

PRO EXTOUR Project Newsletter (1st issue)

Common borders. Common solutions.

PROMOTING HERITAGE- AND CULTURE-BASED EXPERIENTIAL TOURISM IN THE BLACK SEA BASIN (PRO EXTOUR)



BRIEF PROJECT INFORMATION

PRO EXTOUR is a project that aims to promote experiential tourism as a sustainable development pathway for tourism business in the BSB by valorising the potential of the indigenous heritage and culture, innovative solutions and cross-border cooperation. The project is a joint initiative of three higher education institutions with established applied research expertise in tourism - Varna University of Management (BG), Yerevan State University (AR) and Thessaloniki University (GR), a cultural networking organisation - the Georgian Arts and Culture Centre (GE), and regional hospitality cluster - the Culinary Arts and Hospitality Association (BG).

The project will bring about

- a regional needs assessment report and action plan for

encouraging the heritage and culture-based experiential tourism in the BSB,

- inventories of business models, heritage- and culture-based activities and events,
- an on-line repository of resources and tools for experiential tourism,
- a cross-border network of Black Sea Hubs on experiential tourism,
- international conferences and fair on digital technologies, heritage- and culture-based experiential tourism in the BSB.

The transnational cooperation has a high added value since it mobilises the capacity of the regional actors and leads to tailor-made solutions, economic and social viability in tourism and hospitality.

PRO EXTOUR stands for “Promoting Heritage- and

Culture-based Experiential Tourism in the Black Sea Basin”. The project is implemented between 1.06.2020 and 30.11.2022 with the support of the ENI CBC Black Sea Basin Programme 2014-2020.



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Varna University of Management (VUM)

VUM is an established business school specialised in social sciences and offering study programs in Management, Marketing, Administration, Tourism, Information Studies and Pedagogy. It also provides innovative education in Culinary Arts, Culinology and Hospitality as well as in Software Engineering. Research areas of its faculty include also education management, sustainable development, service automation, social economy, cross-cultural studies, organizational behaviour, leadership and others. Double-degree programs are offered based on strategic partnerships and accreditation by the Bulgarian National Evaluation and Accreditation Agency and the British Accreditation Council. VUM's prioritizes interdisciplinary education and research as well as contribution to regional and national smart specialization. The academic and student community of VUM includes representatives of over 50 nationalities and countries around the world.



Aristotle University of Thessaloniki

City_Space_Flux Research Unit

AUTH constitutes a comprehensive institution with 41 Faculties and Schools serving a vast array of scientific fields, ranging from natural and technological to social and health sciences, arts and humanities. The University aims to offer equal opportunities for learning, research and communication; it aspires to create an environment where education and research thrive, and subsequently, realize the vision for a better world with equal rights for everybody to claim the fruits of economic growth and social prosperity.

City_Space_Flux (CSF) constitutes an interdepartmental research unit of AUTH that promotes knowledge, innovative research and pilot practices on topics that focus on the strong linkages between spatial and transport planning. Its special emphasis is on cities and the interactions between urban dynamics, city structure, travel behaviour and spatial flows of any character. CSF is specialized in urban planning and regeneration, sustainable mobility, historical evolution and transformation of



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the cities, cultural heritage enhancement and sustainable tourism, climate change impacts and resilience, participatory planning practices.



Georgian Arts & Culture Center (Gacc) Georgia

GACC is one of the leading NGOs in Georgia with 25 years of operational experience. In 2016 GACC became official representative of Europa Nostra in Georgia. The mission of the organization is preservation, development, promotion and sustainable use of Georgian culture and cultural heritage; further support the development of cultural industries, cultural tourism among them; through capacity building support strengthening of cultural institutions, culture-based SME and individuals economic viability, market development, junction with the tourism industry,

awareness-raising locally and internationally; assist to the further promotion of international relations and cultural exchanges; support various educational and gallery/exhibition activities. GACC works for the development of management plans for cultural sites, creation of cultural districts, use of tangible and intangible heritage as a source for the creation of new offers to the tourism industry and hence economic viability of the culture.

Yerevan State University

Founded in 1919 Yerevan State University is the first Armenian University and is ranked among the top higher education institution in the South Caucasus. YSU strives to provide high-quality education and facilitate research through innovative initiatives and policies. YSU is the leader of university educational reforms in Armenia, including reforms in administration, management, curriculum development, having introduced QA system comparable with ENQA standards.

Internationalization is a high priority for YSU, including, but not limited to such areas as joint degrees, academic exchanges and scientific cooperation.



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YSU is an active member of several international networks, including European University Association, International Association of Universities, Black Sea University Network and Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie. YSU has close scientific and educational contacts with more than 250 universities and centers around the world; YSU has been cooperating with numerous international organizations and projects, some of which include the British Council, DAAD, USAID, ISTC, CRDF, FP7, TEMPUS, Erasmus+ etc.

YSU has successful history of development, management and implemented of about 20 TEMPUS projects in such areas as university management, strategic planning, internationalization, educational reforms and curricular development.

YSU is represented in this project by the Faculty of Geography and Geology and particularly by the Service Chair (Organization of Services Activities and Sustainable Tourism). This Chair is one of the fast developing chairs of YSU. Chair has been established only in 2013 but now has more than 600 students. Chair was involved in TEMPUS-SuToMa project (2013-2016). At the same time members of the chair have been involved in different international projects. Chair is the only one in all Armenia which operates under the “umbrella” of sustainability and Concept of Sustainable Development among its filed. Chair has laboratory for tourism.



Culinary Arts and Hospitality Association (CAHA)

“Culinary Arts and Hospitality” Association is a culinary and hospitality sector cluster for Northeaster Bulgaria. With over 30 members. It started operating at the end of 2011 and is based in Dobrich, Bulgaria. The organization`s main objective is to contribute to the development of comprehensive high value-added tourist products in its region of operation and to build a lasting and strong relationship between education and business in support of regional economic development and social cohesion. In view of contributing to the development of the right skills and to the creation of new jobs in the hospitality and culinary sector, the

Cluster promotes innovations by facilitating the knowledge-transfer links between training institutions and business entities operating in the sector or in other related sectors.



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PROJECT ACTIVITIES

Project awareness raising event

On April 16th, 2021 an on-line awareness raising event devoted to the PRO EXTOUR project had been organized, during which Project concept, background and rationale were presented.

ARMENIA

In attendance were public and private organizations involved in tourism sector, entrepreneurs, tour operators, guides, students and lecturers of different HEI.

During the event the NAR was presented and mostly discussed.

National Workshop/Focus group discussion

On June 11, 2021 at YSU Faculty of Geography and Geology a Focus group discussion as part of the PRO EXTOUR project national awareness raising events has been organized. Tour operators, representatives of tour agencies, guides, managers of cultural/heritage sites, festival organizers, representatives of local authorities were among the attendants.

During the workshop the Regional Action Plan on Vision and goals of Heritage and Culture-based Experiential Tourism such as raising the level of internationalization and publicization of the intangible cultural heritage of the RA and ways of creation a culture-based international tourism image for the RA were presented and discussed.

<http://www.y-su.am/news/hy/discussion-promotion-expermental-tourism-YSU?fbclid=IwAR0n1U6N2UuPBRXaQ4Ekml9MvN1X-Irb4HzfX1N0UBww3jAA3lzcW2Vj50>



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PRO EXTOUR International conference

On October 1, 2021 an international conference within the framework of PRO EXTOUR was organised at Yerevan State University to sum up, where all project partners presented the Needs Assessment analysis on perspectives, challenges and visions on the development of experiential tourism in the BSB countries. The visions and goals on HCBET in the Black Sea Basin and in the Region also were presented and discussed.

<http://www.yసు.am/news/en/tourism-conference-YSU>, <https://youtu.be/tP7QWymZatw>



BULGARIA

Studying the country- and region-specific needs for the development of heritage and culture- based experiential tourism

The study was performed between August 2020 and January 2021 with the aim to identify the Bulgaria's potential to offer authentic experience based on its heritage and culture and to outline the environment and resources for development of experiential activities. The expert team engaged in desk and field research to identify and analyse all stakeholders' interests in this regard.

A standardised on-line questionnaire was used to identify the visitors' perceptions and attitudes towards experiential tourism offering, with about 100 respondents involved actively in the research process.

Focus Group Discussion of PRO EXTOUR research outputs in Bulgaria

The Regional Needs Assessment report and Action Plan were presented and discussed with local stakeholders in a focus-group discussion, organized by the Culinary Arts and Hospitality Association on



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May 20th, 2021 in Dobrich. Experiential tourism is context-specific and requires much pro-activity and innovation by the service providers. Therefore, the direct involvement of stakeholders is indispensable for the project. More than 30 entrepreneurs, tour agents, representatives of business branch organizations, NGOs and researchers, commented on the PRO EXTOUR findings, new initiatives that are launched by the local communities to attract visitors, the challenges and prospects for the hospitality industry in the post-pandemic period.



National Awareness Raising Event in Bulgaria

PRO EXTOUR National Awareness Raising Event in Bulgaria was held on June 3rd, 2021, in Dobrich and enjoyed evident public interest. More than 35 representatives of the tourism sector, cultural institutions and museums, local authorities, media and other stakeholders participated on-site to dwell on the new realities and prospects for the hospitality industry in the post-pandemic period. The concept of experiential tourism has not been new to the communities along the Bulgarian Black Sea coast and many municipalities have identified it as a new priority in their development plans. The event gave rise to many new partnerships and exchange of ideas among the participants.



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Identifying country- and region-specific needs for the development of heritage and culture- based experiential tourism in Georgia

GEORGIA

The study was conducted between September 2020 and January 2021 in order to explore the potential of development of heritage and culture-based experiential tourism in Georgia. It identified the main assets, environment and resources for development of experiential activities in different regions of Georgia.

The empirical research encompassed the combination of both quantitative and qualitative research methods. Semi-structured interviews with field practitioners were performed to analyze state-of-art issues, needs and constraints in target field. Among 100 respondents there were representatives of tour operators and rural tourism entrepreneurs such as guesthouse/hotel owners, restaurant/cafe owners (29), national and regional (state) tourism organizations (5), non-governmental organizations (5), international aid organizations (2), and tourists (60).

National Awareness Raising Event in Georgia

On February 4, 2021 GACC team held an online Awareness Raising Event with the representatives of local authorities, Destination Management Organizations (DMO) and Local Action Groups (LAG) to present the activities planned in the frame of PRO-EXTOUR project.

Maka Dvalishvili, Natia Trapaidze, Lela Khartishvili and Nana Kartvelishvili spoke to more than 70 participants from various municipalities about the



PRO-EXTOUR project in general, its goals and missions, as well as importance and opportunities. During the meeting GACC team introduced Black Sea Hub, as a place where entrepreneurs in tourism can use expert consulting and mentoring, meet other entrepreneurs and collaborate in applied research projects in experiential tourism. Overall, the meeting was interactive, welcomed and well received by all participants. Lots of them on the spot expressed their willingness to participate into the project activities. It was decided that similar meetings will be held in the future too.



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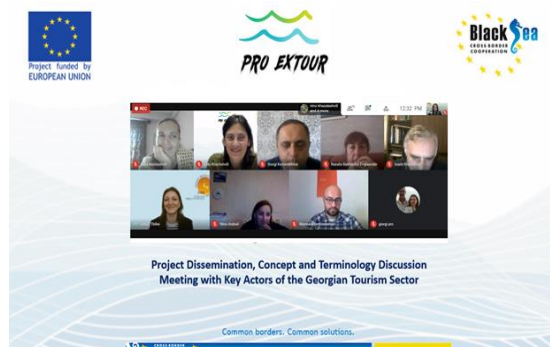


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Focus Group Discussion of PRO EXTOUR research outputs in Georgia

The meeting was held on April 23, 2021 together with tourism sector professionals, experts and academia representatives GACC experts dedicated to definition of Experiential Tourism Term and its Vision in the Context of Cultural Tourism of Georgia.

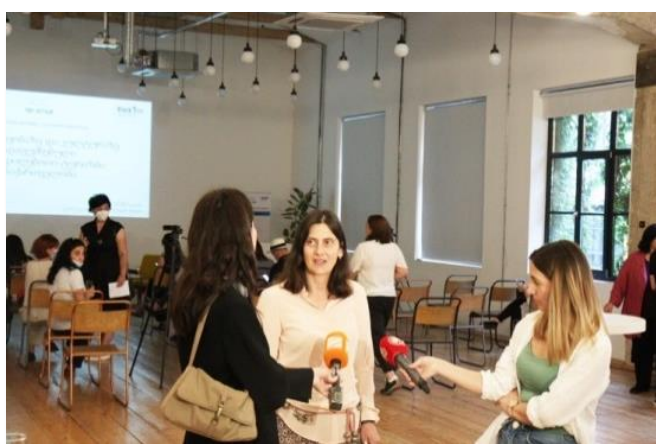


National Awareness Event, Georgian Arts & Culture Center

On July 7th, 2021 Georgian Arts & Culture Center held a National Awareness Event at Fabrika, Tbilisi. The aim of this event was to introduce PRO EXTOUR and experiential tourism to a wider audience. The meeting also featured a discussion of the current trends, challenges and envisioned future developments for the field of experiential tourism in Georgia.

The event was held in a hybrid format - beneficiaries were invited to attend both in-person and online.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia and the Georgian National Tourism Administration officials welcomed the participants of the meeting. Lela Khartishvili GACC Tourism Expert, introduced the findings of the Regional Needs Assessment report and Action Plan. Business models of HCBET were also presented and discussed in terms of context-specific requirements and innovation by the service providers. Lela Khartishvili introduced strategic vision and objectives of experiential tourism, followed by panel discussion with the topic: Experiential tourism products and services in Georgia.



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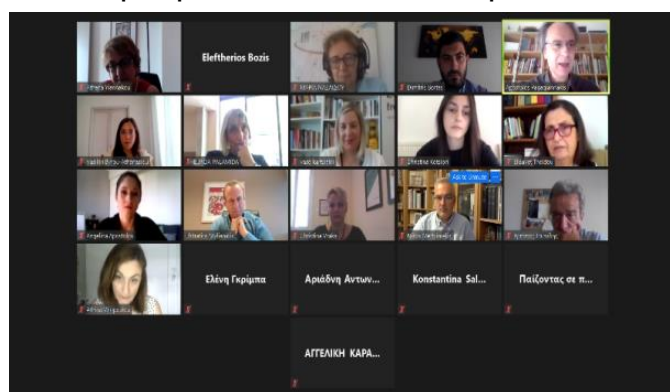
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Focus Group Workshop for PRO EXTOUR research outputs in Greece

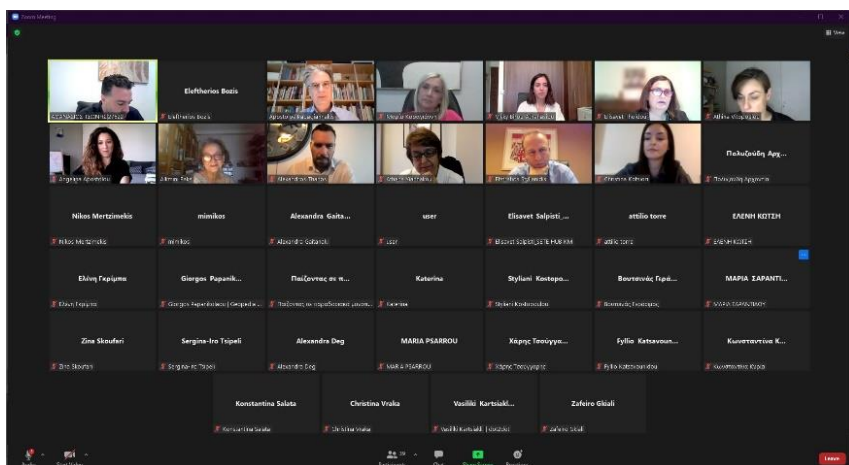
GREECE

The CITY_SPACE_FLUX Research Unit of AUTH organized on June 30th, 2021, an online workshop entitled "Heritage- and culture-based experiential tourism as a lever for local development. Needs, challenges, perspectives from the point of view of the stakeholders". The meeting was attended by public and private bodies and companies active in the tourism sector with the aim to exchange views and develop a public debate on the promotion of experiential tourism in

Greece. The workshop explored the challenges, opportunities, and prospects of experiential tourism, which had been the subject of three related studies that have already been completed: Regional Needs Assessment, Regional Action Plan, and Blueprint for Successful Business Models for the development of experiential tourism in the Greek Regions of Central Macedonia and Eastern Macedonia-Thrace.



National Awareness Event for Experiential Tourism in Greece



The CITY_SPACE_FLUX Research Unit of AUTH organized yesterday Thursday, September 30, 2021, 10:00-13:00, an online national awareness raising event in Greece entitled "Challenges and prospects for the development of heritage- and culture-based experiential tourism". The aim of the event was to raise awareness and develop a public debate between public and private bodies and companies, academia, and policy-

makers, regarding the development potential and opportunities offered by the promotion and enhancement of experiential tourism in the Regions of Central Macedonia and Eastern Macedonia-Thrace. The Vice Rector for Research and Lifelong Education AUTH, the Head of the School of Spatial Planning and Development AUTH, the Head of the School of Architecture AUTH, the Deputy Regional Governor for Tourism of Central Macedonia, the Deputy Regional Governor for Tourism of Eastern



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Macedonia-Thrace, and the Deputy Mayor of Culture and Tourism of the Municipality of Thessaloniki delivered introductory remarks. Next, public and private bodies and companies provided scientific inputs on the multifaceted dimensions of experiential tourism. Finally, the research team of CITY_SPACE_FLUX presented the Regional Needs Assessment Report and the Regional Action Plan for experiential tourism in BSB Greek regions.

MAIN FINDINGS ON NEEDS ANALYSIS

ARMENIA

1. HCBET is already developing in the RA, mainly due to the investment programs of international organizations.
2. HCBET has developed mainly in the regions, especially in rural communities of the RA.
3. HCBET is based on the use of the intangible cultural heritage of Armenian cuisine, arts and crafts.
4. HCBET does not yet have a widespread perception or interpretation in the RA.
5. The RA does not have a HCBET development policy, expressed in the form of concept, strategy and development programs.
6. Public-private-educational/scientific cooperation is almost non-existent for HCBET in the RA.
7. The development of HCBET is hampered by the problems



- of service in enterprises, sometimes by low qualification of human resources, imperfection of legal regulations (within the framework of standardization-licensing), low or no cooperation between enterprises, lack of inclusion of these tourism offers in tour packages developed by tour operators.
8. Lack of educational programs on HCBET in the RA

- universities.
9. There is a need for specialized training for people involved in HCBET.
10. There is a need to improve marketing strategies for companies operating in HCBET.
11. There is a need for guidelines for COVID-19 pandemic for HCBET companies.



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BULGARIA

The desk research revealed that Bulgaria has all the predicaments to be a HCBET destination. On one hand, Bulgaria has strong traditions in providing tourism services and a well performing tourism industry. On the other hand, the government has made genuine efforts to develop a strategic policy framework towards more sustainable, niche tourist offering and to work in coordination and partnership with the private and public companies and organizations. It is also evident that the richness of the Bulgarian cultural heritage is underutilized and Bulgaria remains “terra incognita” or “the best kept secret” for most of the international and even domestic tourists. There is an urgent need to diversify the structure of the tourism offering and to prioritize greener, community-friendly and higher-income generating sustainable forms of tourism. Creating a new image of the



country is another important task if we want to renounce the association with a mass, cheap tourism destination.

The primary study confirmed that both demand and supply sides are ready to welcome and support HCBET development. The tourists are seeking for new, meaningful activities. They want to participate more actively in the life of the local community. They are ready to sacrifice convenience and comfort and to pay more in order to gain insightful and

transformative experiences. The tourism stakeholders regard HCBET as promising, high-yield and a potential remedy for the global crisis. All of them believe that the country has an unleash potential for HCBET development and it should be given a priority in the policy and decision making initiative of the government and the private sector. The success however could be achieved only by coordinated efforts and partnership between all stakeholders involved.



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BLACK SEA BASIN

The needs assessment affirms that HCBET has high but underutilized potential in the Black Sea Regions of Romania, Moldova, Ukraine and Turkey as well.

The desk research revealed that the experiential or experience-based tourism is implicitly considered in the government policies of the observed countries. Only in Romania, the national strategy for tourism links culture and heritage with experience and innovations. In the other three countries, the focus is rather on special interest based tourism based on culture and heritage. In this regard, a more integrated approach is necessary in the policy documents as well as pathways for proper localisation of the strategic aims and priorities in the development strategies of the regions and communities, where culture is created and preserved. In addition, the tourism and culture policies should be made coherent in order to preserve and conserve the unique resources of the



Black Sea Area while avoiding overexploitation. Better use should be made of national and international flagman initiatives that promote the cities and regions across Europe - such UNESCO list, European Capital of Culture, European Youth Capital, Council of Europe Years and so on.

The primary study confirmed that both tourists/visitors and service providers are intersected and support the development of HCBET. Both groups identify two key elements of the travelling experience: the visit to a certain place and the experience, related to it. But,

while for the travellers the act of visiting the destination is the leading one, the service providers identify the experience (and the memories related to it) as more important. Accordingly, the primary task of the service providers is to attract the visitors to a certain place/destination. In this regard, both the survey respondents and academic researchers call for improved national branding of their countries, improved accessibility in the form of infrastructure and higher security standards.

Experiences become central when the visitors get to a



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place. Sustainability and innovation were not explicitly mentioned as integral parts of this process, even though the survey respondents were intuitively aware of their importance. Visitors tend to use technologies to intensify

their experiences only under condition and therefore should be used wisely by the service-providers. A holistic approach is needed, including the local community, local and regional authorities, along with the service providers. It is the

personal involvement that builds in tourists a sense of care and responsibility, and form a long-lasting memorable associations with the visited destinations.

GEORGIA

The analysis of the needs assessment confirms that the heritage and culture-based experiential tourism offerings are becoming more and more popular among consumers. Consequently, Georgia's tourism industry is concerned with what visitors are looking for and this encourages travel service providers to diversify their travel offerings, and combine their activities with authentic areas in tailor-made tours.

SWOT analysis of Heritage and Culture-based Experiential Tourism in Georgia
Strength and Opportunities

- Rich and diverse heritage and culture
- State support
- Use of local resources and



talents

- Integration into Cultural Routes Program
- Advantageous location in the Caucasian region
- Support from the Council of Europe and international organizations
- Development of international thematic tours
- Regulations and copyright protection

Weaknesses and Threats

- Less diversified and quality touristic product
- Inadequate/insufficient qualification and knowledge of the staff
- Growing trend of migration of working-age population
- Weak cooperation and the regional and state level
- Weak network cooperation



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between service providers (which hinders engagement of masters in the tourism market)
→ Insufficient interpretation and marketing of HCBET tour product
→ Unstable political situation in the region

→ Post-COVID-19 pandemic period
According to experts and the sector specialists, new opportunities have appeared against the background of challenges at the tourism market. In this regard, three issues are identified:

- Transition of educational tourism experience to online practice of remote sharing of specific experiences;
- Creation of potential for domestic tourism development;
- Setting short-term goals and making changes to the existing tourism strategy.

GREECE

The Regions of Central Macedonia and Eastern Macedonia and Thrace, which belong to Black Sea Basin (BSB-GR region), are two regions with rich history, wealth of natural resources, many important historical monuments, and population with vivid and diverse cultural background. In both BSB-GR regions, experiential tourism encompasses culture, gastronomy, rural and adventurous experiences. The most experiential-oriented businesses with a fully designed tourism product are related to alternative tours, and agricultural and wine activities. These businesses are located mainly in the Region of Central Macedonia. In the rural



and remote areas of both BSB-GR regions, appealing and distinctive experiential offerings have been developed by accommodation enterprises, in order to survive in the international competitive scene. Gastronomy experiential activities, such as food and wine tasting and traditional cook lessons, are

organized by wineries, agricultural businesses, and traditional cooperative organizations.

The results of the consumers' survey conducted to assess consumer attitudes, perceptions and behavior patterns highlight that most people travel to discover new areas, to explore the living



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culture of a place but also to engage in active holidays and recreation. This underlines the importance of having a “winning mix” in the touristic offering of a destination/experience by combining three factors, new places, living culture and recreation.

After the COVID-19 pandemic, the criteria for selecting a destination might change. The structure of tourism would thus need to be reorganized, following the changes the “new normality” will impose. To this end, a review of the legislative framework to facilitate the development of

experiential tourism appears as a necessity. It is important that, after the pandemic crisis, tourism is expected to offer higher quality products that will provide added value to all stakeholders, including visitors and the local community.

MAIN FINDINGS ON ACTION PLAN

Armenia

HCBET for Armenia can be considered one of the strategic directions of tourism development with innovative approaches. Due to its sustainable development, it will be possible to ensure the balanced territorial development of tourism in particular. At present, the key strategic steps for the development of HCBET in Armenia should be:

- ✓ HCBET state policy development and clarification;
- ✓ Organizing promotional activities between HCBET stakeholders,
- ✓ Sustainable use and preservation of Armenian cultural values included in HCBET;
- ✓ Implementation of regional and international cooperation and investment programs within HCBET;
- ✓ HCBET development of relevant professional qualities of the parties involved,
- ✓ Creating a coordinated educational and scientific basis for HCBET.



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Bulgaria

The regional action plan for the development of HCBET in Bulgaria is aligned along the 3 main priorities:

1. Positioning of the country on the global market as a HCBET destination
2. Increasing the competitiveness of the HCBET sector
3. Supporting HCBET development by creating favourable conditions and business environment

A roadmap of actions or a strategic policy framework towards more sustainable, niche tourist offering has to be elaborated by the relevant institutions in collaboration with the tourism providers and the local communities. Joint efforts of all stakeholders are needed to:

- improve the country's image on the global tourism market and successfully position Bulgaria as an attractive and recognizable HCBT destination;
- diversify of the offering by the inclusion of special interest tourism products in the national portfolio;
- preserve, protect and enhance the cultural heritage, including valorisation of the tourism resources;
- enhance the quality of the services, thus leading to increased competitiveness;
- obtain governmental stimuli for HCBT development;
- provide for intense usage of Hi Tech and web-based solutions such as virtual tours, digitalization of the products; more intense use of on-line platforms and social media for promotion and distribution.



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Black Sea Basin

The countries in the BSB area should join forces to promote HCBET on a regional level and adopt a coordinated policy towards its development. Some of the key areas of strategic importance include:

- Promotion of BSB region as a common destination for heritage - and cultural- based experiential tourism,
- Creating strong HCBET offering, including cross-border theme routes and cultural products,
- Enhancing competitiveness of the sector by providing an excellent ratio between price and value proposition,
- Protection, preservation and valorisation of the cultural and heritage-based assets,
- Ensuring financial stimuli, technical assistance, and support for entrepreneurial social and business initiatives,
- Encouraging smart tech solutions, web-based application, and digitalization of HCBET offering, sales, and promotion,
- Promoting cross-border cooperation, including joint business ventures, research, development, educational, and training activities.

Georgia

By 2030 Georgia will be a competitive destination of Heritage and Culture-Based Experiential Tourism in the Black Sea Region, based on its rich living culture and high-quality services. The country creates conditions for participation in practice which gains authentic experiences by tourists for increasing local community's social and economic benefits. At the same time, it ensures preservation of cultural heritage raises appreciation and awareness from local population as well as tourists and increases tourism revenues in the country.



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HCBET 4 directions, 9 strategic goals and 24 strategic actions:

Strategic directions

HCBET product development

- Reservation and protection of Heritage and Culture
- Access to the Market and Communication
- Governance and Collaboration

Goals of the Strategy:

➤ Authentic, competitive HCBET touristic products and services are developed on the basis of the country's diverse and rich living culture.

➤ The country's heritage and living culture are preserved in the long run marketing and communication meet the target market requirements and represent the country on the international creative and experiential tourism market.

➤ HCBET touristic products and services are developed on the basis of the country's diverse and rich living culture.

➤ HCBET management corresponds to multi-sectoral and co-participatory development approaches, where the engagement of local community and cooperation at various levels are envisaged.

A roadmap of actions or a strategic policy framework towards more sustainable, niche tourist offering has to be elaborated by the relevant institutions in collaboration with the tourism providers and the local communities. Joint efforts of all stakeholders are needed to achieve:

- Creation of high quality, HCBET tour product where local resources and elements of living culture are integrated
- Creation and management of touristic infrastructure tailored to cultural values;
- Increasing opportunities locally and in the region for the purpose of making innovative and profitable offers
- Increase awareness of heritage and cultural resources
- Avoidance of loss of cultural resources
- Development and implementation of effective target organizational and marketing measures
- Enhancement of network cooperation at the local, national and international level
- Enhancement of self-government co-participatory practice - community-based activities
- Coordination of Advisory Council/Platform



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Greece

The Regional Action Plan focuses on a set of recommendations to be implemented by the main private and public sector stakeholders in tourism to promote opportunities provided by experiential tourism in the BSB-GR region, and it is structured along **4 Strategic Priorities (S)**. Each Strategic Priority embodies specific Objectives (O), which are specified into Actions of strategic nature. The Strategic Priorities and their Objectives are as follows:

S.1. Enhancement and utilization of cultural resources

S1.01. Identification of the resources in the BSB-GR regions

S1.02. Improving the visibility and the attractiveness of the resources

S1.03. Sustainable use of resources

S.2. Development of high quality and innovative experiential tourism product

S2.01. Restructuring of the BSB - GR region's tourism model

S2.02. Enhance the quality of experiential product in the tourism sector

S2.03. Integrating marketing and branding practices to experiential product

S.3. Building capacity and support the transition to experiential tourism SMEs

S3.01. Enhance the quality of experiential tourism enterprises

S3.02. Foster innovation presence of SMEs and reinforce their sustainability

S.4. Promotion of public and private partnerships for the development of experiential tourism

S4.01. Managing experiential tourism through a Destination Management Organization (DMO)

S4.02. Promote branding and brand identity of destinations

S4.03. Networking and cooperation of local stakeholders

S4.04. Cross-border cooperation for the promotion of experiential tourism

The Regional Action Plan also identifies the main stakeholders that could be involved in the field of heritage and culture-based experiential tourism in relation to their spatial level of reference (national, regional, local) and their ownership status (public, private).



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Common borders. Common solutions.

CONTACT INFORMATION:

LEAD PARTNER

Varna University of Management
13a Oborishte str., 9000 Varna, Bulgaria
Tel. +359 52 620871
Tel. +359 58 655620

E-mail: projects_dept@vumk.eu
Website: www.vum.bg
Facebook: [/VarnaUniversityofManagement](https://www.facebook.com/VarnaUniversityofManagement)

PARTNERS

Yerevan State University
1 Alex Manoogian, 0025, Yerevan, Armenia
E-mail: info@ysu.am, international@ysu.am
Website: <http://www.ysu.am/main/en>
Facebook: [/ysu.am](https://www.facebook.com/ysu.am)

Georgian Arts and Culture Center
7, Niko Nikoladze str. Tbilisi, 0108, Georgia
E-mail: gacc@gaccgeorgia.org
Website: www.gaccgeorgia.org
Facebook: [/GACC.gaccgeorgia.org](https://www.facebook.com/GACC.gaccgeorgia.org)

Aristotle University of Thessaloniki
City_Space_Flux Research Unit
Thessaloniki 541 24, Greece
Website: <https://www.auth.gr/en/>
E-mail: apa@plandevel.auth.gr
Facebook: [/CitySpaceFlux](https://www.facebook.com/CitySpaceFlux)

Culinary Arts and Hospitality Association
3 Bulgaria str., 9300 Dobrich, Bulgaria
Website: <http://www.culinary-arts.bg/>
E-mail: akig_bg@abv.bg
Facebook: [/ClusterKulinarnilzkustvalGostopriemstvo](https://www.facebook.com/ClusterKulinarnilzkustvalGostopriemstvo)



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