

Exploring the tourist potential and development opportunities in the Municipality of General Toshevo

/Summary/

A strategic plan for development and sustainable tourism in the Municipality of General Toshevo

/ year 2020 - 2030 /

/Summary/

1. Introduction

The present strategic plan for development and sustainable tourism in the Municipality of General Toshevo has been prepared in the framework of the project “Tourist Potential Development, Preservation and Popularization of the Natural and Cultural Heritage” financed within the program for transborder cooperation INTERREG V-A, Romania - Bulgaria 2014 - 2020.

A partner under the project is the Municipality of Murfatlar - Romania which is also carrying out a similar study, the goal being a preparation of a common strategic document which is to unite the resources and possibilities of both municipalities for the development of tourism in the transborder region General Toshevo - Murfatlar.

The principal aim of this study is the exploration of the tourist potential and the opportunities for tourist development in the Municipality of General Toshevo with consideration of the additional opportunities enabled by the cooperation with the Romanian municipality.

The plan has a far-reaching scope comprising the period 2020-2030. It has been made on basis of an elaborate analysis of the social-economic state of the Municipality of General Toshevo, after conducting constructive meetings, discussions and consultations with representatives of the municipal administration, the local businesses and the local community, as well as a result of a feasibility study of the tourist potential of the Municipality.

The main goal of the plan is, based on the situational analysis of the Municipality of General Toshevo, to identify the strengths and weaknesses, the opportunities and risks before the tourist development of the Municipality, the

strategic goals, the main priorities and necessary measures, which are to be undertaken for the provision of sustainable tourist development in the Municipality.

The strategic plan for tourist development in the Municipality of General Toshevo has been made in compliance with the main strategic policies and documents on European and national level as follows:

- The strategy “Europe 2020” and strategic directions to the EU member states for the development of appropriate policies for boosting the economy and employment.
- The National strategic and referent framework, the National program for development 2020 and the Operative programs.
- The strategic plan for cultural tourism development in Bulgaria which lays at its foundation the so called “Local Cultural System” (LoCuS), that is, a sphere which, through exchanging values, cultural resources, territory, infrastructural systems, is capable of combining the different elements of a potential tourist offer.
- The national strategy for sustainable tourist development in Bulgaria 2014-2030, the main goal of which is the establishment of the competitiveness and efficiency of the tourist sector in Bulgaria by means of optimal usage of the available natural and anthropogenic resources in compliance with the market demands and customer expectations for sustainable tourist development.
- The regional strategy and municipal plan for development of the Municipality of General Toshevo, whose main goal is achieving an economic development with high levels of employment based on the potential and resources of the Municipality, improving the technical infrastructure and overcoming the demographic crisis and poverty, as well as the Strategy for CLLD (Community-led Local Development) - LIG (Local Initiative Group) Balchik - General Toshevo.

The strategic plan for tourist development in the Municipality of General Toshevo is based on the main principles for regional development, also used in the preparation of the municipal plan, and namely:

- balanced and gradual planning of the resources of the situational analysis data base and the achieved results over the last years;

- integrated development of the activities in compliance with the resources, traditions, the national and regional framework for development;
- identification of the specifics of the Municipality and orientation of the resources and activities towards its development.

An important feature of the developed blueprint is that it is open to supplements and revisions depending on the variable conditions in the environment where it will be implemented. Until recently, it was acceptable in strategic planning that each strategy has to mandatorily be implemented without minding the variable nature of conditions, where it will be implemented. The new understanding for strategic planning is based on the dynamics of the modern world - future is by and large unpredictable, forecasts can never be absolutely correct, long-term goals have to be “mobile” depending on external conditions. For this reason, it is impossible to develop “universal” strategies, which are “fit” for any type of conditions and it is even less likely that they be mandatorily implemented in their entirety. Contemporary mode of thinking is that the strategy has to be “open” to revisions and additions in compliance with the forthcoming changes in the environmental conditions. This means that the key to the successful strategy is not precisely an accurate forecast of the future but, rather, the creation of a mechanism that triggers tourism sector development, even when faced with an unpredictable future. Hence the developed strategy gives only an outline of long-term tourism development in the General Toshevo region.

The analyses attached, along with some key concepts from the tourism sphere, clarify the main factors for tourism development, natural and anthropogenic tourist resources, the present condition of the tourist sector in the trans-border region, the tourist markets (tourist demand and supply), the basic and specialized tourist infrastructure, the environmental conditions, advertising and marketing, tourist products and services, tourist organizations, human resources and other important to tourism development in the region aspects.

2. Situational analysis

From a geomorphologic point of view, the target territory refers to the eastern part of the Danube hilly plains, which is located on the Dobrudjan plateau and which is not rich in relief forms.

The Municipality of General Toshevo (General Toshevo District) is part of the granary hold of Bulgaria - Dobrudja which is characterized by a fertile hinterland with soil-climactic conditions favorable for agricultural development. The moderate climate, rural landscape, proximity to the Black Sea and the major Bulgarian and Romanian resorts are all beneficial for the tourist development.

Although it has not been defined as a region with significant from macrogeographic standpoint recreational resources, the municipality General Toshevo possess some palpable comparative advantages, which could turn tourism into a serious source of additional revenues and employment for the local population, as well as will facilitate the effective diversification of the almost entirely agricultural profile of the two municipalities. One should not forget that the balanced tourism development, which minds local resources and possibilities, contributes not only to the improvement of the state of local economy but also to the attainment of a more efficient protection of the cultural-historical heritage and the natural landscapes. Namely the understanding of these complex benefits from tourism development has spurred the local community, the various structures of the civil society, namely business, NGO, social partners, the governmental and local authorities, etc. to look for the region's place on the tourist market in the two countries and beyond.

This is why, while working on this blueprint it was vital to determine the alternative approaches to the tourism development strategic planning, to evaluate experience accumulated during implementation of various programmes and projects in the trans-border region, to define the approaches in the draw-up and argumentation of priorities and strategic goals in tourism development at regional level.

2.1. General characteristic of the trans-border region

Geographic location, borders and size

General Toshevo Municipality is the second largest in the Dobrich region. It is located in the north-eastern part of Bulgaria. The population of General Toshevo municipality according to NSI data as at 31.12.2018 is 13 063 people and the area of the municipality is 982 km² or the average density of the population is 13.8 people / sq. Km. In administrative terms, General Toshevo municipality consists of 41 settlements (1 town and 40 villages): Alexander Stamboliyski, Balkantsi, Bezhanovo, Vassilevo, Velikovo, Vichovo, General Toshevo, Gradini, Goritsa, Dubovik, Zhiten, Zograph, Izvorovo, Yovkovo, Kalina, Kardam, Konare, Kraishite, Krassen, Kupinovo, Loznitsa, Lyulyakovo, Malina, Ograzhden, Petleshkovo, Pisarovo, Plenimir, Preselentsi, Prasad, Pchelarovo, Ravnets, Rogozina, Rossen, Rossitsa, Sirakovo, Snop, Sniagovo, Spasovo, Sredina, Surnino, Uzovo and Chernookovo.

Half of the population (about 47%) lives in the city.



Fig. 1 Transborder region General Toshevo

2.2. Natural and resource potential

The territory of General Toshevo municipality covers the eastern part of the Danube Hilly Plain and is situated on the Dobrudzha plateau. The average altitude varies in the 150 - 250 m range. The surface of the plateau, where it has been studied, is poorly fragmented - the bulk is made of vast flat watershed areas, which are delimited by dry gorges and river valleys with temporary outflow. The limestone, which underlies the plateau, is covered with a loess film, under which rocks are karst laden. In some places, they surface and form karst shapes.

The climate of the trans-border region is definitively moderately continental and is suitable for growing various agricultural crops. The average annual temperature of the air is 13.5°C. Winters are cold whereas summers are hot and dry. The big temperature amplitudes are typical year-round. The average annual rainfall is about 440 mm, i.e. the trans-border region is among the driest on the Balkans.

The examined territory is poor in superficial water. This predicates the economic use of available water and active search of possibilities for the use of alternative water sources. The river currents lose their superficial outflow because of the dense karst shapes of their comprising limestone rocks. The main river, which collects water from the territory of General Toshevo municipality is Purun gorge. The outflow high is in February, whereas the minimum is in July-August. The trans-border region is characterised by one of the lowest values of the average annual water yield of the Balkan rivers (around and below 0.1 l/sec/km²).

The agricultural areas occupy the largest relative share of the territory of the General Toshevo municipality, where the latter the latter being the first place on this indicator in the region of the city of Dobrich as its administrative center.

The latter in the framework of the the territory of the region occupy 86.96% of the total area, of which 93.1% represent tillable farm land.

The lack of surface water makes it difficult for the development of irrigated agriculture. Low forest cover is unfavorable prerequisite for wind soil erosion, pollution of air and for a low absorption of carbon.

2.3. Local economy and human resources

Local economy is mono-structural and has a similar economic profile and specialisation in the field of mechanised farming, which has been favourably influenced by the extraordinarily high soil fertility and the agroecologic potential. That is why, in the municipal center of General Toshevo municipality, an agricultural research center is located - the Dobrudja Agricultural Institute, which develops scientific activity in four main directions:

1. Selection of cereal-wheat crops;
2. Selection of bean crops;
3. Selection of technical crops;

4. Agricultural equipment.

The agricultural line-up has farming oriented toward growing the main agricultural crops - wheat, corn and sunflower - as its priority. In recent years, due to climate and market specifics the ratio of spring to autumn crops is 2:1 /two to one/. The new agricultural crops also have their place - namely the production of lavender and coriander has been on the rise. Wheat and corn seed production is also growing. A slight trend toward breaking the framework of the monocultural farming has been observed. This factor is favourable because in the long run this will reduce the dependence of local economy on the fluctuations in production buyout rates on the Romanian and Bulgarian markets, and especially on the international mercantile exchanges.

Industry

Industry within the surveyed territory is poorly represented only by small and medium enterprises in the processing industry, with few opportunities for growth and opening new jobs. In General Toshevo Municipality representatives of this economic activity are mainly enterprises in the food processing industry, enterprises for the production of electric tools, shoes, garden furniture and wooden houses, bricks.

The population of General Toshevo municipality as of 31.12.2018 is 13 063 people, with women being predominant. The total birth rate is 8.2 ‰ and the mortality rate is 18.9 ‰.

Because of the negative migration balance and the natural population growth in the short run, it is expected that the population continue to dwindle. In this sense, the intensification of tourism development in the General Toshevo municipality will have a favourable impact on population migration, whereby it will create preconditions for retaining the young population within the trans-border region over the improvement of socio-economic conditions.

The surveyed region is characterized by higher than average unemployment in the country, which has so far tended to decline and has increased in recent years.

In relation to unemployment, it should be noted that because of the mono-structural profile of local economy of the target region are dependent on external factors, which can lead to sharp leaps in the relative share of the employed (respectively, of the jobless people). This predicates an urgent need to diversify and

specialise the economy by looking for alternative economic activities, which are to be subject to the relative advantages of the territory, available tourist resources included.

2.4. Evaluation of the tourist potential

Tourism is a complex and variable human activity, which is related to the travel of people who meet their cognitive and recreational needs. A number of scientists maintain that tourism satisfied people's natural needs for movement in the nature and these needs are remnants from the instincts of the past. Other scientists think that the need of people to move, change their permanent residence motivates them to travel. In this connection, tourism is a socio-economic phenomenon which emerged at a certain stage of public development when people started to realise their need for rest.

World Tourism Organisation experts forecast an even fiercer competition in future not only between the various destinations but also between the companies offering various types of tourist services. This forecast is based on the growing trend on the part of consumers to intensively look out for the best bargain, where one of its main components is the price. This, for its part, will predicate the search of destinations that offer alternative forms of tourism at competitive rates. Contemporary tourists generally exhibit low "loyalty" levels toward a destination or a tourist product. The main motive is growingly the desire to buy the most advantageous tour package (for example, a top-rated hotel, free add-on services in combination with a cheap flight, etc.). One should not neglect the feeling of security, which the tourist growingly minds over the growingly frequent terror acts in world tourist destinations. Based on this and due to the fact that search and plan tour destinations happens more and more online, it is expected that the trend to book in the last minute will be growingly in the fad. The motives to look for individual trips are characterised mostly by the desire of tourists for unique experiences.

They have two main parameters - good infrastructure of the recipient country or destination that secures problem-free access to tourist landmarks and attractions, and the availability of information about the destination. Growingly important in the choice of destination, not only among the elder tourists, are teh

search for authentic experience that touches upon local culture and nature. The wish to live a healthy lifestyle is also on the increase. Trips become growingly frequent at the expense of their duration.

2.5. Tourist resources of General Toshevo municipality

General Toshevo Municipality is located in the historical and geographic area of Dobrudja, located in the northeastern part of Bulgaria. The main tourist destination is the Black Sea with its resorts, which are missing on the territory of the municipality but their proximity creates opportunities for attracting visitors and guests to the local objects and tourist attractions.

Natural resources

The following natural resources are located on the territory of the municipality General Toshevo: protected zone Coastal Dobrudzha with area of 6517.31 ha (of which 6391.1 ha fall into the General Toshevo municipality); protected zone Rossitsa - Loznitsa with area of 1812.0 ha, of which 31% are protected territory (PT); protected zone Izvorovo-Kraishte with area of 1081.5 ha; protected zone Kardam with area of 918.3 ha; protected zone Chairya with area of 1451.2 ha (partially spanning the territory of Dobrich-rural municipality) were included in 2005 into the list of BirdLife International as Important Bird Area (IBA) for Europe (№ 085), whereas with Ordinance № 122 dated 2007 of the Council of Ministers and under № BG 0002085, a Legal Order was passed for the wild birds protection; natural landmark Arboretum - town of General Toshevo, natural landmark centennial tree Summer Oak - the village of Dubovik; These natural tourist resources are a good basis for the development of hunting and ecotourism.

Despite the significant economic utilisation of the territory as a result of the well developed mechanised farming, the territory of the General Toshevo municipality stand out for their preserved biologic diversity, which is a precondition for the development of soft tourism forms such as ecotourism. The examined territory is part of the Ukrainian-Kazakh (steppe) biogeographic province. The most characteristic steppe elements in the municipality are the dry meadow association and the steppe biota species. The steppe fauna complex has a definitively conservation status, mammals in particular - three species globally and 2 species of regionally endangered rodents and predators. The steppe habitats, however, are

fraught with extinction and with them tens of animal and vegetation species. The dig-up of the steppe-like meadows, as well as the decline of the animal husbandry that leads to the forestation of pastures, are among the main threats to the steppe biota.

Anthropogenic resources

The anthropogenic resources on the territory of the General Toshevo municipality include: the house of Dora Gabe's birth - the village of Dubovik; the building of the cultural center, where Memorial Exposition Dora Gabe is located and which contains photos and personal belongings of the poetess; a dendrarium with unique vegetation types - the Dobrudzha Agricultural Institute; the school in the village of Krassen, which was built in 1865 and where writer Yordan Yovkov worked and a museum collection; Philip's tavern; a church which opened doors in 1860 - village of Krassen; millhouse - the village of Izvorovo (there the drama Albena unfolds; historical museum - the town of General Toshevo; remnants from a stronghold off the village of Vassilevo; remnants from a stronghold off the village of Izvorovo; remnants from a stronghold off the village of Ograzhden; remnants from a stronghold off the village of Preselemtsi; remnants from a stronghold off the village of Sredina; the Karaliyski kaynak - village of Izvorovo; the Cossac tomb in the village of Pchelarovo; the church in the village of Zhiten; Dobrudzha house in the village of Dabovik and a guest house in the village of Kalina.

Cultural calendar

The following cultural initiatives and events are organized on the territory of the municipality:

- Dora Gabe national best young poetess contest - the village of Dubovik; General Toshevo municipality, Dobrich region. Organisers: General Toshevo municipality, Cultural center Dora Gabe - the village of Dubovik;
- Festivities of the town of General Toshevo - the town of General Toshevo, Dobrich region; Organisers: General Toshevo municipality, Cultural center Svetlina - General Toshevo;

- Easter Dobrudzha Music Competition - instrumental groups - the town of General Toshevo, Dobrich region; Organisers: General Toshevo municipality and Cultural center Svetlina;
- Dora Gabe national literature contest for young poetesses - the village of Dubovnik, General Toshevo municipality, Dobrich region; Organisers: General Toshevo municipality, Cultural center Svetlina;
- Ivan Georgiev national young artists competition - the village of Dubovik, General Toshevo municipality; Organisers: General Toshevo municipality and Cultural center Svetlina, Cultural center Hristo Botev in the village of Dubovik;
- Dobrudzha folklore fair Bogoroditsa - General Toshevo municipality, Dobrich region; Organisers: General Toshevo municipality, Cultural center Svetlina.
- Festival of Urban Song "Give Me a Sea". Organizers: General Toshevo Municipality and Shabla Municipality, Cultural center "Svetlina".
- A gathering of the Bulgarians who were relocated from Northern Dobrudja in the village of Dubovik.
- Festival "Enyov day" of the Generations and Traditions - Near Dryan Dam" in the village of Krasen, and "Yovkovi Holidays".
- Feasts of bread, wheat and Dobrudja in the village of Spasovo.

Tourist profile

Demand for tourist goods and services has its specifics and differs materially from regular demand for goods and services. The difference stems primarily from the real fact that price rates are secondary in the decision to buy among potential tourists. Of higher importance are such factors as the "image" of the country selected as a tourist destination, the type of the holiday (sun, education, health, business issues, etc.), the natural-geographic conditions and the cultural-historical heritage as well as many other individual, subjective factors. The latter are often called "irrational" (they are difficult to explain) but the same have a key role in the process of taking a decision to undertake a tourist trip.

The systematic approach is almost always singled out as "classic" classification in tourist demand, which on the basis of phonetic criteria distinguishes among six main types of tourists, namely:

- A - adventures;

Interested parties in tourism on the territory of the municipality of General Toshevo face the following opportunities to participate in national and international tourist fairs.

National tourist fairs:

- “Vacation” Sofia;
- “Tourism and Leisure Time Fair” - Varna;
- National Exchange “Cultural Tourism” - Veliko Tarnovo;
- On the way to the sun;
- Bulgarian mountains - Smolyan;
- Your vacation - Tourist exchange Burgas;
- Weekend tourism - Rousse;
- Contact Exchange “Four Seasons Vacation in the Elena Balkans”

International tourist fairs:

- International tourist fair Vakantie, Utrecht;
- International tourist fair Ferien, Vienna;
- International tourist fair CMT, Stuttgart;
- International tourist fair Slovakiatour, Bratislava;
- International tourist fair FERIE, Copenhagen;
- International tourist fair FITUR, Madrid;
- International tourist fair ITB, Berlin;
- International tourist fair ITM, Moscow;
- International tourist fair MITT, Moscow;
- International tourist fair UITT, Kiev;
- International tourist fair TUR, Gothenburg;
- International tourist fair SALON DES VACANCESS, Brussels;
- International tourist fair TNT, Bucharest;

- Another source of positive emotions in the municipalities is nature. It is suitable for ecotourism and hunting tourism.
- Global experience has found that the product is the best brand. In this sense, municipalities have to concentrate their efforts not to the ad-hoc promotion of the brand, but on its continual presence on the national and European markets.

Trends in tourism advertising on the territory of General Toshevo municipality

The tourist industry is one of the most dynamic and interesting ones in the structure of economy. It in itself predetermines the specific features of the tourist sector in advertising terms.

The tourist service has its specifics, which draws on the fact that “to carry out consumption it is not the commodity that goes to the consumer but rather the consuming tourist performs consumption on the tourist spot, i.e. the tourist travels and to do so he/she interrupts his/her traditional lifestyle and spends extra.”

Advertising represents any paid form of controllable impact, which is carried out through the means of mass communication, of presentation and establishment of goods and services in the interests of a clear source. It is one of the key instruments (alongside quality and price) to achieve competitiveness of the tourist product offered on the territory of General Toshevo municipality.

In its application, one should not neglect several important facts.

First, according to the product’s lifecycle, it has to be:

- Introductory;
- Sustaining;
- Reminder.

This has to be taken into account when launching an advertising campaign for the tourist products offered on the territory of the municipality. One should also not neglect the fact that depending on the communication channel and the advertising tools used, advertising in the tourist industry differs significantly from the advertising of the other goods and services. The more specific feature in this particular case is that the most frequent promotional means is postal direct advertising (especially direct marketing for sale, which is usually applied by the

larger hotel complexes), outdoor advertising, the various graphic advertising publications, advertising in the means of mass communication, directory advertising, etc. Advertising communications in the electronic media, print publications assume an important place but, nonetheless, in use are still too outdated forms, which have established themselves in the tourist industry (in the restaurant and hotelier business, in particular), such as: postal cards; maps of tourism settlements; card-menus and real menus; tourist “trophies” (souvenirs) - advertising matches, key holders, etc.

Due to the fact that advertising in the tourist industry may be classified according to its scope as well, namely:

- local - it is conducted in a certain region or a certain settlement;
- national - within the framework of the entire country;
- international.

This has to be duly considered by parties interested in tourism opportunities on the territory of the municipality and their efforts have to be directed to these three levels.

Trends and opportunities for small companies in the field of tourism in the municipality of General Toshevo

Since tourism is regarded as a traditionally profitable sector with a high growth potential, it is pointed as a priority sector on a governmental level. Based on this and the fact that General Toshevo municipality have their, although small, tourist potential one might conclude that this sector of economy could contribute to the development of the municipality. The key challenges that tourism in the municipality faces can be summarised in the following groups:

- Improvement of the infrastructure;
- Creation of conditions for year-round tourism;
- Improvement of the quality of service;
- Definition of uniqueness;
- Creation of a list of tourist products.

The tourism development strategy in the municipalities represents a target strategic paper, which has formulated the vision for tourism development in the region, the priorities, goals and measures necessary to achieve not only on a desired

but also on a realistic level in the tourist sector. It has to outline the main lines for planning and management of tourism activities in the medium and long term, which are to carry the traits of sustainability and prospects and in the meantime can serve as the foundation for building a contemporary and profitable regional product. Presently, the Strategy's horizon of action is 10-year, until 2030.

3. Main Findings

Despite the presence of multiple preconditions for effective tourist development in the Municipality of General Toshevo, we have identified the following key challenges that require focused activities on part of all interested parties:

- Renewal of the inner waterpipe network and finishing the construction of the sewerage networks in the respective residential areas so that normal life conditions can be provided for the local population, as well as modern conditions for tourist accommodation adequate to the European requirements.
- Repair of the municipal roads which are in a state of medium to severe damage, as well as regular investments in the entire road infrastructure, which is an important condition for attracting tourists to the district.
- Improvement of the quality and safety of the power supply and increase of the energy efficiency in the public and private sector.
- Building a more-effective system for recycling management compatible with all legal requirements and European standards.
- Investment in the information and communication infrastructure in the Municipality.
- Enlargement and reconstruction of the available sports infrastructure.
- Modernization of the medical equipment for providing quality health care in the Municipality.
- Effective marketing of the Municipality of General Toshevo and its natural and anthropological resources.
- Formation of sustainable public-private partnerships for developing the economic potential of the Municipality.
- Search for suitable municipalities - partners in the country and abroad with the aim of creating an effective tourist cluster.

- Improvement of the capacity of the municipal administration and local businesses for preparing, implementing and managing financial projects under the Structure and Cohesion fund of the European community.
- Transformation of the Municipality of General Toshevo in a modern **e**-district with the goal of providing modern electronic services for the local people and businesses, as well as for the future tourists in the district.
- Active management of the municipal property for providing means for an active investment policy on part of the Municipality, development of effective PPPs (Public-private Partnerships), as well as providing cofinancing for the implementation of significant projects for resolving the municipal problems with European funds.

3. Strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats before the tourist development of the Municipality of General Toshevo - SWOT Analysis

The SWOT analysis has been prepared to achieve the following objectives:

- synthesized presentation of a complex picture of the state of tourism in the Municipality;
- construction of a preview of the solvability of the discovered problems;
- redirection towards priority spheres of development;
- redirection towards priority problems to solve.

SWOT-Analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses
<p>1. Favorable transport-geographic location, availability of autoroute and railway connection to the bigger cities and Black Sea resorts.</p> <p>2. Developed transportation links in the regional centers of Constanta and Dobrich, respectively, the Black Seaside;</p>	<p>1. Bad technical state of a considerable part of the municipal road infrastructure.</p> <p>2. The area performs the functions of a transit territory and hinterland assisting the tourist development of the Black Sea littoral.</p> <p>3. Not near the international airports</p>

<p>3. Beautiful and comparatively clean environment as well as a favorable climate. Good general condition of the environment of the transborder region.</p> <p>4. Rich cultural-historical heritage of regional and national significance.</p> <p>5. Regional authenticity, preserved cultural-historical heritage (historical and architectural-ethnographic sites; churches; preserved way of life, traditions and crafts; authentic local holidays and customs).</p> <p>6. Rich combination of natural resources (preserved nature and landscape; availability of protected territories; favorable conditions for holidays, treatment and prophylactics; game and forest husbandry).</p> <p>7. A variety of anthropogenic and natural resources for the development of different kinds of tourism, which can develop on their own or by means of inter-combinations among them.</p> <p>8. Availability of tourist attractions and entertainment opportunities. Attractions are a resource for tourist development.</p> <p>9. Availability of anthropogenic, natural</p>	<p>and not easily accessible by means of public transport.</p> <p>4. Underdeveloped urban environment and for the bigger part a badly maintained basis infrastructure.</p> <p>5. Not sufficiently effective system for garbage management.</p> <p>6. Presence of territorial disproportions in the available potential for tourist development.</p> <p>7. Lack of marketing and advertising for the popularization of the region as an alternative tourist destination on the local and international market.</p> <p>8. Lack of a common information system in the sphere of tourism; insufficiently developed internet presentation of the alternative tourist products and services.</p> <p>9. No packages offered for a complex tourist service to keep the visitors for longer periods of time.</p> <p>10. As capacity and quality most of the facilities and equipment for the development of tourism do not meet the modern comfort requirements both for national and the international visitors; manifestation of defective maintenance and management of the tourist sites and places of accommodation.</p> <p>➤ Presence of out-dated and poorly</p>
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<p>and tourist resources for the development of ecotourism, country and gourmet tourism, short-term weekly stays, fish and game tourism, photo and hobby tourism, as well as cultural, religious, etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Well-developed network of protected natural territories of significant biologic and landscape diversity ➤ Cultural-historical heritage, which favours the development of cultural-cognitive, rural, religious and other types of specialised tourism; ➤ Preserved lifestyle, traditions, crafts; ➤ Delicious cuisine and attractive brands of wine from the region; ➤ Significant periodic events and holidays in the cultural calendar. <p>10. The tourist attractions in the region are connected to numerous holidays - religious and local recreating the history and ways of the people. The cultural calendar is populated by festivals, gatherings, concerts, etc. In most of the events the main participants are self-made groups and bands supported by the community centers.</p>	<p>maintained tourist infrastructure;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Remoteness of accommodation from the resource regions with unsatisfactory transport links; lack of sufficiently good accommodation in the public centres; ➤ Problems with the standardisation and quality of tourist servicing. ➤ An underdeveloped sector of the commerce and services. <p>11. Sparse population; unfavorable age structure; largely low-qualified and not well-educated locals.</p> <p>12. Migration of the younger people towards the developed cities in the country.</p> <p>13. Qualification problems in the tourist management and services.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Shortage of local experts who work in the sphere of tourism; ➤ Insufficiently well prepared managers of tourist sites; ➤ Insufficient and poor quality workforce in the tourist services sector; ➤ Insufficiently utilised opportunities for tourism-related professional qualification and training.
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<p>11. A developed village network with a high-profiled municipal center.</p> <p>12. Certain experience and capacity of the municipal administration for the preparation and realization of projects with European financing.</p> <p>13. A positive attitude towards alternative tourism as a motor for regional development.</p> <p>14. Built but insufficient hotel base with a certain bed capacity.</p> <p>15. Diverse both as capacity and as a means of accommodation - cozy with customized servicing are cottages, guest houses, hotels and camping sites with improved service standards.</p> <p>16. Sustainable small enterprises: in customer service - most of the hosting sites including accommodation/food, as well as with the additional attractions.</p> <p>17. Investments for improving the infrastructure and the quality of the existing facilities in compliance with higher standards.</p> <p>18. Good general condition of the environment in the region.</p> <p>19. Cooperation with the adjacent maritime municipalities - Balchik, Kavarna, Shabla, as well as with municipalities from Romania, Ukraine and Italy.</p>	<p>14. Insufficient development of the information technologies used in the sphere of tourism.</p> <p>15. Lack of marketing and advertising of the tourist potential of the Municipality.</p> <p>16. A non-developed and poor-quality tourist product on offer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The tourist potential is not utilised in full because of the lack of a complex tourist product and the poor interest on the part of tour operators; ➤ The conservation, socialization and commercialization of the culture—historical heritage and the natural resources have not been financially backed and utilized for tourist purposes; ➤ Poor interpretation of the cultural-historical and natural heritage; ➤ Limited offer and poor organization of add-on services and attractions. <p>17. Lack of electronic services for providing quality servicing to the customers and businesses.</p> <p>18. Insufficient efforts aimed at promoting the tourist product:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The image of the target region as a holistic tourist destination,
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<p>20. Presence of municipal strategies directed towards sustainable social-economic development and tourism.</p> <p>21. Realized necessity in the municipalities for uniting the efforts and resources for the creation of joint tourist products and their marketing and advertising in the country and abroad.</p>	<p>which offers products of the alternative tourism (there is no “identifiable mark”) is yet to be built;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Advertising on the Bulgarian, Romanian and international tourism markets via tourist exchanges, through the dispatch of advertising materials on international tourist exhibitions, through direct marketing, etc. is insufficient; ➤ Insufficient efficiency of the advertising and promotional campaigns. <p>19. Insufficient use of the partnership with the neighboring municipalities for opportunities for a more thorough development of the region.</p> <p>20. Insufficient administrative and project capacity on part of the municipal administration and local businesses.</p> <p>21. Unbuilt system for monitoring the indicators for sustainable tourist development and its impact.</p>
<p>Opportunities</p>	<p>Threats</p>
<p>1. Proximity to the big tourist market on the Black Sea coast.</p> <p>2. The proximity to the large coastal tourist market permits the inclusion of the target region into a common</p>	<p>1. Deteriorated demographic situation. Aging population and migrating young people.</p> <p>2. Increasing in importance climactic changes and the global warming.</p>

<p>tourist product with highlights on the cultural-historical, eco- and rural tourism.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Redirecting transiting visitors and holidaymakers to offers of activities and thematic tours in the region. 4. Creation of a favorable business environment with all instruments of the local self-government for encouraging the creation and development of resilient small and medium enterprises in the tourist sector - commerce and services. 5. Creation of effective public-private partnerships (PPPs) for the realization of significant for the local community projects for social-economic development of the Municipality. 6. Overall improvement of the capacity and quality of the accommodation base, dining establishments and tourist attractions. 7. Considerable reduction of the administrative requirements concerning the product “home hospitality” and the remaining services in the sphere of alternative tourism. 8. Effective usage of the existing facilities and creation of conditions for purposeful assistance of the 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Environmental pollution, deterioration of the qualities of the natural and social environment as a result of tourism development, indiscriminate deforestation, unfavourable consequences from climate change. 5. Extreme circumstances such as natural disasters, diseases and terrorist attacks. 6. Pollution of the environment, deterioration of the qualities of the natural and social environment as a result of the tourist development, indiscriminate deforestation, unfavorable conditions of the climactic changes. 7. Low qualification and lack of basic knowledge of tourism among the employed in the tourist sphere and among those who have just started or are about to start their own business. 8. Growing competition from other areas in adjacent regions with a similar offer but with more diverse tourist services of higher quality, as well as internal unfair competition. 7. The low level of service combined with the low prices as a basic marketing instrument make a change in the tourist destination a particularly hard task to do. 8. A big discrepancy between the actual
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<p>tourism in the Municipality. Active management of the municipal property.</p> <p>9. Increase of the quality of the tourist products with the aim of attracting a better paying clientele; overcoming the seasonal character of tourism and attracting the better paying ones.</p> <p>10. Preparation and realization of a long-term program in the Municipality to increase the capacity for effective usage of the European, national and local funds for the development of tourism.</p> <p>11. Accentuation of the authenticity, the natural and cultural heritage as a key element of the development of the region as a tourist destination.</p> <p>12. Creation and realization of a strategy for transforming the General Toshevo district into a modern e-municipality.</p> <p>13. Building and developing strategic partnerships with other municipalities in the country and abroad for developing the tourist potential.</p> <p>14. Strategic planning oriented toward environment conservation (so-called “soft” forms of tourism) drawing on the tourist goods and services on offer.</p> <p>15. Development and implementation of</p>	<p>and expected implementation of the municipal budget which emburdens the realization of the active municipal investment policy and access to European and national funds.</p> <p>9. Dependence of the municipalities on the central budget and lack of financial resources for cofinancing projects.</p> <p>10. Lack of a current investment interest in the Municipality from strategic Bulgarian and foreign investors.</p> <p>11. Incomplete usage of the available natural and anthropogenic resources.</p> <p>12. Breaking the balance through extreme limitation of companies by the Municipality of General Toshevo and imposition of predominant presence of companies from other parts of the country (registered lack of tax incomes to the municipal budget).</p> <p>13. Unviability of projects after external financing withdrawal, lack of alternative financial sources, poor interest or low capacity among tourist organisations to secure the necessary funds to conduct their activity.</p> <p>14. Lack of progress in the procurement of accurate and timely statistical information about tourist development for analytical purposes or to attract investments.</p>
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<p>a marketing strategy for tourism development in the target region, which ensures the formation of a “brand” tourist product, positive “image” and “recognition”.</p> <p>16. Aggressive advertising of the target region as a tourist destination, which offers specific types of tourism (cultural-historical, environmental and rural) and creation of opportunities aimed at attracting the interest of big tour agents and potential investors.</p> <p>17. Development of a digital archive and actual master plans for the entire territory of the target region and the adjoining settlements, will allow the effective management of tourism and the related spheres.</p> <p>18. Creation of attractive regional tourist products based on common natural and cultural resources with the neighboring maritime communities.</p> <p>19. Creation of a tourist cluster in the region with representatives of the municipal administration, local businesses and non-governmental organizations, as well as the mass-media.</p> <p>20. Research of the best practices in the sphere of the target alternative forms</p>	<p>15. Lack of conscious necessity in the neighboring communities for uniting the efforts and resources for the creation of a tourist cluster, joint tourist products and their marketing and advertising in the country and abroad.</p> <p>16. Incomplete usage of the available natural and anthropogenic resources.</p> <p>17. Uncontrolled development of various types of tourism with no monitoring of the efficiency or their impacts on various spheres (ecology, economy, infrastructure, employment, unemployment, etc.).</p> <p>18. In future, tourism development will continue to feel the unfavourable impact of the powerful competitive tourist destinations with a well-developed mass tourism.</p> <p>19. Priority development of capital-consuming projects much too aggressive to the environment.</p> <p>20. Deterioration of the investment climate in Bulgaria and/or Romania, contraction of the tourist market and limited access to the international markets, unfavourable business environment for sector development (legislation, tax, loan policy, etc.), inefficient policy in the field of regional development.</p>
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<p>of tourism that the Municipality has the potential of developing and their adaptation according to the specific local conditions and needs.</p>	<p>21. Deterred implementation of a national concept for an electronic management of Bulgaria.</p> <p>22. Accelerated processes of regional differences on a national scale.</p>
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4. The vision and strategic objectives

Vision for the development of the tourism in the Municipality of General Toshevo

THE MUNICIPALITY OF GENERAL TOSHEVO - WELL KNOWN AND PREFERRED TOURIST DESTINATION WITH PRESERVED CULTURAL-HISTORICAL HERITAGE AND NATURAL RESOURCES, COMPETITIVE TOURIST SECTOR AND ADVANCED HUMAN RESOURCES.

The main goal and the strategic objectives

The main goal in the tourist development for the period 2020-2030 is the increased competitiveness of the tourist sector in the Municipality of General Toshevo through an active use of the available natural and anthropogenic resources in compliance with the main principles for sustainable tourist development.

The goal is to achieve full functional and spatial integration of local tourist policy with economic, cultural, infrastructure, environmental, urbanistic and agrarian policies, which can only lead to the creation of a sustainable and profitable tourist product, which can expose and monetize the available natural and cultural values.

In this aspect, this strategy steps on the foundation formed by all strategies, policies, programmes and operating plans at regional and municipal level developed to date, and which affect both regional development as a whole and the individual spheres of the socio-economic life in the target region.

The main goal will be achieved through the realization of the following strategic objectives:

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1: Positioning of the Municipality of General Toshevo on the map for the Bulgarian and international tourists.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 2: Building and development of competitive small and medium enterprises in the field of tourism and its concurrent activities - commerce and catering.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 3: A developed institutional, social and technical infrastructure in compliance with the best European practices.

Priorities

For the realization of the main goal and the strategic objectives the following priorities have been established:

PRIORITY 1: Preservation and development of the cultural traditions, historical heritage and natural resources.

PRIORITY 2: Building an attractive business environment for attracting investments, building a competitive tourist sector and providing a high life standard for the local population.

PRIORITY 3: Creating and promoting an integrated tourist product with high quality of the tourist services, protected rights and safety for the users of the tourist products and services.

PRIORITY 4: Effective collaboration for the tourist development in the Municipality of General Toshevo from all interested parties - national, regional and local authorities, businesses, associations, media, NGOs, the local community and other Bulgarian and international partners.

Measures for realizing PRIORITY 1:

- Transforming the community centers into modern multifunctional cultural centers and increasing people's interest in them.
- Making and realizing projects in the field of the cultural-historical heritage of the Municipality with Bulgarian and foreign partners on a national, regional and local levels for the exchange of ideas, experience and positive practices, as well as for marketing and advertising purposes.
- Maintaining, preserving and restoring the cultural-historical and archeological monuments in the Municipality, organizing archeological excavations.

- Preserving, restoring and maintaining the natural environment clean.
- Encouraging the organization of regular local events such as festivals, folklore events, the presentation of the local traditions, cuisine, crafts, etc.
- Encouraging the application of innovative policies and practices for the development of the cultural-historical and natural resources in the Municipality.
- Rehabilitation, reconstruction and building of new roads/passages/paths to cultural-historical sites, maintenance and servicing of the cultural-historical sites.
- Regular monitoring and analysis of the state of the cultural-historical heritage and the natural resources in the Municipality so that regular adequate preventive and corrective measures may be undertaken.

Measures for realizing PRIORITY 2:

- Analysis and revision in the policy concerning the local taxes in order to attract investors for the realization of the significant for the Municipality infrastructure projects.
- Identification and realization of effective public-private partnerships (PPPs) in the field of the social and technical infrastructure in the Municipality.
- Improvement of the information and communication infrastructure in all populated areas in the district.
- Transformation of the Municipality of General Toshevo into a modern e-Municipality which provides modern services to the businesses and locals in compliance with the European practices and requirements in the field.
- Encouragement of cluster and network creation in the field of tourism.
- Measures towards encouraging the young people who have left the Municipality to improve their education and qualifications, to return to the district and make their contribution to its social and economic prosperity.

- Modernization of the educational system on municipal level in accordance with the needs of the local economy and businesses, including the development of the tourist sector.
- Active local policies for providing flexibility and security on the local job market.
- Regular monitoring of the business environment so that timely adequate, preventive and corrective measures may be undertaken.

Measures for realizing PRIORITY 3:

- Building and developing a modern tourist information center which is to present information about the tourist sites and forms of tourism in the Municipality, about the local traditions, customs and public events, about the effective marketing and advertising.
- Creating, maintenance and regular actualization of its own tourist information portal or as a subpage of the municipal portal.
- Preparation and dissemination of local folklore calendars in order to popularize the local traditions and customs as well as attract tourists to the region.
- Creation of a tourist catalog and its effective dissemination in the country and abroad.
- Realization of effective marketing and advertising of the tourist sites and types of tourism in the Municipality in national, regional, as well as local printing and electronic media.
- Изграждане на ефективни партньорства със съседни общини с цел ефективна реклама на регионален интегриран туристически продукт.
- Building effective partnerships with neighboring communities in order to have effective publicity of a regional integrated tourist product.
- Regular monitoring on the quality and efficacy of the offered tourist products and services so that timely action may be taken to eliminate the problematic areas.

Measures for realizing PRIORITY 4:

- Analysis of the existing public-private partnerships /PPPs/, identification of potential new niches for collaboration and taking active action for the realization of effective PPPs for developing the tourist potential of the Municipality.
- Use of the opportunities for European funds and the operative programs in the field of the transborder and regional cooperation.
- Effective participation in existing associations and joint ventures in the field of tourism on an international, national and regional level.
- Attracting all interested parties in the process of formulating, conducting, monitoring and evaluating the local policy for encouraging the tourist development in the Municipality of General Toshevo.
- The Municipality of General Toshevo needs to apply for membership and become a member of the Association of the Bulgarian Black Sea Communities with domicile the city of Varna.
- Regular monitoring of the built partnerships and PPPs so that necessary changes, if any, may be implemented.

6. Implementation and Monitoring Mechanism

The realisation of the tourism development strategy of region General Toshevo requires a long implementation period and as full integration with the existing planning strategic development blueprints at municipal, district and regional level as possible. It represents an open document, which is subject to development and perfection.

The implementation of the strategy represents a continual process of implementation of the activities, monitoring, control and update. The accumulated experience is taken into account, as are difficulties and failures. So are made changes to the already existing development dimensions and activities aimed at adjusting to the new circumstances and changed environment. Based on this document, it is necessary to develop annual implementation programmes, which are subject to sanction from the Town Halls of the two municipalities and they have to

be implemented by the respective responsible institutions, as defined in the respective annual programme.

The main risks before the attainment of the strategic goals are related to a complex of factors, which are largely hardly predictable in the long run. It is clear that it is impossible to forecast with a high degree of authenticity all changes, which could have happened within the horizon of implementation of the strategic goals (2030). This means that the implementation of the strategy has to be a continual process of monitoring, control and update, analysis and corrections of errors, difficulties and failures, and adaptation of the planned activities to the new circumstances and conditions.