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MEMOFISH

Memory and Future. Stories about the Danube Civilization



COMMON MANAGEMENT PLAN for joint commercialization of tourism products



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THE PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

The present document has been developed within project „MEMOFISH - Memory and Future. Stories about the Danube Civilization“, funded under INTERREG V-A Romania-Bulgaria Programme 2014 - 2020.

It is a practical marketing document, designed to serve as a guide for all stakeholders, incl. the project partners with regards to the follow-up marketing and management efforts needed to widely promote the products that have been created as part of the MEMOFISH project (tourist routes, digital materials and visualizations, advertising and promotional materials, strategic documents, web-platform, etc.).

More particularly this document shall be of use to all parties (tour operators, tourist agencies, tourist service providers, tourist promoters, etc.), who would like to take the necessary steps to commercialise the new integrated cross-border tourist routes that have been elaborated.

To provoke the interest of the modern tourists to fairly unknown destinations such as the ones that are being promoted within the project, is a job that would require longer-term commitment and consistent investment not only from the project partners, but also from the key stakeholders - the local communities and the tourist industry representatives. Work in partnership is a key to the success, thus this document is targeted to all entities that would like to use the project products and join efforts to attract more visitors to the cross-border region at the same time ensuring the preservation of local heritage. However, only licensed or otherwise legally authorized operators from the tourist industry can use the Memofish resources in order to construct commercial offers. All other interested parties as well as individual tourists can promote, use or offer the products free of charge.

The final aims are to contribute for the development of competitive tourist destinations, which can attract new tourist flows, provide new jobs and increase the opportunities provided by the local communities in a sustainable way.





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INTRODUCTION TO THE MEMOFISH PROJECT

The Danube river, the existing border dividing Bulgaria and Romania has long been an obstacle to look at the cross-border region as one joint tourist destination. The research and analyses concentrate on the problems starting from the poor infrastructure and difficult accessibility, lack of attractions and low quality of services but this did not help much for building a unique image of the region as a place able to present competitive, integrated cross-border touristic offers.

The Danube river may be a physical barrier, but it surely opens new opportunities for the local communities to join forces for development and growth. There is culture, there is nature, there is lots of history and traditions, but from touristic point of view the region needs to make visitors indulge in something new, something intriguing, something that will bring them unforgettable experience on both banks of the river by using instruments to make them interested and help them in their decision to come.

This was exactly the challenge undertaken by the partners¹ of the MEMOFISH project- to discover and present the potential of the CBC region as an attractive place to visit. They choose to achieve this goal stepping on three main pillars:

1. To research, describe and reveal for the public the heritage of the Danube river fisheries communities.
2. To digitalize and visualize them in order to present and promote them to a wider audience
3. To use all these and build several integrated tourist routes possible to be commercialised and bring additional revenues to the local communities

The heritage of the fisheries communities in the Romania-Bulgaria cross-border area is little known outside their settlements, even to researchers. It applies both to the mysteries of one disappearing craft and to the techniques of preserving the river world. It remains hidden to modern people who cannot take advantage of this knowledge and experience, combined with the natural beauties of the Danube river banks. In describing, digitalizing and promoting the fishermen heritage, the MEMOFISH partners are preserving it for the future generations which is the most valuable contribution of the project.

¹ Memofish project gathered together 5 partners with a different background, each of them contributing actively for the successful project implementation: The Bulgarian – Romanian Chamber of Commerce and Industry – lead partner; The Ruse Regional Museum of History, Paralel – Silistra, Access Association Calarasi and FLAG “Dunarea Calaraseana”





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So, what has been done?

The partners researched and selected 10 Danube settlements in the cross-border region (5 in each side of the border) which have preserved traditions of the fishing communities. They were matched by their territorial proximity into 5 CBC pairs:

- Vidin (Kutovo, Antimovo) - Calafat
- Ruse (Brashlen) - Giurgiu
- Silistra (Tataritsa) - Calarasi
- Vetren (Srebarna) - Mostistea Galatui
- Tutrakan - Oltenita

One of the core project activities was an anthropological field study, the results of which have been processed and stored into a digital database accessible online through the MEMOFISH project platform: www.memofish.eu - All these materials - photographs, films, videos and interviews with fishermen from Bulgaria and Romania can be used free of charge by travellers, researchers, travel agents, guides and tourism providers, tourist info centres and by all people interested in the natural and historical heritage of the Danube Region.

In order to demonstrate that economic profits can go hand in hand with protecting the traditions and the environment, the partners also applied strategic planning techniques. The five pairs of settlements were the subject of cross-border planning, focusing on the use of the fisheries heritage in economic development approaches. The project elaborated two more strategic documents covering the whole Romania-Bulgaria cross-border area: „A common policy for the conservation, development and utilization of the heritage of fisheries communities“ and „Culture matters - cross-border cooperation for the management of cultural heritage“.

Besides the research and the strategic planning, the partners created new tourism products - 15 cross-border tourist routes each of them comprising 2 of the fisheries community settlements, on both sides of the river. They were developed in variants for large groups, young people or family tourism, combining, according to the interests of the visitors, various kinds of information for cultural sites, attractions, places for accommodation and eating, transport, etc. For the testing and promotion of each route, group promotional trips were organised in the cross-border region.

The products were widely promoted on-line and off-line through a specially designed web platform, social media channels, promotional materials (incl. flyers for each tourist route), participation in international tourist fairs and other events. All strategic documents, resources and materials are reachable through the project website.





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DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT PRODUCTS SUBJECT TO COMMERCIALISATION

All project end outputs have their value and can be used freely by the local communities and a great number of different other stakeholders interested in tourism and history. All of these have contributed in one way or another to design the final project products that are suitable for commercialization - the 15 integrated cross-border tourist routes which constitute a potential tourist offer - the main subject of the present management plan.

The Memofish routes have been designed with the idea to:

1. Have a strong cross-border character, e.g. each of them comprises of settlements and places on both sides of the Danube
2. Be suitable for short visits or weekend vocations (1 route) or longer visit with travel between settlements (combination between 2 or more routes)
3. Include all 10 fishermen communities, matched in 5 pairs, e.g. one route includes visits to 1 pair of communities which are closer to each other and can ensure easy access (Bulgarian one + Romanian one)
4. Be suitable 3 different groups of target clients: young people; families and larger organised groups
5. Be suitable for visitors with different interests and background
6. Be possibly organised and implemented either by tourist agents, group leaders or individual tourists

The 15 tourist routes have been grouped in 5 packages (5 pairs of settlements) for 3 different groups of tourists, as follows:

1. NEW EUROPE Programmes. Destination: Vidin - Calafat (V-C)

The Vidin-Calafat route offers a lot of historical buildings (monasteries, fortresses etc.), a vacation complex near Vidin and a zoo in Calafat. Young people can enjoy the Youth Festival of Arts “The Bridge”, families and large groups may be more interested in the folklore festival “Albotin”, which takes place during Easter, while all travellers can enjoy the Vidin Fair at the end of August/beginning of September and the medieval festival “Badin”, also at the end of August. Typical for the region are also the so-called “culinary houses”, where the food is prepared on the spot.

1.1 V-C: Youth tourist route

Topic: Route for youth tourism with an emphasis on local landmarks, outdoor activities and forms of cultural heritage





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Duration: Three days of activities, two overnight stays

Seasonality: The package can be used during the period April - November

Geography, municipalities, region: Vidin (Kutovo, Antimovo) - Calafat

Target group: The package is aimed at Bulgarian, Romanian and foreign guests - youth with an interest towards cultural heritage

Details at: <https://memofish.eu/en/new-europe-youths>

1.2 V-C: Tourist route for organised groups (30- 40 people)

Topic: Route is oriented towards adult organised tourist groups with an emphasis on historical places, museums, monasteries, wineries, places to walk and enjoy local culture

Duration: Three days, two overnight stays

Seasonality: The package can be used during the period April - November

Geography, municipalities, region: Vidin (Kutovo, Antimovo) - Calafat

Target group: The package is aimed at Bulgarian, Romanian and foreign guests - adult organised tourists with an interest towards cultural heritage

Details at: <https://memofish.eu/en/new-europe-groups>

1.3 V-C: Tourist route for families (and/or friends)

Topic: Route for family tourism with an emphasis on local landmarks, museums, monasteries, wineries, places to walk and enjoy local culture

Duration: Three days of activities, two overnight stays

Seasonality: The package can be used during the period April - November

Geography, municipalities, region: Vidin (Kutovo, Antimovo) - Calafat

Target group: The package is aimed at Bulgarian, Romanian and foreign guests - families with an interest towards cultural heritage

Details at: <https://memofish.eu/en/new-europe>

2. DANUBE BOATS Programme. Destination: Silistra - Calarasi (S-C)

The Silistra-Calarasi route will be preferred by nature and wildlife lovers because of the Srebarna natural reserve, which is a riverside lake, part of the UNESCO world heritage. The lake is home to hundreds of animal species, some of which are endangered. There is also a museum of natural history in the reserve. Tourists will also enjoy the Danube islands near Calarasi, which are an important part of the river basin ecosystem. Other natural tourist attractions are the Raven Swamps (20 km east of Srebarna) and Balta Ialomitei, which is an island - paradise for fishermen. Tourists here can enjoy a sailing regatta and various types of festivals throughout the year.

2.1 S-C: Youth tourist route





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Topic: Oriented towards young people with an emphasis on local landmarks, historical places, outside activities and forms of cultural heritage.

Duration: Three days of activities, two overnight stays

Seasonality: The package can be used during the period April - October

Geography, municipalities, region: Silistra - Calarasi

Target group: The package is aimed at Bulgarian, Romanian and foreign guests - youth, in group or individually, with an interest towards cultural heritage

Details at: <https://memofish.eu/en/danube-boats-youths>

2.2. S-C Tourist route for organised groups (30- 40 people)

Topic: Oriented towards adult organised tourists with an emphasis on historical places, museums, monasteries, wineries, fish markets, places to walk and enjoy local culture

Duration: Three days of activities, two overnight stays

Seasonality: The package can be used during the period April - October

Geography, municipalities, region: Silistra - Calarasi

Target group: The package is aimed at Bulgarian, Romanian and foreign guests - organised adult tourists with an interest towards cultural heritage

Details at: <https://memofish.eu/en/danube-boats-groups>

2.3 S-C: Tourist route for families (and/or friends)

Topic: Oriented towards family tourism with a focus on local landmarks, museums, monasteries, wineries, places to walk and enjoy local culture

Duration: Three days with two overnight stays

Seasonality: The package can be used during the period April - October

Geography, municipalities, region: Silistra - Calarasi

Target group: The package is aimed at Bulgarian, Romanian and foreign guests - families with an interest in cultural heritage

Details at: <https://memofish.eu/en/danube-boats-families>

3. DANUBE BRIDGE Programme. Destination: Ruse - Giurgiu (R-G)

The Ruse-Giurgiu route can offer tourists the opportunity to mix urban, culinary, historical and cultural tourism. Both cities have museums, many historical buildings with unique architecture and will enlighten the travellers on the local cuisine with amazing Bulgarian and Romanian dishes. Youngsters will be pleased to attend the Ruse Ice Fest, which is an international ice sculpture festival, taking place in December in Ruse, while all types of tourists will like the Fish Fest in the village of





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Brashlen (near Ruse) at the end of August, the March Music Days music festival in March or the festival Giurgiu Days on April 23rd.

3.1 R-G Youth tourist route

Topic: Oriented towards youth tourism with an emphasis on local landmarks, historical places, outside activities and forms of cultural heritage

Duration: Three days of activities, two overnight stays

Seasonality: The package can be used during the period March - November

Geography, municipalities, region: Ruse - Giurgiu

Target group: The package is aimed at Bulgarian, Romanian and foreign guests - youths, in group or individually, with an interest towards cultural heritage

Details at: <https://memofish.eu/en/danube-bridge-youths>

3.2 R-G Tourist route for organised groups (30- 40 people)

Topic: Oriented towards adult organised tourists with an emphasis on historical places, museums, monasteries, wineries, places to walk and enjoy local culture

Duration: Three days of activities, two overnight stays

Seasonality: The package can be used during the period March - November

Geography, municipalities, region: Ruse (Brashlen) - Giurgiu

Target group: The package is aimed at Bulgarian, Romanian and foreign guests - organised adult tourists with an interest towards cultural heritage

Details at: <https://memofish.eu/en/danube-bridge-groups>

3.3 R-G Tourist route for families (and/or friends)

Topic: Oriented towards family tourism with a focus on local landmarks, museums, monasteries, wineries, places to walk and enjoy local culture

Duration: Three days of activities, two overnight stays

Seasonality: The package can be used during the period March - November

Geography, municipalities, region: Ruse (Brashlen) - Giurgiu

Target group: The package is aimed at Bulgarian, Romanian and foreign guests - families with an interest in cultural heritage

Details at: <https://memofish.eu/en/danube-bridge-families>

4. OLD FISHERMEN Programme. Destination: Tutrakan - Oltenita (T-O)

The Tutrakan-Oltenita route is mainly for historical admirers with a slight natural flavor. There are many museums, old towers and churches, a memorial complex near Tutrakan, a Roman fortress and many monuments. The protected area “Kalimok-Brashlen” is also in the region. It has 400 types of plants, 60 types of fish, 240 types of birds. Travelers can enjoy various music festivals, a culinary exhibition and even the autumn fair “Harvest Day” in Oltenita.





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4.1 T-O Youth tourist route

Topic: Oriented towards youth tourism with an emphasis on local landmarks, historical places, outside activities and forms of cultural heritage.

Duration: Three days of activities, two overnight stays

Seasonality: The package can be used during the period May - October

Geography, municipalities, region: Tutrakan - Oltenita

Target group: The package is aimed at Bulgarian, Romanian and foreign guests - youths, in group or individually, with an interest towards cultural heritage.

More details at: <https://memofish.eu/en/old-fishermen-youths>

4.2 T-O Tourist route for organised groups (30- 40 people)

Topic: The travel package with a route „Old Fishermen“ is oriented towards adult organised tourists with an emphasis on historical places, museums, monasteries, wineries, fish markets, places to walk and local cultural heritage.

Duration: Three days of activities, two overnight stays

Seasonality: The package can be used during the period May - October

Geography, municipalities, region: Tutrakan - Oltenita

Target group: The package is aimed at Bulgarian, Romanian and foreign guests - adult organised tourists with an interest in cultural heritage

Details at: <https://memofish.eu/en/old-fishermen-groups>

4.3 T-O Tourist route for families (and/or friends)

Topic: The travel package with a route „Old Fishermen“ is oriented towards family tourism with a focus on local landmarks, museums, monasteries, wineries, places to walk and local cultural heritage.

Duration: Three days with two overnight stays

Seasonality: The package can be used during the period March - November

Geography, municipalities, region: Tutrakan - Oltenita

Target group: The package is aimed at Bulgarian, Romanian and foreign guests - families with an interest in cultural heritage

Details at: <https://memofish.eu/en/old-fishermen>

5. BIRDS OF THE WORLD Programme. Destination Vetren/Srebarna - Mostistea/Galatui (VS-MG)

The Vetren-Srebarna - Mostistea-Galatui route covers the historical and cultural type of tourism. There are quite a few museums in the vicinity, including a specialised ethnographic museum about fishing and boatbuilding. Tourist can see birds, fish, etc. at Srebarna Natural History Museum. Eco-trails, places for observation are





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located on the lake bank. Calarasi Zoo is home of 87 species of animals and birds from all over the world, among them the only hippo in Romania.

5.1 VS-MG Youth tourist route

Topic: Oriented towards youth tourism with an emphasis on local landmarks, natural heritage, historical places, outside activities and forms of cultural heritage.

Duration: Three days of activities, two overnight stays

Seasonality: The package can be used during the period May - October

Geography, municipalities, region: Vetren-Srebarna (district Silistra) - Mostistea-Galatui (region Calarasi)

Target group: The package is aimed at Bulgarian, Romanian and foreign guests - youths - in group or individually, with an interest in cultural heritage

Details at: <https://memofish.eu/en/birds-of-the-world-youths>

5.2 VS-MG Tourist route for organised groups (30- 40 people)

Topic: Oriented towards adult organised tourists with an emphasis on historical, cultural and natural heritage, museums, monasteries, wineries, fish markets and places to walk.

Duration: Three days of activities, two overnight stays

Seasonality: The package can be used during the period May - October

Geography, municipalities, region: Vetren-Srebarna - Mostistea-Galatui

Target group: The package is aimed at Bulgarian, Romanian and foreign guests - adult organised tourists with an interest in the natural and cultural heritage

Details at: <https://memofish.eu/en/birds-of-the-world-groups>

5.3 VS-MG Tourist route for families (and/or friends)

Topic: Oriented towards family tourism with a focus on local landmarks, museums, monasteries, wineries, places to walk and local cultural heritage.

Duration: Three days with two overnight stays

Seasonality: The package can be used during the period May - October

Geography, municipalities, region: Vetren-Srebarna - Mostistea-Galatui

Target group: The package is aimed at Bulgarian, Romanian and foreign guests - families with an interest in cultural heritage

Details at: <https://memofish.eu/en/birds-of-the-world-families>

The description of each route contains information for places to visit, accommodation, restaurants, events and festivals. It is accessible from the project website and can also be downloaded from it as pdf document. Each tour organiser can step on these and build its own programme.





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The website (<https://memofish.eu>) has been developed in 3 language versions (BG/RO/EN) and has an attractive and mobile-friendly design suitable also for mobile phones reading.

There is an advertising movie (about 4 min.) produced for each of the 10 localities which is available in 3 languages: Bulgarian, Romanian and English. It can be accessed through the Memofish platform (bottom of home page) or via the [YouTube channel of the project](#).

Additional resources to get to know, illustrate and promote each of the 5+5 destinations are available and downloadable from the digital database which is also accessible from the project platform: <http://memofish.brcci.eu/>

They are organised in 3 different sections: images, texts and videos

1. The first section contains high resolution photos from all 5 pairs of locations. They are downloadable and can be used at no charge by any operator or individual tourist.
2. The second section contains texts from interviews with local people from all 10 locations, most of them fishermen. The texts are available in two languages (Bulgarian and Romanian) and are absolutely authentic - these are real stories of real men exactly the way they have told them to the researchers. These materials can be used by individuals with interest in anthropology or local culture and by local guides to help them build the stories they will tell their groups during the visit.
3. The third section contain video materials from all locations: time lapse, bird eye and slow-motion videos, video of some of the fishermen interviews (only in Bulgarian and Romanian) and all advertisement movies in 3 languages. These can be built into promotional campaigns or used during events.

Promotional social media tools have also been created by the project team in order to promote the tourist routes and all resources available for the 5+5 fishermen localities. These are:

[Facebook page in BG](#)

[Facebook page in RO](#)

[Instagram page](#)

[Linked-in show case page](#)





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[YouTube channel](#)

These channels are administered by the MEMOFISH lead partner BRCCI who has the responsibility to maintain them at least 3 years after the project end. New materials, incl. from other entities who has visited the sites can be uploaded with the prior consent of the page administrator.

Finally, a river boat, able to accommodate 7 tourists as well 8 life jackets have been acquired under the project and these are available to be rented out for short group travels along the river by “Dunarea Calaraseana” Fishing Local Action Group Association (Calarasi). A certified driver is available, and the boat can be used for DANUBE BOATS routes. 15 additional life jackets can be rented out by Paralel Silistra (Silistra).

Three of the designed Memofish routes have been tested in real life with groups of tourists. Information on the results and feedback is as follows:

1. Testing of DANUBE BOATS - youth tourist route

The route was tested during the period 30 August - 1 September 2019 in the region Silistra - Calarasi and 15 people participated.

On the first day the participants visited the national architectural and archaeological reserve "Durostorum - Druster - Silistra", located in the Danube garden. They visited the Srebarna Biosphere Reserve, the Museum of Danube Fishing and Boatbuilding in Tutrakan, and at the “Fisherman's Neighbourhood” assessed the skills of the old masters in knitting fishing nets. In line with the stories of the Danube civilization, there was lunch and dinner in the Solostar region - fish, cooked according to old local recipes on the Danube bank.

The second day was a great adventure for the group - rowing on the river to Bezimenen Island. The young people put a wreath in the waters of the river, following the traditional ritual for the month of August - Swimming towards the Memory, and ate fish soup. In Calarasi the group discovered the Borcea channel and the beaches.

On the third day of the promotion, the young people visited a fish farm in Ciocanesti, explored architectural landmarks in Calarasi and enjoyed boats





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in a small artificial lake in Jegalia. The zoo in Calarasi, the largest in Romania, aroused great interest.



The rowing on the river was especially emotional and exciting. All the sites, which were scheduled to be visited, were interesting and instructive.

2. Testing of DANUBE BRIDGE - group tourist route

The route was tested during the period 27 - 29 September 2019 in the region Ruse - Giurgiu and 15 people participated.

On the first day, the group visited the paper mill in Comana where the group participated in several workshops, then the group visited the Comana Natural Park, Comana Monastery, Comana Museum, the mausoleum of the heroes fallen in the First World War. In Giurgiu the group saw the clock tower, cathedral, Tudor theatre.

On the second day the participants visited in Ruse the craftsmen's exhibit, eco-museum with aquarium, they made a walk in the city centre, after which they visited the following places outside the city: Dimitar Basarbovski rock monastery, National park Rusenski Lom, Rock-hewn Churches of Ivanovo.

On the third day the group visited the Ruse Regional History Museum and took a walk in the city centre.



The organization was very good, the places we visited were very interesting and I would gladly participate in other similar projects.

3. Testing of BIRDS OF THE WORLD - family tourist route

The route was tested during the period 10 - 12 October 2019 in the region Vetren-Srebarna - Mostistea-Galatui and 15 people participated.

On the first day, the participants visited Ciocanesti, lakes Galatui, Lake Ciocanesti, Privalul Botului and had joint activities with representatives of the WWF Foundation. The group visited Calarasi Municipality and the traditional autumn fair in Calarasi. The central park and the zoo were visited by the participants.





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On the second day the group visited the Srebarna Natural Reserve and the Museum of Natural Sciences Srebarna, followed by a visit to a Vetren fishermen's village.

On the third day the group participated in the culinary festival „Foods of Dobruja“, which takes place in Srebarna. The families had time for walks in Srebarna and Silistra.



We had the opportunity to taste traditional cuisine, meet people we would not meet in our daily lives, and appreciate the effort that fishermen make to make a living.

All resources and information, as provided above, are the basis on which all interested commercial tourist entities can build their tourist offers and sell to potential customers. All other details and conditions as well as additional information and hints for marketing and promotion are available further in the present management plan.





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REGIONAL ANALYSIS

Tourism in Bulgaria

Bulgaria has been a popular tourist destination for both local people and foreigners for a long time. There are several reasons for this - the diverse nature, suitable climate, rich history of local traditions and customs, local cuisine etc. Bulgaria's tourist potential is not limited to only one or two seasons, but throughout the entire year. Aside from visiting sea resorts like Sunny Beach, Golden Sands, Albena, Balchik etc. during the summer, which is what most tourists do, the country also has the prerequisites to be a winter destination with ski resorts like Pamporovo, Borovets and Bansko. Fans of local customs and traditions can visit for example Pernik, where the International Surva Festival takes place every year, on the last Friday, Saturday and Sunday of January, gathering people from both Bulgaria and abroad, who perform ritual dances, while wearing elaborate costumes and scary masks in order to drive away evil spirits. Another local tradition, which might be of interest to tourists, is nestinarstvo (Anasteria), which is a fire-walking ritual performed mainly in villages around Strandzha mountain.

Although the overall standing of the tourist sector in Bulgaria is very good, there are some regions, which have been neglected as potential tourist destinations due to either lack of the necessary infrastructure or lack of marketing efforts. Such is the Bulgarian part of the Danube region, which is composed of the districts Vidin, Vratsa, Montana, Pleven, Veliko Tarnovo, Ruse, Silistra and Dobrich.

County	2018*		2019*		Change for Bulgarian tourists	Change for foreign tourists
	Bulgarians	Foreign tourists	Bulgarians	Foreign tourists		
Vidin	24,329	8,241	28,680	8,782	+17.88%	+6.56%
Vratsa	27,448	4,637	24,815	3,749	-9.59%	-19.15%
Montana	27,650	2,129	26,192	2,524	-5.27%	+18.55%
Pleven	32,957	7,370	27,742	8,337	-15.82%	+13.12%
Veliko Tarnovo	126,215	61,675	123,580	63,807	-2.09%	+3.46%
Ruse	64,272	27,382	61,449	31,113	-4.39%	+13.63%
Silistra	14,482	4,467	19,977	4,549	+37.94%	+1.84%
Dobrich	150,563	315,535	155,547	299,221	+3.31%	-5.17%
BULGARIA	3,298,045	3,693,235	3,492,177	3,834,302	+5.89%	+3.82%

* It should be noted that the data for both 2018 and 2019 doesn't consider the months of November and December, because at the moment of writing this report, the data





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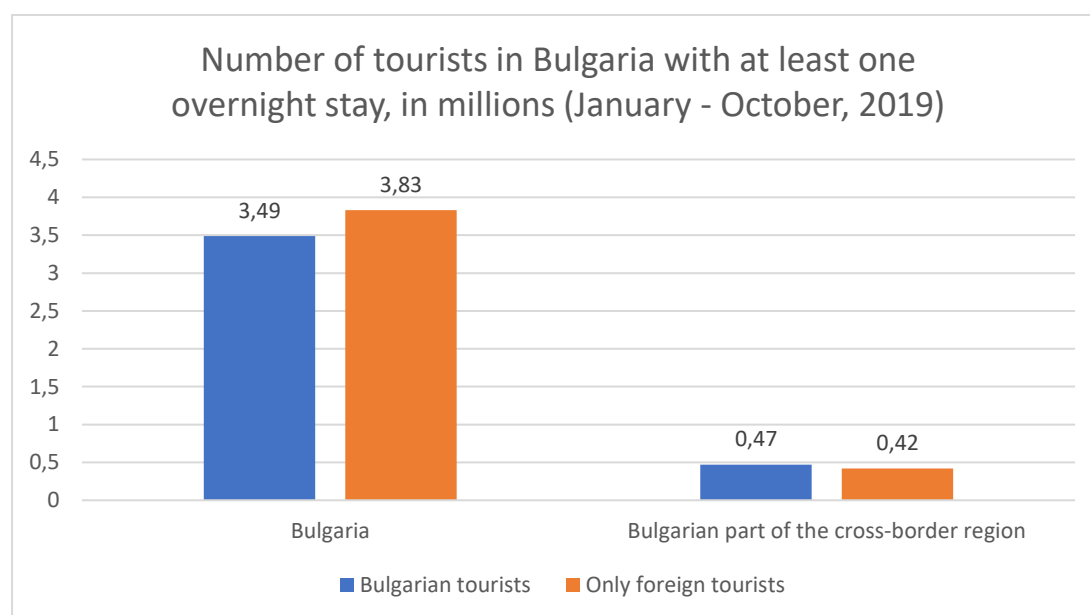


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for 2019 for these two months wasn't available yet. That's why, for the data to be directly comparable, the November and December data was also excluded for 2018. Also, except for Veliko Tarnovo and Ruse, the other districts from the Bulgarian part of the cross-border region didn't have any data for February 2019.

For the period January - October 2019, the overall number of tourists who have had at least one overnight stay in Bulgaria was 7.33 million. Among those, 3.83 million overnight stays belonged to foreign tourists, which is an increase of 3.82% compared to 2018.ⁱ Those are numbers for the whole country.

However, when considering only the Bulgarian part of the cross-border region, the situation is very different. The overall tourists with at least one overnight stay just in the cross-border region for the first 10 months of 2019 was 890,064. Among those, 422,082 overnight stays belonged to foreigners.ⁱⁱ The cross-border region plays an insignificant part in the overall tourist traffic in the country and there is much room for improvement.



And the data for 2018:





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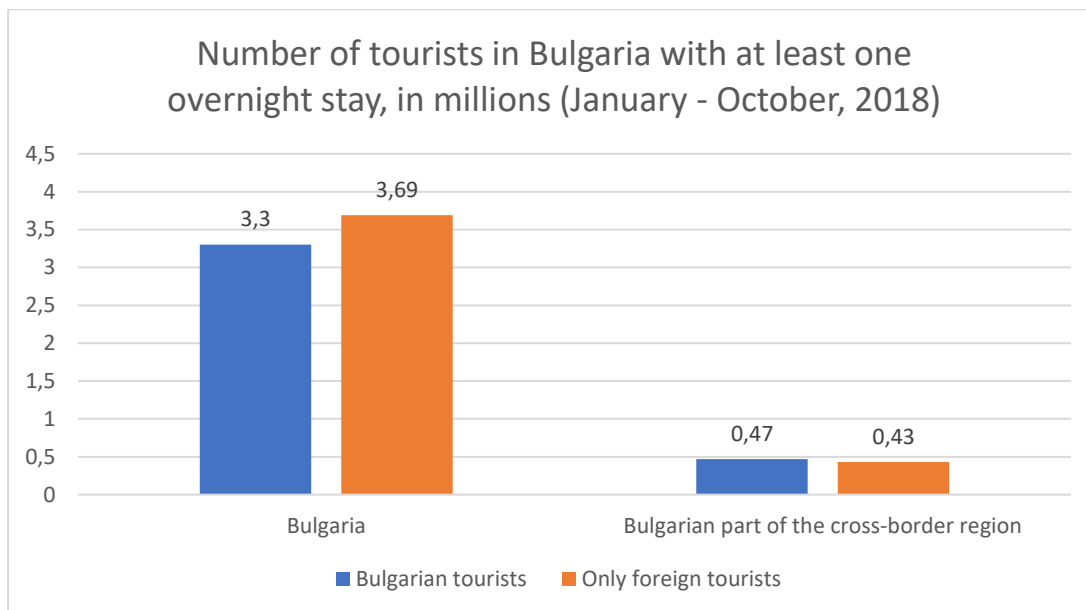
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Tourism in Romania

Just like Bulgaria, Romania is a popular tourist destination not only in certain months and seasons, but throughout the year. The country's climate is temperate, with well-defined four seasons. It offers various types of tourism, which can please every tourist.

Mountain admirers can enjoy the beautiful Carpathian Mountains. Some of the most preserved medieval castles and fortresses are situated there. Of course, the most famous example is the Bran Castle, which is situated close to the city of Brasov and which has been popularised as the home of Dracula. Other famous historical landmarks in the region are the Peles Castle near Sinaia, the fortified church in Biertan, the Black Church in Brasov, the Corvin Castle in Hunedoara etc.

Ski fans can also find something satisfactory for them. Poiana Brasov is the most popular ski resort in Romania and is visited every year by thousands of tourists from all over Europe.

If one is a sea lover, s/he can visit Romania's sea resorts during the summer. The most popular sea resort is Mamaia, which lies on an 8 km strip of land in the Constanta county. Other popular sea resorts are Neptun, Venus and Saturn.

If someone loves the wildlife, and especially birds, s/he can visit the Danube delta in the Tulcea county. It's the largest river delta in Europe.

Again, in a similar fashion to its southern neighbor, Romania's cross-border region with Bulgaria is underdeveloped in terms of attracting tourists, even though it has a





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lot of potential. The Danube River acts as a natural border with Bulgaria, but it also offers a lot of opportunities for tourism.

The following table shows the number of tourists with at least one overnight stay in the given year in the cross-border region:

County	2018*		2019*		Change for Romanian tourists	Change for foreign tourists
	Romanians	Foreign tourists	Romanians	Foreign tourists		
Constanta	1,233,572	61,010	1,299,181	63,476	+5.32%	+4.04%
Calarasi	15,734	3,687	20,237	4,013	+28.62%	+8.84%
Giurgiu	23,072	2,104	22,448	1,862	-2.70%	-11.50%
Teleorman	9,001	877	9,155	1,151	+1.71%	+31.24%
Olt	26,510	3,604	22,768	3,442	-14.12%	-4.50%
Dolj	94,635	13,831	91,403	13,732	-3.42%	-0.72%
Mehedinti	81,911	11,083	94,714	9,524	+15.63%	-14.07%
ROMANIA	9,358,574	2,634,492	9,911,089	2,523,053	+5.90%	-4.23%

* It should be noted that the data for both 2018 and 2019 doesn't consider the month of December, because at the moment of writing this report, the data for 2019 for this month wasn't available yet. That's why, for the data to be directly comparable, the December data was also excluded for 2018.

For the period January - November 2019, the overall number of tourists who have had at least one overnight stay in Romania has been 12.43 million, which is a 3.68% increase over the same period last year. As far as only the cross-border region goes, there has been an overall increase of 4.84%. If we take only the foreign tourists into consideration, the increase in the cross-border region is only 1.04%, but this is still better than the situation on a national level, where foreign tourists mark a 4.23% decrease.

If we take into account only the Romanian part of the cross-border region, which consists of the counties Mehedinti, Dolj, Olt, Teleorman, Giurgiu, Calarasi and Constanta, the situation is as follows: for the first eleven months of 2019, the number of foreign tourists with at least one overnight stay was 97,200, which is much lower than the number of Romanian tourists - 1,559,906. The foreign tourists in the cross-border region mark a slight increase of 1.03% compared to 2018, while Romanians have increased by 5.08%. The number of Romanian tourists is overall much higher than that of foreign tourists and the cross-border region is not very utilized.





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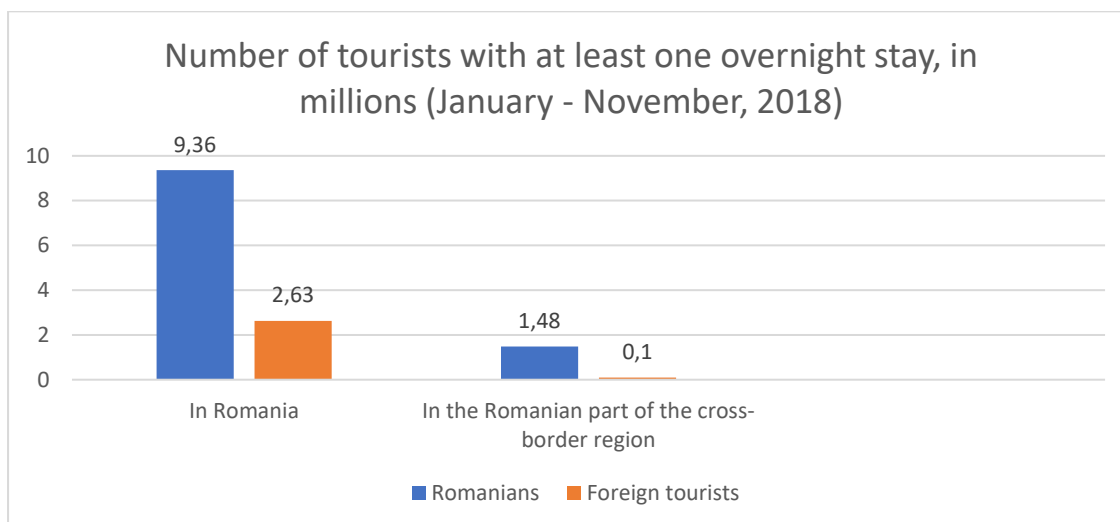
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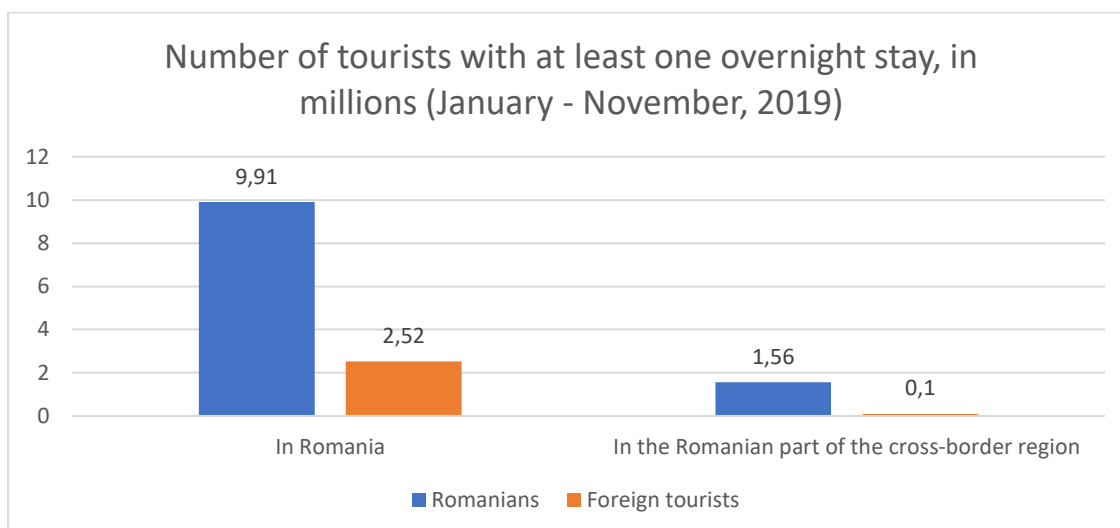
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And the data for 2019:



Tourist potential of the cross-border region

The Bulgarian-Romanian cross-border region has a lot of untapped potential in terms of attracting both local and foreign tourists. The region is part of the Danube Region, which is one of the four macro-regions on an EU level, which was prioritized in 2010 when a Strategy for the Development of the Danube Region was drawn up.

In terms of tourism development, the region has the potential to offer the following types of tourism:

- river cruise tourism





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- wine and culinary tourism
- historical and cultural tourism
- nature and wildlife tourism
- urban tourism

Of course, one type of tourism can be mixed with another, thus potentially creating even more of a unique experience.

The attractiveness of a certain destination, which wants to market itself to tourists, comes from a combination of elements, whose mix makes the people see it as an individual and distinguished tourist product. These elements include, but are not limited to:

- tourist attractions
- events
- transport infrastructure
- essential facilities
- hospitality
- qualified personnel

Considering all of this, there are several places in the Bulgarian-Romanian cross-border region, which could be marketed as potentially successful tourist destinations. Most of these are united into the new tourist products that are being offered by the Memofish project. The uniqueness of the Memofish routes come from the fact that they are not limited to only one of the countries but cover territories in both. Also, the routes are suitable for and can be marketed to different types of clients - large organised groups, families or young people. Depending on the target audience, different attractions, events and facilities can be recommended to each respective group.

Regional issues which need to be addressed

However, despite the positive sites and existing potential, there are also several problems that has hindered the wider opening of the CBC region towards tourists.

Accessibility: connectivity and transport infrastructure

There is no very accurate data on how visitors (local and foreign) arrive in the region. Estimates show that most passengers arrive by land (car and bus) and a small percentage - by railway. Currently there is no direct access to the province by air, with the closest international airports located in Bucharest - 70 km away and Varna





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- about 200 km. The internal road infrastructure is not well developed and is far from the European standard. The transport connection between Bulgaria and Romania is carried out through only 2 bridges and crossing the Danube is a real challenge to the communities on both sides of the border.

The tourist landmarks, located outside the populated areas, do not have free internet access. The possibility of renting a car (rent-a-car) from the populated areas in/near the tourist landmarks, except for the town of Ruse, is extremely limited.

The transport infrastructure is probably the first thing, which comes to mind when talking about things that need improvement. This includes the mobility and multimodality of the inland waterways, railway, land and aerial transport connections. This would lead to better and faster contacts between the different counties and districts of the region. In that regard, Bulgaria and Romania really need to take advantage of the Danube River and rely more heavily on waterway vessels as a cheap and eco-friendly mean of transport.

The current tourism offers

The analysis of the offered tourist products shows that, at present, there is no fully consolidated product. Cultural and religious tourism are showing the best results. Nature tourism is still developing - it is a subject of individual trips and is less popular in the region. Its combination with cultural tourism is the most preferred option among tourists, but the product needs to be value-oriented, information for the visitors needs to be elaborated, the experience needs to be promoted and diversified and best practices for sustainability must be developed.

Rural tourism requires diversification of experience, provision of additional services of value, the practicing of active tourism, promotion and commercialization of the offer and the provision of authentic culinary experiences.

The region has also opportunities for the development of adventure tourism. However, there are very few direct suppliers for it - very few tour operators, who organise adventure tourism activities.

Preservation Vs commercialization

Preservation of the historical and cultural heritage is an important aspect of the region and an essential reason as to why tourists may come to visit. The region's rich history spans as far back as the times of the Roman Empire. There are so many buildings from that period, and from later periods, that have so far been protected





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from destruction, which is something that needs to continue going forward. These old towers, fortresses, castles and monuments are invaluable in not only reminding the local people of their great past, but also giving foreigners the opportunity to learn and appreciate the rich history of the region.

The cultural aspect of the region is as important as the historical one. Preservation of the traditions, customs and even rituals of the local people provide tourists with a one-of-a-kind experience during their visit. For example, the fishermen communities along the Danube have preserved their way of living and their traditions for many years. Their heritage must be promoted heavily among tourists, which will definitely be interested in learning more about such an interesting part of the region's culture.

Preservation of the environment is another problem, which needs to be addressed. The Danube River creates an important ecosystem, which provides home to many animals and plants. Many of them have been put into the Databook of Endangered Species, meaning that extra high efforts need to be put forth in order to protect them and their natural habitat. Those efforts will undoubtedly pay off not only by knowing that the unique wildlife in the region has been protected, but also with higher tourist traffic.

Quality of the service

The qualification and training of the personnel in the tourist sector in the region is an important indicator, which would contribute greatly to the experience of the average tourist. This aspect is closely related to the overall bad demographic situation in Northern Bulgaria and Southern Romania. Many young people immigrate to other countries, because they don't see any perspective for development and improvement of their lives. This directly affects the tourism sector, since there will be less and less people, who would be willing to work in it. People would have the incentive to stay and improve their skills if they can be certain of the possibility of a stable job with good salaries, which would allow them to have a comfortable life.

Marketing of the tourist products

As discussed earlier in this document, the cross-border region has a lot of tourist potential and the things we already mentioned there are great prerequisites for Bulgaria and Romania to market it as a renowned destination for tourists from all over the world. There are several measures that need to be taken for the popularization and promotion of the region, as well as preserving its already existing resources. Not only is there a need for stronger efforts and better coordination





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between the local and national authorities on both sides of the Danube, but a closer cooperation between the governments of Bulgaria and Romania, and to be more precise - between their respective Ministries of Tourism, is also essential for the successful accomplishment of that goal.

A goal of the marketing efforts must be to increase the information of the existence of such region and products to foreign tourists. The region must be promoted as a place where people can come to experience something new and unfamiliar - something which cannot be achieved anywhere else. Tourists may not expect luxurious hotels and accommodations, but they would certainly want to be provided with the opportunity to get to know a different culture, to be brought back in time and learn interesting facts about the region's rich history, to taste the delicious local cuisine and enjoy the beautiful nature.

Marketing efforts should be directed, i.e. they should target the audience, which would be most interesting from the types of tourism the region can offer. This would be better than just marketing and promoting the region to everyone. The strategy would ensure that tourists that come here will experience something new, which is still related to the field they are interested about (so in regards to the cross-border Bulgarian-Romanian region - history, culture, cuisine, wildlife etc.) and would want to visit the region again in the future, instead of attracting people, who will come one time, be disappointed because they didn't experience what they thought they would, and then never return again.

Marketing must also take into consideration other characteristics of the potential tourists - age, cultural background, family status, time available for travelling, previous experience with traveling etc. By segmenting the groups in such a way, the decision about which product to offer to which group of people becomes easier. For example, if a destination is marketed for young people, they would expect to experience festivals and other such events, where there are gatherings of other people of similar age. However, if a tourist sight is marketed towards families or large groups of more adult tourists, they will probably expect a more relaxing day among nature, visits of museums or for example activities such as wine degustation.

The Memofish routes, as they are developed now, bear most of the advantages and disadvantages of the CBC region noted above. However, they are a very good base, a marketable product for every industry representative who would like to use their resources and further developed then into a profitable tourist product.





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SWOT ANALYSIS

The present SWOT analysis show the main advantages and disadvantages of the 15 tourist routes as they stand now:

STRENGTHS	WEEKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Authentic historical resources and traditions, combined with preserved nature heritage • Comparatively balanced seasonal demand • Routes built on fishermen stories and traditions are unique for the market • Routes combine different forms of tourism - nature, culture, religious, rural • Variants of the tourist routes for different tourist groups • Flexibility of tourist routes - one can step on the resources provided and build its own route • Availability of promotional and visual instruments • Travel to the places is not expensive and can be offered to average income visitors • Target markets are close and easy reachable in terms of promotional activities • Web platform developed in 3 languages (BG, RO, EN) • Social media channels set up (Facebook, Instagram, YouTube) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Availability of other more attractive or better marketed destinations • Routes promote destinations situated in the most deprived region of both Romania and Bulgaria • Bad or missing infrastructure and road access - Poor accessibility to the region as a whole and to some sites • Difficult access by public transport • Not enough activities/attractions offered currently at/in the Danube river • Adventure tourism not well developed; not enough offers to include in the routes • Routes, as they are built now, suitable mainly for the local markets (Bulgarian, Romanian)
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targeted promotion to priority markets (Romanian and Bulgarian) using on-line 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local (BG, RO) travel agents not interested to promote the routes





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<p>marketing/social media; reservation sites, etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Building partnership with travel agents• Targeted promotion to schools and youth groups• Develop the routes further to be able to attract also foreign tourists• Adapting the routes to offer to river cruise tourists• Develop adventure tourism offers to include as part of the routes• Develop fish-related culinary/fishing offers to include as part of the routes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Damage to the tourist infrastructure and to nature by visitors
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The SWOT analysis is intended to build on and summarize the situational analysis in order to help the tourism providers understand the positive and negative aspects of the Memofish routes as touristic products, check on the opportunities and decide whether they would like to commercialise them.





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TRENDS IN TOURISM

It is extremely helpful to look at the recent trends in the tourist sector and see what's popular when it comes to the successful promotion of a destination, as well as find the best way to ensure the visitors will have an unforgettable experience when they come. According to a study by the Travel and Tourism Research Association (TTRA), the trends are the following:

- Weekend trips - travellers start to prefer more and more to take short trips just for the weekend. However, even though the vacation isn't long (one week or more), the tourists still expect to have unique and authentic experiences in accordance with their interests. In that sense, the recommendation is to try and reach potential tourists, which are within a three-hour drive radius from the location you are trying to promote.

Since the cross-border region is quite big and there are many routes for various types of target audiences, that means that the marketing efforts in trying to promote the region can span over a quite large territory not only in Bulgaria and Romania, but also neighbouring countries.

- Culinary tourism - riding on the recent wave of having “new experiences”, this trend has not missed the culinary aspect of tourism. Social media, particularly Instagram, has had a large role to play in the establishment of this trend, since anyone can share the local foods and drinks they are having with friends and family. What was once a niche market has now moved to the mainstream as more tour agencies, event planners and restaurant owners recognize the need of providing unique and authentic culinary experiences for tourists.

The five tourist routes in the cross-border Bulgarian-Romanian region have promoted local dishes among tourists on their website and listed local restaurants that serve them.

- Combining business travel with leisure time - more and more tourists are looking to combine the pleasant with the necessary and spend some time relaxing after their business duties in the region they are visiting have finished. According to the study, the top three activities for people in such





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occasions are sightseeing, dining and visiting art or cultural events. Therefore, heavier emphasis needs to be put on providing information and promoting such activities, so the people on a business trip can plan their time better.

The Memofish website, which promotes the five mentioned routes, lists every significant art, cultural or historical event in the visited region, as well as when and where exactly those events are taking place.

- Family adventures - the ways in which families plan their vacations is changing. Parents are not the only decision-makers anymore, now they also include their kids in the process. Families are searching for something unusual and unique, away from the already tried tourist destinations they are used to. Therefore, it would be advantageous in such occasions to offer families such travel plans, which would accommodate the preferences of multi-generational travellers.

The website of the Memofish project has specific sections for not only families, but also for large organised groups of tourists and for young people. In every section, the routes, local attractions, tourist sights and other aspects of the trip are carefully planned in order to fully satisfy the customers.

- Emphasis on Instagram - the platform can be a powerful marketing tool, as people are starting to choose their destinations based solely on how good the pictures of a certain location look when captured and posted on Instagram. If people are looking for inspiration for traveling, such a visual platform can provide a more genuine overview of a destination than, say, a tourism brochure. Having a presence on that platform is almost a must nowadays. A noteworthy fact is that people are engaging with Instagram ten times more than with Facebook. Another useful option is to search for a partnership with Instagram influencers, which can be possible since there are many accounts dedicated to travel and tourism. Such people can be greatly beneficial for the promotion of the destination.

Project Memofish has an Instagram profile, where pictures from various events and locations within the region are posted regularly. People can see the interesting tourist sights and various local traditions, which would increase their desire to experience them in person.





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- Experiences instead of things - gone are the days when people just wanted to go to a certain location and spend their entire visit in the hotel and the nearby pool and buy a few souvenirs for their friends and family at home. Now, when people are going to a certain place, they want to do something which they'll remember for their entire lives. They want to immerse themselves in the local culture, perform the same activities as the local population and eat the same food. Walking tours with a tour guide are also important for tourists, since they give them the opportunity to get to know that particular destination better, have their questions answered by an expert and meet new people, who share similar interests.

Expectations and attitudes of the contemporary tourist

In general, tourists can be motivated by different things, have various expectations and behaviours and can differ in many aspects - nationality, economic and social status, cultural background, travel experience etc. That makes the job of organisers and planners of tourist trips much more difficult, since they must take all those variables into account and figure out a way to provide the travellers with worthwhile experiences. That is why market segmentation plays such a big role in determining how to provide different tourists with the products most suitable for them.

For example, cultural explorers are defined by their love of constant travelling and the continuous opportunity to discover and immerse themselves in the local culture and environment they visit. They are particularly interested in unique and authentic experiences that include the opportunity to participate in local cultures and lifestyles, rather than being limited to group trips and schedules.

On the other hand, nature lovers are mainly searching for natural landscapes, which are way more important to them than the quality of the hotel, for example. Adventurous in spirit, they like to actively enjoy the nature and culture by, for example, going on walks or riding a bike. Safety and sustainability are important to them.

Apart from the market segmentation, there are some expectation that all tourists will have, no matter what segment they fall into.





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- increase in the requirements of towards quality, specificity, attractiveness and diversity of the offered tourist products;
- increase in the requirements towards the quality of the country's technical infrastructure and the material and technical touristic base; the provision of specific services, which are in line with people's interests and needs;
- preference for destinations and countries, which guarantee their security, tranquillity;
- increase in the share of children and youth trips, especially for students involved in cultural and educational tourism, study trips in other countries, etc.;
- expanding the role of information and communication systems in the hotel and tour operator activities in terms of searching, planning and executing travels;
- increase in the offered travel packages for older people

Fast changing consumer preferences require destinations to constantly change their products and travel packages. This reality forces tourist destinations to have a shorter product cycle and the necessary access to resources for creating new experiences and memories. Visitors nowadays accept their travels as an experience and not as a series of visits to tourist destinations. This entails tourists wandering off the regular tourist routes to participate in outdoor adventures and local festivals, to eat at restaurants that offer local authentic cuisine etc.

The tourist routes, which have been selected under project Memofish, respond to a large part of the changes in the tourist attitude and expectations towards destinations in recent years. Not only is market segmentation considered by offering different groups of travellers different products and experiences based on their profiles, but the organisers have tried to include as many and as diverse set of activities and experiences as possible for each group. Even though there are still problems, which need to be addressed (like the infrastructure in the region not being on the necessary level and the lack of qualified personnel), the other aspects of the contemporary tourists' expectations are covered on a more or less satisfactory level.





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MARKET STRATEGY

As it was said earlier in this document, mainly the developed tourist routes have potential for commercialization, thus the market strategy is built around them. All other products of the project are valuable source of information and support material to be used for marketing the destinations with the final aim to contribute to the development of the local communities.

One very important aspect for the commercialization of tourist routes is that this activity cannot be done directly by the project partners due to legislation restrictions in both countries - need of license for tour operator/tourist agent commercial activities. None of the project partners have such a license, therefore product commercialization shall be organised by local and/or international tour operators based on contractual agreements with the project lead partner - The Bulgarian - Romanian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BRCCI)². However, partners shall stay actively involved in the process, promoting widely the destinations and maintaining the resources and equipment they are responsible for.

Bearing in mind the final goal to be achieved with the MEMOFISH project and more particularly through the routes that are being promoted, the present strategy has been built along the following main **principles**:

Focus on local communities

The end goal of the market strategy is to achieve positive effects for the 10 local communities, included in the developed tourist routes. Therefore, all actions that are being planned and implemented shall carefully combine the promotion of income flow from tourism activities with care taken constantly for preserving nature and local heritage.

Focus on tourists

Along with the target focus placed on the destinations, the strategy shall also focus on potential visitors. In view of the limited marketing resources, the potential tourist groups shall be pre-defined, segmented and our marketing

² A template of such an agreement is attached at the end of this document





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efforts shall be concentrated on instruments and channels which can help connect with the target clients, to hear what they expect and to prepare and send the marketing message that would matter for them.

Focus on positioning

If we advertise our tourist products as fisheries communities' destinations, then we shall position them in a way that they are strongly differentiated amongst the thousands of similar offers. Why shall the visitor choose to come here? What will s/he experience? What will s/he learn about the local communities? These are the questions that need to be answered.

Focus on cooperation

There are several stakeholders who will directly benefit from developing the fisheries tourist routes - local hotels, restaurants, cafes, museums, shops, travel agents, municipal administrations. Therefore, gradually as many stakeholders as possible should join forces to market the new routes and attract visitors. The project consortium shall take the lead in defining the strategic partnerships and manage the process further.

Partnerships between the public and private sector, as well as between both sectors and NGOs are more and more accepted as a crucial element in the development of a certain tourist destination. The old paradigm that those who benefit shall only pay and take responsibility for the development of a destination and its marketing should be left behind. The future of the Memofish products and resources lie within the cooperation and efforts of all key stakeholders (the project partners, the local communities administrations, the tourism service providers).

Several important **challenges** have been also identified and these need to be considered as they may hinder or slow down the commercialization of the new tourist products:

Enormous information flow and many competitive destinations

Information is everywhere nowadays. Tourist destinations from the whole world are fighting to attract visitors. Too much information makes the decisions of the tourists difficult. The supply surpluses the demand and it is of a crucial importance to create and outstanding offer and identify a strategic approach that will respond to the profile of the potential tourists and that is able to match his/her preferences and





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motives for travel. We need to find the key USPs, the focus of our destinations, so that we can target and attract more visitors. We need to demonstrate the existing potential and personalize our products.

The “Memofish brand” needs to combine different aspects of the tourist offer: unique tourist attractions, suitable infrastructure, fair price, the highest possible quality, safety. It needs to demonstrate the authentic spirit and values of our tourist routes.

Demographic changes

The changing demographic profile of potential visitors forces operators to leave behind their traditional understanding for markets and to develop new approaches when implementing their strategies. Nowadays the so-called generation Y (Millennials) and generation Z change the way one travels and the way the destinations are promoted. They have very different expectations and loyalty levels for a destination and can easily switch preferences and change to other options. 90% of the representatives of these generations plan their travels online. Therefore, a marketing strategy aimed at these kinds of tourists shall be built around strong images, useful content, multichannel approach and authenticity.

At the same time our main tourist market (e.g. Europe, incl. Bulgaria and Romania) have an aging population where other opportunities shall be offered when it comes to tourism such as longer vacations, for example; and more traditional promotional channels shall be used.

Fast changing consumer preferences and behaviour

Fast changing consumer preferences require destinations to constantly change their products and packages. This reality forces destinations to have a shorter product cycle and the necessary access to resources for creating new experiences and memories. Visitors nowadays accept their travels as an experience and not as a series of visits to tourist destinations. This entails tourist wandering off the regular tourist routes to participate in outdoor adventures, to eat at restaurants that offer local authentic cuisine etc. part of the current popularity of this type of travel nowadays is the tourists’ need to get away from their natural habitat. This tendency obviously leads to the question what do tourists look for in this region and what will motivate them to visit it?

Making the local operators interested

This is a very specific challenge application to our tourist products. The 15 Memofish tourist routes can be freely promoted by all partners and practically everybody but can only be commercialised through licensed tour operators and travel agents. Therefore, our first marketing efforts should be focused to “sell” the routes to them.





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Local Tour operators and travel agencies mainly offer excursions and holidays abroad or to the more famous Bulgarian resorts. International agents are overplied with offers, from which they should choose. How to make both types of entities interested to offer the Memofish routes?

Climate change

Climate change can have a significant effect on tourism. All indicators show that air temperatures will likely increase between 1 to 3.5 degrees Celsius within the next century, which will have immediate effects on the vitality of certain destinations. In some areas water shortages will become tangible. It suffices to say that climate change will have a significant impact on the desire and ability to travel as well as on the physical environment of many destinations. As a result, there is no doubt that destinations which are considered “green” will have a bigger likelihood of remaining attractive. How “green” the Memofish routes can be? How do we send this message to the potential visitors?

Finally, there are also few facts and tendencies that are **“real helpers”** for the successful commercialization of our new tourist products:

Technology’s influence

People buy emotions and the best way to supply them with these is to offer them information and excitement. Internet and computer technologies allow people to accumulate information, check and review the destinations they are going as much as possible before they start their travel. Now visual instruments have the power to convince more people to decide to visit a certain destination. In this aspect, the Memofish routes have competitive advantage due to the vast resource database that was developed within the project and is available as promotional tools.

Growth and influence of social media

Social media as a marketing and promotion instrument help reduce the costs of promotion and allow for much more focused efforts. This also means that destinations with creative marketing campaigns can have a significant competitive edge to traditional destinations which still count on old school strategies for distribution and promotion. Memofish routes are very well positioned in this on-line world as they have several social media channels already set and promoted where both text and visual content can reach easily the target groups selected.

The green moment

There can be no doubt that the increased support and concern for the environment will influence future travels. What is less certain is the exact essence of this effect





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because there have only been a few studies which clearly and confidently prove that at equal other conditions people will choose green activities. There is no doubt that the eco-movement is something to be considered when developing tourism products and can become an important part of positioning an attraction, facility or entire destination. In this context Memofish routes are very well positioned as they have and can easily develop numerous elements linked to the nature, the environment and eco practices.

Market segmentation: Defining the target markets

Identifying specific markets is especially important because potential visitors from different origin may have various motivations for travelling, interests and behaviour. Tourist perceptions are influenced by the personal knowledge of the destination, the distance needed to travel, the promotional and advertising channels to get information, the time to be spent, how secure it is to travel to the destination, how reliable the information and people are, whether it is the first visit and many more. All of these will have an influence on decision making, therefore should be the core of the present market strategy. It should be geared towards the markets that are most likely to adopt our tourism products based on cultural and natural resources. In order to increase tourist presence, we shall target markets with opportunity and potential for growth in nights spent and income generation from other services. In order to be successful and cost efficient, all subsequent marketing and promotional activities should be focused on the identified priority markets.

The following markets, which would be most inclined to accept the proposed tourist offers, have been identified:

1. BULGARIANS FROM THE CBC REGION - priority market 1
2. ROMANIANS FROM THE CBC REGION - priority market 1
3. BULGARIANS FROM THE REST OF THE COUNTRY - priority market 2
4. ROMANIANS FROM THE REST OF THE COUNTRY - priority market 2
5. FOREIGN TOURISTS - MAINLY EUROPEAN - priority market 3
6. FOREIGN TOURISTS - TRAVELLERS WITH THE DANUBE RIVER CRUISE SHIPS - priority market 4

The choice of the above priority markets is based on thorough analysis but is also justified by data, provided by the World Tourist Organization (UNWTO), noting that the majority of the travels take place within the vicinity of the regions to which the tourists belong (inter-regional tourism), e.g. 4 out of 5 travels have taken





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place within the same region of which tourists live. The data also shows that Europe continues to be the most preferred destination in the world as it generates over 50% of all travels.

In the context of the Memofish routes, the biggest potential lies within using the Bulgarian and Romanian visitors who plan to make short vocations. These are mainly the citizens of the bigger urban centres situated comparatively close to the region. If we only target the people from the CBC region, we will have a group of over 4 mln. tourists, out of which at least 2 mln will meet the criteria of being potential visitors to our routes. This group will make shorter visits (one to three days) but will also tend to come back if their expectations are met.

For the visitors of the rest of Bulgaria and Romania (those living outside the CBC region) the region is a reachable destination. They can travel more than once for weekend/short vacations. Most of them will come individually (with families or friends). With having prior knowledge of a destination comes also the confidence to plan alone and travel in a more relaxed and independent style. In order to attract visitors from this target group, we need to offer a different tourist product, value and adventure that they will have nowhere else in their country.

The key growth potential of the regional tourist market is expected to be generated by visits and nights spent by tourists coming from Europe. The main trends show that the citizens of the continent have made over 1 bln. tourist travels. A little over half of them have been short visits (from one to three nights) and over 74% of them have been towards internal destinations within Europe. About 64% have made at least one individual travel. Here again the Memofish routes must compete with the thousands of other interesting offers available for these tourists to choose from. The best chance is to attract the “cultural researchers and discoverers” of Europe, whose motive for travel will be to explore the cultural heritage of the region. Unique sites combined with additional experience, which can leave lasting memories, are the most important reasons for this group when choosing a destination.

We have excluded here the long travel markets like Russia and China. For the tourist from those markets the CBC region requires larger commitment in terms of money and time. Those tourists would like to see as many key attractions as possible. The Memofish routes are at present not ready for that. The only potential to reach to this part of the tourist market is via the river cruises where such tourists are part of a longer vacation on a Danube river cruise ship. And here we come to the main question when selecting the priority markets for this strategy: **What is the potential (and chance) of including Memofish routes as part of the excursions offered to the river cruise tourists?**





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River cruises along the Danube River are growing fast and each year are generating larger number of passengers. During the last few years, the average number of passengers was above 25 thousand (for the first half of 2019, the number of passengers was more than 29 thousand. For the same period in 2018, they were more than 25 thousand, and during 2017 - close to 19 thousand). Travelers usually do not exceed 200 people per ship, which is why they are considered a non-invasive type of tourism with few travellers, which the cities welcome. The main locations to board and/or get off the ship are Budapest, Vienna, Belgrade and the Danube delta. About 170 ships operate along the Danube. Of these, 85 percent sail between Passau and Budapest and only few come to the low Danube.

Most of the Danube cruises last from 9 to 25 days. The focus is mainly on culture. The average tourist profile includes tourists of over 50 years of age (although there is a trend of decreasing age of travellers) with medium socio-cultural and purchasing power. Among their interests are gastronomy, classical music or art. Most tourists are Germans and Americans but there are new markets like Japan, China, Russia. Cruises are especially sought after for occasions and as gifts for loved ones - anniversaries etc. There is a strong interest in themed cruises - music, food and wine, culture and art, alternative lifestyles, etc.

For many providers of river cruises, travel agencies represent 100% of the bookings. These are tour groups from the US, Japan and Western Europe. The peak season is from June to September, but cruise travels in the transitional seasons (late March to May or late September to late October) are also popular because of their lower cost. The price includes all accommodations on land and during the voyage along the river, most of the meals, entertainment, sightseeing and more.

What is changing in river tourism is that there are more and more traveling tourists, who want to explore not only the standard sights, but also be outside the traditional programme, which requires tour operators to be flexible and offer more interesting things - meetings with local people, wine tourism and more. Excursions on the shore are most often included in the package price and depend on the following criteria:

- Availability of tourist attractions - interesting and preserved natural and cultural sights, local events etc.;
- Availability of tourist infrastructure - variety of eating and entertainment facilities, additional services, trained staff and quality of service, price level, etc.;





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- Accessibility - transport network in proper condition.

Very few river cruise ships currently stop and spend the night in the CBC area ports, though this number is growing (e.g. since the beginning of 2019, there were 207 cruise ship visits at the port of Ruse. For the first half of 2018 they were 179, while for 2017 - 143.). Since not enough attractions are offered to the tourists locally, they mostly visit Vidin and Ruse within only half a day. Feedback from tour operators shows that they will be willing to include new offers/excursions into the river cruise package if they meet the criteria noted above.

Most of the Memofish routes to a large extent meet these requirements, but in order to start negotiations with international tour operators they must be further adapted, developed and promoted and presented in a suitable way. Here, a longer-term vision needs to be implemented as river cruise travels are planned well ahead and in order to be included in the programme a new product needs to be presented and contracted at least 3 years ahead.

Defining the target client

Defining the profile of the potential tourists that we will target is necessary, in order to apply a more focused and cost-effective approach when implementing marketing initiatives. This approach is based on the understanding that tourist products and destinations should be "sold" to consumers who are known to be interested in the area. Therefore, we shall be targeting narrower segments of the target markets that are most likely to accept tourist products based on the cultural and natural heritage, instead of the whole markets.

The main factors that will attract tourists to our Memofish destinations are culture nature, landmarks and tranquillity. The three main reasons for visiting the region as a Bulgarian/Romanian tourist are excursion with the family and/or friends, vacation and visiting friends and relatives. The main motive for a European tourist to visit the region will be to discover unknown but interesting places and learn about new culture. When defining out target clients we shall bear in mind that the people from ALL pre-defined markets shall expect "the special thing" - experiences that will be different from the everyday routine and that will leave them with long lasting impressions and warm memories.

Based on the thematic of our Memofish routes we can define the following **profiles of potential tourists** within the above selected priority markets:





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- **Cultural explorers**

Cultural explorers are recognized by their love of constant travelling and the continuous opportunity to accept, discover and immerse themselves into the culture, people and local environment they visit. They are particularly interested in unique and authentic experiences that include the opportunity to participate in local cultures and lifestyles. They travel in order to experience something new, which is entertaining, engaging (they are active, not passive travellers) and different. They are interested in arts, architecture, museums, historical monuments, local cuisine and are ready to hear all stories about local culture and local life.

These tourists have specific mindset and can be found amongst all age groups, income levels and priority markets. Their decisions to travel are less affected by time, distance and costs. They are more informed, interested and curious about the destinations they will visit. They expect and require certain level of quality and cosiness of the places they stay and facility they use. However, they are ready to open their minds and accept new landscapes, cultures and history. These tourists would rather organise their travel alone and will be with families and friends or can also join group excursions organised by tour operators. Therefore, all Memofish routes set up for families and groups are suitable for tourists with this profile.

- **Nature lovers**

These travellers are passionate about nature. They are interested in new and authentic experiences and they love to visit new and non-traditional destinations. They search for natural landscapes, interaction with locals and active experiences. This is often more important than the level of the facilities they use on spot. To observe pure nature, wildlife watching, to be in the open and outside industrial zones is the priority motive.

Adventurous in spirit, they like to actively enjoy the nature and culture by, for example, going on longer walks in nature, riding a bike or admiring at the Danube river flora and fauna from a boat. Safety and sustainability, as well as proper descriptions of the site they are about to visit, are important to them.

People with such profile would be mostly middle-income household members, active users of internet and electronic services, young or middle-aged (maybe no more than 50 years of age). For accommodation spots, they would prefer mainly





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private rental apartments and three-star hotels. The younger ones would also choose camping options. Those type of tourists would not travel in an organised group. The most suitable Memofish routes for them would be the variants adapted for families but especially the parts of them that have direct access to the Danube river, surrounding nature and local fish-based cuisine.

- **People searching for adventures**

They would mostly travel with their friends/spouse, looking for an opportunity to spend some time together, sharing new experiences. They want to find new places, further away from the known tourist routes, which would help them break away from their busy daily routine and take time for themselves and their loved ones. They would take short-term but also medium - term (1 days) more frequent trips to short or long-distance destinations. They would stay in a guest house, as close as possible to the locals and, in the context of the Memofish topics, would love to sit next to an old fisherman and tow the net together with him, go fishing or cook a fish soup in the open at the bank of the Danube river.

These people are normally in their early 30s/40s and would organise their travel alone. They are sociable and seek and enjoy authentic personal experiences that they can talk about and share. They want to learn more about the places they visit. They are usually open-minded and interested in historic places and sites. In order to attract their attention, a destination shall be promoted as able to uncover unknown places, tell new stories and offer semi-extreme attractions.

In addition to the above defined 3 main target groups, which should be targeted on an individual basis, we shall need to mark one more specialized group of potential visitors with a great potential to “buy” the Memofish offers and these are the **school-age young people**. It is maybe too early to define whether these kids will be the future cultural explorers or nature lovers, but they are surely part of a large potential market of our routes via the organised school excursions. The specifics that need to be considered in this case are that we would not sell directly to the kids, but rather to their parents and even more to the school staff that will organise the excursion. These are group trips, mainly focused on history and nature. The trips are usually short ones, outside the tourist season. Statistics show that more than 50% of the school excursions are organised via tour operators, therefore the Memofish route variants suitable for group visits of young people have the largest potential for commercialization via such partners.

A very similar “group target client” is **the corporate sector**, where such vacations can be part of team building initiatives. In this case, the offer is





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targeted to the heads of the internal marketing and human resource departments of the companies and/or the general manager, in the case of smaller firms. The routes selected shall be adapted to also include team building games and exercises. All other aspects already commented above, apply also here.

Marketing instruments

In this section of the strategy we will comment on pricing and the PR and promotional approaches, also focusing on the **main promotional channels** which the Memofish partners shall use to disseminate information about the Memofish routes and all other resources available.

Pricing strategy

In every market strategy pricing is one of the most important aspects to consider. In our case when we discuss price, we will take into consideration only cases where a Memofish route is to be priced as a full service provided by a tour operator or any other commercial entity that has the rights and the abilities to offer such tourist products to a client.

In general, the following pricing strategies are widely applied in business:

- Cost-plus pricing—simply calculating costs and adding a mark-up;
- Competitive pricing—setting a price based on what the competition charges;
- Value-based pricing—setting a price based on how much the customer believes what the product/service is worth;
- Price skimming—setting a high price and lowering it as the market evolves;
- Penetration pricing—setting a low price to enter a competitive market and raising it later.

The pricing strategies that are generally applied in tourism have much more to do with what the client is ready to pay than with the cost incurred by the service provider. To this view, like in the service sector as a whole, to set the “fairest” price for both the seller and the buyer is a bit of a challenge. How much the customers are willing to pay for the service has very much to do with how much they value the product they are buying. Thus, the value-based pricing strategy in this case is most appropriate but also the most difficult to apply.





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The following practical advices can be used for a service provider to arrive at a value - based price for a Memofish route³:

- Pick a product that is comparable to ours and find out what customers have paid for it;
- Note all specifics that make our product different from the comparable product;
- Place a financial value on all these differences, add everything that is positive about our product and subtract any negatives to come up with a potential price;
- **Make sure the value to the customer is higher than the actual costs!**
- Demonstrate to customers why the price will be acceptable, e.g. promote it to them.

The value-based pricing strategy can better convey the value the Memofish routes offered to the tourist. Using this strategy, the perceived value to the customer is primarily based on how well our products suit his/her needs and wants. An advantage over competitive products can be gained if the price is a better fit with the customer's perspective.

Value-based pricing will allow the provider to be more profitable, meaning s/he can acquire more resources and grow his/her business. On the other side, if a price does not work, the answer is not just to lower it, but to determine how it can better match customer value. That may mean adapting the products to better suit the market which will inevitably have a positive effect on the local communities and help the Memofish routes "stay alive".

Promotion of the Memofish routes

Commercializing the Memofish routes and positioning them on the regional tourist market as a new service will give an opportunity to open a new revenue stream with existing customers or to sell to prospects in a different market sector. Promotion is an important stage in the new service development process, helping to ensure a successful launch by making the existing and prospective customers aware of the service and its benefits.

Before putting further efforts into the promotion of the Memofish routes, one needs to bear in mind that launching a new service is an expensive venture, so one needs

³ Based on the advices of Eric Dolansky, Associate Professor of Marketing at Brock University in St. Catharines, Ont.





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to make sure not to waste resources on taking “a weak service” to the market. Although all efforts have been made by the Memofish project partners to facilitate this process, any tourism service provider needs to verify first that s/he has a strong and unique product that meets customer expectations. In order to have a higher chance of commercial success, each operator needs to further develop and adapt the products for their own group of potential clients and structure their own tailor-made programmes. Each promoter is free to add new objects, new places for accommodation or dinner. Each operator, who has signed an agreement with BRCCI, has the right to propose amendments and improvements to the routes to be reflected on the project’s web platform, as well as to request to upload new information, new pdf-downloadable files with specific programmes, etc.

Promoting the Memofish routes and the supplementary existing resources by the tour operators who have signed agreements with BRCCI, as well as by the project partners, shall be done in two levels which will require comparatively different approaches:

- **promotion to end users** - individual potential tourists, corporate clients and group leaders (schools, NGOs, etc.) outside the tourist industry
- **promotion to industry representatives: travel agents or external/international tour operators** - these entities need to “buy” the products first in order to offer them further to their existing or prospective clients

As already mentioned above, the project partners don’t have the right to directly commercialise the Memofish products (in the sense of taking revenues directly from tourists for organizing their Memofish travels) due to the existing licensing regimes in both countries, therefore commercialization of the products shall be done exclusively through the partnering tour operators (those who have signed the Memofish agreements).

However, the Memofish partners have the responsibility to put additional efforts in maintaining the resources developed and in promoting the project outputs outside the financial project lifetime⁴, therefore for at least 3 more years they will also actively support all industry representatives who commercialise the routes.

⁴ The Memofish project as a subsidy contract ends on 31 January 2020.





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Branding

Each of the 5 core Memofish routes have their name linked to a certain theme and pair of localities. Thus, for example, the routes that go near Vidin - Calafat are named NEW EUROPE because New Europe is the name of the Vidin-Calafat Danube Bridge. The routes that goes near Silistra - Calarasi are named DANUBE BOATS, because the fishing boats in Silistra are visible from the nearest restaurant and in Calarasi it is easiest to find a boat for a trip on the Danube. The routes that go near Ruse - Giurgiu are named DANUBE BRIDGE and to this day this name is mainly associated with the bridge near Ruse and Giurgiu. The routes that goes near Tutrakan - Oltenita are named OLD FISHERMEN, because in the Tutrakan region there has always been a steady presence of fishermen and fishing communities over the centuries. The routes that go near Vetren-Srebarna - Mostistea-Galatui are named BIRDS OF THE WORLD because this name is associated with lake Srebarna and lakes Mostistea and Galatsui, as well as birds, that do not know what a border is and do not know what a reserve or fish farm is and are in both places.

Memofish, as the project name, has its own logo which can be used as the brand name of the routes. The logo has been designed within the Memofish project and approved by all partners. It has the following characteristics:

- Full colour version



C: 67, M: 100, Y: 24, K: 0
R: 120, G: 49, B: 114
PANTONE 520 C



C: 100, M: 85, Y: 0, K: 0
R: 45, G: 65, B: 145
PANTONE 288 C





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- Monochrome version - one colour



- Monochrome version - black colour



- Grayscale - shades of gray





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- Negative variant



Memofish routes can be promoted as unique Danube river destinations that combine history (memories) and local culture (fishing, fisheries) accessible and adaptable to the needs and wants of different tourists.

The following slogans/messages can also be used to promote the Memofish routes to potential tourists:

ENGLISH	BULGARIAN	ROMANIAN
Discover the places not reached... Hear the stories not told.... Follow the Danube river Memofish routes...	Мемофиш - началото на историята	Memofish - Apa trece, pietrele rămân
Whiteness the sunset or a sunrise on Danube	Мемофиш - чуй неразказаните рибарски истории	Memofish - Povești pescărești de neuitat
Memofish - new ideas for unusual tourism	Мемофиш - веднъж не стига	Memofish - Fii martorul civilizației dunărene!
Feel the taste of Memofish: real stories, natural beauty and unforgettable adventures	Мемофиш - винаги има още...	Memofish - Tradiții pescărești autentice





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Taste Memofish - taste fish dish	Мемофиш - приключение, за което ще благодарим	Memofish - Aventuri gustoase
The memory of fishing traditions	Приключението Мемофиш - тръгни сега	Memofish - 1001 rețete cu pește și.. aventuri!
Fishing for memories	Мемофиш - водата помни, рибата знае. Чуйте какво	
	Паметта на рибарските традиции	

Promotional materials

As part of the Memofish project, a series of promotional materials have been developed and disseminated, namely:

- Leaflets for the project in 3 languages (EN/BG, RO)
- Flyers for each integrated tourist products in 3 languages (EN/BG/RO)
- Project posters in 2 languages (BG/RO)
- Project roll-up banners
- Project transparencies
- Project outdoor banners
- Keychains
- Hats
- T-shirts
- Light reflection bands
- Carrier bags/rucksacks
- Stickers
- Tourist magnets
- Pens

Each tourism agent or group leader promoting the Memofish routes (e.g. with signed agreement with BRCCI) shall receive:

- 1 pen
- 1 hat
- 1 t-shirt





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Each Memofish route has been promoted via a flyer, developed in Bulgarian, Romanian and English. 300 000 copies of these have been printed out and already disseminated. Each agency with an agreement to promote the Memofish routes shall receive:

- 100 flyers in English for each tourist route
- 100 flyers in Bulgarian for each tourist route

In addition, the leaflets can be provided upon request also in pdf format, as well as source files for further printing out.

Main promotional channels

Due to the limited marketing budgets of the Memofish contractors and partners and based on the fact that significant investment in promotional tools and resources has already been made as part of the EU-funded project, the main promotional channels we propose to be further used shall be largely the ones already set up and developed: For more clarity they are presented in the following table:

Promotional channel	Applicable for end users/tourists	Applicable for industry representatives	Frequency of activity	Notes
Memofish website	X	X	monthly	News section to be constantly updated; routes to be developed and adapted, contact info on accommodation etc. to be up to date
Websites of the project partners	X	X	Once in every 3 months	Sharing info from the Memofish site; news on using the routes
Websites of the Memofish contractors (partnering tour operators)	X	X	monthly	Publishing content, advertising specific Memofish programmes
Press releases to local media - on-line and off-line/specialized tourism editions	X	X	Once in every 3 months	Press releases sent to media; interviews and editorials to be drafted
Memofish social media channels: • Facebook • Instagram • YouTube	X	X	Once in every 2 weeks	Sharing news, photos, videos, stories; promo campaigns





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• Linked-in show case page				
Social media channels/e-newsletters of the partners	X	X	Once in a month	Sharing of news, photos, videos, stories
Social media channels of the Memofish contractors (partnering tour operators)	X	X	Once in a month	Publishing content, photos, videos, stories, sharing Memofish social media publications
Tourist info offices in the region	X		Once at the beginning of the promotional campaign; checking every 3 months	Info provided to officers; Memofish leaflets and/or other left at the desks
Hotels/restaurants included in the Memofish routes	X		Once at the beginning of the promotional campaign; checking every 3 months	Info provided to managers; Memofish leaflets left at the desks
On-line travel guides and travel-related social media groups	X		Once in every 3 months	Info already published; to sustain it and publish news
Tourism fairs and specialized events	X	X	annually	To present the destinations, the routes and the other resources available
Direct mailing		X	Once at the beginning of the campaign; Every 3 months	100 letters sent to local entities and tour operators; new contacts to be added constantly
Personal meetings		X	In the first 3 months during the initial campaign; continuously after	To directly promote the routes and the Memofish resources available to industry operators
OPTIONAL: On-line booking platforms	X		Depending on cost	Paid publications on platforms like TripAdvisor, Booking.com, etc.
mouth-to-mouth method (also through placing customer reviews on the website(s) and provoking the sharing and reactions in the social media channels)	X	X	Once in every 3 months	recommendations of friends and relatives as well as positive feedback from clients and visitors are essential for taking a decision to travel





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The ultimate goal of all promotional activities shall be to generate interest, preferences and particularly to “close a sale” - a visit to the destinations. Awareness, interest and preferences for travelling to our tourist destinations need to be raised. In order for the area to compete with destinations that are much more popular and have more resources for advertising and attracting visitors, innovative campaigns and effort is needed. Here are some further suggestions:

Creative campaigns:

- ✓ Create content based on the experience and feeling that a visit to the Memofish locations gives to a tourist. The focus can be on real stories of tourists that visited the places, should be more emotional and shall use the photographic and video resources, the fishermen interviews and more. Distribution may be done via the Memofish website, the website of the tour operator, the social media channels or through sponsored content on sites such as TripAdvisor, outdoorproject.com, theculturetrip.com, iLoveBulgaria, bulgariatravel.org, Opoznai.bg, etc.;
- ✓ Online advertising and marketing campaigns - efforts should be focused online, with a highly segmented approach through the channels most commonly used by the target audience. Preferences will be given to strategic product categories and markets. This communication may take various forms - sponsored ads and banners, sponsored content, attracting influencers on social networks with a focus on travel and tourism, etc., and can be a constant and comprehensive incentive for other actions;
- ✓ Regular announcements in national and electronic media may be broadcasted when planning specific events or concrete visit programmes, subject to budget availability.

Promotion in partnership:

- ✓ Link the Memofish routes to other destinations and develop larger inter-regional routes and promotions or design one unique route from all Memofish destinations or construct “A walk along the Danube River” including also new destinations;
- ✓ Couple the routes with other adventures in the region and share the costs for advertising;
- ✓ Develop new partnerships with other tour operators, tourist agents, accommodation spots, dining establishments, bloggers, vloggers and influencers on social networks. This is essential for the routes to stay “alive” and benefit from the synergies to promote visits and access to high-potential market niches.





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Social media campaigns:

Social media is the cost-effective way to get messages to targeted markets and visitors so it shall be used widely and constantly.

- ✓ Create regular Instagram and Facebook campaigns by showing the quality of the destinations; The already developed” official” Memofish channels can be used widely for these and at no charge
- ✓ Photos and destinations may be published on Pinterest and Flickr in order to show the diversity that the area has;
- ✓ Create a GoPro Vimeo user-generated adventure channel; live stream also on YouTube;

New attractions:

At the time the Memofish routes were developed, there were not too many real attractions or adventure-type of products developed in the selected localities in order to add them to the routes. The following can be as asset:

- ✓ Develop a programme with interactive lessons about local nature and local culture in the open for school kids
- ✓ Develop a programme for fish-cooking and fish cuisine degustation
- ✓ Develop a programme for adventure tourism on a Memofish route (e.g. fishing with local fishermen, etc.)





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RULES FOR COMMERCIALISATION. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITY OF THE PARTIES

The present rules for commercialization of the Memofish routes are binding for the project partners on one hand, represented by BRCCI as lead partner and, on the other, for the tourism industry operators (hereafter called partnering operators), who have signed an agreement to commercialise the Memofish routes.

The overall responsibility for the Memofish product commercialization shall be taken by the lead project partner BRCCI, with all partners from the project consortium contributing to the promotion and monitoring activities. BRCCI will be the organization to sign the Memofish agreements with the partnering industry operators and to monitor the implementation of these agreements, with all parties observing their commitments.

The copyrights of all visual materials produced within the project (photos, videos, films and the other data base resources) are held by BRCCI. These are provided for use to the tourism providers free of charge. They cannot be used for harmful activities or to breach personal rights. They cannot be sold for revenue. Whenever possible, they must be accompanied by the EU logo and an information sign noting the EU funding programme (in our case INTERREG V-A Romania - Bulgaria Programme 2014 - 2020).

The Memofish brand cannot be used in relation to other destinations or other routes apart from the ones already designed and subject to this commercialization plan. In case of new routes developed by the project partners, the partnering tour providers or any other entities, which include Bulgarian and Romanian Danube river localities, have fisheries topics etc., can qualify to be added to the existing Memofish routes after the written consent of all project partners. In such cases, the new routes shall meet the standards already set and shall be placed on the Memofish website next to the existing ones. The costs for this shall be agreed upon and split by the parties proposing the additions.

The Memofish logo and all electronic designs can be used by all parties free of charge if they are referred to only as logos and design of the Memofish routes and resources.

The usage of the Memofish web platform or the official Memofish social media channels for direct advertisement of a concrete Memofish route campaign organised by a partnering commercial tour provider is possible against a small





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fee needed to cover the costs for uploading the content and implementing the campaign.

Commitments, rights and responsibilities of the Memofish project partners:

1. BRCCI shall strictly monitor the observation of the rules and responsibilities derived by the Memofish agreements and have the right to terminate them in case of a breach⁵;
2. BRCCI has the ultimate responsibility to maintain and regularly update the Memofish web platform and resource database, ensuring free access for a period of minimum 3 years (until 31 January 2023);
3. BRCCI shall maintain the Memofish social media channels for a period of minimum 3 years and shall regularly publish new content on them;
4. BRCCI shall promote the Memofish routes to its wide network of Bulgarian and Romanian business stakeholders via its own website, social media pages and e-bulletin;
5. The Ruse Regional Museum of History shall promote the Memofish routes to its network of institutional stakeholders and shall present them at least 3 events/fairs in Bulgaria and Romania until 31 January 2023);
6. FLAG “Dunarea Calaraseana” shall keep and maintain the river boat acquired within the project and shall make it available for usage as part of Memofish visits against a fee;
7. Paralel - Silistra shall preserve and make available the life jackets acquired within the project and shall make them available for usage as part of Memofish visits against a fee;
8. FLAG “Dunarea Calaraseana” shall take the responsibility to monitor the natural sites covered by the Memofish routes for accessibility and proper maintenance;
9. The Ruse Museum of History shall take the responsibility to monitor the historical and cultural sites, included in the Memofish routes for accessibility, proper maintenance and correctness of the relevant information published on the Memofish web platform for each site;
10. BRCCI shall be responsible for the accuracy of the contact information for all sites, hotels and restaurants in Bulgaria, included in the Memofish route and Access Association shall do the same for the objects in Romania;
11. All partners commit to actively promote the routes through all their channels.

⁵ BRCCI shall have the right to warn and if no action is taken, to terminate the agreement with an operator whose tourists systematically do harm on the natural environment, cultural sites and eco systems included in the Memofish routes





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Rights and responsibilities of the partnering operators:

1. They have the right to make full usage of all Memofish resources, materials, logo and designs according to the rules already described earlier in this document;
2. They have the right to ask their contact details to be placed on the web platform and the downloadable pdfs for further reference as promotes in all/some of the Memofish routes;
3. They have the right to request an advertisement to be placed on the web platform or in the Memofish social medial pages or make a campaign through these against a fee;
4. They have the right to construct their own concrete programme using the core Memofish routes and include new local objects, hotels, restaurants or attractions;
5. They have the right to place with BRCCI and the project partners proposals for additions, amendments, feedback from clients and other information, which is relevant and useful to promote the routes;
6. They have the right to promote new rules to be included as Memofish routes following the procedures already mentioned above;
7. They are responsible to actively advertise the routes on their own websites and/or other media;
8. They are responsible to instruct their tourists and partnering agents to take due care and observe clean natural environment during their visits;
9. They are responsible to provide regular data (every half a year) on the tourists attracted on Memofish routes and the exact number of nights spent by them;
10. They are responsible to provide to the project partners/BRCCI regular information on tourists' satisfaction of the Memofish routes

All these rights and responsibilities are included in the model agreement, annexed to this management plan.





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TIME PLANNING. FINANCIAL PLAN

The following timing shall be observed when commercializing the Memofish routes:

Activity	Timing/deadline	Target	Value, EUR	Responsible entity
Focused promotion to tour operators in view of attracting them as partners (mailing, meetings, etc.)	January 2021	300	500	All project partners
Signature of agreements with tour operators	May 2021	30	n/a	BRCCI, supported by all project partners
Memofish website maintenance and update	Monthly updates until January 2023	36 new articles/news/content	1000	BRCCI
Memofish social media publications	Once in every 2 weeks until January 2023	72 new publications	200	BRCCI
Promoting the routes at fairs and events	Annually until January 2023	3 fairs	2000	RRMH; partnering operators
Promoting the routes through the websites, social media and other channels of the parties	Monthly until January 2023	200 publications in total	n/a	All parties!
Paid on-line campaigns	January 2023	5	2000	Partnering operators
Publications of articles and similar content in general or	January 2023	5	n/a	BRCCI RRMH





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specialized tourism-related media				
Collection of feedback from end users	January 2023	30	n/a	Partnering operators
Data collection on nights spent	Every half a year until 31 January 2023	500 nights	n/a	BRCCI Partnering operators





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MANAGEMENT AND MONITORING

The Chamber shall guide the process of commercialization of the Memofish products in order to ensure proper management and sustainability, with a strong focus put on **observing the balance between benefitting from commercial activities and preserving the cultural and natural heritage.**

Tourism is an important factor, which has a positive effect on the local economies of the communities where Memofish routes are to be commercialised. On the other hand, it can be a threat to the natural environment. The increase of visitors flow to the Danube river ecosystem, which is one of the most vulnerable natural areas, might lead to a deterioration of its flora and fauna. Practices like the so-called “hit and run” tourism which causes negative effects due to waste generation, water consumption, traffic and others should be avoided as much as possible and the tour organisers shall be kept responsible for observing those rules.

Individual automobile transportation poses another series risk on the landscape of the Memofish communities. We can expect that about 80% of the visitors will come by car which will create negative preconditions in relation to the environment due to automobile gases, parking in grass areas, violation of the ban to enter certain areas, etc. Where possible due care shall be taken to instruct the tourists to save the nature; group transportations shall also be encouraged.

Some additional negative phenomena such as erosion, disturbances caused by unregulated visits in the most vulnerable territories, noise, fire hazards, increased waste, distribution of non - autochthonous species on paths, poaching and others are frequently connected to the development of such tourism destinations.

Due to the threats connected with the utilization of natural and cultural-historic resources, part of the Memofish routes, it is necessary to implement a suitable, efficient and rational approach to the preservation efforts of these resources. Careful planning and execution, as well as adequate tourist flow management should be constantly implemented, but the responsibilities for these lie far outside of the capacity of the project partners. However, we will continue to be actively involved in all local government initiatives focused on the implementation of proper management measures and will closely monitor the direct effect from the visits of the Memofish groups provided they are done via the partnering tour operators.





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Good management practices

In view of the development and preservation of the identified historical, cultural and natural sites included in the Memofish routes, it is necessary to define special rules for the management of the tourist flow, the aim being to prevent disruption of the integrity of the sites and resources.

At an international level the following practices are widely used:

- Monitoring of the tourist flow in the target destinations;
- Implementation of taxes for visitors;
- Implementation of tourist behaviours guidelines;
- Implementation of tour operators best practices.

There are four basic approaches that can be used to reduce the negative impact of visitors to sites:

- Managing the provision of tourist services or visiting opportunities, for example by increasing the space or the time the site is open so that it can handle the increased tourist interest;
- Managing the demand for services related to visits to sites and attractions, such as traveling in small groups of up to 12-14 people, mandatory with a guide (thus restricting the number of tourists and the group leader can control their behaviour);
- Management of the sites' ability to take on the increased tourist flow: through fortification of the site or its elements or through the construction of additional facilities;
- Managing the usage impact, for example by modifying the use or lowering the frequency of use.

What else can be done by the local authorities or other designated agencies:

- Create an integrated database with information on the tourist flows the sites conditions;
- Observe and monitor the tourist flow, implement where necessary of tourist entrance fees;
- Research on the effects of climate change on historic and religious resources and sites;
- Set up visitor guidelines for historic, religious, cultural and natural sites;





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- Perform periodic surveys on the state of natural and historical resources and heritage;
- Build video surveillance systems on key sites;
- Place instruction notes and warning signs on key spots;
- Impose fines for violation of the rules;
- Fundraise to develop and preserve the sites.

Synergy with current tourism development strategies

Tourism contributes to the activities in virtually every industry across the local and regional economies. The process by which the consumer (visitor) comes to the product (the destination), consumes identifiable tourism products and incurs normal day-to-day living expenses in that destination is unique among traded goods and service markets. Tourism has social effects in areas as diverse as crime, health, congestion, land and other prices, and urban amenities. This illustrates the extent to which tourism has a multiplicity of stakeholders and shows that local governments have to address both horizontal issues (across agencies responsible for transport, infrastructure, regional development, immigration and customs, education and training and so on) and vertical issues (from the national level through, to the provincial, regional and local levels of government) in the design and execution of tourism-related policies and programmes.

Addressing the major and multi-faceted challenges faced by the tourism industry demands an integrated approach to policy development across many stakeholders. Coherence and consistency are essential if we are to ensure that tourism policies are effective. This has been the reason why the Memofish partners also worked alongside the local communities to build together with them local development strategies looking for synergies with other planning documents. Two additional policy documents were elaborated ([e.g. „Common policy for the preservation, development and utilization of the heritage of fisheries communities“](#) and [„Culture matters! - cross-border cooperation for the management of cultural heritage“](#)) which provide information on the up-to-date policies and practices for preserving the cultural heritage of the fisheries communities on an international, regional and local level, as well as examples of the impact of the European Union's cultural and historical heritage policy, strategic regional planning and the measures taken to support the cultural and creative industries. All of these should be also promoted by the partners especially for local and regional government actors in view of supporting and synchronizing with upper level planning policies.





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CONTACT INFORMATION

BRCCI:

Overall management of the commercialization process;

Responsible for the maintenance of the on-line resources: website, social media channels, database

Address: Ruse, Bulgaria, 12-14 Voyvodova str.

Office hours: 9.00 - 17.00, Monday to Friday

E-mail: info@brcci.eu

Tel: +359 82 507 606 (in Bulgarian and English, during office hours)

Tel: +359 895 533 882 (in Romanian and English, during office hours)

Paralel-Silistra

Responsible for the 15 life jackets in Bulgaria and testing of DANUBE BOATS - youth tourist route

Address: Silistra, Bulgaria, 41 Dobrudza str., Ent B, Floor 3, Office 10

E-mail: office@paralel-silistra.net

Tel: +359 888 494 077

Ruse Regional Museum of History

Responsible for general enquiries about the places of interest etc.

Address: Ruse, Bulgaria, 3 "Al. Battenberg" Sq.

E-mail: nenoff@abv.bg

Tel: +359 82 825 002

Access Association Calarasi

Responsible for testing of BIRDS OF THE WORLD - family tourist route

Address: Calarasi, Romania, 75, Str. Sf. Nicolae

E-mail: viomiranca@gmail.com

Tel: +40 730 025 010

FLAG "Dunarea Calaraseana"

Responsible for the boat and 8 life jackets and testing of DANUBE BRIDGE - group tourist route

Address: Calarasi, Romania, 17, Progresul street, block BBB, 3rd floor

E-mail: office@dunareacalaraseana.ro

Tel: +40 242 311 161





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Annex 1: Model agreement for commercializing the Memofish routes

Sources

ⁱ National Statistical Institute, Bulgaria

ⁱⁱ National Statistical Institute, Bulgaria

