

STUDY AND STRATEGIC PLAN FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM IN MURFATLAR MUNICIPALITY

SUMMARY

Paper elaborated under „Development of tourism potential, protecting and promoting the common heritage” Project, code ROBG-453, financed by Interreg V-A Romania-Bulgaria Programme

July 2019

Elaborator Groove Hour SRL
Contract no. 3247/13.05.2019

CONTENT

- I. Trends in tourism sector. Sustainable tourism
- II. Tourist context of Constanța County
- III. Murfatlar Town
- IV. Tourist request and offer of Murfatlar Town and its area of influence
- V. Tourist resources of Murfatlar Town
- VI. Tourist infrastructure in Murfatlar Town
- VII. Influencing factors on tourism sector
- VIII. SWOT analysis of tourism activities in Murfatlar Town
- IX. Murfatlar Town. Potential of tourist resources and opportunities for development
- X. Development proposals for current tourist resources in Murfatlar Town
- XI. Tourist products. Immediate and future actions
- XII. Strategic approach for developing the tourism sector in Murfatlar
- XIII. Marketing strategy

I. TRENDS IN TOURISM SECTOR. SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

Tourism plays an essential role in the economic development of a country, supporting the reduction of poverty in disadvantaged areas, coagulation of local communities and job creation, especially for young people. According to the World Tourism Organization, tourism has been the industry that has grown steadily since 2010, while Europe has attracted the largest number of people worldwide¹. At the same time, tourism is correlated with the use and development of the natural, historical and cultural assets of the cities and regions of a country, aspects that significantly influence their attractiveness and the time spent by tourists in those areas. Current trends in tourism aim at developing and sustaining coherent tourist products and brands, niche markets such as eco-tourism, vine and wine tourism, or tourism for the elderly, based on sustainable tourism and on diversifying and adapting tourist attractions. Sustainability thus influences not only the tourism sector, but also the cultural and creative industries, agro-food sector, construction, experimental archaeology etc².

Another trend in tourism is to create a destination management by coordinating the management efforts of all entities involved in creating and supporting a tourist destination, based on types of attractions, facilities, access, marketing and pricing. A responsible and sustainable management works to the extent that it is able to facilitate and harmonize the interactions between visitors, the tourism industry, the local community and the environment as a whole (natural and anthropic resources). At European level, the travel and tourism sector supports nearly 26.5 million people, and visitors' spending generates 375.1 billion euro. Tourism therefore plays an important role in generating income, jobs and investment, which has prompted the tourism industry to develop a European Tourism Manifesto³ in order to develop effective policies to support the sustainable development of the industry at European level. A consistently capitalized opportunity in recent years is the cross-border tourism, strongly supported by European policies and structural funds invested in promotion, strengthening of tourism objectives and creation of common activities attractive to both sides of the border.

The city of Murfatlar can benefit from all these trends, policies and new approaches in the tourism field by developing and supporting modern, coherent and consistent strategies, linked to national values and strategies. Thus, the long-term tourism strategy in Romania, namely the Master Plan for the Development of National Tourism 2007-2026, identifies as a market niche - besides the main markets of the seaside and mountain tourism - the *ecotourism, culture and cultural heritage tourism, tourism adventure, bird-watching and wildlife tourism*.

II. TOURIST CONTEXT OF CONSTANȚA COUNTY

The numerous natural and anthropic resources of national and international significance located in Constanta County, spread along the main transport routes, suggest an important "basic" tourist product - seaside tourism, Sunlust type. This fact is also statistically demonstrated by the data regarding the arrivals in the tourist accommodation structures in the period 2014-2018, placing Constanța County on the third place at the national level, after Bucharest City and Brasov County.

¹ World Tourism Organisation, <https://www.e-unwto.org>

² European Commission, Regional Policy, Tourism Theme, available at https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/ro/policy/themes/tourism/

³ European Tourism Manifesto for Growth and Jobs, www.tourismmanifesto.eu, available at https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/0222ec_d9a77903c6474b31aec45a9962ac5e52.pdf

Constanta County's strategic location between the Danube and the Black Sea, in Southern Dobrudja, made possible a long history, its territory being inhabited continuously since prehistory - Hamangia Culture, Greek and Roman fortresses along Black Sea coast and Danube banks, religious vestiges such as the Cave Complex - monasteries and cells carved in stone. As far as biodiversity is concerned, about 40 natural protected areas, many of which are sites of community or international relevance, are located in Constanta County.

The opening of the Black Sea over 245 km and the exceptional natural conditions of the sea coast have led to the development of seasonal tourism and almost half of the Romanian tourists' accommodation capacity is located in Constanta County, especially in the coastal area.

Along the coast, resorts have been created or developed naturally so that to meet the needs of all ages and preferences: Navodari - Mamaia Sat, Mamaia, Eforie Nord, Eforie Sud, Costinesti, Techirghiol, Olimp, Neptune, Jupiter, Cap Aurora, Venus, Saturn, Mangalia, 2 May, and Vama Veche. Consequently, Constanta County benefits, first of all, of a „Sunlust” type of tourism - sun and sea, and less of a „Wanderlust” type - of discovery, knowledge, which is a challenge in terms of urban tourism strategies, cultural tourism or ecotourism.

These conditions are favourable for the development of specific forms of tourism in Constanta County, which can be very diverse: from summer tourism - the most consistent tourism income provider, to balneary and leisure tourism, nautical and sports tourism, cruise tourism, business tourism, cultural and itinerary tourism, or rural and ecotourism, which are beginning to develop in the recent years. The events that animate the county are, on the one hand, performances and festivals with classical and contemporary themes, ethnographic events supported and determined by the ethnic and cultural diversity of Dobrudja and, on the other hand, by important business events, of national scale, or sporting events.

III. MURFATLAR TOWN

III.1. Overview of tourism resources in historical, ethno-folklore and geographic contexts

Although barely recognized as a tourist destination, Murfatlar Town is an objective on the map of the great historical discoveries or the most famous wine-growing areas in Romania. The first name, under which Murfatlar was known, testified in written in 1855, is of Ottoman origin, subsequently changed to Basarabi and eventually returned to Murftlar during the last century and a half. The archaeological remains in the city area attest to a much older settlement, the most famous of which is the monastic cave complex, consisting of churches, cellars, intricate galleries, graves dug into the chalk of the Tibisir Hill, possibly the most important early Christian centre on the territory of Romania. Although the site may not be visited by tourists, the cave complex can indirectly become an invaluable tourist element for cultural and religious tourism. In the following centuries,

various ethnicities cohabitating in Dobrudja and Murfatlar⁴ have created resilient communities, loaded with legends, folklore and folk art that are an attraction in themselves in this area.

With the modernization of the region, especially by building the first railway in Dobrudja⁵ to facilitate trade and exchanges by connecting the Danube and the Black Sea, then the "Carol I" Bridge at Cernavoda, put into operation in 1895, Murfatlar was found on the Cernavoda - Constanta direction and the railway station built by the British company "Danube and Black Sea Railway Kustendje Harbour Company Limited" (DBSR) is under operation even today and can be visited. The following decades have seen important growth, leading to the development of the ancient province of Dobrudja, and Murfatlar was among the cities that had risen in a short span. The Danube-Black Sea Canal built between 1949 and 1953 and inaugurated in 1984, crosses the city, Murfatlar Harbour allows bulk cargo transit and a free port area facilitates industrial and commercial activities related to canal shipping.

Throughout this time, Murfatlar's chalk hills become a resource for what will be one of the largest and most famous vineyards in Romania, the Murfatlar Vineyard, shrouded in legends with brigands. Fântânița⁶ Murfatlar Forest is a natural reserve from 1932 and one of Murfatlar's most famous tourist attractions.

After 1990, the town of Murfatlar is being developed organically, both public and private investments are taking place in the urban and tourist infrastructure, in order to promote the city's image and the interesting tourist resources, some even unique on the territory of Romania. The town of Murfatlar is located approximately halfway north-south of Dobrudja, 18 km from Constanta, and approx. 200 km from Bucharest.

IV. TOURIST RESOURCES OF MURFATLAR TOWN

IV.1. Description of natural tourist resources

Murfatlar's great natural tourist attractiveness resources can be a very valuable basis for expanding local and cross-border tourism activities and ecotourism, respectively.

Fântânița Murfatlar Reserve and "Fântânița Murfatlar Forest" Natural Reserve

Fântânița Murfatlar Reserve is a site of Community importance within the Natura 2000 Network, which overlaps a protected natural area of national interest, both protecting a forest of high botanical and zoological value, Fântânița Forest. The reserve is located South of the town, while the access to the protected area is uncomplicated, namely at the cross-roads of the 22C National Road connecting Constanta de Murfatlar with Constanta - Ostrov road - the National Road DN 3. The name "Fântânița" refers to the only permanent spring in the protected area. The reserve covers a relatively steep coast of the hill and a plateau at heights of about 90 m above sea level. The area is crossed by narrow and

⁴ During 2011 Census, the large majority of the population declared to be (84,3%), followed by (5,5%) and roma people (2,49%). Source: www.recensamantromania.ro

⁵ Cernavodă - Constanta railway was the first railway in the Ottoman Empire, built between 1857 and 1860.

⁶ Small fountain

shallow valleys and its base is limited by a wide valley, adjacent to the former Basarabi - Negru Voda irrigation channel. The biogeographic region is the steppe, with limestone slopes and the hill plateau of Sarmatian age covered with a layer of chernozem. The climate is temperate continental, with influences of the marine climate.

The reserve accommodates over 500 species of plants, characteristic of the Southern area of Dobrudja, predominantly pontic elements, followed by Balkan, continental, submediterranean and Eurasian ones. The fauna contains numerous species of animals, characteristic of the Dobrudja steppe areas. The rare species that are listed in Annex II to Council Directive 92/43 / EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora include mammals - the European ground squirrel (*Spermophilus citellus*), the Southern birch mouse (*Sicista subtilis*) and the marbled polecat (*Vormela peregusna*), amphibians and reptiles - the tortoise of Dobrudja (The Greek tortoise) (*Testudo graeca*) and the four-lined snake (*Elaphe quatuorlineata*), as well as numerous invertebrate species. As regards the plants mentioned by the above annex, two species are to be found the reserve, red-flowered viper's grass (*Echium russicum*) and *Pulsatila grandis*. To this list, another 69 important plant species found in the reserve are to be added.

Within the reserve the tourist infrastructure is relatively developed, including accommodation, public catering and minimal recreation facilities as well as hiking trails and paths. At this time, the reservation is the most important natural site of the town and the Murfatlar area, a heritage site in a wider area of touristic interest.

The Lake of Chalk

The Lake of Chalk is very little known and, at the same time, unique and extremely accessible in the landscape. The clear blue-turquoise clear lake was formed into the basin of an abandoned limestone and chalk quarry. The white, chalk walls that surround it, and the little steppe vegetation give it a strange picturesque landscape. The legend of the place says the water of the lake changes its colour after the season. The lake is located about 1.5 km South of the centre of the town and 300 meters South of the Murfatlar cave complex, being partly accessible by car from Constanta - Ostrov - National Road 3 (DN 3) on a gravel rough road.

Chalk Hills covered in vineyards

Mounds and hills with low heights of 100-105 m are located in South of Murfatlar Town, forming a varied and attractive relief. The hills are made up of white chalk layers alternating with thin layers of gray clay⁷. These hills have excellent soil for the vineyards that dominate the landscape.

IV.2. Description of anthropic tourism resources

The town of Murfatlar consists of two localities, the Murfatlar urban locality and the village of Siminoc. The town territory is brutally cut by the Danube-Black Sea Canal, East-Northeast being the largest part of the city, its administrative and community centre, while in the West of the canal, the industrial area, a residential district and the village Siminoc are to be found.

⁷ Management Plan for ROSCI 0083 Fântânița Murfatlar Reserve, available at http://www.mmediu.ro/app/webroot/uploads/files/2016-05-12_PM_Fantanita_Murfatlar.pdf

Archaeological and architectural monuments

Murfatlar Cave Complex

About 1 km East of Murfatlar town centre, on the Southern bank of the Danube-Black Sea Canal, lays Murfatlar-Basarabi archaeological site, a unique monument on the Romanian territory. The archaeological ensemble, discovered in 1957, is a complex of monuments which, for the Romanian medieval art, represents the oldest known architectural and pictorial document, whose elements link to the Cappadocian vestiges⁸. The Christian religious site of the sec. X-XI consists of churches, cells, crypts and graves, labyrinth galleries and dwellings dug in the chalk, currently protected by law and classified as a national monument⁹.

The monument may not be visited by tourists, as the actual conservation works being minimal and not designed to ensure visitors' protection. The cultural and spiritual value of this monument, however, allows its indirect capitalization for tourists and visitors who do not need the immediate contact with the object of their interest.

The total area of the site is about 3500 square meters, the most spectacular elements being six churches¹⁰ carved in the chalk cliff of the Tibisir Hill. The walls are decorated with cross-shaped and geometric signs, crosses of different motifs and sizes, human or animal images. There are also runic inscriptions, undecoded, and inscriptions in Paleoslav or Greek characters. The decoded inscriptions are of religious-commemorative nature. On one of the churches, an inscription in Cyrillic letters may be read as "year 6500" - 6500 years from the Genesis, which means 992 d. Chr. The year is considered a reference moment in time for dating the cave complex. These inscriptions and motifs are of exceptional value for the cultural research of the epoch which stands for the crystallization of the Romanian people¹¹.

Murfatlar Railway Station

Murfatlar Railway Station is part of the first railway infrastructure built in Dobrudja and, at the same time, throughout the Ottoman Empire - Dobrudja being at that time under Ottoman domination¹². The architectural complex of the train station consists of two main buildings, the Murfatlar station and the water tower serving the steam locomotives at the beginning of the 20th century, as well as the tower water pumps. Both the train station and the tower are historical monuments protected by law¹³.

⁸ *Art of Bisantine Tradition in Romania*. Author: Monahia Atanasia (Adela Vaetisi), Printing House Noi Print, 2008

⁹ Ministry of Culture and National Identity, List of Historic Monuments 2015, available at <http://www.cultura.ro/lista-monumentelor-istorice>

¹⁰ *Tourist Routes in Cultural and Religious Areas*, project „Tourist Promotion of Ostrov-Adamclisi Area” financed under the Regional Operational Programme 2003-2007, November 2012, available at <http://traseeostrovadamclisi.judetul-constantina.ro/trasee>

¹¹ *Murfatlar Cave Complex*. Authors Oana Damian, Mihai Opreanu, communication with zentată Architecture Restoration Archaeology Association (A.R.A.), 4 April 2003, available at http://www.simpara.ro/ara4/a4_02_06.htm

¹² *History and Identity of Turcs in Dobrudja*, coordinator Adriana Cupcea and Kozak Gyula, Institute for Research of National Minorities Issues, Cluj, 2017

¹³ Ministry of Culture and National Identity, List of Historic Monuments 2015, available at <http://www.cultura.ro/lista-monumentelor-istorice>

Kogălniceanu Mansion

Kogălniceanu Mansion is one of the few Romanian mansions from the modern age preserved in Dobrudja until nowadays, being declared a historical monument of national interest. The monument is built in eclectic style, in the second half of the nineteenth century. The building features details of Western architecture of the 19th century, as well as elements of Moorish influence. Nowadays, the Kogalniceanu Mansion houses a kindergarten, which withdraws it from the tourist routes.

Murfatlar's built heritage includes a number of houses dating from the end of the 19th century - early 20th century, such as the Stamatopolus House (1899), Omer Bechir Bey House, and other houses considered valuable to the local community.

Religious edifices: the „*Birth of Mary the Virgin*” Orthodox Church is located on Matei Corvin Street, number 3, and is over 100 years old, being included on the list of protected historical monuments of national interest. The "Saint Teotim" Monastery is a recent religious site, dating back to 2001, and is built on Tibisir Hill, above the Murfatlar Cave Complex. Other places of worship raised during the recent period include the New Church “St. Emperors Constantine and Helen” in Murfatlar, “St. Hierarch Nicholas” in the village of Siminoc, “Maranata” Pentecostal Church, “Betania” Christian Baptist Church and the Mosque in Murfatlar.

Old Town of Murfatlar

The old centre is the administrative centre of the city, where protected heritage buildings from the end of the 19th century - the beginning of the 20th century are located: the Stamatopolus House (1899), the Kogalniceanu Mansion, the Omer Bechir Bey House, the „*Birth of Mary the Virgin*” Orthodox Church (1903-1906), as well as the railway station and heritage buildings of local value, such as the Town Hall building.

Vineyards and wineries

Murfatlar Vineyard

One of the most famous and old vineyards in Romania, the Murfatlar Vineyard, lies on the hills that overlook the town, on an area of about 3000 hectares. The history of the vineyard¹⁴ dates back to ancient times - many religious and secular monuments in the area display mythical characters crowned with vine springs and grapes, and refer to the cult of Dionysus (Bacchus), and it capitalizes, as now, the soils formed on limestone Sarmatic deposits and the favourable exposure of the flowing cultivated hillsides. After the devastating invasion of blight at the end of the sec. XIX, the cultivation of the vine resumed with grafted varieties and foreign varieties - mainly French, yet preserving some old Romanian varieties. The vineyard grew and developed as a result of research and investment, as well as due to its associated reputation after being named “Royal Vineyard” as King Carol II's recognition of its wine quality by 1939¹⁵. At present, the Murfatlar

¹⁴ *Annals of Dobrudja „Dobrudja - Fifty years of Romanian history 1878 - 1928”*. Publication occasioned by the celebration of fifty years after the reunion of Dobrudja and Romania. National Culture, București, 1928.

¹⁵ *Murfatlar - Basarabi, a locality in Dobrudja*. Monography. June 2012

Vineyard, totally private, includes 3000 hectares of vineyards, and a Tourist Entertainment Centre that animates the vineyard with typical oenological tourism events.

The Murfatlar Viticulture and Wine Research and Development Centre

This research centre with a long history, set up in 1887¹⁶ on 4.8 hectares, is considered the core of the current Murfatlar wine-growing area. The initial activity of the resort was the nursery of shrubs and vine with the role of diminishing the effects of the drought in Dobrudja. Currently, the resort hosts tasting events that can be integrated into a larger project promoting oenological tourism in the Murfatlar area.

“Domeniul Vlădoi¹⁷” Winery

“Domeniul Vlădoi” Winery is located in the village of Siminoc, which belongs to the town of Murfatlar, about 5 kilometres away central-Murfatlar. The cultivated vine varieties are both autochthonous and international, for white wines - Pinot Gris, Sauvignon Blanc, Muscat Ottonel, Chardonnay, Romanian Tămâioasă, Royal Fetească, Italian Riesling, and for red wines - Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, Black Fetească, Syrah. “Domain Vlădoi” Winery hosts wine tastings and visits of the wine cellars and vineyards are organised for tourists.

Public Monuments

Murfatlar Heroes Monument was constructed in 1995 in memory of the heroes who fought and sacrificed in the First World War (1916-1918).

The Monument of Straja, the highest monument in Romania, is located at a distance of 9 kilometres in the South of Murfatlar. The access to the monument can be done either on foot, by bicycle or by car, on a gravelled road. The monument has the shape of an angel, being raised in the area of the former village of Straja, thus bearing its name. The village was destroyed during the communist period in order to build the Danube-Black Sea Canal. The monument is an angel without wings and was made at the initiative of the Communist Youth Union as a testimony of the work and sacrifice of the people during the construction of the canal.

Industrial Monuments

Danube-Black Sea Canal

Danube-Black Sea Canal is one of the longest artificial waterways in the world. The canal links up Cernavoda Port on the Danube, with Constanta and Midia Năvodari ports from the Black Sea, shortening the Danube distance from Cernavoda to Constanța by about 400 km. The canal is the collective work of 30 research and design institutes, covering over 33,500 detailed estimation and construction projects signed by over 1,000 specialists¹⁸. Nevertheless, the overwhelming efforts, the unimaginable resources, the human sacrifices and the martyrdom that made this project come to life, which included the period of 1948 and 1952 as a labour camp, make the Danube-Black Sea Canal one of the most controversial achievements of the communist regime.

¹⁶ Murfatlar Viticulture and Wine Research and Development Center, www.statiuneamurfatlar.ro

¹⁷ Vlădoi Estate

¹⁸ Administration of the Navigable Canals, History of Danube-Black Sea Canal

Events with tourist potential

The annual program of events commemorating heroes, of cultural and religious nature organized in Murfatlar and Siminoc highlights both the interest of the local community in organizing, participating and maintaining events that reunite the community and ensure its identity. Also, it stresses the availability of local authorities and institutions to organize and co-finance events. Both aspects are essential for the development and promotion of local and cross-border tourism.

IV.3. Murfatlar Town Identity Elements

Historic Identity

The most important archaeological discoveries testifying the dwelling of Murfatlar area are the chalk churches of Tibisir Hill since 1957. During the exploitation of the chalk quarry located on the hill, a number of rooms were observed, proved to be cave churches, galleries with tombs, dwellings. This cave ensemble was the first attestation of a settlement inhabited on the territory of the town, before 992 AD. It is only much later, since the 1800s that official documents and texts testified about the locality bearing the name of Murfatlar. The town of Murfatlar also encompasses the village of Siminoc, which name comes from the flower with the same appellation.

Location and natural setting

The town of Murfatlar is situated near the Southern part of Dobrudja, about 20 kilometres from the Black Sea and the city of Constanța, on the line of one of the first railways on the current territory of Romania, Constanța - Cernavoda and at the intersection of national roads DN 3 and DN 22C connecting Bucharest, Constanta and Adamclisi / Ostrov. The town of Murfatlar also includes the village of Siminoc, located 6 km West, on the communal road DC27. Hills, mounds and valleys dominate Murfatlar area, including the village of Siminoc, the town developing on the Carasu Valley, on the chalk hills of Dobrudja, with heights of 100-105 meters. The relief and soil make of Murfatlar an eye-catching attractive place for tourists. Another key factor, which is part of Murfatlar's identity, is the millenary tradition of vine cultivation, favoured by the temperate continental climate, the limestone soil and the large number of sunny days, creating the ideal microclimate for achieving a wide variety of wines.

Cultural, ethnic and religious identity

Dobrudja, as a whole, is a confluence area of religions, traditions and nationalities, within a true multicultural and interethnic cradle based on understanding and respect. This ethnic, religious and cultural communion determines the attractiveness of Wanderlust-type tourist products in Constanta County, based on the richness of historical and cultural heritage and beyond the main attraction of the seaside, the beach.

IV.4. Tourism potential analysis, identified opportunities

The tourist potential of an area, including a town, is the set of natural and anthropic elements on a territory, which attract tourists' interest and lead to carrying out touristic activities¹⁹.

The tourist potential of Murfatlar is therefore formed of the natural and anthropic tourist resources that are both known and latent, but equally attractive, worthwhile to be valorised and promoted to attract more visitors and to keep tourists more time in the town. The natural tourist resources identified at the time of the present study are the Fântânița Murfatlar Reserve, the Lake of Chalk and the landscapes created by the chalk hillsides cultivated with vines. Anthropic tourist resources, made by people over time, are the chalk churches of the Murfatlar Cave Complex, the „*Birth of Mary the Virgin*” Orthodox Church, Murfatlar Railway Station, the Kogalniceanu Mansion, “St. Teotim” Monastery and other local worship places, the Danube-Black Sea Canal, Monument of Straja, Murfatlar Vineyard, and “Domeniul Vlădoi” Winery.

The short distances between the natural and cultural resources of Murfatlar Town make it possible for tourists to cover it either on foot, by bicycle or by car. Extending the area to the Monument of Straja or the “Domeniul Vlădoi” Winery represents a 10 kilometres-distance from the central area of the town.

The current analysis shows that the attraction vectors on which a sustainable, realistic tourist activity can be built and which provides a reasonable degree of satisfaction for tourists are the vine-growing and winery activities, and the Murfatlar Fântânița Forest, a visiting nature reserve and an amenable setting for accommodating tourists. Other resources identified are valuable opportunities that will be debated by the strategic plan to develop sustainable tourism in Murfatlar, targeting cultural and ecumenical tourism.

V. TOURIST INFRASTRUCTURE IN MURFATLAR TOWN

V.1. Access and transport infrastructure, public tourism infrastructure

The privileged position of Murfatlar Town on the Bucharest - Constanța route provides multiple access variants: road access to and from the Romanian-Bulgarian border, the General Toshevo relation, Bucharest-Murfatlar and Constanța-Murfatlar road access, multiple road access to the seaside and the most relevant localities - Cernavoda, Mamaia / Navodari, Mangalia - Eforie, Ostrov / Adamclisi. Air access is provided via Mihail Kogalniceanu International Airport, Constanta County, about 40 km from Murfatlar, and railway access via the Bucharest - Constanta railway. The banks of Danube-Black Sea Canal are equipped with a gravelled road, an important asset for the development of tourism. River access is for freight transport.

Regarding the public tourist infrastructure, the local public authority has implemented important European projects for the development of certain first concern tourist

¹⁹ *Tourism potential of Romania*, Prof. PhD. Mihai Ielenicz and Prof. PhD. Laura Comănescu. Available at: http://old.unibuc.ro/prof/ene_m/docs/2016/oct/29_12_50_595_PTR-III.pdf

attractions. Thus, extensive tourist information and promotion panels, urban furniture, and bird-watching facilities were set in Fântânița Forest, and cycling and hiking trails were tested.

V.2. Private tourist infrastructure

Without being a tourist destination, the town of Murfatlar has constituted either a stopping point on the tourist routes running over Constanta County or an alternative for spending a day of rest or sport activities in nature. In this context, private infrastructure is underdeveloped in the absence of sustained tourism demand. Thus, Fântânița Tourist Complex is the only accommodation facility in Murfatlar Town, located in Natura 2000 site ROSCI0083 Murfatlar Fântânița, about 2 km distance from the town centre. The facility provides tourists with 32 accommodation places in 16 double rooms and a restaurant with 250 seats. In terms of restoration facilities, several restaurants and terraces with different profiles animate the city. Murfatlar Tourist Entertainment Centre and Murfatlar Viticulture and Wine Research Centre in the town and the “Domeniul Vlădoi” Winery in the village of Siminoc frame the vine and wine tourism in Murfatlar Town.

V.3. Tourist Information Systems

The town of Murfatlar, and especially the tourists, benefit of the National Tourist Information and Promotion Centre²⁰ (CNIPT), authorised in 2017 and member of the national network of centres established under the Regional Operational Program 2007-2013. The mission of CNIPT Murfatlar is to provide free information and guidance to tourists and visitors of Murfatlar, also being involved in organizing tourist-related events. The centre includes an authorized tourist guide.

As far as signalling is concerned, tourism resources are marked by information totems located at key points, especially access-related points. Direction and minimum information on private resources are provided by indicators located in their vicinity. Moreover, on the Tibisir Hill, which dominates the whole town and is visible from the main access ways, the town's name was placed in 4-meter letters.

The online tourist information sources are numerous, three public sources developed and managed by the local public authority ensure transparency and openness to potential tourists and visitors: <http://cniptmurfatlar.ro>, <http://visit-murfatlar.ro>, <http://murfatlar-generalatoshevo.ro>, while others, public and private, complement them.

VI. TOURIST REQUEST AND OFFER OF MURFATLAR TOWN AND ITS AREA OF INFLUENCE

VI.1. Tourist profile of Murfatlar Town and its area of influence

Murfatlar is a growing urban centre that is becoming more and more attractive due to public and private investments, as well as by absorbing European funds, and it is therefore

²⁰ <http://cniptmurfatlar.ro>

essential to address the tourism profile from a dual perspective: urban tourism and nature-based tourism. Murfatlar can be a tourist destination based on its natural endowment, by capitalizing on the existing resources in the town: "Fântânița Murfatlar" Natural Reserve, equipped for welcoming tourists and, at the same time, with a great tourist development potential, and the unique landscape created by the chalk hills covered with vineyards and the Lake of Chalk. At town level, historical and cultural resources of local or national significance may become vectors of the urban tourism: Murfatlar Cave Complex, „*Birth of Mary the Virgin*” Orthodox Church and other places of worship, Kogalniceanu Mansion, Murfatlar Railway Station, Danube-Black Sea Canal etc. Yet, it is Murfatlar Town connection to the *Murfatlar wine*, one of the most appreciated wines in Romania, with a long history, with legends and consistent resources that makes the town’s reputation at national level and not only. This reputation can be the binding between the two types of tourism: urban and nature-related, by promoting vernacular cultural and culinary experiences specific to Murfatlar, and involve Murfatlar Entertainment Centre, „Domeniul Vlădoi” Winery, and the research centre for viticulture and wine.

VI.2. Landmark statistics on tourism demand

As statistical data specific to tourism activities are unavailable due to no reporting, statistical data on the tourism business environment were analyzed²¹. The processed statistics refer to period 2013-2017, where 2017 is the most recent year for which figures are available. Thus, it was found that the average number of employees declared as working in this sector, namely hotels and other accommodation facilities, restaurants and other catering activities, as well as sports and recreational activities, was relatively constant during the analyzed period, indicating a reduced dynamics of the sector. Regarding the number of enterprises declaring such main economic activities as hotels and other accommodation, restaurants and other catering and sports and recreation activities, although it is both low and fluctuating, the number is under a slight increase under the analysed period of time.

VI.3. Types of tourism practicable in Murfatlar

Based on the major segmentation of the city into two distinct areas, located to the East and West of the Danube-Black Sea Canal, a separate analysis was performed on the two areas, and of the town, as a whole, so that to capitalize upon the tourist resources at their maximum capacity, through different types of tourism:

- East of Murfatlar: cultural tourism and knowledge-based or technical tourism
- West of Murfatlar: nature-based tourism (eco-tourism) and cultural tourism at a later stage
- At town level: wine tourism and knowledge-based tourism.

²¹ Local statistics of Murfatlar Town, County Directorate of Statistics Constanta

VII. INFLUENCING FACTORS ON TOURISM SECTOR

VII.1. Positive and negative influencing factors

1. **Political and legislative environment:** certain political and governmental factors may play a significant role on how the demand for tourism services evolves on the domestic market and across borders: transport legislation, tourism classification regulations, authorization and control, on-line booking systems, local regulations etc.
2. **Economic environment:** consumer behaviour is influenced by numerous factors, and among the most important are the availability of credits and the interest rate, the exchange rate, the economic growth and stability and the inflation rate, as well as the economic structure of the relevant tourism industries and their profitability (cost of accommodation, travel costs, etc.).
3. **Social and cultural environment:** the main socio-cultural changes influencing demand in tourism refer to family structure, age structure, lifestyle, quality of life, and education level.
4. **Technology environment, infrastructure endowment:** technological developments, especially telecommunications, access to local leisure infrastructure etc.

VII.2. Stakeholders

According to the World Tourism Organization²², planning and developing of sustainable tourism can be directly and indirectly influenced by a number of stakeholders who play a wide variety of roles and, sometimes, have competing goals and objectives. Their successful involvement in the development of sustainable tourism, along the entire decision-making process through which the local, and in this case cross-border tourist context is planned, implemented and exploited is essential. There are several distinct groups of stakeholders: the Romanian Government and the subordinated public institutions (they design national strategies, develop and maintain the primary infrastructure, promote tourist destinations); keepers of tourist resources - owners or custodians (they decide on whether to include them in tourist trails, routes, tourist products), tourists (tourists and visitors), the local community (can add value to any tourist experience due to the local culture and values they cultivate, require involvement and constant information), tourism employees and experts (require dedication and professional training).

²² *Making Tourism More Sustainable - A Guide for Policy Makers*, UNEP și UNWTO, 2005, available at: <https://sdt.unwto.org/content/about-us-5>

VIII. SWOT ANALYSIS OF TOURISM ACTIVITIES IN MURFATLAR TOWN

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ General agreement of the local community, including the business environment, on the need to develop tourism activities; ▪ Murfatlar identify itself with the origin of the homonymous wines, of national reputation; ▪ The existence of a mix of tourist resources or potentially tourist resources, of different types, distinct and / or complementary which, creatively exploited in complementary tourist products, can address categories of tourists with different interests and, over time, position Murfatlar on the local tourist and cross-border routes; ▪ Relatively intact nature, nature reserves, favourable to developing eco-tourism. Landscapes pleasant to look at; ▪ Local authorities willing to coordinate the development of and to invest in the local tourism sector; ▪ Existence of diversified access infrastructure; ▪ A tourist marking and field guidance in place, adequate to enhancing; ▪ Existence of public tourist information systems: information office, dedicated web sites; ▪ The existence of a tourist information database on the Murfatlar area; ▪ High visibility on the main tourist resources or potentially tourist resources; ▪ Resources and voluntary involvement of the local community in the preservation of the mobile cultural heritage; ▪ Local collective consciousness anchored in local identity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Tourism is not perceived as a source of local income with a significant share in the local economy; ▪ The downward summer season; ▪ Vulnerable public tourism investments in the absence of a security system; ▪ Lack of investments in the creation of new tourist resources, complementary to the existing ones; ▪ The insufficient capitalization of historical monuments; ▪ Difficult access to some cultural and natural tourist resources, lack of marking systems; ▪ Lack of tourism marketing studies; ▪ Lack of information and promotion materials; ▪ Lack of specialized shops on local products, especially wines with D.O.C. Murfatlar; ▪ Negative dynamics of private investment directly or indirectly related to tourism; ▪ Poor partial or complete touristic offer, including organized tourist itineraries or of developing related non-accommodation services; ▪ Lack of promotion through large tourist events, dedicated exclusively to the great tourist attractions - viticulture and wine-related activities, multiculturalism; ▪ Insufficient accommodation capacity, correlated with low demand; ▪ Lack of education on sustainable tourism concepts; ▪ Migration of the skilled labour force; ▪ Lack of an consistent and permanent tourist offer; ▪ Lack of public transport aiming at tourist resources; ▪ Insufficient greening of tourist areas.
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The existence of the strategic framework - Master Plan for Tourism Development in Romania, Murfatlar Town Local Development Strategy; ▪ The institutional framework for a functional regional and interregional cooperation in 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Strong competition between domestic and foreign tourist destination at similar prices and higher conditions; ▪ Owners and custodians of tourist sites delay to invest in their rehabilitation / conservation / valorisation;

- place;
- Growing tourism based on active public policies to stimulate domestic tourism;
- Statistical and scientifically documented trends in the growing interest towards knowledge tourism, ecotourism, un-explored and un-exploited tourist areas;
- Increased interest of tourists for discovering and visiting new tourist areas, outside the seaside;
- Existence of external financing sources for tourist-related public and private investments
- Threats due to climate change and environmental pollution;
- Fiscal and legislative environment discourages investments in large tourist infrastructure;
- Change in public policies stimulating domestic tourism and decrease in the interest of tourists for young destinations;
- Improving the quality standards of tourist offers in neighbouring countries more quickly.

IX. MURFATLAR TOWN. POTENTIAL OF TOURIST RESOURCES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT

The town enjoys a privileged position on the main market for its internal tourists and visitors, namely the Black Sea coast, but also the Romanian-Bulgarian border for cross-border tourism, being located on important tourist routes in Constanta County. This position is enhanced by the very easy access to and from Murfatlar, by road and rail, indirectly by air, on the most important directions: București and Constanța, Bulgaria - towards General Toshevo, within the county towards Adamclisi - Ostrov and Bulgaria - Silistra, Cernavodă - Danube banks, locally on the Danube-Black Sea Canal banks and, on private roads, on the town mounds and hills.

Once arrived at the destination in Murfatlar, tourists are welcomed with complex tourist attractions and sights: natural protected areas of European interest such as Murfatlar Fântânița Forest, and a unique cultural site in the country, the monastic cave complex. These two natural and cultural heritage peaks are nevertheless included in the urban and tourist canvas - unique places in nature, eye-catching landscapes, historical, architectural, technical and public monuments. This entire heritage is absorbed by the reputation Murfatlar has made in over a hundred years, as exceptional wine-growing centre with a long history and high-quality products of international standards. Moreover, the local community values and celebrates its multicultural identity, and the cultural and social life of the town illustrates it by countless events and references to the amalgam of ethnicity and the history of the place.

This is the context in which a sustainable and valuable tourism activity can be built, an alternative or an intermezzo of "Wanderlust" type to the seaside offer. On one condition: investment to be made in tourism infrastructure capitalizing on these exceptional tourism resources, both by public authorities and private owners, investing in exciting and ingenious solutions for capitalizing on resources that are not to be accessible in the long term, facilitating investments in hospitality facilities, facilitating the local community involvement and move to a proactive and energetic attitude of opening the town and merging it with curious and excited tourists touring Dobrudja on both sides of the Romanian-Bulgarian border.

X. PROPUNERI DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS FOR CURRENT TOURIST RESOURCES IN MURFATLAR TOWN

Local tourist resources that may be visited or have a real potential represent a substantial basis for building a consistent tourist activity. To ensure the development of a gradual tourist identity of the city, the strategic plan proposes *particular tourism products for Murfatlar*, products that will later be integrated into the development strategies of cross-border tourism. The proposals focus on measures and investments that can be addressed by Murfatlar local authority and the private sector on the one hand, and on the other hand they can be phased in, depending on the available resources.

Fântânița Murfatlar Reserve

Development proposals addressing the reserve aim at transforming the area into a tourist attraction that is capable of retaining tourists even for several days through the following recreational and leisure activities.

General forest improvements - the area dedicated to tourism activities

1. Identifying hiking trails, checking their safety, including the risks for wildlife. Arranging and marking the routes with hands-on information panels, panels for hiking and cycling or other forms of adventure tourism, arranging resting places, setting up ramps for baby carriages and carriages for disabled persons, equipping with bicycle racks, baskets garbage and ecological toilets, etc.
2. Marking and presentation panels of areas with a high concentration of protected species, educational panels, marking of the well Fântânița;
3. Observation towers for bird watching or belle-vue, setting up areas for picnic and camping and their appropriate equipment.

Proposals to develop private facilities

1. Adventure Park Fântânița

High rope trails

- High rope trails for children, young and adults, with progressive difficulties, which can cross different natural or artificial obstacles.
- Tracks are composed of a series of suspended elements at different heights, equipped for the user's safety, and which are traversed using special protection equipment, by crossing or climbing, following a guide.
- Renting services for bicycles and other materials to increase interest in visiting the forest and spending one or more days in Murfatlar.

2. Wellness and health centres

Considering the degree of wilderness of the forest and to the extent that the reserve's buffer for economic activities allows, wellness and health centres can be developed by focusing on the direct contact with nature for both well-being and prevention and treatment of diseases. Stage 1: creating simple routes and hikes to look for landscapes and animals, for resting, addressing people with various physical or mental deficiencies,

depression, anxiety etc. Stage 2: spacious wellness and health centres with complex services, addressing a specialized market, mostly high incomes.

Examples of actions to be integrated in events dedicated to the Reserve and eco-tourism: tourist orientation competitions in the forest; treasure hunting; contests on botanical, ornithological etc. themes; guided hiking; days of open doors dedicated to certain protected species that can be found grouped in easy-to-visit areas.

Lake of Chalk

- Reabilitating access paths, walking paths and resting places with umbrellas around the lake, safety fencing of lake, information on lake characteristics, surface data, depth, submersible tunnels etc.

Chalk Hills

- Developing roads, and access and hiking paths in the hills, where possible, with informative panels, resting places and, if the relief allows, playgrounds for children, bicycle racks, garbage bins, etc.
- Construction of two belle-vue towers on public land or with the consent of the private owners (Tibisir Hill) equipped with anchored binoculars.

Vineyards and wineries

The following proposals are the basis for the future tourist product “*Murfatlar - millennia of grape-growing and wine*”, described in Cap. XI.2. Tourist products in Murfatlar Town.

1. Setting up a public Vine and Wine Museum in Murfatlar

A public Museum of Vine and Wine is an objective that will stress the aspiration to become the capital of CDO Murfatlar, the hard core around which events, scientific and technical events, trade fairs and, in general, urban activities that will be part of the tourism product “Murfatlar - Millennium of Vine-Winegrowing” will gravitate.

2. Wine route D.O.C. Murfatlar

Stimulating the organization of a wine route CDO Murfatlar, at least in the Murfatlar Town at a first stage, then in the entire area of CDO Murfatlar, through the collaboration with Murfatlar Tourist Entertainment Centre, “Domeniul Vlădoi” Winery, Murfatlar Viticulture and Wine Research and Development Centre and, preferably, Fântânița Tourist Complex as an independent platform for various wine producers in CDO Murfatlar area. It is recommended to involve small producers and the local community as well. The route will be promoted jointly, and the media and travel agencies selling trips and events in the county, on the seaside and beyond, will be regularly invited to tours for presentation, appreciation and consultation to improve the route.

3. Event „ Murfatlar - Millennia of grape-growing and wine”

Event dedicated exclusively to grape-growing and winemaking, which will become the most important local event annually, recognizable by tourists interested in viticulture and

gastronomy, Dobrudja nature and culture at cross-border level and across the country, by all seaside tourists, towns near the Romanian-Bulgarian border, and Constanta, Bucharest. Collaboration with business associations in tourism and viticulture and wine sector, with the wineries from CDO Murfatlar area, is essential to ensure an international standard for the event.

4. Marking and promotion of Murfatlar Town as a portal for Murfatlar grape-growing and winemaking

Panels, maps, indicators related to the Murfatlar grape-growing and winemaking attractions are proposed to be placed around the town. Also, promotional materials - flyers, maps, postcards, souvenirs etc., are proposed to be produced. Local authority will initiate this action and encourage wine producers and other tourist contact points with to sell promotional materials and dedicated souvenirs.

5. Concept and production of a mobile presentation stand for wines

A mobile presentation stand for wines produced in Murfatlar area is proposed with the aim of being exposed with local or even national events such as agricultural, cultural and tourism fairs and exhibitions.

6. Working sub-group „Murfatlar - Millennia of grape-growing and wine” - part of the working group Tourist Murfatlar

In order to facilitate Murfatlar's positioning on the map of the major Romanian oenological destinations, it is recommended to organize a working sub-group directly coordinated by the local authority and including Murfatlar National Tourist Information Centre. When initiating the working sub-group, its purpose, objectives and program should be well defined and passed on to potential members so that to motivate their participation. Potential members: Murfatlar Viticulture and Wine Research and Development Centre, “Domeniul Vlădoi” Winery, Murfatlar Tourist Entertainment Centre, “Trantu” Winery - Vinex Murfatlar (Cernavodă), “Domeniul Bogdan” Winery (Peștera), “Gabai” Winery (Valu lui Traian), Rasova Winery etc. Also, at least two independent experts - a wine expert and an oenological tourism expert, are recommended to take part in the sub-group.

Proposals for private facilities

1. Network of small shops exclusively dedicated to Murfatlar wines.

2. Wine SPA Centre Murfatlar

The benefits of grapes and grape-based and wine products are well-known for well-being and health effects. A Murfatlar SPA Wine Centre could become the first wine-therapy centre open in a CDO area.

Stage 1: as a beginning, the SPA centre can be equipped with a reception, lockers, 2 wooden traditional bathtubs or other wine baths, dry sauna and massage salon, where dermatological treatments and various types of massage with grape and wine products can be performed.

Stage 2: Subsequently, depending on market interest and demand, the centre can expand its wellness and therapy section, including a jacuzzi, swimming pool, fitness room and relaxation area.

Archaeological and architectural monuments

Murfatlar Cave Complex

Valorising Murfatlar Cave Complex is a sensitive mission due to the continuing site degradation process, its protection system being morally and technically outdated without providing a sufficient standard of preservation. Two approaches are proposed to meet the two interests - opening up to tourists and visitors, and its safeguard. Both avoid interacting with the site itself and ensure compliance with the rules imposed by the administrators of the monastic cave complex.

1. Opening up to tourists and visitors

The proposed method is the one of physical and digital reconstruction:

a. Physical reconstruction:

- Production of scale models of the churches, to scales allowing for their mobility, transport, and exhibition in various locations. Panels with drawings and inscriptions, their translation and interpretation, their religious and secular meaning.

b. Digital 3D reconstruction, cooperation with the Constanta Museum of National History and Archaeology (MINAC) for valorising similar projects.

c. Camera system inside the cave complex.

Opening to tourists and visitors:

- Identification of a plateau in the vicinity of the complex, levelling it, setting it up with gravel or other easy way to avoid clutter and unevenness, with reduced financial effort. Arrangement of ramps for children's trolleys and trolleys for people with disabilities, bicycle racks, garbage bins, ecological toilets;
- Arranging an open air enclosure on the above-described plateau for tourist, scientific, educational etc. activities, exhibition of the scale models, panels, live projection system.

At a later stage, after confirming the interest of tourists and visitors, the following proposals may be taken into consideration:

- Build and develop a centre of the Cave Complex, hosting events, projections, exhibitions, models and reconstructions, etc.
- Organize experimental archaeology workshops - sculpture, inscription, and moulding of the typical rock of Tibisir Hill - chalk.

2. Safeguard

The strategic plan proposes the following elements that are feasible for Murfatlar Local Authority:

- Rigorous and safe enclosure of the cave complex, using materials that allow visual contact with what is currently found in the archaeological site.
- Establishing a phased approach to safeguarding the complex, in phases that are as short as possible and feasible from a financial and temporal point of view, in

collaboration with MINAC, the Ministry of Culture, etc. Implementing phases based on funds raised through fund raising campaigns.

Old town centre, historical monuments, places of worship, public monuments

„Murfatlar - Multicultures in Dobrudja” tourist product involves access to local monuments by touring a cultural route in Murfatlar Town, which will include the old town centre, Kogalniceanu Mansion, Murfatlar Railway Station, listed monuments - private buildings, churches and the mosque, Murfatlar Heroes Monument. It will also capitalize on the investments proposed under the project "Development of tourism potential, protecting and promoting the common heritage", code ROBG-453, financed by Interreg V-A Romania-Bulgaria Programme.

As regards the development of new tourism resources for the promotion of local history and multiculturalism, the following actions are proposed:

- Organisation of a permanent exhibition with the Cultural House presenting the history and achievements of Murfatlar Town, then promoted in all tourist offers. At a later stage, a museum of the town may be established.
- Marking of the elements of attractiveness in the old centre, monuments, churches and the mosque etc. through explanatory panels, including, wherever known, the legend of the place.

The Danube-Black Sea Canal and the Straja Monument assembly

It is recommended to collaborate with Cernavoda, Medgidia, Agigea and Navodari localities, as well as with the Administration of Navigable Canals, for the touristic capitalization of the engineering work by marking a cycling route, organizing an exhibition in the future Murfatlar museum for presenting the canal history, by planting information panels and road signs.

Events

In the first stage of promoting the town, two types of events are proposed to strengthen the town's tourist image:

1. Events dedicated to the vine-growing and wine sector and multi-ethnic local gastronomy:

- The annual wine event, organized in collaboration with the wineries in the entire area, in the beginning of the harvest time. The event is briefly described in the proposals for tourism development of vineyards and wine-related attractions;
- Brunch event at the Murfatlar Tourist Entertainment Centre, inviting the local community to participate in the preparation and presentation of the culinary products, presentation of the area and access to the vineyards.
- Day of open doors at the two wineries that are available for tourism - Murfatlar Viticulture and Wine Research and Development Centre and “Domeniul Vlădoi” Winery.

2. Event dedicated to eco-tourism and Fântânița Murfatlar Reserve, briefly described in the proposals for the tourist development of the reserve.

XI. TOURIST PRODUCTS. IMMEDIATE AND FUTURE ACTIONS

XI.1. Definition of a tourist product

The evolution of tourism in recent decades has demonstrated and certified the profound transformation of tourism worldwide and, obviously, at national level, by changing from mass tourism, characteristic for the 70s, aimed for the crowd and almost exclusively proposing leisure and recreation activities, to niche tourism. The tourist destinations have adapted and metamorphosed to reflect these major transformations and the result is a destination that offers the modern tourist experiences, participation in the life of the local community, the chance to escape from the limiting patterns promoted by globalization. Thus, the tourist product is made up of different components which, assembled, define the product: transport, accommodation, food, recreation, etc. The components ensure an integrated and coherent product that focuses on the “experience” offered. This definition leads to a wide diversification of tourist products to “niche” areas, for smaller, highly specialized but well localized and identified target groups, including holidays centred on cultural experiences, archaeological, ecological, festivals, gastronomy and viticulture, motorbikes, bikes, climbing, diving, fishing, etc.

XI.2. Tourist products of Murfatlar Town

The analysis of local elements that, grouped together, can generate tourist products specific to Murfatlar town and area, relying on the specific and the local competitive advantage has led to the following tourist product proposals:

Murfatlar - Millennia of grape-growing and wine

- a. Tangible and intangible natural and cultural heritage features: Murfatlar Vineyard, “Domeniul Vlădoi” Winery, Murfatlar Viticulture and Wine Research and Development Centre, small owners; chalk hills; legends and the history of growing vine.

Future elements: event „ Murfatlar - Millennia of grape-growing and wine”; wine route CDO Murfatlar, phased; the public museum of vine and wine Murfatlar; towers of belle-vue on the chalk hills.

- b. Infrastructure and basic services: visitable wineries in Murfatlar, Murfatlar Viticulture and Wine Research and Development Centre; Fântânița Tourist Complex, other accommodation facilities, restaurants and local restoration facilities.

Future elements: Murfatlar Tourist Entertainment Centre - developed and modernised; offers of the small producers - stands at the house or vine plantation gate; hospitality infrastructure for tourists; concept and production of a mobile wine stand; Wine SPA centre / centres Murfatlar; markings and promotional elements to promote the town as a portal to Murfatlar viticulture; guiding services on wine route CDO Murfatlar or on routes chosen by the groups of tourists; exposure and sale of local wines, souvenirs appropriate to this product, eventually made by regional craftsmen.

Murfatlar - Wild nature

- a. Tangible and intangible natural and cultural heritage features: Fântânița Murfatlar Reserve, Lake of Chalk - the story of the lake; chalk hills.
Future elements: organisation of competitions, events, open doors etc. Dedicated to the natural heritage of Murfatlar Town.
- b. Infrastructure and basic services: accommodation and food facilities; access roads; markings.
Future elements: trails and walkways and walkways, playgrounds, belle-vue towers; markings and information boards; guided hiking - guide of CNIPT Murfatlar; adventure park Fântânița; wellness and health centres.

Murfatlar - Multicultures in Dobrudja

- a. Tangible and intangible natural and cultural heritage features: old town of Murfatlar, listed historical monuments, Heroes Monument, The Danube-Black Sea Canal and the Straja Monument assembly, legends and local stories, vine and wine heritage, local gastronomy, traditional art, folklore, cultural events etc.
Future elements: the extended Murfatlar House of Culture and diversified cultural activities; theme park dedicated to the natural and cultural heritage of Murfatlar; Museum / permanent exhibition on local history and achievements; valorisation of Murfatlar Cave Complex, phased; events dedicated to cultural tourism.
- a) Infrastructure and basic services: Fântânița Tourist Complex, other accommodation facilities, local restaurants and other food facilities, access roads, walking trails, markings and guiding panels for tourists etc.
Future elements: markings and information boards displayed on relevant buildings in old town centre, on monuments, churches and the mosque etc.; walking trails, cycling routes; private hospitality infrastructure for tourists.

XII. STRATEGIC APPROACH FOR DEVELOPING THE TOURISM SECTOR IN MURFATLAR

XII.1. Target groups for tourist activities

Depending on the practicable forms of tourism in Murfatlar Town, such as wine tourism, cultural tourism, knowledge tourism, nature-related or gastronomic tourism, tourist typologies are:

1. Tourists interested in cultural and heritage values that are on the move to explore culturally a particular destination. They are curious, interact with local people and make their own research before vacation.
2. Adventure tourists, centred on experiences in nature, knowledge and adrenaline. They travel both individually and in groups, prefer cross-country trails or cycling. They are interested in new places and active leisure.

Other groups: future tourists, undecided on their holiday destinations, holiday-makers on the seaside or tourists crossing Murfatlar, the local community.

XII.2. Tourist development vision of Murfatlar Town

Until 2030, Murfatlar Town will become a niche tourist destination in Dobrudja, complementary to coastal tourism, with prominent tourist identity grounded on knowledge tourism products created based on the complex natural and cultural resources existing in the town's area. The tourist products, developed according to the principles of contemporary, international tourism, will constitute the competitive advantages of the town, offering tourists and visitors unprecedented, coherent and experiences able to meet higher demands, protecting and valorising the heritage. Tourism in Murfatlar Town will develop in a sustainable manner, with the protection and valorisation of the natural and built heritage and of the material and immaterial cultural values. It will become a significant economic activity for the local budget, a safe and constant alternative source of income for the population and will create jobs for the young people in the town.

The local community will be encouraged to take part in this transformation and engage in innumerable ways in the activities and solutions proposed through this strategy, from volunteering to greening and protecting green areas, putting in place information panels, cycling routes, turning into local tour guides and hosting brunch events in their own homes.

In order to achieve this vision of Tourist Murfatlar, it is proposed to concentrate efforts on the next development intervention with three priority objectives, out of which one objective dedicated to the implementation of the strategic plan:

- I. Development of the tourist products
- II. Implementation of the tourist marketing strategy
- III. Creation of the implementation framework for the tourism development strategic plan

XII.3. Strategic intervention for Murfatlar Town tourist development

Starting from the priority development objectives, the tourism development intervention is structured on development directions that complement each other and strive to achieve these objectives. These development directions also take into account a two-stage phase-in for the implementation of the strategic plan that is to be achieved under the 2030 time horizon.

Legend: MV Murfatlar - Millennia of grape-growing and wine; MN Murfatlar - Wild nature; MM Murfatlar - Multicultures in Dobrudja

Strategic directions	Implementation actions and projects
I.1. Ensuring the road, pedestrian, ecological and digital accessibility, facilities related to the reception of tourists to the natural and cultural	I.1.a. Analysis of the state of road and pedestrian access to tourism resources, of which priority are the facilities that integrate the defining elements of the circuits / trails. Prioritize interventions on these routes / circuits based on availability of local or attracted resources. The action can be implemented in co-operation with associations of cycling, hiking, local high school. I.1.b. Minimal provision of road and pedestrian access, based on the priorities set out in Action I.1.a. At tourist product level, MV has priority.

resources that make up the tourist products	<p>I.1.c. Arrangement of comfort elements on trails / circuits / to tourism resources, according to the priorities established under Action I.1.a.</p> <p>MN: The Fântânița Forest Reserve - resting places, picnic areas, ramps for baby carriages and disabled people, bicycle racks, garbage bins, ecological toilets; the chalk hills: resting places, playgrounds; bicycle racks; trash cans; Chalk Lake: shady rest places, fencing and safety measures.</p> <p>MM: The cave complex - platform with ramps, bicycle racks, garbage baskets, ecological toilets; Channel and Straja Monument Assembly - checking and establishing pedestrian and bicycle trail.</p>
I.2. Ensuring tourist and visitor guidance on routes that form tourist products	<p>I. 2.1. Based on the priorities set out in Action I.1.a., routes, walkways, access roads or areas dedicated to tourists will be marked. The action is recommended to be implemented in cooperation, as appropriate, with the custodians of the Romsilva RPN, the National History and Archaeology Museum of Constanta, the Navigable Canal Administration, the private landowners adjacent to the trails.</p> <p>MV: panels, maps, indicators on wine-vineyard trails, production of printed promotional materials and souvenirs</p> <p>MN: Fântânița Forest Reserve - maps, signs, trails and marking of spring Fântânița, exposure of Protected Area Regulation, forest guide; Chalk Lake - Informative panels on lake characteristics; chalk hills - information panels, map</p> <p>MM: Signalling The cave complex for guidance, the production of printed promotional materials and souvenirs; old centre - guided trails, explanatory panels - legend of the place; Canal and Straja Monument Complex - marking cycling route.</p>
I.3. Rehabilitation, fitting out, equipping natural and cultural tourism resources for an ingenious and memorable knowledge experience	<p>I.3.a. Public investments:</p> <p>MV: Public Vine and Wine Museum in Murfatlar, mobile wine stand</p> <p>MN: Fântânița Forest Reservation - panels about protected species, hands-on panels, educational panels in areas with a high concentration of protected species, towers / observation towers of protected birds, animals; Lake of Crete - history panel of lake formation / legend; the chalk hills - two belvedere towers</p> <p>MM: The cave complex - indoor and projection system on the adjacent platform.</p> <p>If necessary, it is possible to collaborate with RPN Romsilva, the National History and Archaeology Museum of Constanta, the Constanta Folk Art Museum, the wine cellars in the D.O.C. Murfatlar, local community holding local folk art objects, old utensils and equipment for wine-making, etc.</p> <p>I.3.b. Private investments:</p> <p>MV: "Murfatlar Wine Cellar" shops network</p> <p>MN: Bicycle rental centres</p> <p>MM: The Cave Complex - Information and Educational Panels System.</p>
I.4. Creation of new tourism resources to enhance and refine tourism products	<p>I.4.a. Public investments:</p> <p>MM: The cave complex - physical and digital reconstruction, archaeological park, Centre of the Cave Complex, experimental archaeology workshops; Old Centre - Modernization and Extension Cultural House, Theme Park, Heroes Monument Rehabilitation, Murfatlar Exhibition / Museum; Canal and Straja Monument Complex - dedication of a section of the future Murfatlar Museum.</p> <p>The action is recommended to be implemented in cooperation, as appropriate, with the National History and Archaeology Museum of Constanta, the Constanta People's Art Museum, the Administration of Navigation Canals.</p>

	<p>I.4.b. Private investments: MV: Rehabilitation of Murfatlar Tourist Rest, Wine Spa Murfatlar MN: Fântânița Forest Reserve - Adventure Park Fântânița, wellness and health centres.</p> <p>I.4.c. Public - private investments: MV: Wine route D.O.C. Murfatlar MN: Camping sites in Fântânița Forest Reserve</p>
I.5. Stimulation of tourist products	<p>I.5.1. Public-private collaborations: MV: Event "Murfatlar - Millennium Wine growing", brunch events, open gates events for visiting wine cellars. MN: Fântânița Forest Reservation - tourist orientation contests, botanical, ornithological contests, guided hikes, open days dedicated to rare species; events dedicated to eco-tourism, adventure tourism events MM: The cave complex - exhibitions, projections, outdoor concerts, shows, scientific meetings, etc.</p>
II.1. Tourist advertising of Murfatlar town	<p>II.1.a. Development of tourist brand Murfatlar. Tourist Visual Identity Manual. II.1.b. Development of the website related to the project "Development of tourism potential, protection and promotion of the common heritage", code ROBG-453 II.1.c. Social Media: Facebook, Instagram, and Youtube accounts II.1.d Banners online II.1.e. GPS and Navigation Systems - Google Maps II.1.f. Smartphone apps II.1.g. Discover Touristic Murfatlar movie and its periodical update II.1.h. Participation in fairs with touristic, gastronomic, oenological profile, etc.</p>
II.2. Specific promotion of tourist products	<p>II.1.i. Public relations II.2.a. Events centred on tourism products II.2.b. Use of increased interest in photography, as art and practice, in promotion II.2.c. Printed materials, brochures, posters</p>
II.3. Internal communication	<p>II.3.a. Internal communication at the Murfatlar City Hall in order to create the tourism department and the working team - meetings, debates. II.3.b. Internal communication administered by the travel department - newsletter, memo, notice, etc. II.3.c. Establishing a two-way communication. II.3.d. Promoting the tourism identity of Murfatlar at the internal level, promoting the strategic plan and to involve the town hall's team in its implementation and promotion.</p>
III.1. Ensuring a competent institutional framework for implementing the strategic plan - within the local public authority	<p>III.1.a. Transforming CNIPT into a tourism department by expanding the team and attracting at least two external experts - a tourism expert and a marketing expert III.2.b. Monitoring and evaluating the performance and impact III.2.c. Increasing institutional capacity of the working group through regular information and training in the field of tourism, tourism marketing, etc. III.2.d. Developing partnerships with public and private suppliers to expand and diversify the local tourist and cultural act</p>
III.2. Creating tools to stimulate private investment	<p>III.2.a. Defining and approving the concept of stimulating investments in tourism. This concept may include: - establishment of progressive local tax and tax facilities corresponding to</p>

the occupancy of the tourist development areas;
 - establishing conditions for concession of buildings; town planning regulations in those areas; and so on
 - establishing the rules in which facilities are granted - priority CAEN codes, company development phase, implantation area, etc.

The concept will be presented in the form of a regulation for the granting of facilities for the development of tourism and may be developed jointly / in partnership with the Chamber of Commerce, Industry, Navigation and Agriculture of Constanta or with the Small and Medium Enterprises of Constanta.

III.2.b. Establishment of a micro-credit fund

III.2.c. Developing information and entrepreneurial education programs in the field of tourism and the hospitality industry.

III.3. Creating „Touristic Murfatlar” working group

III.3.a. Creation of work group "Touristic Murfatlar", consisting of the tourism department, CNIPT, local operators in tourism - wine cellars, local public authority, Culture House, experts, Constanta National Museum of Archaeology and Archaeology (MINAC) , custodians, etc.

III.3.b. Creating the sub-group "Murfatlar - Millennia of Winegrowing"

III.3.c. Monitoring and evaluation of the performance and impact of „Touristic Murfatlar” work group

III.3.d. Increasing the institutional capacity of the working group.

III.4. Local community involvement

III.4.a. Raising awareness of the local community towards the destination Touristic Murfatlar, along with the related tourist products. External communication with representatives of the local community by organizing periodic meetings to present the status of measures in implementation, community involvement in tourism promotion actions and events related to the cultural heritage of Murfatlar City

III.4.b. Involvement of the local community in the development of new tourist resources: Murfatlar Town Museum, Murfatlar Public Vine and Wine Museum, Wine route CDO Murfatlar, etc.

III.5. Informing and educating stakeholders and the public on the concept of sustainability in tourism

III.5.a. Passive information by conventional methods - notice boards, posters, billboards.

III.5.b. Educational actions through games, competitions, etc. for children up to the gymnasium cycle, as the main vector of change in a family / household.

III.5.c. Cooperation with non-governmental organizations for actions and projects at local level.

III.5.d. Education of the local community in the spirit of a tourist town, the principles of reception of tourists, hospitality.

III.5.e. Educate the business community and the local community on the concept of proximity, promote the capitalization of local resources and local producers and providers to boost the added value of local products and services.

The proposed actions will be phased in between 2020 and 2030 period defining the strategic plan so that from one stage to the next, the synergic effects of investment will produce the targeted change in the three tourism products recommended to Murfatlar Town.

XIII. MARKETING STRATEGY

XIII.1. Marketing Strategy

The Marketing Strategy of Murfatlar Town plays on the analysis of tourism resources, strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, based on institutional knowledge and capacity building of its potential, in order to create and promote consistent and interesting tourist products and to attract and keep an increasing number of visitors and tourists in the area. The objective is to create a unitary tourist destination attached to the town and its area of influence, where natural and human-created resources, transport infrastructure, attractive services, promotion and information can be combined with the essential element: people who make possible a memorable touristic experience.

Market objectives:

- To create and extend the market share by increasing the number of arrivals of domestic tourists in the first instance, later also foreign ones, with an average of 25% each year, starting with third year after the completion of the project “Development of tourist potential, protection and promotion of the common heritage”, code ROBG-453;
- To consolidate and promote the destination “Tourist Murfatlar”, through a coherent and complementary approach of the three defined tourism products, capable of extending the season.

Image objectives:

- To change the general perception and improve the image of tourism activities in Murfatlar Town, by shifting from people passing by to visitors and tourists, from more or less spontaneous visits to scheduled arrivals in Murfatlar;
- To change the perception of investors on local public authority and the local community determination to support and get involved in tourism development;
- To promote Murfatlar as an ideal tourist destination for non-seaside Dobrudja.

A fundamental element of the marketing strategy is the marketing mix involved in creating and supporting Murfatlar tourist destination, and its four tools - product, its design and positioning on the market; price, by setting fees for visits / camping, tour guiding, price range for accommodation etc.; distribution channels that will favour the speed with which the tourist product can be purchased or made aware by potential tourists, and promotion, they will all increase the tourist product's reputation and create the image of the tourist destination.

The workflow and internal communication strategy needed to implement the marketing strategy includes a number of concrete implementation objectives and actions:

- To transform CNIPT²³ into a tourism department by expanding the team and attracting at least two external experts - a tourism expert and a marketing expert. This department will ensure the implementation of the tourism development strategy, including the marketing strategy;

²³ National Centre for Tourism Information and Promotion

- To create the working group "Tourist Murfatlar", consisting of the tourism department - CNIPT, local operators in tourism - wineries, the local public authority, House of Culture, experts, Constanta Museum of National History and Archaeology, Constanta Folk Art Museum, custodians, and so on. The role of the working group will be, on the one hand, to be involved in the implementation of the tourism development strategy - monitoring, adjustment and, on the other hand, identification of resources for its implementation. Moreover, the group will be actively involved in promoting tourism in Murfatlar.
- To raise local community's awareness towards the creation of the tourist destination "Tourist Murfatlar", along with the related tourist products, as well as towards the need for its involvement in the development of new tourism resources: Murfatlar Town Museum, the public Murfatlar Vine and Wine Museum, wine route CDO Murfatlar etc.

As to the promotion strategy and channels used to promote Murfatlar as a travel destination and its tourist products, it proposes online and mobile promotion and information - website, social media accounts, Google Maps online maps, mobile apps. Conventional promotion aims at publishing printed materials, promoting Murfatlar through tourist films, marking and panels systems, as well as through participating in profile events. As regards public relations and related events, it is recommended to conclude media partnerships and organize press / info trips, etc.

XIII.2. Action Plan for implementing the Marketing Strategy

The Action Plan aims to achieve the marketing objectives in the time horizon of year 2030. The plan proposes the following integrated implementation objectives and measures:

- *To define Murfatlar tourist brand and crystallize the three tourism products:* definition of Murfatlar tourist brand and tourist products, differentiation elements of the offer as compared to the competition and conclusion of media partnerships with local and national mass media. Developing promotional tools: developing a dedicated website, creating social media accounts, making visuals, designing and making brochures and posters, making presentation films, concept and production of street billboards and signs, making radio spots.
- *To inform the local community:* organizing regular meetings with representatives of the local community, informing through local public authority channels.
- *To promote Murfatlar tourism offer at local level:* signalling and panels with a gradual approach, dissemination of printed materials, organization and co-organization of local events, organization of info-trips, after the completion of at least one tourist product.
- *To promotion Murfatlar tourism offer at regional and national level:* use of the entire structure of new media and mobile channels, promotion of tourism products through online banners, drafting and transmission of press releases to travel sites and online publications, participation in fairs and salons; organization of local festivals and fairs, participation with Murfatlar wine promotion mobile stand at profile events, public relations campaigns.

XIII.3. Indicators for performance and results of the promotion plan implementation

Sustainable development of local communities is a challenge, and a priority at the same time. A challenge, because a community must be receptive to the internal and external changes that can affect it, thus adapting itself to these changes through local action and initiatives. A priority, because the way the locality develops affects the present and the chances for the future.

The current promotion plan aims at an equal and complementary promotion of Murfatlar, focusing in this way to raise awareness of potential tourists and public at large, to the beneficial interdependence between vine and wine tourism and local natural and cultural resources, while at the same time making more effective use of the two components by integrating them.

The intended main results of the implementation plan are as follows:

- An institutional context for the implementation of the tourism strategic development plan in Murfatlar - tourism department, “Tourist Murfatlar” working group;
- Identification of Murfatlar Town with an urban destination of “Wanderlust” type, impregnated by Dobrudja specific, multicultural, complex;
- Promotional and marketing actions for the town and the three tourist products, aiming at tourists and potential visitors as target groups;
- Market share created and extended with an average of 25% each year, starting with third year after the completion of the project “Development of tourist potential, protection and promotion of the common heritage”;
- Perception of investors changed on local public authority and the local community determination to support and get involved in tourism development;
- Implementation of the strategic plan for tourism development facilitated.

Developing a sustainable tourism in Murfatlar will affect three main plans:

1. *Economic*: by increasing the capitalization on local resources and local authorities and private operators involvement, by extending the local tax base;
2. *Ecological*: by ensuring the rational and sustainable use of all resources;
3. *Social*: by increasing the jobs number, maintaining traditional trades or skills in tourism and lowering the unemployment rate.

Social and cultural impact of tourism

Apart from the economic consequences, tourism has deep socio-human significance. It acts, by its nature, both on the tourists directly and on the local community, on the quality of the environment, on the use of free time and on the links between communities. Tourism is an element that favours communication, exchange of ideas, information, creates new jobs and contributes to the mitigation of unemployment.

Multiplying effect of tourism: impact on local community

The direct effect consists in the increased revenue at tourism sector level (wages, profits of accommodation units, restaurants, travel agencies, welcome trade, etc.) as a result of the monetary flows. Secondly, there is an indirect effect as well, which targets the impact

of the higher spending on tourism services upon the consumer goods industries supplying tourism operators. Thirdly, an effect on the entire local economy can also be pursued by reinvesting revenue for development. There is thus a multiplication of aggregate demand on a macroeconomic scale.