

Project CB005.1.22.166 “Development of common cultural tourism destination in the Strandzha (Yildiz)/Sakar area based on archaeological and historical objects”

JOINT STRATEGY

**FOR DEVELOPMENT OF COMMON CULTURAL TOURISM
DESTINATION IN THE STRANDZHA (YILDIZ) / SAKAR
AREA BASED ON ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL
OBJECTS IN THE CROSS-BORDER REGION OF REPUBLIC
OF BULGARIA AND REPUBLIC OF TURKEY**

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I. Introduction

The current strategy is developed within project CB005.1.22.166 “Development of common cultural tourism destination in the Strandzha (Yildiz)/ Sakar area based on archaeological and historical objects” under Interreg - IPA CBC Bulgaria – Turkey Programme 2014-2020. The project is implemented in partnership between Salted Winds Association, Burgas and the University of Kirklareli, Turkey.

The aim of the strategy is to develop and offer on the market a specialized competitive tourism product with 5 (five) thematic cultural and historical routes. The new specialized tourism product should make the most of the tourist potential of the target areas of the cross-border region of Bulgaria (Bourgas, Yambol, Haskovo) and Turkey (the Edirne and Kirklareli districts) and take a specific market niche.

The strategy is developed in the period February – June 2018 on the basis of researches by experts archaeologists (Daniale Agre and Dian Dichev), historians and geographers (Veselin Kalvachev), experts on sustainable and cultural tourism, cultural and urban planning experts from Bulgaria and Turkey. Parts of this strategy cite namely data from these experts.

The tourist product has been developed in the form of 5 (five) specialized routes based on the anthropogenic cultural and historical resources in the cross-border region, thematic and chronologically grouped on the suggestion of the experts archaeologists from Bulgaria and the experts on cultural tourism from Turkey. The secondary accents are related to the main cultural-historical and natural landmarks, along which the five specialized thematic routes pass.

The main reason for initiating the project and developing the current strategy is the common cultural and historical heritage of the eastern part of the Balkan Peninsula. Namely in this region, known as the "crossroad of civilizations", the concentration of numerous and diverse monuments enables tourists to get acquainted with movable and immovable cultural heritage from millennia before Christ to our day.

In the research of the specialists, the main link that is sought is between the immovable cultural heritage and the natural-geographic environment in which they are situated. That is why the strategy focuses on the anthropogenic cultural and historical resources, paying special attention to the tourist potential of the mountains Strandzha (Yildiz) and Sakar and Dervent hills.

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Namely these mountains and the hills cover the entire cross-border area - all 3 districts in Bulgaria (Bourgas, Yambol and Haskovo) and 2 provinces in Turkey (Edirne and Kirklareli). Sakar Mountain has been inhabited since ancient times. The largest cultural and historical sites in Sakar are megalithic monuments dating back to the 2nd millennium BC - the dolmens, the Matochina fortress and two nearby churches from the 10th century, sanctuaries, the Paleokastro fortress and others.

Strandja is a unique geographical, historical and ethno-cultural region on the Balkan Peninsula territory. For several millennia, it is the kingdom of one of the oldest and most originally from a cultural point of view world civilizations - the Thracian one, which in turn maintains constant contacts with the Hellenistic world. Until now, the signs of Thracian antiquity have been preserved not only by the numerous archaeological monuments and finds of that time, but also by a very rich anthropocultural material, accumulated in the folklore, beliefs and rituals of the local population in this region. Many monuments of the spiritual and material culture of the past are preserved in the region of Strandzha. Almost uninterrupted cultural layers are discovered from the Chalcolithic and Bronze Age, Megalithic Thracian culture, Antiquity, Middle Ages, Renaissance and the latest history.

In recent years there has been an increased interest in tourist travel and a steady increase in the number of tourists. In 2014, global tourism has grown with 5%. Europe has a market share of 46% of world tourists. It is expected that by 2030 Europe will be visited by 744 million tourists and will have a market share of 41% of tourists in the world. Northern, Southern and Mediterranean Europe is growing by over 8%. The market share of Central and Eastern Europe is expected to decline from 10.1% to 9.7% between 2020 and 2030, with an increase in the absolute number of tourists (1.8 billion tourists in the world and 740 million in Europe in 2030); the accelerated development of new destinations outside Europe (Asia and the Pacific region). All this shows that the countries have begun to overcome the financial and economic crisis since the end of the first decade of the 21st century. Expectations for the development of international tourism in the coming years are positive. Against this background, tourism in Bulgaria and Turkey is growing upwards and has good prospects.

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A study by the European Tourism Commission on tourism preferences and motives shows two distinct trends:

- Visitors from North America (USA and Canada) visit Europe primarily on the motif of *acquainting with cultural heritage* (urban tourism and visits to nature parks), which is the least expressed in markets such as Brazil, China and, above all, India;
- Shopping tourism is a major motivating factor for Chinese tourists in Europe (also ecotourism). Shopping is a leading motif for tourists from India, Russia and Brazil.

European tourists who rest in Europe are practicing as an accompanying type of tourism, mostly cultural and sports tourism (39%), followed by ecotourism (25%) and entertainment (19%). They are also interested in local cuisine, shopping, nightlife, cruises, visits to entertainment centers and theme parks.

Russian tourists visiting Europe combine leisure with visits to sports events / tourism (63%), cultural sites (45%), and ecotourism (35%) and entertainment (28%).

Tourists from Japan and Korea who visit Europe practice eco- (47%) and cultural tourism (34%). They are interested in shopping and local cuisine.

There are several main trends in the development of world tourism:

- fast-growing markets in the Asian region will continue to generate high growth in tourists to Europe over the next two decades;
- changing tourist demand and behavior on European markets as a result of an aging population (it is expected in 2020 the age 65+ to reach 20% of Europe's population);
- increasing tourists with difficult mobility and with specific needs;
- global increase in tourist demand for specialized forms of tourism;
- diversification of tourist products on the European market and offering themed tourist products in the field of cultural and historical heritage, contemporary culture, religious tourism, protected nature areas, SPA tourism, sports and adventure tourism etc.;
- increasing the role of innovation and information technology as a decisive factor in the competitiveness of the tourism industry;
- growing competition between Europe as a leading tourist destination and emerging new destinations;

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- long-term climate change can lead to changes in travel and supply of some types of tourism (winter and summer);
- the development of air links will continue to be an important factor for the competitiveness of tourist destinations;
- active entry of China, India, Japan and Russia into the world tourist market;
- the reorientation of tourism from "service economy" to "economy of experience" and highlighting tourist attractions, animation and offering authentic national specifics;
- increasing competition in the quality of tourism services.

Cultural tourism is a traditional practice that has evolved from antiquity to the present day. The beginnings of cultural tourism were documented in III millennium BC (papyrus from ancient Egypt). In recent years, cultural tourism has become one of the most successful industries in different countries around the world. Today, exploring other cultures and peoples has become a major motif for travel around the world. Cultural-cognitive tourism trips account for 37% of all tourist trips and demand increases by 15% per year. According to World Tourism Organization (WTO) forecasts in 2020, cultural-cognitive travel trips will have a leading role in the world.

The basis for the development of cultural tourism is the cultural and historical heritage and its potential, which are considered as a strategic source for the socio-economic development of individual regions and local communities.

The cultural potential of a destination is expressed by:

- history of the state / region - unique historical sites, historical heritage and reproduction of historical events;
- religion - religious centers and holy places, religious rituals and pilgrimage trips;
- folklore - local traditional music, dancing and customs are the main factor for attracting tourists - folklore festivals and entertainment programs, evenings and concerts;
- national cuisine - its peculiarities and quality leave lasting memories of the experienced positive emotions in the destination;
- folk crafts - traditional souvenirs made by local masters are a good memory of the destination.

Leading in the development of cultural tourism are countries with a preserved cultural and historical heritage, in which are identified **cultural loci** (LoCuS – Local Cultural System). These are areas which, by sharing values, cultural resources and infrastructure systems, unite the

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territory with its cultural resources, relevant themes and the target market segment. Examples of cultural loci are Paris, London, Rome, Istanbul, etc., which attract millions of tourists every year.

Important trends in the development of cultural tourism:

- expanding content - besides cultural monuments, includes other values such as: traditional farming practices; social events and traditions; local cuisines and crafts; intangible values, etc., forming the unified cultural environment.
- expanding the territorial scope - includes values at ever higher levels: historic cities, cultural landscapes, cultural routes - with a local, national, continental or even transcontinental range;
- the potential is manifested not only as a spiritual value but also as a unique resource that can and should be used for sustainable development, by economic rules and market laws.

II. Development of tourism in Bulgaria and Turkey

2.1. Development of tourism in Bulgaria

Bulgaria has natural and anthropogenic resources, many of which are unique in nature. They are a major part of the development of various forms of sustainable tourism: cultural, natural, recreational (Black Sea and mountain), winter, health, cultural, rural eco, adventure, camping, wine, hunting, etc. Much of this potential at this time is not usable, especially in the border and rural areas of the country.

It is expected to reduce the growth rates in the number of tourist trips to Bulgaria, according to data from the World Tourism Organization. Average annual growth of 3% over the period 2013-2020 and 4% for the period 2020-2030 are projected for the whole country. At the same time, the expectations are for an increase in the absolute number of tourists, due to the increase of the tourists' volume and greater market saturation. 9 million tourists without transits are the expected number of foreign tourists in Bulgaria in 2020. Thus, the growth for the period 2012 - 2020 reaches 37%. It is projected to double the inbound tourism to Bulgaria by the year 2030 and to reach 12 million foreign tourists.

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Visits of foreigners in Bulgaria by country

№	Countries	Total
	Total	10 604 396
A.	European union	6 208 793
1	Romania	1 743 697
2	Greece	1 157 062
3	Germany	1 003 030
4	Poland	388 833
5	United Kingdom	281 777
6	Czech Republic	219 349
7	Austria	204 489
8	France	195 571
9	Italy	152 078
10	Netherlands	147 882
11	Belgium	119 429
12	Hungary	118 805
13	Slovakia	78 167
14	Denmark	74 125
15	Spain	63 497
16	Sweden	48 066

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17	Finland	30 332
18	Ireland	25 388
19	Croatia	23 464
20	Slovenia	22 591
21	Cyprus	22 181
22	Portugal	11 817
23	Malta	4 868
	Other EU countries	72 295
B.	Other European countries	3 378 927
1	Turkey	1 312 895
2	Russia	589 844
3	FYR of Macedonia	562 365
4	Serbia	490 668
5	Ukraine	342 214
6	Norway	46 899
7	Switzerland	34 042
C.	Other countries	298 718
1	Israel	183 846
2	USA	82 465
3	Canada	17 395
4	Japan	15 012
D.	The rest of the world	717 958

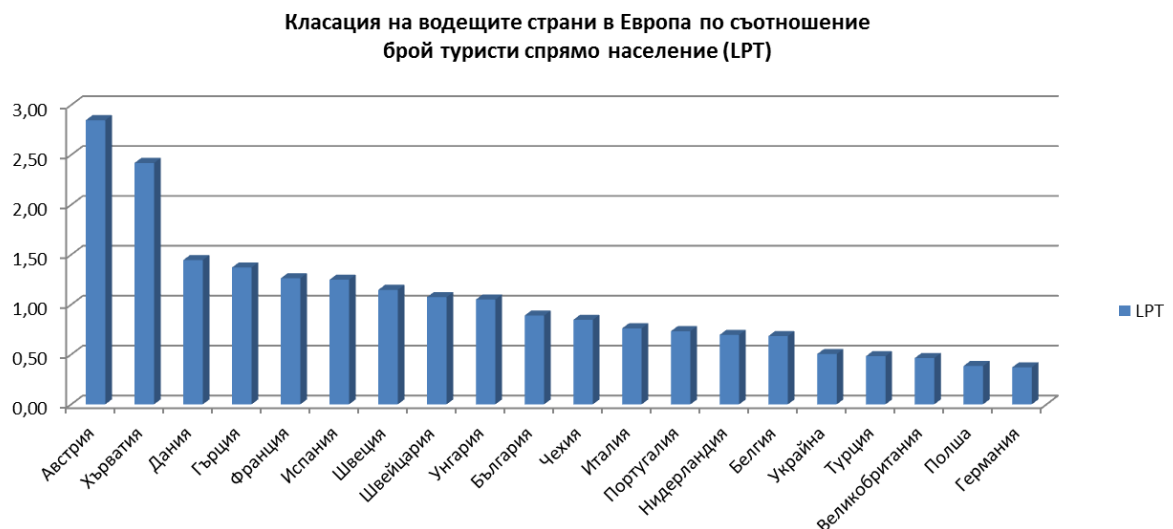
Again according to the National Statistical Institute, the growth of foreign tourists and revenues in 2016 compared to 2015 is close to 14%. Most of the arriving foreign tourists come for a holiday and excursion. 10.6 million were foreign tourists who visited Bulgaria in 2016. One of the main reasons for the serious growth is the tourists from EU Member States, which are the most important generating market for international tourism in Bulgaria with a relative share of just over 60%. The most is growing the number of tourists from Romania - 1.7 million, Turkey - 1.3 million, Greece - 1.2 million and Germany - 1 million.

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According to WT & TM data for 2012, the total contribution of the tourism industry to Bulgaria's GDP is BGN 10 586.1 million, representing 13.6% of the country's total GDP. It is envisaged that in 2023 the tourism industry in Bulgaria will provide revenue of BGN 13 072.2 million, which represents 10.6% of GDP.



Bulgaria stands at 10 position per indicator "number of foreign tourists per capita". The value of the indicator itself for the country in 2012 is 0.89.



In contrast to the significant growth of incoming tourism in Bulgaria, domestic tourism is developing much more slowly. In most regions in Bulgaria there are no created and popularized tourist products. The state support for the development of tourist destinations in the country and for the development of alternative forms of tourism is very small or completely absent.

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According to the tourist surveys conducted for the needs of the Ministry of Tourism, Bulgaria is not a recognizable tourist destination. Bulgaria is markedly lagging behind the competitors and countries on the following indicators:

- price / quality ratio of service where one of the leading countries is Turkey;
- cultural heritage, where once again one of the leading countries is Turkey;
- nature.

On international markets, Bulgaria is famous as cheap, low-budget maritime tourist destination. Also recognizable are the exceptional nature, unique cultural and historical heritage, as well as the fine traditional food. One of Bulgaria's most recognizable shortcomings is poor service, poor quality of services and underdeveloped infrastructure.

Bulgaria is divided into 8 tourist regions in order to create a specific identity through branding and better recognition of the country among the target groups and keeping statistics: Danube - Moesia; Balkan (Stara Planina); Valley of Roses; Thrace; Rhodope Mountains; Sofia - Serdika; Pirin, Rila and the Black Sea coast.

Tourist zoning of Bulgaria



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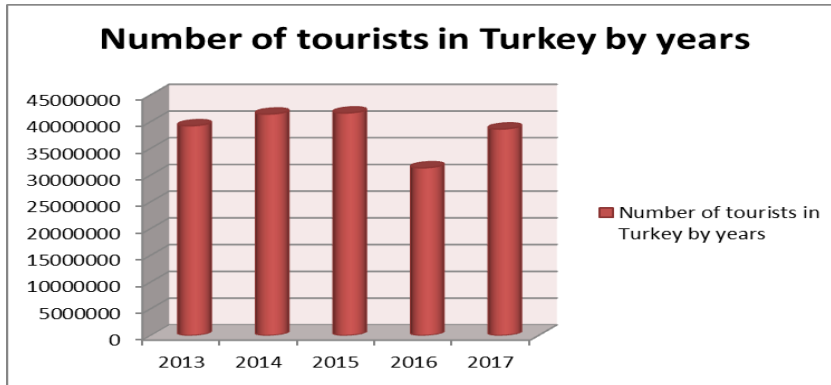
2.1. Development of tourism in Turkey

In Turkey, one of the fastest growing sectors is tourism. Istanbul, Antalya, Bodrum, Marmaris, Izmir are one of the country's major tourist centers. Marine, cultural and spa tourism are well developed. More than \$ 22 billion is Turkey's revenue, as a result of 31 million tourists in the country in 2008. Turks employed in tourism in 2009 are approximately 3.6 million. The goal of the state is to become a year-round destination by 2023, with large investments being made in winter tourism as well. The most frequent visitors to the country are citizens of Germany, Great Britain, Russia, the Netherlands, Israel and Iran. Bulgarian tourists in Turkey are increasing each year due to good hotels, competitive prices and good and attractive service. However, the border areas of the country are poorly developed in terms of tourism. They are not a recognizable tourist destination among foreign tourists despite the rich natural and cultural landmarks of the area.

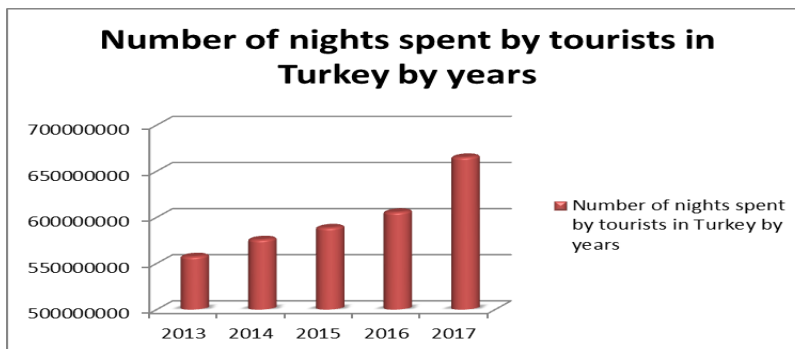
Strandzha Mountain is an important geographic feature of Turkish Thrace. It starts from the region of Katalka, continues along the Black Sea coast and connects with the Rhodope massif. Gentle slopes form the southwestern part of the mountain. On the northeast, the ridge throws out an almost continuous series of spurs and hills near the Black Sea historic buildings, archaeological sites and abandoned open spaces. Very significant sites in the region are at risk of physical deterioration and destruction of their construction. This is a real risk of losing the opportunity to revive structures that contribute to the identity and social traditions of local communities. The tourist flow to this region has increased in recent years. Today many tourist regions experience a huge flow of visitors, which can lead to intensive management challenges, worsening visitor experience and general conditions of the site, especially during the peak periods.

The Thrace region is not yet a region that has such a busy tourist movement. So the depreciation of the area due to tourist movements is not very high. This leads to both the advantages and disadvantages of the region. All forms of tourism should be included within sustainability, including mass tourism and special interest segments. Archaeological heritage is the main document of human activity in the past. It is therefore necessary for archaeologists and other scientists to study and interpret it. Insufficient are the available tourist products in the border regions of the country, the promotion of existing ones is ineffective.

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The number of tourists in Turkey in 2013 reaches 42,500,000 tourists, as approximately the same is the number of tourists in Turkey in 2017, only in 2016 there is a significant decline.



Significant growth is seen in the number of nights spent in Turkey. This necessitates the creation of more tourist services and of better quality, not only in the already popular tourist destinations in the country.

III. Potential for development of the tourism in the cross-border region of Bulgaria and Turkey on the territory of Strandzha (Yildiz)/Sakar mountains

2.1 General characteristics

The cross-border region Bulgaria-Turkey covers 2 provinces in Turkey - Edirne and Kirklareli; and three administrative districts in Bulgaria - Bourgas, Yambol and Haskovo. The total area of the cross-border area is 29 455,60 km².

Kirklareli province is the most northwestern part of Turkey, located on the west coast of the Black Sea. The province is "divided" from the Strandzha Mountain (Yildiz). One of the

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least developed and populated areas of Turkey is the northern and northeastern parts of Kirklareli province. Forests cover most of the northern and eastern parts of the province. This region is important for the development of viticulture and wine production. The province is divided into eight districts - Babaeski, Demirköy, Kirklareli, Kofçaz, Luleburgaz, Pehlivan köy, Pınarhisar and Vize. The area of Kirklareli province is 6,550 km².

Edirne province, Turkey is located in Eastern Thrace region and is also known as European Turkey as it falls entirely within the borders of the continent of Europe. Nine regions fall within the boundaries of the province - Edirne, Enez, Havsa, Ipsala, Keshan, Lalapasha, Meric and Sjuloglu. The total area of the province is 6,279 km².

The biggest district by area in Bulgaria is Bourgas, which falls within the boundary of the cross-border region under consideration and occupies 7748.10 km². The district is located in Southeastern Bulgaria. More than 40% of the mass tourism in Bulgaria is carried out on the territory of Bourgas district. This is the result of the unique and diverse natural, anthropogenic and cultural tourism resources in the district. The territory of the district includes parts of the Eastern Balkan (Stara Planina), the Strandzha Mountain, the Upper Thracian Plain and the Bourgas Lowland. To the east the district borders the Black Sea.

West of Bourgas District is the district of Yambol with area of 3335.5 km². To the south, the district borders Turkey, south-southwest with Haskovo district, and to the east with Bourgas district and falls entirely in the cross-border region of Bulgaria-Turkey.

The third district in Bulgaria in the target region is Haskovo. It borders both Greece and Turkey. Two border checkpoints are located on the territory of Haskovo district - Kapitan Andreevo and Kapitan Petko voyvoda - Ormenion. The total area of the district is 5543 km². Parts of the Eastern Rhodopes and the Upper Thracian Plain fall within its borders.

The natural and cultural assets of the cross-border area make it a preferred tourist destination with a wide variety of tourism types and an enviable potential for tourism development. The Black Sea coast, many beaches, several cultural and natural sites included in the UNESCO World Heritage List are part of the distinctive features of the cross-border region Bulgaria-Turkey.

Emphasis in the development of the current strategy and developed tourist product (5 thematic tourist routes) is placed on the Strandzha and Sakar Mountains. Sakar Mountain

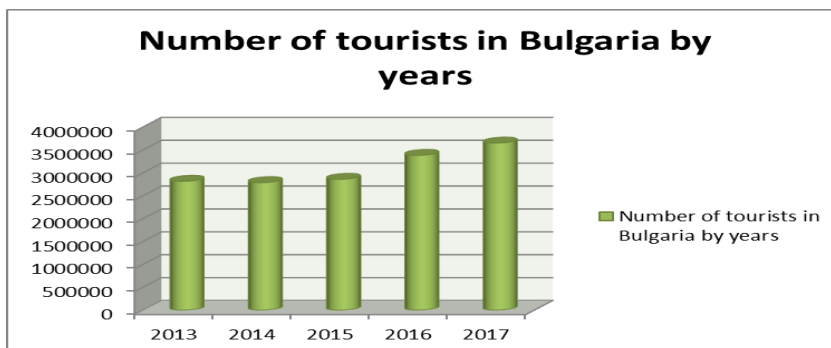
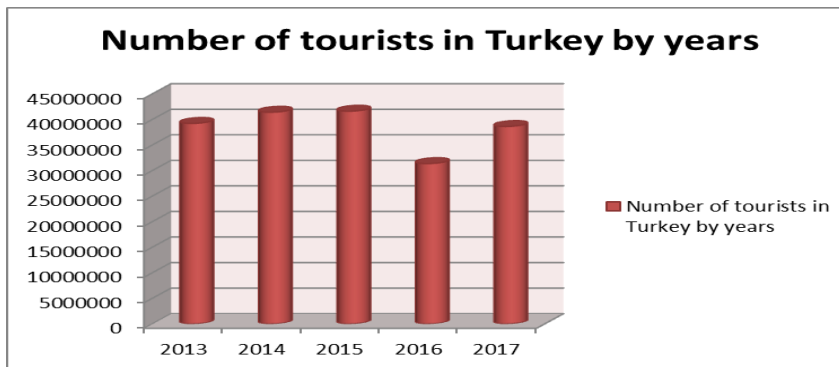
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spreads to Southeastern Bulgaria (Haskovo and Stara Zagora districts) and the most north-west part of European Turkey. This mountain has been inhabited since antiquity, as with its uniqueness are impressing the most the megalithic monuments dating back to the 2nd millennium BC – the dolmens.

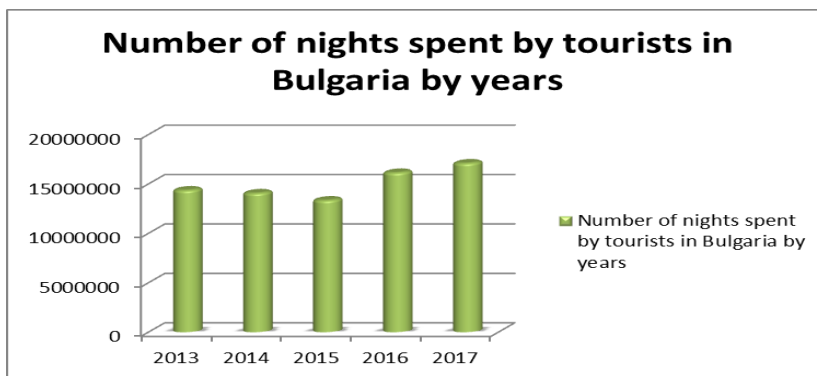
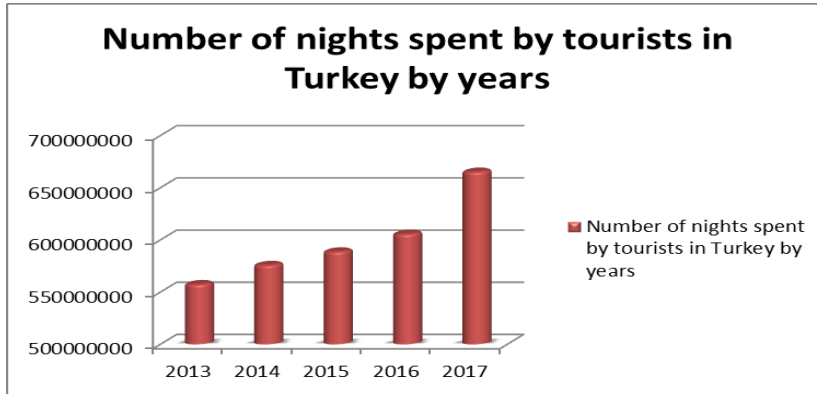
Parts of Bourgas and Yambol district, Bulgaria and European Turkey are occupied by the Strandzha mountain. It occupies the eastern part of the historical-geographic area of Thrace. The rich nature - flora and fauna, history and cultural heritage make it a mountain with great potential for tourism development in the targeted cross-border region.

2.2 Touristflow

In recent years, international tourism in Bulgaria as well as in Turkey has been steadily rising both in the number of foreign tourists and in the revenues from international tourism. These are tourists as defined by the World Tourism Organization and the European Commission for Tourism in the EU.



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It is evident from the above graphics that not only the number of tourists visiting Bulgaria and Turkey in the period 2013-2017 but also the number of nights spent by tourists in the respective country are marked by a significant increase in the following years. For example, the number of nights spent by tourists in Bulgaria has increased by approximately 4 million in 2017 compared to 2013, and for Turkey this number is 200 million.

According to surveys among potential users and key audiences of both countries as tourist destinations, as well as expert analyzes, the main factors that are with positive influence are the physico-geographic features, namely the landscape and the favorable climate.

2.3 Target markets and tourists’ profile

The main generating markets can be grouped into two types:

- Western European markets, including the Great Britain, Germany and Sweden, which are characterized by high purchasing power, high intensity of travel abroad and high costs abroad. Moreover, for the three mentioned markets they are distinguished by their high affinity for sea vacations in the sunny and warm climates.

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- The second group is formed from Eastern European, respectively neighboring markets. Including the Czech Republic, Russia, Ukraine, Serbia, Romania, Greece and Turkey. Both Bulgaria and Turkey have a great potential for interest in all these markets, exceeding the current volume of travel.

Profile of the tourist

The global profile of the user of tourism worldwide has the following characteristics:

- There is interest in the "innovative tourist product" - the combination of a standard service with a specific product.
- He has a tourist experience that allows him to assess the value of tourist services.
- There are bigger requirements as he is well informed.
- They prefer rest breaks to be shorter, but more in number, divided throughout the year.
- He retains his preference for traditional and relatively close destinations.
- He searches for more tourist products and packages.

2.4 Tourism products - potential and development guidelines

Cultural tourism is a traditional practice, dating from antiquity to the present day. Cultural tourism in recent years has been recognized as one of the most successful industries in different countries around the world. The main motive for travel in the world today is the desire to explore other cultures and peoples. Cultural tourism trips has a share of 37% of all tourist trips and demand increases by 15% each year. According to the forecasts of the World Tourism Organization by 2020 cultural tourism trips will have a leading role worldwide.

The basis for the development of cultural tourism is the cultural and historical heritage and its potential, as well as the proposed tourism products, which are considered as a strategic source for the socio-economic development of individual regions and local communities. The aim of this strategy is the development of a new tourist product, namely the creation of five thematic tourist routes in the cross-border area Bulgaria-Turkey. The established tourist product covers three districts in Bulgaria (Bourgas, Yambol and Haskovo) and two provinces in Turkey (Edirne and Kirklareli). The main focus in the newly created product is cultural and historical objects. CB area Bulgaria-Turkey has the qualities for development not only of cultural tourism but also of other alternative types of tourism.

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In order to increase the interest of visitors and tourists both to the created thematic routes and to the entire target region it is important to examine and analyze the opportunities for development of other alternative and additional tourist opportunities in the target area. This will allow a full offer for all visitors - proven to be the most successful tourism development policy worldwide.

Some of the included districts (Bourgas and Kirklareli) in the thematic tourism routes created under the current project offer opportunities for development of sea tourism, dictated by the common border between the cross-border region Bulgaria-Turkey and the Black Sea. Another type of alternative tourism with potential for development and high interest in it in the area are health (spa), rural tourism, as well as wine-gourmet tourism. The availability of adequate and complete information about all the tourist products / services offered in CBA Bulgaria-Turkey, gathered in a common database and freely accessible to visitors and tourists in the target region will significantly increase the tourist flow, turning the area into a diverse and attractive tourist destination. The possibility of combining several alternative types of tourism will attract a wider range of tourists, offering everyone to choose the tourist services / products they want to use.

The created tourist product (5 thematic tourist routes) includes cultural and archaeological sites, rated as "Main sites" and historical, religious, natural, etc. objects rated "Additional". All of them will be available to any tourist online, offering them alternative opportunities to expand the scope and the included objects in each of the thematic routes created, depending on each person's personal preferences and interests.

2.5 Transport infrastructure

The cross-border area Bulgaria-Turkey is peripheral for both countries, with a relatively poorly developed transport infrastructure. In recent years there has been an improvement in the state of transport infrastructure but it can not yet be assessed as being developed. There are roads for small, medium and large cars and other vehicles, hiking trails exist in certain parts of Strandzha and Sakar. Within various projects and initiatives are created plans for cycling paths in the target region. Within the framework of this strategy, the main transport corridors, border checkpoints between the Republic of Bulgaria and the Republic of Turkey are considered.

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- **Travel by car** – the main mode of travel in the cross-border region is by car or another vehicle. Gas stations exist in all municipal centers and larger settlements in the area, as well as in many of the villages in the area.

The international road E87 and the second - class road 98 Bourgas - Malko Tarnovo, which dominate the traffic from the mountain and the coast, have the greatest transport significance for Bulgarian Strandzha. These two roads, together with their branches, are the main transport arteries that lead to the remarkable monuments of human culture and building genius in the area.

The main road 9 is the main transport artery to reach the monuments of human culture and the beauty of nature along the southern Black Sea coast. If you are traveling along this route, natural landmarks and monuments of anthropogenic culture can be visited in: Kraymorie, Atiya, Chernomorets, Sozopol, Primorsko, Kiten, Lozenets and Tsarevo along the coast. From main road 9 you can take a trip to objects that will touch your senses and soul. Namely deviation from Tsarevo to the south to the village of Rezovo. The other main transport corridor for Bulgarian Strandzha is a secondary road 98 from Burgas to Malko Tarnovo and from there to the Republic of Turkey. This time deviates from Kraymorie to Strandzha Mountain, passing through the villages of Marinka, Krushevets, Zvezdets, Malko Tarnovo and the border with Turkey. This way you will touch the tender and pure heart of Strandzha Mountain. This is an incredible journey and experience in the gentle beauty and enchanting of clean and fresh nature. At Bosna junction you can take a trip to the right to the village of Byala voda, the village of Kalovo, the village of Vizitsa and the village of Kondolovo and on the left side of Strandzha you reach the Tagarevsko / Valchanovo / hanche on a secondary road 79. Other interesting deviations can be made by a secondary road 98 from Marinka village to the village of Tvurditsa, village of Dimchevo, village of Prisad, village of Zidarovo, village of Gabar, village of Varshilo. There are branches from the road to the village of Izvor, to the village of Novo Panicharevo, the village of Yasna Polyana and the town of Primorsko, as well as to the village of Indzhe voivoda, the village of Byala voda and the village of Brashlyan.

For the three mountains in Bulgaria - Sakar, Strandzha and Derwent Heights with the highest transport, economic and social importance are the second-class roads 79 from Burgas -

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Sredets - Elhovo and second-class road 76 from Elhovo - Topolovgrad - Harmanli. This road is a main one for Western Strandza, the Derwent Heights and the Sakar Mountains. On this route is realized the largest passenger-flow and freight transport for the region. On this route, tourists can get to know the anthropogenic building landmarks from ancient times to the present day and to follow the development and achievements of the human construction genius from antiquity to the present day.

In recent years, with the opening of the Lesovo - Hambazayli - Edirne border checkpoint, first - class road 7 has become important as a new north - south transport corridor. Through it can be reached and visited the municipal center Elhovo, and through its branches can be visited a protected area and cave Dranci dupka near Melnitsa village, the Thracian rock sanctuary at Melnitsa village and Dolnotundzhanski gorge near Lesovo village.

The most important transport for the target region of Turkey (the Edirne and Kirklareli provinces) are the international roads E80 and E87. These two roads, along with their branches, are the main transport routes connecting Kapikule - Edirne - Babaeski - Silivri - Istanbul and Dereköy - Kirklareli - Babaeski - Havasha - Keshan. Many of these settlements also have a large number of sites included in the created five thematic tourist routes.

Other important transport routes in the Turkey-Bulgaria cross-border region from Turkish side are the secondary roads D565 and D020. Road D565 in Kirklareli province allows transport links between the cities of Demirköy, Pinarhisar and Luleburgaz. D020 makes it possible to travel from the eastern parts of Edirne to the larger cities of Kirklareli, including Inecé, Kirklareli, Pinarhisar and Vize.

- ***Travel by plane***

In the cross-border region Bulgaria-Turkey, air transport is not well developed. The only regulated airport is located in the Bulgarian part of the target region. Bourgas Airport is an international airport in Southeastern Bulgaria. It is located in the Sarafovo district of Bourgas, 10 km northeast from the center of Bourgas. The airport occupies the second place on the passenger flow in the country after Sofia Airport. In 2017, 2982339 passengers were served.

- ***Travel by bicycle*** – in Bulgaria-Turkey cross-border area there is also a possibility for cycling. There are distinct routes linking sites of major tourist importance. Information about

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them can be found online. Most bicycle routes include start and end point information, route points, length, and average duration for each route.

- **Travel on foot** – Walking trips can be carried out in the higher parts and marked tourist routes in the Strandzha Mountain and Sakar Mountains. There are no professional guides in the region. This makes the trip on foot more risky. Trips must be scheduled to arrive at the endpoint before the evening. This type of trip limits the possibility of following the created five thematic tourist routes but can take place in separate sections of them.

Intercity public transport is relatively well organized, except for some of the remote settlements for which transport access is limited, as well as in Bulgaria and Turkey. Municipal centers and larger settlements are connected by bus lines with district centers and larger cities in the area.

Checkpoints Bulgaria-Turkey

1. Checkpoint Kapitan Andreevo – Kapikule

The Checkpoint Kapitan Andreevo – Kapikule (in Turkish: Kapikule Sınır Kapısı) is situated on the Bulgarian-Turkish border near the Bulgarian village of Kapitan Andreevo on the left bank of Maritsa River. Nearby is Kapitan Petko Voivoda – Ormenion checkpoint, through which can be made connection with Greece.

2. Checkpoint Lesovo - Hamzabeyli

The checkpoint Lesovo – Hamzabeyli connects the town of Elhovo, district of Yambol with the Turkish town Lalapasa.

3. Checkpoint Malko Tarnovo

The Malko Tarnovo border checkpoint is a checkpoint located on the Bulgarian-Turkish border. It is located near the Bulgarian town of Malko Tarnovo. The nearest border checkpoint is Lesovo - Hamzabeyli, located at 133 km in the western direction from Malko Tarnovo border checkpoint, also serving the Bulgarian-Turkish border. Malko Tarnovo border checkpoint serves the E87 international road. The Malko Tarnovo border checkpoint is not foreseen for the crossing of heavy goods vehicles and mainly serves the tourist traffic - light motor vehicles and buses. Heavy vehicles to R Turkey are shifted to Lesovo - Hamzabeyli border checkpoint or Kapitan Andreevo - Kapikule border checkpoint. The Malko Turnovo checkpoint is located in the Malko Tarnovo border police station, which has the largest area

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of responsibility – 141,139 km of state border, of which 31,093 km of land and 110,046 km of river, non-navigable - along the rivers Rezovska and Deliyska.

It is planned to build at least two more border checkpoints between the Republic of Bulgaria and the Republic of Turkey, namely Strandzha - Malkodzhar border checkpoint and Rezovo border checkpoint.

2.6. Human resources

Taking into account the trend of growth in the tourism industry, one of the most complex tasks is the adequate parallel development of the human resources that are at the heart of the development of a tourism product / service. The development and training of staff working in the field of tourism lags far behind the development of tourism. The low salaries in this branch, the high turnover of staff, the complete lack of investment in training of staff are the main reasons leading to low qualification and motivation of the staff and poor quality of service. Efforts are focused on increasing the number of tourists as a number of nights at the expense of low prices, resulting in poor quality of service.

Forecasts for the period up to 2030 worldwide are for the growth of the direct employed in tourism by 2% per annum, while in Bulgaria for decline of -1.9% per year. Such a trend for Turkey is not noticeable.

There are significant differences in the selection, qualification, salary and training of staff between different types of companies in the industry. The difference between the seasonal (summer and winter) tourist sites and the permanent ones is outlined as the most significant. This gap is particularly deepening with respect to so-called business hotels and restaurants in major cities and tourist sites with a seasonal character in the more remote parts of the country.

The deficit of staff in tourism can be summarized as follows:

- Deficit of specialized staff for innovative positions, as well as for managerial positions for the so-called "Rare" specialists in restaurant and research positions;
- There are still no graduates in the system of specialized tourism or general education for some relatively new professions.

Human resources is a field that needs:

- Training in various specialties;

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- Reducing staff turnover;
- Using own and external innovative and effective training programs;
- Updating curricula and training programs on tourism in universities and vocational education and training schools, as well as vocational training centers;
- Promoting the geographical and occupational mobility of employees in tourism;
- Promoting corporate social responsibility in the tourism industry;
- Introducing the innovation in the qualification of the cadres in the dynamic development of the technical and technological challenges in tourism;
- Regulating the requirements regarding education, practical training and professional qualification.

IV. Brief description of thematic routes showing the most significant anthropogenic cultural attractions in the cross-border region

1. Geographical location

Each of the five thematic tourist routes is located in the cross-border region of Bulgaria and Turkey and covers the districts of Burgas, Yambol and Haskovo in Bulgaria and the provinces of Kirklareli and Edirne in Turkey. A big part of this region occupies the Strandzha Mountains, the Sakar Mountains and the Derven Heights

It is planned to cross the border separating the Republic of Bulgaria and the Republic of Turkey. Passage is possible through one of the existing border checkpoints: Kapitan Andreevo - Kapikule; 2. Lesovo - Hamzabeyli border checkpoint; 3. Malko Tarnovo border checkpoint. So planned, the specialized route is suitable for tourists from Romania and Bulgaria, as well as foreign tourists who can arrive by cruise ships along the Danube. In the case that foreign tourists arrive by air, the international airport in Craiova (Dolj) is suitable. In this case, the route can start and end in Craiova (Dolj), following the same route.

It is planned to build at least two more – BCP (Border checkpoint) between the Republic of Bulgaria and the Republic of Turkey, namely BCP Strandzha - Malkoydar and BCP Rezovo border checkpoint, which will have a significant positive influence on the tourist flows between the two countries and will facilitate the observation of each of the thematic tourist routes.



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2. Main sites included in tourist routes

Thematic Route: I. Megalithic culture in Strandzha and Sakar			
№	Object	Location	GPS
1	Dolmen in locality „Lozyata“ near village Belevren	locality „Lozyata“ near village Belevren, Sredets Municipality, Bourgas district, Bulgaria	N 42.105176 E 27.157749
2	Dolmen № 1 in locality „Peshterite” near village Golyam Derwent	locality „Peshterite“ near village Golyam Derwent, Elhovo Municipality, Yambol District, Bulgaria	N 41.970973 E 26.740416
3	Dolmen in locality „Kapakliyka” near village Sakartsi	locality „Kapakliyka” near village Sakartsi, Topolovgrad Municipality, Haskovo District, Bulgaria	N 42.027098 E 26.287481
4	Dolmen in locality „Kliftinova niva” near village Sakartsi	locality „Kliftinova niva” near village Sakartsi, Topolovgrad Municipality, Haskovo District, Bulgaria	N 42.027392 E 26.298155
5	Dolmen in locality „Gaydarova peshtera” near village Hlyabovo	locality „Gaydarova peshtera ” near village Hlyabovo, Topolovgrad Municipality, Haskovo District, Bulgaria	N 42.046666 E 26.239554
6	Dolmen in locality „Slavova kuriya” near village Bulgarska polyana	locality „Slavova kuriya” near village Bulgarska polyana, Topolovgrad Municipality, Haskovo District, Bulgaria	N 42.010780 E 26.142971
7	Dolmen № 2 in locality „Mangara” near village Hlyabovo	locality „Mangara” near village Hlyabovo, Topolovgrad Municipality, Haskovo District, Bulgaria	N 42.00146 E 26.162966
8	Dolmen in locality „Evdzhika” near village Hlyabovo	locality „Evdzhika” near village Hlyabovo, Topolovgrad Municipality, Haskovo District, Bulgaria	N 42.044007 E 26.259150
9	Dolmen in locality ”Lakite” near village Evrenezovo	locality „Lakite” near village Evrenezovo, Malko Tarnovo Municipality, Bourgas district, Bulgaria	N 42.136704 E 27.330043



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10	Dolmen № 1 and Dolmen № 2 in locality “Lagat” near village Zabernovo	locality „Lagat” near village Zabernovo, Malko Tarnovo Municipality, Bourgas district, Bulgaria	N 42.106824 E 27.541045
11	Dolmen in locality „Golemiyat rat” near village Hlyabovo	locality „Golemiyat rat” near village Hlyabovo, Topolovgrad Municipality, Haskovo District, Bulgaria	N 42.027098 E 26.287481
12	Dolmen in locality „Zheliiov dol” near village Sakartsi	locality „Zheliiov dol” near village Sakartsi, Topolovgrad Municipality, Haskovo District, Bulgaria	N 42.028254 E 26.279574
13	Dolmen in locality „Koruba” near village Kirovo	locality „Koruba” near village Kirovo, Sredets Municipality, Bourgas district, Bulgaria	N 42.162289 E 27.181880
14	Mound with stone installation in locality „Golemiat Kayryak” near village Bulgarska polyana	locality „Golemiat Kayryak” near village Bulgarska polyana, Topolovgrad Municipality, Haskovo District, Bulgaria	N 42.042914 E 26.171516
15	Mound with citrus grave in locality „Kayryaka” near village Bulgarska polyana	locality „Kayryaka” near village Bulgarska polyana, Topolovgrad Municipality, Haskovo District, Bulgaria	N 42. 055277 E 26.180117
16	Two dolmens in locality Lozyata near village Granichar	locality Lozyata near village Granichar, Sredets Municipality, Bourgas district, Bulgaria	N 42. 133152 E 27.230388
17	Village Asadzhipinar and Kanlagetichit		
18	Cave Dupnitsa (Zone of ancient life and nature)	District: Demirkoy; Village: Sarpdere	41°50'26.5 N 27°33'19.7 E
19	Erikler old tomb menhir	District: Central, Village: Erikler	41°51'54.4 N 27°07'38.1 E
20	Menhir Hoyuk Baba	District: Kofçaz, Village: Malkochkar Koyu	42°02'24.6 N 27°01'06.6 E
21	Mound Islambeyli	Region: Pinarhisar, Village: Islambeyli	41°42'22.1 N 27°37'17.4 E
22	Yuskyup Balaban rock tomb	District: Central, Village: Yuskyup	41°41'53.1 N 27°25'43.0 E
23	Yuskyup Hatchioglu Cemetary zone	District: Central, Village: Skopie	41°41'54.2 N 27°25'29.2 E



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24	Mound Karaaballar Hay dutlu	District: Kofçaz; Village: Karaaballar	42°04'15 N 27°16'50 E
25	Mound Karaaballar Molla Ibrahim Korusu	District: Kofçaz; Village: Karaaballar	42°04'14 N 27°16'50 E
26	Tomb mountchifakli Hoyuk	District: Kofçaz; Village: Karaaballar	42°04'15 N 27°16'15 E
27	Mound Hachifakli Haydarbaba	District: Pinarhisar; Village: Chaiadere	41°37'28 N 27°31'25 E

Thematic Route: II. The Odrysian kingdom			
№	Object	Location	GPS
1	Fortified royal house in locality Tatar masha near village Knyazhevo	locality Tatar masha near village Knyazhevo, Topolovgrad Municipality, Haskovo District, Bulgaria	N 42.06 5200 E 26. 295040
2	Tomb in locality Tumbata near village Ruzhitsa	locality Tumbata near village Ruzhitsa, Bolyarovo Municipality, Yambol District, Bulgaria	N 42.158755 E 26.861929
3	Dolmen Lalapasha 1 (Arpalik)	Lalapasha District; Village: Arpalik	41°50'3602 N 26°44'1451 E
4	Dolmen Lalapasha 2	Lalapasha District; Village: Center	41°51'14.95 N 26°45'1.05 E
5	Dolmen Muhitin Baba	Lalapasha District; Village: hill Muhitin Baba	41°55'21.42 N 26°51'9.88 E
6	Dolmen “Hachilar”	District: Lalapasha, Village: Hachilar	41°55'02.5 N 26°48'10.5 E



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Thematic Route III. The Astess kingdom			
Nº	Object	Location	GPS
1	Fortress „Pharmakida“	locality Pharmakida, Primorsko Municipality, Bourgas district, Bulgaria	N 42.293270 E 27. 718851
2	Fortified royal house in locality Pastich, near village Brodilovo	locality Pastich, village Brodilovo, Tsarevo Municipality, Bourgas district, Bulgaria	N 42. 084033 E 27. 833173
3	Fortified royal house in locality Golata niva, near village Sinemorets	locality Golata niva, village Sinemorets, Tsarevo Municipality, Bourgas district, Bulgaria	N 42.063875 E 27.971735
4	The fortress near Ahtopol	The modern town Ahtopol, Tsarevo Municipality, Bourgas district, Bulgaria	N 42. 101587 E 27. 94315
5	Fortress „Kaletó” in the land of village Slivarovo	locality Gradishteto, village Slivarovo, Malko Tarnovo Municipality, Bourgas district, Bulgaria	41.959997 E 27.671653
6	Fortress „Chingene“	District: Vise, Village: Kızılağaç	41°42'38.4"N 27°49'34.2"E
7	Fortress Vise	District: Vise, Village: Distric Zamak	41°34'38.6"N 27°46'04.4"E
8	Ancient Theater Vise	District: Vise; village: Evren	41°34'25.8 N 27°46'09.7 E
9	Cave Dupnitsa (Zone of ancient life and nature)	District: Demirkoy; Village: Sarpdere	41°50'26.5 N 27°33'19.7 E
10	Ancient settlement area and cult area Karakochak	District: Vise; Village: Devlet	41°34'58.6 N 27°47'30.5 E
11	Mound Chyomlektepe	District: Vise; Village: Evren	41°34'29.9 N 27°46'16.0 E
12	Mound Sivriiler 1	District: Demirkoy; Village: Sivriiler	41°48'53 N 27°56'03 E
13	Mound Sivriiler 2	District: Demirkoy; Village: Sivriiler	41°48'55 N 27°56'06 E



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14	Mound Sivriiler 3	District: Demirkoy; Village: Sivriiler	41°48'56 N 27°56'07 E
15	Mound Sivriiler 4	District: Demirkoy; Village: Sivriiler	41°48'55 N 27°56'09 E

Thematic Route IV. Strandzha during the Roman Age			
№	Object	Location	GPS
1	Fortified Roman villa in the Thracian cult complex in locality “Mishkova niva” near Malko Tarnovo	locality Mishkova niva, town Malko Tarnovo, Malko Tarnovo Municipality, Bourgas district, Bulgaria	N 41. 956050 E 27.499796
2	Necropolis with citrus graves in locality Propada near Malko Tarnovo	locality Propada, town Malko Tarnovo, Malko Tarnovo Municipality, Bourgas district, Bulgaria	N 41. 983904 E 27.484585
3	Tomb № 1 in locality Propada near Malko Tarnovo	locality Propada, town Malko Tarnovo, Malko Tarnovo Municipality, Bourgas district, Bulgaria	N 41. 983904 E 27.484585
4	Tomb № 2 in locality Propada near Malko Tarnovo	locality Propada, town Malko Tarnovo, Malko Tarnovo Municipality, Bourgas district, Bulgaria	N 41. 983904 E 27.484585
5	Tomb № 3 in locality Propada near Malko Tarnovo	locality Propada, town Malko Tarnovo, Malko Tarnovo Municipality, Bourgas district, Bulgaria	N 41. 983904 E 27.484585
6	Tomb № 4 in locality Propada near Malko Tarnovo	locality Propada, town Malko Tarnovo, Malko Tarnovo Municipality, Bourgas district, Bulgaria	N 41. 983904 E 27.484585
7	Dolmen in locality Bakaren izvor near village Evrenezovo, Malko Tarnovo Municipality	locality Bakaren izvor, village Evrenezovo, Malko Tarnovo Municipality, Bourgas district, Bulgaria	N 42. 129446 E 27.365873
8	Thracian architectural and archaeological complex	locality Mishkova niva, town Malko Tarnovo, Malko	N 41. 957934 E 27.500629



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	in locality “Mishkova niva”, near Malko Tarnovo	Tarnovo Municipality, Bourgas district, Bulgaria	
9	Roman villa in locality “Manastircheto” near village Sroino	locality Manastircheto, village Stroyno, Elhovo Municipality, Bourgas district, Bulgaria	N 42. 274053 E 26. 683586
10	Mound Yariktebe A	District: Vise; Village: Devlet	41°33'04 N 27°46'19 E
11	Mound Yariktebe B	District: Vise; Village: Devlet	41°32'41 N 27°45'40 E
12	Fortress „Kayakyoy“	District: Vise, Village: Kiyakoyu	41°38'01.2"N 28°05'33.5"E
13	The fortress „Kayakyoy Harbour Gate“	District: Vise, Village: Kiyakoyu	41°37'59.3"N 28°05'53.5"E
14	Village Pazarli, Ancient Waterways, area of the Necropolis, Worship zone	District: Vise, Village: Pazarli	41°36'40.6"N 27°42'17.2"E

Thematic route V. Strandzha and Sakar through the Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages			
№	Object	Location	GPS
1	Fortress „Poros” , peninsula Phoros	peninsula Phoros, locality Kavkata, town Bourgas, Bourgas Municipality, Bourgas district, Bulgaria	N 42.453303 E 27.472938
2	Early Byzantine fortress Akra	peninsula „St. Nikola” at cape Akra, town Chernomorets, Sozopol Municipality, Bourgas district, Bulgaria	N 42.456908 E 27. 62 6854
3	Late Antique town Hrisosotira	peninsula „ St. Nikola” at cape Hrisosotira, town Chernomorets, Sozopol Municipality, Bourgas district, Bulgaria	N 42.4309 67 E 27. 651764



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4	The fortress Urdoviza near Kiten	peninsula „Urdoviza”, town Kiten, Municipality Kiten, Bourgas district, Bulgaria	N 42. 236692 E 27.781164
5	The fortress near Ahtopol	Modern town Ahtopol, Tsarevo Municipality, Bourgas district, Bulgaria	N 42. 101587 E 27. 94315
6	Fortress „Gradishteto“ near village Bulgari	Village Bulgari, Tsarevo Municipality, Bourgas district, Bulgaria	N 42.131026 E 27.732456
7	Fortress “Golyamo Kale” near village Mladezhko	Village Mladezhko, Malko Tarnovo Municipality, Bourgas district, Bulgaria	N 42. 151630 E 27. 353305
8	Late Antiquity and Medieval Fortress “Gorn Gradishte” near the town of Sredets	locality Kaleto, town Sredets, Sredets Municipality, Bourgas district, Bulgaria	N 42. 339654 E 27.153012
9	Early Christian and Medieval Monastery Complex near village Voden	locality Excavations, village Voden, Bolyarovo Municipality, Yambol District, Bulgaria	N 42.050893 E 26.912397
10	Late Antiquity Fortress near Village Melnitsa	locality Gradishte, village Melnitsa, Elhovo Municipality, Yambol District, Bulgaria	N 42.042589 E 26.544737
11	Fortress and sanctuary “Paleokastro” near Topolovgrad	locality Paleokastro, town Topolovgrad, Topolovgrad Municipality, Haskovo District, Bulgaria	N 42. 078436 E 26.304466
12	Fortress in locality „Kaleto” in the land of village Bulgarska polyana	locality Kaleto, village Bulgarska polyana, town Topolovgrad, Topolovgrad Municipality, Haskovo District, Bulgaria	N 42.008042 E 26. 249974



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13	The church “Little Hagia Sophia” (Suleiman’s mosque)	District: Vise	41°34'35.4"N 27°46'01.6"E
14	Fortress „Pinarhisar“	District: Pinarhisar; Village: Chaminakebir	41°37'46.6 N 27°30'54.7 E
15	Pool of “Ayasma” (Pool “Baptism”)	District: Lalapasha, Village: Hazambeyli	41°57'52.4 N 26°38'34.8 E
16	Cave Dupnitsa (Zone of ancient life and nature)	District: Demirkoy; Village: Sarpdere	41°50'26.5 N 27°33'19.7 E

Each of the developed thematic tourist routes has a very specific thematic focus. Point 2 "Main objects included in tourist routes" does not include visits to nearby sites / places suitable for the development of other types of tourism in the given area. It is necessary to provide the opportunity to visit additional tourist sites and attractions within the routes. This will increase the tourist interest in both the respective route and the target area as a whole. As an Annex 1 to this strategy, additional objects are presented in tabular form. Their geographical location is in close proximity to the main sites included in each of the 5 thematic tourist routes. They should be included in the interactive map at <http://strandzha-sakar-history.com/en> where information can be accessed by anyone.

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3. Marketing profile of a Tourist Route

3.1. General features of the route

Each of the five thematic routes created can be traveled for a period of 5-10 days. Duration depends on the individual wishes of each tourist to visit the additional sites in the region (religious, natural, historic, wine / gourmet, rural) provided in tabular form as an annex to this joint strategy. The developed routes allow for the initial destination - it can start from the region of Haskovo, Bulgaria, to the east in the Bulgarian part, where through BCP Malko Tarnovo to cross the territory of Turkey, from where to finish its route, moving in the west direction . Another option is the departure from the westernmost point of the route in Turkey, the eastward movement and the re-crossing BCP Malko Tarnovo to Bulgaria and continuing to the west. A third way to go through each route is to start it in any country (Turkey or Bulgaria) but not to follow the route in its Bulgarian or Turkish part but to go through the available three BCPs from one country to the other, with the trajectory of motion representing "sea wave". The average length of each route is 600-1000 km, depending on the chosen sequence to visit the different sites, as well as the desire to visit additional sites. The duration of each route includes breakfast, lunches, dinners, nights, recreation - conditions for similar tourist services can be found in each of the larger cities in the targeted cross-border region Bulgaria-Turkey.

3.2. Market positions and market potential of tourist routes

In order to adequately assess the market positions and the potential of each tourist itinerary it is necessary to conduct Demo tours and launch campaigns for promotion of the tourist product as well as to make marketing researches because the targeted cross-border territory Bulgaria-Turkey is away from the main flows of foreign and domestic tourists for both countries. This will allow the collection of up-to-date information about the internal movement of tourists and the regions from which they arrive. Information about the interest of foreign tourists to the taion can also be gathered from a similar type of study. The attitudes / reactions of current tour operators and touring agents in the area concerned should also be taken into account.

3.3. Transport accessibility

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The targeted cross-border region Bulgaria-Turkey and the tourist routes have relatively good external and internal accessibility. Foreign tourists from the Balkan countries, the European Union and other destinations can access the international airports in the region. In addition, they have access to the area by rail, road transport (cars and public buses). Many of the sites included in the five thematic touristic routes are located in high altitude areas - the Strandzha Mountains, the Sakar Mountains and the Dervent Heights. Access there is very difficult for cars, public transport is missing. In parts of the routes there are built pedestrian and bicycle paths right in the high mountainous parts. There is a strong shortage of specialist drivers / guides in the region, which can make climbing in one of the mountains dangerous for tourists with poor physical training or who are completely unaware of the region and its characteristics. Turkey and Bulgaria need to continue investing in improving conditions and building a better road infrastructure. The links between Turkey and Bulgaria are realized only through land BCP – 3 in number.

3.4. Conditions for tourist visits

In the target area there is a good tourist base, especially in the provinces of Kırklareli and Edirne, Turkey and the regional town of Bourgas, Bulgaria. Accommodation possibilities can easily be found in the cities of Harmanli, Topolovgrad, Haskovo, Yambol, Lalapasha, Demirkyoy, Kofchaz and Erichler.

There are tourist information centers in the big administrative centers and some smaller ones. There are also centers in some smaller settlements. Information about them can be found on different websites but at the same time many are missing. There are numerous sites on the internet that provide information on the locations, landmarks, tourist sites and routes.

V. Vision and mission for the development of thematic routes

1. Vision

Establishing the Bulgarian-Turkish cross-border region of Strandzha (Yildiz), the Dervent Heights and Sakar Mountain as a well-known destination for cultural tourism with a recognizable local identity and preserved culture and nature, with an ever increasing number of tourist visits in the tourist region “Trakia” and tourist “Black Sea” region in Bulgaria and northern Thrace, Turkey.

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Tourism in the Bulgarian-Turkish cross-border region of Strandzha (Yildiz), the Derwent Heights and Sakar Mountains develops as a structuring for some of the municipalities and local communities in the cross-border region (Maritime Municipalities, Svilengrad and Malko Tarnovo in Bulgaria and Edirne, Kirklareli, etc. in Turkey) and occupies an increasingly important place in the economies of the municipalities. Tourism in the target region contributes to the development of local economies and communities through:

- Continuous growth of gross domestic product generated by it;
- Ensuring high employment in the sector vis-à-vis other developed sectors of the local economy - creating both permanent and temporary employment;
- Creating opportunities and projects for cross-border partnership and pooling the efforts of stakeholders from both sides of the border;
- Protecting the environment and preserving the rich cultural and historical heritage.
- A major field for development and maintenance of a small and medium business based on family ownership;

Successful long-term partnerships between local, regional and national stakeholders, authorities, NGOs, local communities and businesses will contribute to development of the tourism sector in the region.

MISSION

The cross-border region will develop a coherent and focused policy for the development of cultural tourism based on a partnership between the public sector, state and municipal institutions, the private sector and non-governmental organizations, generating jobs, generating opportunities for entrepreneurship development, long-term economic and social benefits, increases the revenues from tourism, which will lead to increasing the efficiency and competitiveness of the Bulgarian economy

VI. Goals and strategic goals

Establishment of measures for a pragmatic, realistic and realizable strategy for the development of tourism in the border region of the Strandzha Mountains, the Derwent Heights and the Sakar Mountains:

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Expanding, valorising and changing the structure of demand for the tourist product in this boundary region aimed at the anthropogenic cultural monuments attracting Bulgarian and foreign tourists. Increasing the number and stay of Bulgarian and foreign citizens to visit and relax in the region during extended tourist season.

Achieving the primary aim will mean:

- Attract more in number and more solvent tourists in the region to accommodate and diversify and enrich the tourist supply;
- Increasing the revenues from international and domestic tourism in the region;
- Growth of visitors traveling to the region for the purpose of anthropogenic cultural tourism in the region;
- Extend the position of the border region to the target markets by diversifying the offered product (combined travel and specialized tourism) and attracting new consumer segments;
- Longer use of the region's tourism resources on the basis of the variety of products offered

Specific objectives:

1. Sustainable development of an integrated tourist product based on the diversity of natural and anthropogenic features of the border region and improvement of its quality
2. Effective marketing policy of the destination to promote and impose anthropogenic cultural tourism on the tourism market
3. Improving the state of the local environment and infrastructure for the development of cultural tourism in the border region.
4. Establishment and strengthening of the institutional framework for the development of tourism in the region
5. Effective marketing policy of the destination for promotion and enforcement of the product on the tourist market.

SWOT analysis

1. Strengths of the offered tourist product in the Bulgarian-Turkish cross-border region Strandzha (Yildiz), Dervent Heights and Sakar Mountains:

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- Existence of a variety of resources, providing the potential for sustainable development of the tourist product with realization of domestic and cross-border tourist markets - rich material and immaterial cultural and historical heritage, beautiful and ecologically clean environment, good cuisine, quality wines, hospitable population etc.
- Equal distribution of cultural and historical anthropogenic tourism resources on the territory of the cross-border region of Bulgaria (Bourgas, Yambol, Haskovo) and Turkey (Edirne and Kirklareli districts);
- Good and relatively easy transport accessibility to the region - Availability of all modes of transport (land, water, air);
- Favorable geographic location, characterized by proximity to the main generating markets for tourists in the world - Europe and Asia;
- Good opportunities for entertainment and nightlife.

2. Weaknesses that negatively influence the development and the prospect of tourism in the Bulgarian-Turkish cross-border region Strandzha mountain, Derwent Heights and Sakar Mountain are:

- Poor condition of the transport infrastructure outside the national roads and the technical infrastructure in the area;
- Low qualification of the personnel in the field of tourism at both operational and managerial level;
- Poorly developed and unmotivated sectoral and non-governmental sector working in the field of tourism;
- Poor quality or lack of additional tourist services outside of the traditional tourist destinations in the region (marine in Bulgaria and Edirne in Turkey);
- Irregular and non-homogeneous provision of accommodation (concentrated in big cities) and other tourist services;
- Distorted, unsupervised and non-socialized cultural and historical sites;
- The offered product has insufficient level of services / hotels, restaurants, etc. /
- Lack of adequate tourist statistics on the number of visits in the cross-border region;

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- Monostructure of the product and poorly developed infrastructure inside the region - lack of a comprehensive tourist product and uniformity of the existing tourist product;
- There is a disproportion - concentration of a contingent of the sea and unused significant tourism resources inside the region;
- Ineffective absorption and utilization of the existing potential of natural and anthropogenic resources and degradation of environmental parameters;
- The development of modern information technologies and reservation systems is lagging behind.

Most external factors could be considered both as an opportunity and as a threat depending on the situation. Generally speaking, opportunities and threats are beyond the direct control of stakeholders and can hardly be influenced.

1. Opportunities for development of the offered tourist product in the Bulgarian-Turkish cross-border region Strandzha (Yildiz), Dervent hills and Sakar mountain:

- Positive image of both the country and its major tourist centers on the domestic and international tourist market;
- Lack of imposed and competitive alternative tourism products offering more tourist attractions and resources of more than one municipality in the cross-border region;
- Constantly growing interest in the domestic for the cross-border region tourism and increasing intensity of visits of tourists from both countries;
- Existence of developed marine tourism that could be used to impose non-traditional tourist products and services, such as the proposed tourist product with five thematic tourist routes;
- Improving accessibility to the main cultural and historical sites included in the five routes and building a new road (pedestrian and car) network to them;
- Offering tourist packages, including combinations of traditional sea tourism and cultural-cognitive tourism according to the season;

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- Utilization of the potential of the municipalities and other territorial units for diversification of the tourist supply and improvement of the attractiveness of the cultural and historical heritage;
- Establish long-term cross-border partnerships with stakeholders from both sides of the border - state and local administration, branch organizations, tourism organizations, universities and vocational high schools in tourism.

2. Threats for development of the offered tourist product in the Bulgarian-Turkish cross-border region Strandzha (Yildiz), Derwent Heights and Sakar Mountains

- Negative demographic trends of depopulation of the cross-border region with a clear and lasting character on the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria.
- The worsened political situation in the Middle East and constant migratory pressure at the common border, which creates a sense of insecurity in the target zone due to the facilities built and the continuous activity of border police in this area;
- Strong dependence of local authorities on the decision-making process regarding the conservation, management and development of the cultural and historical heritage in the territory of the cross-border region;
- Regional instability and conflicts that can lead to outflow of tourists, especially foreign ones;
- Unrealistic high expectations for tourism as an economic sector and return on investment in it;
- Threat of terrorism - globally in both countries, resulting in outflow of tourists;
- Campaigns of competitive destinations from other parts of the two countries that promote already known and imposed cultural and historical tourist products at more competitive prices;
- The presence of rapidly growing competitive cultural and historical destinations offering better value for money holidays both in both countries and in neighboring countries (eg Greece);
- Decreasing the pace of development of the general and specialized tourist infrastructure in the municipalities of the cross-border region of Bulgaria and Turkey, especially in the peripheral municipalities and districts for the maritime tourism;

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- Concentration of attention and investment in tourist attractions in traditional tourist areas;
- A permanent deterioration of the business environment.

VII. Recommendations of the development strategy of thematic routes and participation in future projects to improve the attractiveness of thematic routes

In developing this strategy, the W-O-Strategy approach or the elimination of weaknesses to create new opportunities has been adopted. The main focus in the implementation of this strategy is the destruction of the most significant, according to the cross-border team of experts, a weak country, namely: Distorted, unsupervised and non-socialized cultural and historical sites.

For this purpose, in the present strategy for each of the sites included by the specialists in the thematic routes are proposed measures for improvement of the physical condition of the immovable cultural property and its protection, the basic transport and information infrastructure, accessibility and socialization of the site and the possibilities for its transformation into tourist attraction.

1. Thematic Route I. Megalithic culture in Strandzha and Sakar

The thematic route includes 27 objects of immovable and cultural heritage in the Bulgarian-Turkish cross-border region of Strandzha (Yildiz), Derwent Heights and Sakar Mountains. Objects of *Thematic Route I The Megalithic culture in Strandzha and Sakar* represent dolmens, rock tombs, menhirs and mounds (including mounds with cyst graves). A common feature of the sites included in the route is that all are located in open areas, often in less populated or remote populated areas. It is precisely these characteristics (that are situated outdoors) that make them vulnerable to the negative influence of anthropogenic and climatic factors.

The main shortcomings in all identified objects are that the structure of the real estate is subjected to the continuous harmful influence of air and water, which in many cases has led to

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the breaking up of the integrity and load-bearing capacity of the stone blocks. In some cases, this has led to a violation of the original structure of stone chips and the original architecture of the monument. For these objects (especially for dolmens, menhirs and stone tombs), it is of the utmost importance to **thoroughly conserve the stone structures** in order to protect the monument from physical loss. The main identified obstacles for the implementation of this most important for the sites in thematic route I Megalithic culture in the Strandzha and Sakar conservation step are:

- Lack of **legal status of the site** - in many cases the sites are located in a forestry area owned by enterprises of the structure of the Executive Forest Agency (in Bulgaria) or of the state in the form of the validation in Turkey. The issuing of a document on the status of the site as an immovable cultural asset in both countries requires the appointment of a commission from the Ministry of Culture in Bulgaria and the Ministry of Culture and Tourism in Turkey. This is a cumbersome administrative procedure that both countries can last for months, sometimes years
- Absence of an **act or other document of ownership** of the cultural and historical object - in both countries the document is issued under a complex inter-ministerial procedure. The lack of a property document does not allow the most interested party (the local municipal administration) to invest funds to protect it.
- The lack of sufficient financial resources is also the reason for not conserving the megalithic structures.

Overcoming these obstacles to the preservation of the monument is at the heart of its protection from destruction.

The next decisive step to improve the condition and preservation of the objects included in the thematic route I is to provide a **thorough archaeological survey of the site**. It is a prerequisite for starting activities for preparation of an **investment project for restoration of the monument** and implementation of subsequent **real restoration** - the final phase of preservation of the immovable cultural value.

The complexity of the restoration processes (especially for dolmens), is particularly high due to the impossibility of precise fabrications to position the stone structures when their restoration to the upright / original state is necessary.

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In the mounds included in the thematic route it is particularly challenging to exhibit them in the absence of structures inside them. These objects, though very interesting for archaeological science, are difficult to perceive and appreciate by ordinary tourists and require unusual exposure that objects do not currently offer.

The accessibility of the subjects included in the thematic route is characterized by remoteness from the settlements and deviation from the main roads. After deviating from the main road to many of the sites, there are "black" roads - forest or agricultural. This requires the presence of an off-road vehicle. Some of the sites can also be reached after crossing the pedestrian crossing. Many sites are hard to find without a local guide.

All non-verbal animation (signboards) and signposts are missing from all the objects included in the route to their location.

Considering that all sites included in Thematic Route I of the Megalithic Culture in Strandzha and Sakar are poorly known as tourist sites, it is necessary for each of them to install directional signs / signs to the site and basic information about it for the individual tourists who have come without guide or guide.

For each of the cultural and historical sites, basic information could be given via an integrated information system with a QR code or mobile application (but only if the mobile operators provided site coverage).

The table below describes the recommendations for improving the physical condition of the immovable cultural heritage and its conservation, the basic transport and information infrastructure, accessibility and socialization of the sites in order to make it a tourist attraction.

Dolmen's socialization measures are not prescribed, as it is the practice of this world to leave these types of objects in the macally untouched environment in order to better understand their specificity and connection with the surrounding space and environment.

For this route it is recommended to build a museum and information center in the town of Topolovgrad, where is the concentration of the megalithic monuments.

Achieving the primary aim will mean:

- Attract more in number and more solvent tourists in the region to accommodate and diversify and enrich the tourist supply;

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- Increasing the revenues from international and domestic tourism in the region;
- Growth of visitors traveling to the region for the purpose of anthropogenic cultural tourism in the region;
- Extend the position of the border region to the target markets by diversifying the offered product (combined travel and specialized tourism) and attracting new consumer segments;
- Longer use of the region's tourism resources on the basis of the variety of products offered

Specific objectives:

1. Sustainable development of an integrated tourist product based on the diversity of natural and anthropogenic features of the border region and improvement of its quality
2. Effective marketing policy of the destination to promote and impose anthropogenic cultural tourism on the tourism market
3. Improving the state of the local environment and infrastructure for the development of cultural tourism in the border region.
4. Establishment and strengthening of the institutional framework for the development of tourism in the region
5. Effective marketing policy of the destination for promotion and enforcement of the product on the tourist market.

VII. SWOT analysis

1. Strengths of the offered tourist product in the Bulgarian-Turkish cross-border region Strandzha (Yildiz), Dervent Heights and Sakar Mountains:
 - Existence of a variety of resources, providing the potential for sustainable development of the tourist product with realization of domestic and cross-border tourist markets - rich material and immaterial cultural and historical heritage, beautiful and ecologically clean environment, good cuisine, quality wines, hospitable population etc.
 - Equal distribution of cultural and historical anthropogenic tourism resources on the territory of the cross-border region of Bulgaria (Bourgas, Yambol, Haskovo) and Turkey (Edirne and Kirklareli districts);

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- Good and relatively easy transport accessibility to the region - Availability of all modes of transport (land, water, air);
- Favorable geographic location, characterized by proximity to the main generating markets for tourists in the world - Europe and Asia;
- Good opportunities for entertainment and nightlife.

2. Weaknesses that negatively influence the development and the prospect of tourism in the Bulgarian-Turkish cross-border region Strandzha mountain, Derwent Heights and Sakar Mountain are:

- Poor condition of the transport infrastructure outside the national roads and the technical infrastructure in the area;
- Low qualification of the personnel in the field of tourism at both operational and managerial level;
- Poorly developed and unmotivated sectoral and non-governmental sector working in the field of tourism;
- Poor quality or lack of additional tourist services outside of the traditional tourist destinations in the region (marine in Bulgaria and Edirne in Turkey);
- Irregular and non-homogeneous provision of accommodation (concentrated in big cities) and other tourist services;
- Distorted, unsupervised and non-socialized cultural and historical sites;
- The offered product has insufficient level of services / hotels, restaurants, etc. /
- Lack of adequate tourist statistics on the number of visits in the cross-border region;
- Monostructure of the product and poorly developed infrastructure inside the region - lack of a comprehensive tourist product and uniformity of the existing tourist product;
- There is a disproportion - concentration of a contingent of the sea and unused significant tourism resources inside the region;
- Ineffective absorption and utilization of the existing potential of natural and anthropogenic resources and degradation of environmental parameters;
- The development of modern information technologies and reservation systems is lagging behind.

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Most external factors could be considered both as an opportunity and as a threat depending on the situation. Generally speaking, opportunities and threats are beyond the direct control of stakeholders and can hardly be influenced.

1. Opportunities for development of the offered tourist product in the Bulgarian-Turkish cross-border region Strandzha (Yildiz), Derwent hills and Sakar mountain:

- Positive image of both the country and its major tourist centers on the domestic and international tourist market;
- Lack of imposed and competitive alternative tourism products offering more tourist attractions and resources of more than one municipality in the cross-border region;
- Constantly growing interest in the domestic for the cross-border region tourism and increasing intensity of visits of tourists from both countries;
- Existence of developed marine tourism that could be used to impose non-traditional tourist products and services, such as the proposed tourist product with five thematic tourist routes;
- Improving accessibility to the main cultural and historical sites included in the five routes and building a new road (pedestrian and car) network to them;
- Offering tourist packages, including combinations of traditional sea tourism and cultural-cognitive tourism according to the season;
- Utilization of the potential of the municipalities and other territorial units for diversification of the tourist supply and improvement of the attractiveness of the cultural and historical heritage;
- Establish long-term cross-border partnerships with stakeholders from both sides of the border - state and local administration, branch organizations, tourism organizations, universities and vocational high schools in tourism.

2. Threats for development of the offered tourist product in the Bulgarian-Turkish cross-border region Strandzha (Yildiz), Derwent Heights and Sakar Mountains

- Negative demographic trends of depopulation of the cross-border region with a clear and lasting character on the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria.
- The worsened political situation in the Middle East and constant migratory pressure at the common border, which creates a sense of insecurity in the target zone due to the facilities built and the continuous activity of border police in this area;

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- Strong dependence of local authorities on the decision-making process regarding the conservation, management and development of the cultural and historical heritage in the territory of the cross-border region;
- Regional instability and conflicts that can lead to outflow of tourists, especially foreign ones;
- Unrealistic high expectations for tourism as an economic sector and return on investment in it;
- Threat of terrorism - globally in both countries, resulting in outflow of tourists;
- Campaigns of competitive destinations from other parts of the two countries that promote already known and imposed cultural and historical tourist products at more competitive prices;
- The presence of rapidly growing competitive cultural and historical destinations offering better value for money holidays both in both countries and in neighboring countries (eg Greece);
- Decreasing the pace of development of the general and specialized tourist infrastructure in the municipalities of the cross-border region of Bulgaria and Turkey, especially in the peripheral municipalities and districts for the maritime tourism;
- Concentration of attention and investment in tourist attractions in traditional tourist areas;
- A permanent deterioration of the business environment.

VIII. Recommendations of the development strategy of thematic routes and participation in future projects to improve the attractiveness of thematic routes

In developing this strategy, the W-O-Strategy approach or the elimination of weaknesses to create new opportunities has been adopted. The main focus in the implementation of this strategy is the destruction of the most significant, according to the cross-border team of experts, a weak country, namely: Distorted, unsupervised and non-socialized cultural and historical sites.

For this purpose, in the present strategy for each of the sites included by the specialists in the thematic routes are proposed measures for improvement of the physical condition of the immovable cultural property and its protection, the basic transport and information infrastructure, accessibility and socialization of the site and the possibilities for its transformation into tourist attraction.

1. Thematic Route I. Megalithic culture in Strandzha and Sakar

The thematic route includes 27 objects of immovable and cultural heritage in the Bulgarian-Turkish

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cross-border region of Strandzha (Yildiz), Derwent Heights and Sakar Mountains. Objects of ***Thematic Route I The Megalithic culture in Strandzha and Sakar*** represent dolmens, rock tombs, menhirs and mounds (including mounds with cyst graves). A common feature of the sites included in the route is that all are located in open areas, often in less populated or remote populated areas. It is precisely these characteristics (that are situated outdoors) that make them vulnerable to the negative influence of anthropogenic and climatic factors.

The main shortcomings in all identified objects are that the structure of the real estate is subjected to the continuous harmful influence of air and water, which in many cases has led to the breaking up of the integrity and load-bearing capacity of the stone blocks. In some cases, this has led to a violation of the original structure of stone chips and the original architecture of the monument. For these objects (especially for dolmens, menhirs and stone tombs), it is of the utmost importance to **thoroughly conserve the stone structures** in order to protect the monument from physical loss. The main identified obstacles for the implementation of this most important for the sites in thematic route I Megalithic culture in the Strandzha and Sakar conservation step are:

- Lack of **legal status of the site** - in many cases the sites are located in a forestry area owned by enterprises of the structure of the Executive Forest Agency (in Bulgaria) or of the state in the form of the validation in Turkey. The issuing of a document on the status of the site as an immovable cultural asset in both countries requires the appointment of a commission from the Ministry of Culture in Bulgaria and the Ministry of Culture and Tourism in Turkey. This is a cumbersome administrative procedure that both countries can last for months, sometimes years
- Absence of an **act or other document of ownership** of the cultural and historical object - in both countries the document is issued under a complex inter-ministerial procedure. The lack of a property document does not allow the most interested party (the local municipal administration) to invest funds to protect it.
- The lack of sufficient financial resources is also the reason for not conserving the megalithic structures.

Overcoming these obstacles to the preservation of the monument is at the heart of its protection from destruction.

The next decisive step to improve the condition and preservation of the objects included in the thematic route I is to provide a **thorough archaeological survey of the site**. It is a prerequisite for starting activities for preparation of an **investment project for restoration of the monument** and implementation of subsequent **real restoration** - the final phase of preservation of the immovable cultural value.

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The complexity of the restoration processes (especially for dolmens), is particularly high due to the impossibility of precise fabrications to position the stone structures when their restoration to the upright / original state is necessary.

In the mounds included in the thematic route it is particularly challenging to exhibit them in the absence of structures inside them. These objects, though very interesting for archaeological science, are difficult to perceive and appreciate by ordinary tourists and require unusual exposure that objects do not currently offer.

The accessibility of the subjects included in the thematic route is characterized by remoteness from the settlements and deviation from the main roads. After deviating from the main road to many of the sites, there are "black" roads - forest or agricultural. This requires the presence of an off-road vehicle. Some of the sites can also be reached after crossing the pedestrian crossing. Many sites are hard to find without a local guide.

All non-verbal animation (signboards) and signposts are missing from all the objects included in the route to their location.

Considering that all sites included in Thematic Route I of the Megalithic Culture in Strandzha and Sakar are poorly known as tourist sites, it is necessary for each of them to install directional signs / signs to the site and basic information about it for the individual tourists who have come without guide or guide.

For each of the cultural and historical sites, basic information could be given via an integrated information system with a QR code or mobile application (but only if the mobile operators provided site coverage).

The table below describes the recommendations for improving the physical condition of the immovable cultural heritage and its conservation, the basic transport and information infrastructure, accessibility and socialization of the sites in order to make it a tourist attraction.

Dolmen's socialization measures are not prescribed, as it is the practice of this world to leave these types of objects in the macally untouched environment in order to better understand their specificity and connection with the surrounding space and environment.

For this route it is recommended to build a museum and information center in the town of Topolovgrad, where is the concentration of the megalithic monuments. Possible projects that could be implemented in connection with the improvement of cultural and historical sites are projects related to accessibility, verbal and non-verbal animation of objects. The possible sources of funding for these projects are the cross-border cooperation programs (Bulgaria-Turkey and Greece-Bulgaria), the EEA Financial Mechanism, the Regions for Growth, the Rural Development Program, etc.



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Thematic Route: I. Megalithic culture in Strandzha and Sakar				✓ - Measures are needed × - Measures are not needed			
№	Object	Measures needed to improve the condition and attractiveness of the site					
		Conservation measures	Restoration activities	Signboardsto the site	Information infrastructure	Transport accessibility	Socialization measures
1	Dolmen in locality „Lozyata“ near village Belevren	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	×
2	Dolmen № 1 in locality „Peshterite” near village Golyam Dervent	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	×
3	Dolmen in locality „Kapakliyka” near village Sakartsi	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	×
4	Dolmen in locality „Kliftinova niva” near village Sakartsi	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	×
5	Dolmen in locality „Gaydarova peshtera” near village Hlyabovo	✓	✓	×	×	×	×
6	Dolmen in locality „Slavova kuriya” near village Bulgarska polyana	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	×
7	Dolmen № 2 in locality „Mangara” near village Hlyabovo	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	×
8	Dolmen in locality „Evdzhika” near village Hlyabovo	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	×



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9	Dolmen in locality "Lakite" near village Evrenezovo	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	×
10	Dolmen № 1 and Dolmen № 2 in locality "Lagat" near village Zabernovo	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	×
11	Dolmen in locality „Golemiyat rat” near village Hlyabovo	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	×
12	Dolmen in locality „Zheliiov dol” near village Sakartsi	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	×
13	Dolmen in locality „Koruba” near village Kirovo	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	×
14	Mound with stone structure in locality „Golemiat Kayryak” near village Bulgarska polyana	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	×
15	Mound with cyst grave in locality „Kayryaka” near village Bulgarska polyana	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	×
16	Two dolmens in locality Lozyata near village Granichar	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	×
17	Village Asadzhipinar and Kanlagechit	✓	✓	✓	✓	×	×
18	Cave Dupnitsa (Zone of ancient life and nature)	✓	✓	✓	✓	×	✓



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19	Erikler old tomb menhir	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
20	Menhir Hoyuk Baba	✓	✓	✓	✓	×	✓
21	Mound Islambeyli	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
22	Yuskup Balaban rock tomb	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
23	Yuskup Hachioglu Tomb zone	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
24	Mound Karaabalar Haydutlu	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
25	Mound Karaabalar Molla Ibrahim Korusu	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
26	Tomb mound Karaabalar Hoyuk	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
27	Mound Hachifakli Haydarbaba	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

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1. Thematic Route: II. The Odrysian kingdom

The second thematic route is the route of the Odrysian kingdom, which has fewer sites (6), but one is a group of objects clustered around Lalapasha, Turkey.

Undoubtedly the most interesting object of this thematic route is the fortified ruler's home in the locality of Tatar masha near village Knyazhevo. The site has an exceptional potential for tourism development as it is the best preserved complex of Thracian-era residential buildings located on the territory of Bulgaria.

Thematic Route II. The Odrysian kingdom includes the fortified ruler's house in the locality of Tatar Masha near Knyazhevo, Topolovgrad Municipality, Tomb in Tumbata near village Ruzhitsa, Yambol Municipality and four dolmens in the region of Lalapasha in the Republic of Turkey.

All objects are located in the open, less distant from the populated areas, compared to the objects from the first thematic route. They are characterized, albeit with less disturbance in the structure of the site as a result of negative atmospheric influence. Anthropogenic factors have not contributed to disturbing the integrity of cultural and historical objects from the itinerary.

The main drawbacks of all identified objects on the route are that the structure of the real estate is subjected to continuous damage to air and water, which in many cases has led to the breaking of the integrity and load-bearing capacity of the stone fragments. In some cases, this has led to a violation of the original structure of stone chips and the original architecture of the monument. For these objects (the dolmens and the stone tomb), it is of the utmost importance to implement **a complete conservation of stone structures** to protect the monument from physical destruction. And these objects have the obstacles described above for their timely conservation.

Three of the six sites included in Route II require an **in-depth archaeological survey of the site**. The fortified royal home in the village of Knyazhevo and the Dolomites Lalapasha 1 (Arpalik) and Dolmen "Hachilar" have been fully explored. The remaining three sites need complete completion of their full archeological survey. For the studied sites it is a prerequisite for starting activities for preparation of an **investment project for restoration of the monument** and the implementation of the subsequent **real restoration** of the immovable cultural value.

In the subject of this thematic route (especially in dolmens), the complexity of the restoration processes is particularly high due to the impossibility of accurate fictions for the positioning of the stone structures when their restoration to the upright / initial state is necessary.

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The accessibility of the subjects included in the thematic route is characterized by proximity to the populated areas and a slight deviation from the main roads. Up to four sites on the Turkish side do not have direct access by car. They can be reached after a short hike. The objects are little known and, apart from the fortified ruler's domicile, the village of Knyazhevo is difficult to find without a local guide.

All the objects included in the route lack non-verbal animation (billboards) and signposts to their location (exception makes the royal home).

Given that all subjects included in Thematic Route II. The Odrysian kingdom, are poorly known as tourist sites, it is necessary for each of them to mount guiding signs / signs to the object and basic information about it for individual tourists who have come without a guide or guide.

For each of the cultural and historical sites, basic information could be provided through an integrated information system with a QR code or a mobile application since the mobile operators have coverage for these sites.

The archaeological site near the village of Knyazhevo has a leading role in this route. For this route, it is recommended that the restoration, preservation and exposure of the fortified ruler's home be restored. It is of particular scientific and tourist interest and has a significantly better potential than other sites included in the route. This project requires considerable resources and could be realized under the cross-border cooperation programs (Greece-Bulgaria), the EEA Financial Mechanism, the Regions for Growth, the Rural Development Program, the Norwegian Grant Program, etc.

For other sites, projects for the improvement of cultural and historical sites should be implemented, which include investments in the restoration of sites, accessibility, verbal and non-verbal animation of sites. The possible sources of funding for these projects are the cross-border cooperation programs (Bulgaria-Turkey and Greece-Bulgaria), the EEA Financial Mechanism, the Regions for Growth, the Rural Development Program, etc.

The table below describes the recommendations for improving the physical condition of immovable cultural heritage from Thematic Route II. The Odrysian kingdom and their protection, the basic transport and information infrastructure, accessibility and socialization of the sites in order to make it a tourist attraction.



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1. Thematic Route: II. The Odryian kingdom		✓ - Measures are needed × - Measures are not needed					
№	Object	Measures needed to improve the condition and attractiveness of the site					
		Conservation measures	Restoration activities	Signboardsto the site	Information infrastructure	Transport accessibility	Socialization measures
1	Fortified royal house in locality Tatar masha near village Knyazhevo	✓	✓	×	✓	×	✓
2	Tomb in locality Tumbata near village Ruzhitsa	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	×
3	Dolmen Lalapasha 1 (Arpalik)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	×
4	Dolmen Lalapasha 2	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	×
5	Dolmen Muhitin Baba	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	×
6	Dolmen "Hachilar"	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	×

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Thematic Route III. The Astess kingdom

The thematic route includes 15 sites of real estate and cultural heritage in the Bulgarian-Turkish cross-border region of Strandzha (Yildiz), Derwent Heights and Sakar Mountains. Objects of Thematic Route III. The Astess kingdom are mainly fortresses, fortified rulers, a cave, traces of dwelling in the same age, cult complexes and mounds.

A common characteristic of the cultural and historical sites included in the itinerary is that all are located in the open, close to settlements and are located (for the most part) forest territories or agricultural lands.

The degree of deformation and destruction of archaeological structures in them is much higher than the previous two thematic routes. This is due to the fact that many of the structures are built on mortar without mortar and have not been subject to conservation and restoration activities. The exception is the fortress near Ahtopol, the antique theater in Vise, the Dupnitsa cave and the Ancient settlement area and the cult area of Karakochak. Faced with the continuous atmospheric influence of the fortress walls and towers, they have destroyed architectural and archaeological structures and need **timely conservation and restoration**. Most sites included in Route III were the subject of archaeological research by experts from Bulgaria and Turkey. Taking into account the nature of the sites, the fortresses, fortified rulers and the ancient theater are needed for conservation and restoration. For the preservation of fortresses and fortified rulers' homes the most important will be the construction of a "**sealing" upper protected over-wall** to stop the penetration of water between the stone structures of the archaeological sites. Some of these same objects need **partial restoration of the walls** by using the ground quadras fragments.

Most of the sites included in the route have certain limits and conservation regimes, but most of them do not have property acts issued. This prevents the implementation of restoration and conservation activities, despite the great reluctance of local municipal administrations to work for the conservation, exposition and socialization of these sites.

The existence of existing archeological structures of fortresses, fortified rulers' homes and antique theater is a prerequisite for their contemporary exposure and socialization.

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In the mounds included in the thematic route it is particularly challenging to exhibit them in the absence of structures inside them. These objects, though very interesting for archaeological science, are difficult to perceive and appreciate by ordinary tourists and require unusual exposure that objects do not currently offer.

Some of the sites are located in populated areas or in close proximity to such sites. Accessibility of the subjects included in the thematic route is characterized by proximity to the settlements and minimal deviation from major roads.

Some of the sites, especially the fortress, have non-verbal animation (information boards) and signboards to their location.

Given that all objects included in Thematic Route III. The Astess kingdom, which are poorly known as tourist sites (except the fortress of Ahtopol), it is necessary for each of them to mount directional signs/signs to the object and basic information about it for individual tourists who have come without a guide or guide.

For each of the cultural and historical sites, basic information could be provided through an integrated information system with a QR code or through a mobile application that is currently unavailable to the objects.

The table below describes the recommendations for improving the physical condition of the immovable cultural heritage and its conservation, the basic transport and information infrastructure, accessibility and socialization of the sites in order to make it a tourist attraction.

In this route, many of the sites are characterized by the existence of significantly preserved structures of the archaeological sites. Each of them has significant potential. For this route, comprehensive restoration, conservation, exposure and socialization of the sites included in the route are recommended in Bulgaria. Resources for this are significantly larger than those needed to improve the Bulgarian part of the route.

Projects to improve the status of disturbed, unsupervised and non-socialized cultural and historical sites could be implemented under the cross-border cooperation programs (Bulgaria-Turkey, Greece-Bulgaria), the EEA Financial Mechanism, the Regions for Growth, rural



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areas, the Norwegian Grant Program, and others. Considerable measures for the socialization of the fortresses, the amphitheater and the rulers' homes are necessary in the route under consideration. It is a universal practice for such sites to provide opportunities for a longer stay for the tourist.



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Thematic Route III. The Astess kingdom				✓ - Measures are needed × - Measures are not needed			
№	Object	Measures needed to improve the condition and attractiveness of the object					
		Conservation measures	Restoration activities	Signboards to the site	Information infrastructure	Transport accessibility	Socialization measures
1	Fortress „Pharmakida“	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2	Fortified royal house in locality Pastich, near village Brodilovo	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
3	Fortified royal house in locality Golata niva, near village Sinemorets	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
4	The fortress near Ahtopol	✓	✓	×	×	×	✓
5	Fortress „Kaletó” in the land of village Slivarovo	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6	Fortress „Chingene“	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
7	Fortress Vise	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
8	Ancient Theater Vise	✓	✓	✓	✓	×	✓
9	Cave Dupnitsa (Zone of ancient life and nature)	✓	✓	✓	✓	×	✓
10	Ancient settlement area and cult area Karakochak	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
11	Mound Chyomlektepe	×	×	✓	✓	✓	✓



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12	Mound Sivriлер 1	×	×	✓	✓	✓	✓
13	Mound Sivriлер 2	×	×	✓	✓	✓	✓
14	Mound Sivriлер 3	×	×	✓	✓	✓	✓
15	Mound Sivriлер 4	×	×	✓	✓	✓	✓

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Thematic Route IV. Strandzha during the Roman Age

The thematic route includes 14 sites of real estate and cultural heritage in the Bulgarian-Turkish cross-border region of Strandzha (Yildiz), Derwent Heights and Sakar Mountains. Objects *of Thematic Route IV. Strandzha during the Roman Age* are mainly necropolises, Roman villas, architectural and archaeological complexes, traces of dwelling in the same age, cult complexes and mounds.

A common characteristic of the cultural and historical sites included in the itinerary is that all are located in the open, far away from the settlements and are located (mostly) in forest areas.

In many of the sites there is deformation and destruction of archaeological structures. This is due to the fact that many of the structures have been researched but have not been the subject of conservation-restoration activities. An exception is the architectural and archaeological complex in the locality "Mishkova niva", near Malko Tarnovo. Faced with continuous atmospheric influence, tombs, cult complexes, and Ramsikite villas have destroyed architectural and archaeological structures and require **timely conservation and restoration**. Most sites included in Route IV were the subject of aegological research by experts from Bulgaria and Turkey. Taking into account the nature of the sites, conservation and restoration need necropolises, Roman villas, and architectural and archaeological complexes. For the conservation of these objects, the most important will be the preservation of the stone structures (quadras and others) and the restoration of the dromos and cameras in the tombs.

Most of the sites included in the route have certain limits and conservation regimes, but most of them do not have property acts issued. This prevents the implementation of restoration and conservation activities, despite the great desire of local municipal administrations to work for the conservation, exposition and socialization of these sites.

The existence of existing archaeological structures of necropolises, Roman villas and architectural and archaeological complexes is a prerequisite for their contemporary exposure and socialization.

In the mounds included in the thematic route it is particularly challenging to exhibit them in the absence of structures inside them. These objects, though very interesting for archaeological science, are difficult to perceive and appreciate by ordinary tourists and require unusual exposure that objects do not currently offer.

Most sites are located outside settlements in forest tritorials or farmland. Objects are hardly accessible and are at a considerable distance from the main thoroughfares. Frequently, they come along "black" forest or Polish roads, and often on foot. The large gathering of sites in the area of Malko Tarnovo Municipality calls for increased attention due to the fact that many of the sites are close to the state border and the presence of border police is enhanced.

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Given that all objects included in *Thematic Route IV. Strandzha during the Roman Age*, are poorly known as tourist sites (except for the Thracian architectural and archaeological complex in the locality "Mishkova niva", near Malko Tarnovo), it is necessary for each of them to mount directional signs / signs to the object and basic information for him for individual tourists who came without a guide or guide.

For each of the cultural and historical sites, basic information could be provided through an integrated information system with a QR code or through a mobile application that is currently unavailable to the objects.

The table below describes the recommendations for improving the physical condition of the immovable cultural heritage and its conservation, the basic transport and information infrastructure, accessibility and socialization of the sites in order to make it a tourist attraction.

In the considered route it is necessary to take significant measures for the socialization of the areas with crowding sites near the town of Malko Tarnovo. It is a global practice to provide such facilities with opportunities for a longer stay for the tourist.



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Thematic Route IV. Strandzha during the Roman Age				✓ - Measures are needed × - Measures are not needed			
Measures needed to improve the condition and attractiveness of the object							
№	Object	Conservation measures	Restoration activities	Signboards to the site	Information infrastructure	Transport accessibility	Socialization measures
1	Fortified Roman villa in the Thracian cult complex in locality "Mishkova niva" near Malko Tarnovo	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2	Necropolis with citrus graves in locality Propada near Malko Tarnovo	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
3	Tomb № 1 in locality Propada near Malko Tarnovo	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
4	Tomb № 2 in locality Propada near Malko Tarnovo	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
5	Tomb № 3 in locality Propada near Malko Tarnovo	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6	Tomb № 4 in locality Propada near Malko Tarnovo	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
7	Dolmen in locality Bakaren izvor near village Evrenezovo, Malko Tarnovo Municipality	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
8	Thracian architectural and archaeological complex in	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓



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	locality "Mishkova niva", near Malko Tarnovo						
9	Roman villa in locality "Manastircheto" near village Sroino	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
10	Mound Yariktebe A	×	×	✓	✓	✓	✓
11	Mound Yariktebe B	×	×	✓	✓	✓	✓
12	Fortress „Kayakyoy“	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
13	Fortress „Kayakyoy Harbour Gate“	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
14	Village Pazarli, Ancient Waterways, area of the Necropolis, Worship zone	×	×	✓	✓	✓	✓

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Thematic route V. Strandzha and Sakar through the Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages

The thematic route includes 16 sites of real estate and cultural heritage in the Bulgarian-Turkish cross-border region of Strandzha (Yildiz), Derwent Heights and Sakar Mountains. The objects of the ***Thematic route V. Strandzha and Sakar through the Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages*** are mainly fortresses, a church, a holy spring and a cave.

A common characteristic of the cultural and historical sites included in the itinerary is that all are located in the open, close to settlements and are located (mostly) in forest areas or agricultural lands.

The degree of deformation and destruction of the archaeological structures in them is much more identical to that of the subjects of thematic route III. This is due to the fact that many of the structures are built on a mud or mortar that the rain easily washed off and were not subject to conservation-restoration activities. Faced with the continuous atmospheric influence of the fortress walls and towers, they have destroyed architectural and archaeological structures and need **timely conservation and restoration**. Most sites included on Route V were the subject of archaeological research by experts from Bulgaria and Turkey. Taking into account the nature of the objects, all the objects included in the route are conserved and restored. For the preservation of the forts of the route, the most important will be the construction of a "**sealing" upper over wall** to stop the penetration of water between the stone structures of the archaeological sites. In the fortress it is necessary to make **partial restoration of the walls** by using the ground quadras fallen on the ground.

Most of the sites included in the route have certain limits and conservation regimes, but most of them do not have property acts issued. This prevents the implementation of restoration and conservation activities, despite the great desire of local municipal administrations to work for the conservation, exposition and socialization of these sites.

The existence of existing archeological structures of the fortresses is a prerequisite for their contemporary exposure and socialization.

The cave included in the thematic route is particularly challenging to exhibit it in the absence of structures inside it.

Most sites are located outside settlements in forest tritorials or farmland. Objects are hardly accessible and are at a considerable distance from the main thoroughfares. Frequently, they come along "black" forest or Polish roads, and often on foot. The large gathering of sites in the Black Sea region requires a fair assessment whether accessibility to the site will not disturb important natural sites such as dunes.

Given that all objects included in the Thematic route V. Strandzha and the Sakar through the Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages are poorly known as tourist sites (except the Ahtopol fortress), it is

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necessary for each of them to mount guiding signs / signs to the site and basic information about it for individual tourists who arrive without a guide or guide.

For each of the cultural and historical sites, basic information could be provided through an integrated information system with a QR code or through a mobile application that is currently unavailable to the objects.

The table below describes the recommendations for improving the physical condition of the immovable cultural heritage and its conservation, the basic transport and information infrastructure, accessibility and socialization of the sites in order to make it a tourist attraction.

Considerable measures for the socialization of fortresses are necessary in the route considered. It is a global practice to provide such facilities with opportunities for a longer stay for the tourist.



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Thematic route V. Strandzha and Sakar through the Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages					✓ - Measures are needed × - Measures are not needed		
Measures needed to improve the condition and attractiveness of the object							
№	Object	Conservation measures	Restoration activities	Signboards to the site	Information infrastructure	Transport accessibility	Socialization measures
1	The fortress „Poros”, peninsula Phoros	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2	Early Byzantine fortress "Akra"	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
3	Late Antique town Hrisosotira	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
4	Fortress „Urdoviza” near Kiten	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
5	The fortress near Ahtopol	✓	✓	✓	×	×	×
6	Fortress „Gradishteto“ near village Bulgari	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
7	Fortress “Golyamo Kale” near village Mladezhko	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
8	Late Antiquity and Medieval Fortress “Gorno Gradishte” near the town of Sredets	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
9	Early Christian and Medieval Monastery Complex near village Voden	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
10	Late Antiquity Fortress near	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓



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	Village Melnitsa						
11	Fortress and sanctuary "Paleokastro" near Topolovgrad	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
12	Fortress in locality „Kaleto” in the land of village Bulgarska polyana	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
13	The church "Little Hagia Sophia" (Suleiman's mosque)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
14	Fortress „Pinarhisar“	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
15	Pool of "Ayasma" (Pool "Baptism")	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
16	Cave Dupnitsa (Zone of ancient life and nature)	×	×	✓	✓	✓	✓

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When implementing the W-O-Strategy or eliminating weaknesses to create new opportunities, additional efforts should be made to improve the transport infrastructure outside the national road arteries and the technical infrastructure in the area of archaeological sites. Substantial investments need to be made to improve the skills of tourism staff outside the seaside resorts, and future projects in this area will be all the more necessary. Particularly challenging for the cross-border region is the concentration of bed base, its poor quality of places and the lack of high-quality tourist services outside the traditional tourist resorts.

In the formation of a marketing policy of the new tourist product and the proposed tourist routes, the main problem is the lack of adequate tourist statistics on the number of visits in the cross-border region. Special efforts should be made by local authorities to provide adequate statistics.

The tourist routes proposed in this strategy diversify existing tourism products and violate their mono-structure in the cross-border region by offering a comprehensive tourist product evenly located in different areas and municipalities in the region.

Through the proposed tourist routes and after their imposition and popularization, the disproportion between the coastal and the cross-border region will be overcome and the considerable tourist resource in the region will be absorbed.

The use of the existing potential of natural and anthropogenic resources in the cross-border region Bulgaria-Turkey represents an opportunity to overcome the isolation of the regions of the region to the other administrative and territorial units of Bulgaria and Turkey and is an essential prerequisite for active partnership between the interested parties on both sides of the border in favor of local communities.

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