natural ecosystems is minimized, rehabilitated and compensating donation for management of the conservation is established.