



**Project Title: Development of Common Cultural Tourism Destination in the Strandzha (Yıldız)-Sakar area based on archaeological and historical objects**

**STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT EXPERT REPORT**

Strandzha and Sakar region is surrounded by İğneada Longoz (floodplain) forest, Strandzha Mountains, Dupnisa Cave, many lagoons, Demirköy (İğneada) and Kıyıköy beaches. There are also many caves, castles, tumulus, dolmens, rock monasteries, mosques, baths, bridges and many other cultural monuments.

Strandzha region is in the most popular basin for Tumulus graves density in Turkey. It is a center where the pre-historic, Roman, Byzantine and Turkish civilizations take place in the region where connecting Anatolia and Europe and provides a link between geography and cultural structure ([kirklarelikulturturizm.gov.tr](http://kirklarelikulturturizm.gov.tr)).

Strandzha (Yıldız) at the foot of the mountain has the terrestrial climate same as the Black Sea climate in longoz forests and brings a variety of flora & fauna, natural protected areas, of course, caves, historic and cultural values, historical huge trees and with the region's magnificent ecosystem. The 48% of the Strandzha province is surrounded by the mountains of many rivers born from inside of Kirklareli city (Morgül, 2014: 30). İğneada Mountains in the region are also full of flooded forest with rich endemic flora and fauna.

There are many caves in the province of Strandzha. These caves are a prehistoric period and early Christianity has been settled in the process. With these features, its caves and other natural interesting caves are suitable for cave tourism as alternative tourism.

These include the Dupnisa Cave, which is 2720 meters long, Yenesu Cave, which is 1620 meters long, Domuzdere Cave, which is 300 meters long, and Kıyıköy Caves and Captain's Cave, which are 305 meters long. Dupnisa Cave, 6 km south of the Sarpdere Village in Demirköy, is the first registered natural habitat and has been visited by many people every year.



Dupnisa Cave; is an important underground habitat because 18 species of caverns with about 60 thousand bats in 11 species of caves are continuing their invertebrate lives.

The Strandza and Sakar region is an important location for both land and water hunting. Because of its natural structure and its bird migration route, it enables the survival of different animal species.

In Strandza and Kırklareli, there are many hunting areas for sustainable hunting tourism; as Demirköy-Vize Karamanbayırı, Demirköy - Sislioba, Kofçaz- Kocayazı, Vize- Kıyıkoy State hunting areas, Babaeski - Ergene, Lüleburgaz- Ahmetbey, Kırklareli Kayalı are all general hunting areas. It is possible to hunt in this area; in the state forests, soil conservation and reforestation areas, state agricultural enterprises, dam lakes and safety areas, lakes, lagoons, swamps and reeds in the province borders.

The richness of the flora in Strandza makes a great attraction for botanic tourism. The 670 species of plant (10.000 species in Turkey) are grown only in the Kırklareli Forests. There are 27 kinds of endemic plants in Kırklareli and Strandza basin (Morgül, 2014: 32).

Bird watching is very common in Europe and North America, and Strandza region is very suitable for ornithology with 194 bird species (in Turkey 454) in this region. Many of these areas are on the transit route for the autumn migration of water birds and predator birds, especially storks (black and white stork), Some water birds (fishermen, geese, ducks, water chickens, rainbows) and riders (eagles, hawks, borns, drunks, etc.) breed in the field.

This bird richness in Strandza attracts the birdwatching tourists to Kırklareli as one of the alternative tourism destinations in Trakia region. Kasatura Gulf Protection Area, Vize District Çavuşköy Lagoon, Dupnisa Cave Wet land are also the places carried out the birdwatching tourism activities.

Kırklareli is an important resource for cultural tourism with its many different cultural richness. Archaeological excavation areas such as Aşağı Pınar Höyük and Kanlıgeçit Höyüğü, Yayla region, Hızırbey Kulliye, Kırklareli Museum, Seyfioglu Tabyası, Historical Fountains, Yoğuntaş and Polos monuments, Cedit Ali Pasha Mosque and Bridge, Demirkoy district are some these historical destinations. Among the important historical and cultural assets of Fatih Demir Dökümhane, Tumulus and Dolmens, Sokullu Mehmet Pasha Complex, Tomb of Zindan Baba, Small Ayasofya Church (Gazi Süleyman Pasha Mosque), Vize Castle and Anfi Theater, Aya Nicoh Monastery, Kıyıköy Castle Kırklareli are countable monuments.



In the Black Sea coast of Strandza, there are 60 km suitable beaches for coastal usage; The beaches suitable for coastal use, İğneada, Begendik, Limanköy, K1yıköy and Kasatura are very popular beaches in summer.

K1yıköy Natural Sites, Vize District K1yıköy township on both sides of Pabuçdere and Kazandere, from the point of reaching the Black Sea, an important part of the first degree natural protection were taken as a protected area. There are two separate beaches that are frequently visited by local and foreign tourists in the area where both are reaching the seaside.

Archeological tourism, as one of the subtypes of cultural tourism. It can enhance the cultural level of the people by teaching the development process of the cultures through the archeological site and museums, raises the awareness of protecting the archeological remains, and derives national and local economic profit. Strandza; as a route of archeological tourism is an important destination.

With their rich historical, cultural data, archaeological sites that bear the marks of human life in Strandza are sources of information about the past. Conservation of archaeological assets is crucial for preserving city culture and developing sustainable settlements. In this manner, strategies for preserving the historic urban landscape and reviving urban history and culture must be utilized in order to transform original historical settlements to sustainable cities.

As an archaeological sites revival strategy, archaeological parks provide both cultural and archaeological legacy management and urban recreational activities and are seen as a new center for interpretation within cities. Those parks created in order to preserve historical sites and historical landscapes can either serve as archaeological sites parks and museums. And all of this variety makes up the components of archaeological parks (Kwas, 1986). Strandza-Kırklareli region can be a very rich Archaeological Park.

The major stages of the archaeological park approach are planning, design and field management. Other arrangements form their subcomponents. For this reason, the archaeological park is a phenomenon that must be addressed at different scales. The evaluation of a particular archaeological site as a park and its association with the public is shaped by planning. At this stage, the protection program should be prepared as a priority principle. Then the archaeological park should be designed on the lower scale. In the design phase, the 'accessibility' situation of the area should be analyzed firstly and its contents should be integrated with recreational and educational functions.



Tourists traveling for cultural purposes today seem to have a higher level of knowledge of archaeological assets. The factors that encourage people to go for cultural tourism purposes include historical monuments, historical websites, traditional food and beverage varieties, sacred values. Visiting cultural monuments in Strandza by tourists can provide a broad assortment of benefits to local people and the neighborhood. First of all, historical, cultural and natural areas in the region are protected under this respect. In addition, cultural heritage tourism plays a really important role both for the local people and for the tourists to have knowledge about the history and cultivation of the region of Strandza.

Tourism has positive effects on cultural assets as well as negative effects. Excessive appeal to the cultural attractions of the place can be exemplified by depreciation, disregard for local traditions and traditions, environmental problems in areas where infrastructure and superstructure are not supported, loss of control over cultural assets, physical harmfulness of cultural assets. Tourists' interest in cultural heritage and historical values began to flourish with the emergence and development of cultural tourism, historical regions, museums and ruins, visits to fairs and festivals held in ancient civilizations and settlements, has been increasing every day and has become an important motivation for tourism.

Cultural heritage is taken from previous generations as national heritage, together with an intangible and concrete elements. A culture informs about its creators, concrete elements such as traditional production methods, lifestyle, traditions or forms of worship, such as intangible values or architectural, archeological areas, crafts, clothes and food. They all describe, as a whole, the characteristics of past generations of the society in which they belong.

It is necessary to transfer the historical environmental consciousness of the people of the region, to make the local people aware of the use of existing archaeological attractions for tourism purposes and to create a holistic tourism sense. Otherwise, limited archeological assets in the region will not be able to come out of the tourist assets that show seasonal use, and only a certain commercial sector will benefit from this potential as it is in the present situation. The possibility of livelihood of the traditional touch, which reaches the region in the past, is possible with the survival of these historical, natural and cultural items.

#### BEST PRACTISE STRATEGIES FOR STRANDZA TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

Strandza-Kırklareli region, according to data in 2015 on the social and economic development in Turkey is located on the 30th level of growth among the 81 provinces and 53rd in terms of export volume. Kırklareli, which is becoming more and more unfavorable every year, has a



high potential for tourism as an alternative to the environment-friendly first class farming areas can create added value and develop employment.

Kırklareli's proximity to Istanbul, one of the world's greatest metropolises, has a very advantageous position in terms of tourism potential, due to the border with Bulgaria and the coast to the Black Sea. The lack of adequate promotion and marketing activities of existing tourism potential, inadequacy of supply in accommodation and food and beverage facilities and the lack of alternative tourism varieties are not enough to increase this advantage.

However, Kırklareli has all of the international brand name branding conditions. Besides the traditional sea, sand and sun summer holidays, Rural Tourism, which is one of the developed world tourism trends, have all the characteristics in the region. Different human settlements dating from the province of Kırklareli, different geography make this province great for rural tourism activities with its high mountains, forests, rare hoarsenesses, and Dupnisa Cave which is the single biggest cave of Trakya. The different traditions that the immigrant culture has created various tourism types such as cultural tourism, nature tourism, gastronomy tourism, ecotourism, special interest tourism, recreational tourism, trekking, bird watching, coastal tourism and cave tourism.

The solution of the problems of the province of Kırklareli is possible with the good evaluation of the advantages has in the province. For this, central and local governments; In Kırklareli province, local development plans, policies and projects that will assess all the potentials of the province in order to ensure local economic development, prevent unemployment and increase employment need to be implemented without delay. Today, strategically focused on industrial development programs, tourism and other natural supremations, especially applied to the transformation of illusions into brands, are successfully implemented in the promotion of prosperity.

Strandzha-Kırklareli; it has a relatively competitive advantage among many tourism centers, as it has forests of longevity, which are extraordinary beauty and richness in our world where everything is born before and green is gradually disappearing. The Forest project is aimed at GEF II (global warming for developing countries, international water pollution, ozone depletion, continuous organic pollution, land degradation and biodiversity destruction for developing countries to protect the global environment) protected and declared national park. In Demirköy and K1yıköy, preservation of the natural environment is tried to be preserved by



the preservation of the protected areas and some places in these areas. It is extremely important to protect the environment in order to leave an unspoiled environment for future generations.

Today, considering the tourism activities taking place at the global level, nearly 60% are regarded as nature-based tourist visits and are sufficient as tourism activities alone. The Kırklareli destination is also one of the attraction centers for people who want to breathe through the big city complex. Apart from classical holiday concept, besides enhancing different knowledge and experiences by visiting cultural and historical and natural beauties, it is desired to relax in a natural environment by tasting new people, different traditions, customs and lifestyles.

For this reason, Strandzha-Kırklareli is a true city of nature, history and culture. When current potentials are evaluated and necessary investments are made, rural tourism has a good potential for the region. In Kırklareli, rural tourism allows to be realized both in the natural environment and in the sea areas.

The development of rural tourism preferred by many travelers in the world will begin with the acceptance of local people living in rural areas. For this purpose, regarding the contributions of local people to rural tourism; local governments, the private sector and non-governmental organizations should be informed in coordination, educated, environmentally conscious, and the participation of the people especially in the education programs is required. In addition, information and support should be provided to the local people at every stage by cooperating with tourism enterprises. Historical and natural beauties must be retained for future generations to be transferred without deterioration. The protection-use balance should be the basic element to be considered here as it is in every sector.

When all resources owned by Kırklareli are evaluated in terms of sustainability, it appears that there are many natural resources to diversify the tourism potential for natural tourism visits. The unique beauty of the forest, the lake and the sea together and the fact that they can be visited every season are different elements. Tourists who come here to make use of these places usually make daily visits.

The most important advantage that the proximity to Istanbul will provide to the province of Kırklareli is; to organize tours to develop rural tourism especially to Kırklareli which is very close to Istanbul who want to appreciate the weekends and relax. These planned tours will make the province more well known and daily visitors will want to stay on their next visit, so tourism demand will increase. Kırklareli and other travel agencies in the province are not enough to



organize tours for this region. When we look at the tours organized by the many agencies in Istanbul for the weekend, the number of organized tours for Kırklareli is not enough. This is due to the fact that Kırklareli is not well recognized by its values as having everything from natural beauties to cultural beings.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The region has a wide variety of flora and fauna, various natural beauties, promenade sites, natural protected areas, monumental trees, natural caves formed centuries ago, historical and cultural values are among the eco tourism potentials and it is necessary for the public to be conscious of the protection of these values. Excavation studies are continuing within the scope of the Archeological Museum project in Küçükpınar Village, Kırklareli. In this project, it is aimed to evaluate urban-rural sites and monumental structures as a whole. In this way, while preserving the historical and cultural values in the rural areas, guests coming to the locality will be able to visit different cultural assets according to a certain travel route.
2. The local festivals in Kırklareli, rituals and celebrations can not be denied in terms of internal and external tourism. These activities provide added value and mobility to the economy of the province, district or village, even though they occur at certain times and within a certain period of time. The region is also well suited for hiking tours (trekking). For those who like to walk, it is possible to find many hiking routes, to develop this tourism alternative and to have pleasant hours by mapping this place. Agricultural and animal experimental activities can be increased by establishing farms for tourism (such as palivor farms, Arcadia, Bakuca İrem Çamlıca, Vino De Sara and other vintage festivals; vine, grape juice, vinegar etc.) that will provide tourism integration.
3. Kırklareli province has rich tourism potential and tourist attractions can be found, but there is a shortage of facilities, infrastructure and accommodation. Hostels and boutique hotels should be opened in coastal areas and near historical, natural places. Broken roads, lack of directional city signs, dirty area, hygienic conditions are extremely important in the development of tourism. In this regard, it is necessary for the people and companies to be sensitive in the coastal areas and other places visited by the tourists frequently.
4. Bulgaria is a border city and it is also a day trip at most. This is an important power that tourism has and the economy has developed. Various festivals, such as Kakava festivals, which are organized to develop cross-border relations due to the fact that it is a border city, can be



realized in cooperation with the border country, and cultural contacts and economic cooperation can be achieved by forming for example "sister cities".

5. Because of being a border city, tours with the opportunities of eating local restaurants and shopping can be arranged by employing qualified foreign language speaking staff at the border gates and visiting Kırklareli provinces with guides. Beginning with guides to introduce the city, the tourism industry will work every step of the field, the human power in the field is not enough. Guides and other sector employees should be educated in tourism branches. In this sense, gastronomy tourism should be introduced, as well as other tourism alternatives, the cuisine of Kırklareli region and other traditional Turkish dishes can be introduced. Training the people and the employee is very important and will high the awareness of the tourism environment.

6. Largest forests of the Strandzha mountains covered with dense forests and plateaus are the habitats of birds; Kocayazi, Kula villages and Dereköy, Demirköy, Vize and Bulgarian provinces in the districts of Kofcaz province; pigs, wolves; İğneada, Kıyıköy and Kastros, deer are seen around the region. There are foxes, rabbits and badgers on the banks of the creek in the valleys and slopes of the Ergene basin. Bedre, Handere, Ahmetçe and Şeytandere near the central district and rocky and bushy parts of Luleburgaz, Pınarhisar, Babaeski districts; freckles on meadows and vineyards; There are reeds and marshes where the rivers in the region of the needle sprang into the sea, and geese, ducks, woodcock and quail in the forests along the shore. The "Hunting Club", which was founded in 1955 in Kırklareli, keeps on hunting. In order to develop hunting tourism, suitable hunting tourism areas should be determined and necessary facilities should be established. In addition to land hunting, there is also a water fountain.

7. Today, internet has a very significant spot because it enables the person at the other end of the world to reach and introduce the product / service. For those who desire to get to this area; where they can live, where they can stay, what they can eat and where they can eat, as easily as images and price information and transit info, should be provided on the network sites. In addition, oral advice is crucial for the tourism industry, and these recommendations are made in virtual environments today, adhering to technology, as is the traditional way; people who have visited, seen and enjoyed are creating blogs in the virtual environment and expressing them in forums, sharing sites. This means that in the coming days the importance of the internet will increase even more.



8. Today's tourist profile is changing. Many people now prefer vacation plans that are designed for themselves or can be determined by themselves rather than packages that are offered to them in packages; not in masses but on their own in a calmer environment. It is necessary to plan on this point in the introduction to the region and to allow it to be planned in order to take into consideration these points of the tours to be organized. Kırklareli is very suited for special interest tourism due to its tourism potential and its geographical features and environmental sensibility. Making boat tours for a certain number of groups or people, personalizing tours and routes will give more honest outcomes in terms of tourist satisfaction.

9. The university at Kırklareli with close to 30.000 students in the region should mean that at least 5 thousand "tourism ambassadors" are trained each year in the region. This will contribute greatly to recognition of Kırklareli Province and to increase tourism potential. Universities are very important educational institutions that develop, enrich and bring the future where they are from every dimension. For this reason, local stakeholders in Kırklareli should be in cooperation with the university.

10. Restoration of the historic houses in the plateau area will preserve a significant historical texture in Kırklareli and provide a great contribution to tourism. Bulgarian and Greek citizens who come to Kırklareli for shopping and visit, especially the Greeks, have a joyful time and atmosphere in Yayla district. For the restoration of highland houses, projects can be produced in cooperation with Greece, Bulgaria within the framework of EU grant schemes. Local restaurants and boutique hotels with local and traditional flavors offer great contributions to the city's tourism and the economy. The contribution of our tourism potential to our economy will upgrade significantly with the increase in the numbers and quality of hotels and accommodation facilities around.

11. Traditional art centers and courses should be opened in Kırklareli in order to transfer old handicrafts to future generations and gain the economic vitality again for lost traditional arts. In this case, these handicrafts will add value not just to the local people but to the local economy. In Kırklareli, the development of local handicrafts such as pottery, hand sweeping, weaving can experience the experience of "making their own sweeping" by experiencing "experience tourism" pleasure in small productions where tourists like to participate in the process. Tarhana, kaçamak, pasta, which form the basis of the Kırklareli cuisine; manca, kapuska, poultry food, kalle, various fish grids, leek borek, muhacir borek, making and tasting tours of refined dishes



still made in the villages such as halva, baklava, pumpkin desserts, cheese varieties and hardaliye as a drink can be organized.

12. Due to the combination of sea, lake, mountain and forest in Kırklareli, this coastal line is not only limited to summer and coastal tourism but it is a national park. Kıyıköy is a coastal region with a very small sample of the world. it is very convenient to produce added value to the region in terms of tourism, botanical investigation, bird watching (Ornithology), hunting tourism and mountain hotel management. These natural beauty and wildlife should be evaluated in terms of tourism. The Dupnisa Cave in the region is also very important for our city and attracts tourists from home and abroad. However, Aşpınar and Kanlıgeçit Excavations dating back to 8500 BC, the Vize Antique Theater, the mounds remaining from the time of Traklar in Dokuzhöyük constitute the values of Kırklareli on the subject of history and culture tourism.

13. The destination of Kırklareli should be segmented to determine the current tourist and future potential domestic and foreign tourism market within the framework of sustainable tourism; (families, honeymooners, businessmen, congress participants, retirees, women, children, young people, professional chambers, members of national and international NGOs, Kırklareli born celebrities, Kırklareli grooms and brides). Establishment of a knowledge bank related to the target market (the number of tourists coming from Kırklareli, tourism income, research conducted in the target market, research conducted in the region), observations and results of surveys (habits of the target market, life style) (how will the future guests of Kırklareli meet their eating and drinking, accommodation, recreation and entertainment needs)?

Thrace, Marmara, Strandzha-Kırklareli destinations across the border should be described and determined in detail. When the destination of Kırklareli is chosen, it should be researched to compare with which destinations the competing destinations are compared to the goods, services and experiences they are offering to tourists and it should be investigated whether they are more attractive and these products should be considered when making the presentation of Kırklareli destination brand. For example; According to competitors, natural, historical, geographical, cultural and social events, crafts, festivals, fairs, museums, exhibitions, local food culture, city life, shopping opportunities, hospitality of the local people, legends, stories, cross-border attraction in Kırklareli should be explained and promoted to all.

In order to evaluate the potential of this competitive advantage, advertising, promotion, public relations, personal sales activities should be given importance, coordinated work by local



governments, non-governmental organizations, tourism enterprises and related institutions should be provided and investment in accommodation management should be completed.

14. The local people should be in the management of these facilities. Otherwise, the income from tourism will be transferred to other regions. If rural tourism activities are managed properly, it will provide additional income to local people with job opportunities, prevent immigration from the region, increase the quality of life and prosperity of the local people and contribute to rural development positively. Rural tourism also contributes positively to the agriculture sector. However, the increase in the value of the immovables in the region should not cause people living in these regions to move away from agriculture.

15. Destination brand loyalty should be created in Kırklareli. It is important that Kırklareli's lifestyle, which he had acquired from ancient times, is reflected day by day and how long it has been experienced by the coming tourists. This creates a process that is parallel to how stakeholders living in the destination first of all realize how much they aware, feel, own, and organize destination brand management. The brand management process of tourist destinations is not always easy, and many stakeholders living in a small geographical area, acting according to their own motive and purpose, can be found in different initiatives.

In fact, in the brand management process, central and local governments, non-governmental organizations, professional organizations and local people in the city should be in communication and coordination with each other. Supporting economic development; on the basis of councils to ensure participation of public and private sector organizations and Civil Society organizations related to the tourism sector at the national, interregional, provincial and municipal levels in the framework of good governance principles, which are applicable at the physical level, including a community oriented and sustainable tourism initiative, institutionalization should be targeted.

The emphasis should be placed on marketing in order to increase tourism potential of Kırklareli Province. When it comes to marketing, there are a variety of activities starting from the development of tourist products, to pricing, promotion and distribution. First of all, it is necessary to start by responding to the question "What are the touristic products / products that are suitable and potentially developable for Kırklareli?" As mentioned above, the region is suitable for nature tourism, cave tourism, marine tourism. These products; demand, competitors, seasonal factors and so on. Introducing products are extremely important because



the consumer hears the desire to purchase products and services that he is aware of, does not naturally demand products he does not know; he wants to travel if he knows the places and features of the place to visit. For this reason, Kırklareli province should be promoted most effectively with promotional tools such as advertising, public relations, personal sales, sales promotion, direct marketing, e-marketing.

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