

BULGARIAN MINISTRY OF ECONOMY, ENERGY AND TOURISM

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ANNUAL TOURISM REPORTING TEMPLATE 2011

1. INTRODUCTION

Council Decision 86/664/EEC of 22 December 1986¹ establishing a consultation and cooperation procedure in the field of tourism foresees that "each Member State shall send the Commission, once a year, a report on the most significant measures it has taken and, as far as possible, on measures it is considering taking in the provision of services for tourists which could have consequences for travellers from the other Member States".

With the publication of the "Agenda for a sustainable and competitive European tourism", the Commission announced that "in order to strengthen the collaboration with and among Member States, their current annual reporting through the Tourism Advisory Committee (TAC) will be used to facilitate the exchange and the dissemination of information about how their policies and actions safeguard the sustainability of tourism". This Communication was welcomed by the Competitiveness Council conclusions (22nd-23rd November 2007) and by the Presidency Conclusions of the Brussels European Council of 14th December 2007.

The main aims for the reporting process are:

- to be able to monitor the level of implementation of the "Agenda for a sustainable and competitive European tourism" by Member States;
- to facilitate the exchange of experiences among member States with regard to how they tackle issues which are important for the competitiveness and sustainability of European tourism.

MS reports referring to year n shall be sent to the European Commission by the end of February of year $n+1$.

If the reports are sent in English, the deadline is shifted to the end of April.

¹ Official Journal L 384, 31/12/1986 P. 0052 – 0053.

2. ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

This section should provide an overview of the main organisational structure to illustrate how tourism is organised and managed, to identify linkages and to identify the engagement of other organisations/stakeholders.

The information required will only need to be prepared fully in year 1 as it will subsequently only be necessary to provide details of any changes.

2.1 Please identify the National Bodies responsible for tourism (Ministry and also any separate/related National Tourism Organisation), including key areas of responsibility, and their relationship to other national bodies. (maximum of 1.000 characters)

The Bulgarian Ministry of Economy, Energy and Tourism has the responsibility to implement the state policy in the field of tourism and to co-ordinate the activities of the ministries and other institutions towards its implementation. The major priorities of its activities are the inter-state relations in the field of tourism, the regulatory provision for tourist activities, development of the tourist product, assisting the activities of the regional, local and branch tourist organisations, national marketing and advertising, marketing research, analyses and forecasts for the tourist market.

The functions of the Bulgarian Ministry of Economy, Energy and Tourism with regard to tourism are:

1. to lay down the strategic objectives and priorities in the field of tourism policy and design programmes, short-term concepts for their implementation; planning and implementation of a common strategy for development of tourism.
2. to develop and participate in the discussion on drafts of regulations with regard to the tourism sector and take the necessary measures to ensure the legislative framework for development of the Bulgarian tourism;
3. to organize the negotiations and coordinate the implementation of bilateral or multilateral agreements concerning technical and economic cooperation in tourism; to promote collaboration between the respective stakeholders with regard to investments in tourism sector;
4. to represent the Republic of Bulgaria and coordinate the fulfilment of the country's obligations in regard to its membership in the international bodies and tourism organizations; to participate in development, assessment and follow the implementation of programs and projects financed by the European Union and international organizations;
5. to formulate, develop and control the implementation of the Annual Program for spending the state funds designed for tourism development, including the Annual Marketing Program;
6. to support the activity of attracting investments and implement projects for tourism development at national regional and local level; to cooperate in fulfilment of measures for construction and maintenance of the tourism infrastructure;
7. to organize and supervise the work of the economic counsellors in the representative offices in foreign countries; to promote the Bulgarian tourism and cultural heritage abroad and to coordinate the activity of the Bulgarian cultural institutes and associations;
8. to conduct, together with the competent departments, the state policy with regard to the training and improving the professional skills in tourism sector;
9. to cooperate with the national administrations, regional and local authorities regarding the implementation of their activities in the field of tourism; to organize joint activities related to development and promotion of tourism offer.
10. to implement methodical guidance of the activity of the regional and the local tourist

information centres;

11. to establish, organize and maintain the tourist information system, including the National Tourist Register;

12. to promote the quality of tourist product; to implement registration of tour operators, tourist agencies activity and classification of establishments providing tourist accommodation, food and entertainment in the cases stipulated by the Tourism Act;

13. to provide guidelines regarding the activity of the Expert Commission for Registration of Tour Operators and Tourist Agents (**ECRTTA**) and the Expert Commission for Classification of Tourist Sites (**ECCTS**) and organize and manage their activities;

14. to provide information services and support the participation of Bulgarian companies at fairs and tourism events;

2.2 Please, describe what organisations/agencies are used to deliver services at the national and regional level and the services that they deliver. (Maximum 800 characters)

At national level the Ministry of Economy, Energy and Tourism delivers the following services:

1. Elaboration of the legislative framework regarding tourism sector

- Development of a new draft of Tourism Act;
- Elaboration of the regulations under the Bulgarian Tourism Act;
- Harmonization and elaboration of the regulations with respect to the tourism legislation;
- Development of a national concept with regard to the division of the territory of Bulgaria into tourist regions and its implementation;

2. Planning and development of the Bulgarian tourism sector and tourism products with respect to achieving sustainable development

- To update the National Strategy for Sustainable Development of Tourism in Bulgaria 2009-2013;
- Designing programmes and plans for development of cultural, rural, eco, spa and wellness, congress and golf tourism.

3. Ensuring higher profile of Bulgaria as a tourism destination in the global tourist market through implementation of projects financed by the EU Structural Funds and other instruments and programs:

3.1. The European Regional Development Fund is the main financing instrument for the Bulgarian Operational Programme "Regional Development" in particular the operations aimed at strengthening of the sustainable tourism development, incl. operation 3.3. "National Tourist Marketing" The activities include:

- Implementation, monitoring, control и reporting under Operational Programme "Regional Development" regarding running projects;
- Development, selection, implementation, monitoring, control и reporting under Operational Programme "Regional Development" regarding new projects.

3.2. Other financial instruments:

- Development, implementation, monitoring, control and reporting under projects and programmes;

4. Promotion of the quality of tourism products and services and protection of consumers.

- Implementation of classification procedures (classification of establishments providing tourist accommodation, food and entertainment services).

- Up-dating and maintaining of the National Tourist Register through entering, processing, storage and ensuring data regarding classified establishments providing tourist accommodation, food and entertainment services, registered tour operators, travel agencies and tourist organizations.
- promotion and introduction of quality certification systems for tourism services, quality labels;

5. Strengthening of the international and regional cooperation and expanding the partnership with the neighboring countries in the Balkan region.

- Participation in the work of the UNWTO, EC (DG "Enterprise and Industry"), European Travel Commission, CEI, BSEC;
- Participation in joint working groups/committees set up for the implementation of the Danube Strategy and bilateral governmental agreements on cooperation in tourism;
- Development and introduction of trans-border and international tourism products

6. Promotion of the Bulgarian tourism product

- Participation in major international events, large-scale tourism fairs and exhibitions and thematic tourist fairs on main markets.

7. Development of electronic thematic routes

- Offering tourism diversity and promoting new forms of tourism such as - cultural tourism, ecotourism, enotourism, balneotourism, spa and wellness, congress, sport tourism, wine tours, etc. Diversifying of the supply of traditional Bulgarian tourism products with aim to consolidate the profile of Bulgaria as a year-round destination;
- Promotion and elaboration of the bulgariatravel.org website, e-Marketing of Destination Bulgaria (development of electronic dossiers and visualizations of tourist attractions and sites, tours etc.)

8. Presentation of the Bulgarian tourism products and services:

- Organization of visits by journalists, travel writers, travel agents, tour operators, etc. in order to increase the knowledge and awareness of the potential visitors of destination Bulgaria.
- Performance of promotional activities which include advertising by using different media - print (newspaper, magazine) and traditional radio and television.
- Implementation of communication campaign addressing the domestic market - participation in regional and specialized national tourism fairs and exhibitions, workshops; organisation of journalists' trips and media advertising.

9. Conducting market research and other relevant surveys and analyses of tourist markets, needs and trends - collection, processing, storage and providing of tourism related statistical data including through the tourist information system.

10. Performing tourist information activities - collection, processing and providing of information services through the National Tourist Information Center of the Ministry of Economy, Energy and Tourism to Bulgarian and foreign tourists.

At regional level local authorities in the municipalities provide the following administrative services in the field of tourism:

1. implementation of classification (incl. issuing certificates and duplicates, if is necessary) of establishments providing tourist accommodation, food and entertainment services under the provisions of Tourism Act;
2. certification of the registers of the operators that provide accommodation services

regarding the number of the tourists;

3. setting up and maintaining the municipality tourist register (incl. to make an entry of information regarding the classified tourist sites and persons, who provide or will provide accommodation, food and entertainment services; to make an entry of any changes of circumstances in the municipality tourist register;
4. providing information services to the tourists and consultations concerning the certification procedures under the Tourism Act;
5. setting up Tourist Information Centers and Bureaux;
6. to support the performance of promotional activities;
7. to support the environmental and cultural protection activities;
8. to observe the Tourism Act and the other linked with it regulations and cooperate with the authorities at national level regarding the implementation of the state policy in the field of tourism.

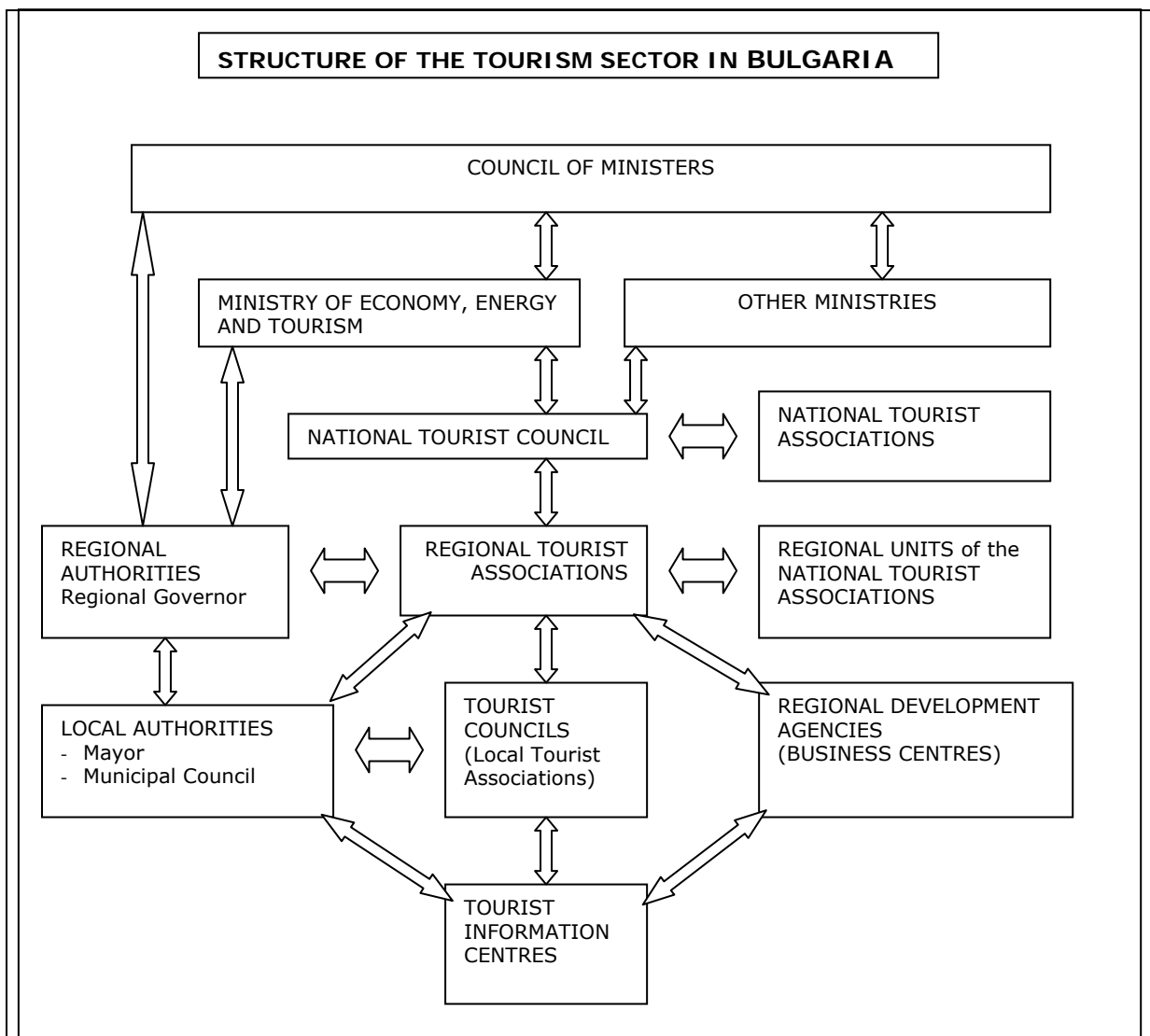
2.3 Please, describe which other bodies and organisations are involved at the national level and the process for involving them. (Maximum 800 characters)

The National Tourist Council (NTC) functions as a governmental consultative body under the authority of the Minister of Economy, Energy and Tourism. It aims to assist in the implementation of a national tourism policy.

The members of the National Tourist Council are representatives of the tourism-related ministries and institutions, national, regional, local and branch tourist associations, associations of air, land and water carriers, nationally represented associations of the consumers in the Republic of Bulgaria. The consultative tasks and activities of the NTC are as follows:

- to approve the national funding support for tourism marketing including the annual program for national tourist advertisement;
- coordinating the implementation of the national tourist advertisement;
- analysis of the implemented promotional activities and appraisalment of the efficacy of tourist seasons;
- making recommendations on designed concepts and programmes for tourism development, as well as proposing measures for improving the control in tourism sector with respect to raising the overall quality of the whole range of tourist services in Bulgaria;
- giving opinion on draft regulations with regard to provision of tourist activities;
- discussing the issues related to tourist infrastructure, foreign investments in tourism, fulfilment of charter programmes, consumer protection.

2.4 Please provide a diagram/organ gram of the organisational structure for tourism identifying the relationship between national, regional and local bodies. Provide also a short description of the core responsibilities and competencies of each of the organisations. Include also information regarding the direct and indirect links between other departments, stakeholder organisations and unions. Information about mechanisms of decision making process participation from outsider organisations, e.g. forums, advisory committees is also requested. (Maximum of 2.000 characters)



Institutional and local actors involved in tourism development in Bulgaria:

National level:

The Bulgarian Ministry of Economy, Energy and Tourism is headed by the Minister. He has three deputies; one of them is in charge of tourism sector in the country. There are also two Directors of Directorates (Tourism Policy; Marketing, Advertising and Information in Tourism).

According to the Tourism Act the Ministry manages the National Tourist Council. The Minister determines the number of the members of the National Tourist Council and issues regulations for its organisation and activity.

The Tourist Associations are established on territorial and professional principle and they can be:

1. **National** (e.g. National Association of Municipalities in the Republic of Bulgaria), **regional and local** (e.g. Bourgas Regional Tourist Association, Stara Planina Regional Tourist Association, Varna Tourist Chamber, Pirin Tourism Forum etc.);
2. **Branch and product associations** (e.g. Bulgarian Association of Tourist Agencies, Bulgarian Hotel and Restaurant Association, Bulgarian Tourist Chamber; Bulgarian Association for Alternative Tourism; Bulgarian Association for Rural and Ecological Tourism, Bulgarian Union of Balneology and SPA Tourism, etc.);

Tourist Associations, in compliance with their statutes:

- coordinate interests, actions and activities of authorities, organizations and companies related to tourism development;
- realize the connection with public authorities responsible for tourism and represent its members;
- cooperate with tourist information centres or bureaux;
- participate in the development of strategies and programmes for tourism development at national, regional and municipality level and ensure their implementation;
- carry out consulting and marketing activities;
- participate in ECRTTA and ECCTS;
- support the process of improving professional skills in the sector;
- support the improvement of the quality of tourism products and service and work for the protection of consumer interests;

Regional level:

Regional authorities (the regional governor and the regional administration) are in charge of implementing the state policy in tourism on the territory of the region by:

- organising, jointly with the tourist associations, development of a strategy and programmes for tourism development and coordinating their implementation. The strategy and the programmes are a part of the Regional plan for regional development and are worked out on the basis of the national priorities for tourism development, as well as in compliance with the regional and local tourist resources and needs;
- coordinating with the mayors and other regional governors in the region the implementation of the National Strategy for tourism development.

According to the Law on Regional Development the regional council for regional development assist the regional governor in carrying out of his duties.

Local level:

According to Tourism Act the municipal administrations have the status of the basic institutions for the development of tourism at a local level. Local authorities are the mayor and the municipal council. The mayor has almost the same duties as the Minister of Economy, Energy and Tourism at local level. He is in charge of establishing and managing the Local Tourist Council. It has a consultative role and functions in the municipalities that develop tourism. The advisory council discusses issues related to tourism at local level, including the collection and spending of the tourist fee, infrastructure and tourism product development, marketing, tourist information services, etc. Local Tourist Council includes, from one side representatives from the local administration, and from the other - local tourist associations, non-profit organizations, whose activities are related to the tourism development in the municipality, local business players and consumers associations.

The Local Tourist Council works out a programme and proposes it to the Municipal Council. The aim of the programme is to support tourism development in the municipality. It includes measures and activities for construction and maintaining the infrastructure in the municipality area, protection of the green areas and cultural heritage, setting up Tourist Information Centers, performance of promotion activities and advertisement of the local tourist sites in the country and abroad. The Municipal Council adopts this programme considering the priorities of the national strategy and in compliance with the local tourist resources and needs.

2.5 Please provide information about financial data, including spend/budget on tourism as a percentage of overall government spend/budget, the level of national funding support for tourism marketing, the amount of EU funding support made available for tourism and data concerning the support to SME-s and Destinations. (500 characters)

- In 2010 the spent national budget for tourism in Bulgaria amounts to 6 760 803 BGN or 3 456796.7 EUR
- In addition the amount of 3 391 040.5 EUR or 6 632 197 BGN is allocated for national funding support for the Bulgarian tourism marketing in 2010.
- The Bulgarian Ministry of Economy, Energy and Tourism does not have official financial information for the general amount of EU funding support made available for tourism. The reason is that all operative programs have measures, which contribute to the development of the tourism – directly or indirectly. For example, in Priority Axis 3: Sustainable Tourism Development of Regional Development Operative Program for the period 2007 – 2013, 218 093 623 EURO are allocated. In this and in the other operative programs indirectly are allocated amounts, for example for training, protection of the biodiversity, rehabilitation of infrastructure, etc., which indirectly benefits the tourism sector.
- The Bulgarian Ministry of Economy, Energy and Tourism is direct beneficiary of 32 714 044 EURO (in the field of tourism) / National public funding 4 907 107 EURO / from Operative Program Regional Development for the period 2007 – 2013.
- The Bulgarian Ministry of Economy, Energy and Tourism does not have official financial information concerning the support to SME-s and Destinations.

3. POLICIES AND STRATEGIES

3.1 Is there a current National Strategy for tourism? Yes No

If yes, please, provide information in bullet point format about the key aims, objectives and priorities of the strategy highlighting those that are designed to address sustainability issues in economic, environmental and social terms in particular those related in the six aims included in the Agenda. In preparing the tourism strategy, explain how consideration has been given to the 9 principles set out in the Agenda (para2.3 p5) and given in the appendix. (Maximum 1.000 characters)

The National Strategy for Sustainable Development of Tourism in Bulgaria 2009-2013 is of approved by the Council of Ministers at the 2nd of April 2009. In this connection the activities described in 4.1.1, 4.1.2, 4.1.3, 4.1.4, 4.1.5 and 4.1.6 are included in the additional Action plan (part of the Strategy).

OVERALL VISION:

STRATEGY FOR SUSTANABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

- Bulgaria will become well-known and preferred all year round destination, from both Bulgarian and international tourists, chosen for its conserved cultural traditions and unique combination of preserved natural resources. With its hospitality and positive international image, provided competitive and high quality tourist products, the country gives attractive opportunities for business, relaxation and environmentally harmonious life.
- Tourism in Bulgaria is priority and prosperous sector number one which main purpose is contribution concerning right application of the principles of sustainable development as a whole – protection of nature, prosperity of local authorities and

economic growth.

- Tourism sector will be based on the ground of successful long term partnerships at national, regional and local level between all involved parties - national, regional and local authorities, business, NGO-s, local communities and foreign partners.

MISSION

Bulgaria promotes a purposeful consecutive tourism policy based on the partnerships between governmental and local authorities, NGO-s, Bulgarian business and role of society in the making of new jobs for the industry, creates good conditions for investments, long term economic and social benefits and increases tourism revenues.

AIMS

The main purpose for tourism development in Bulgaria until 2013 is enhancing the competitiveness of the sector through effective use and preservation of current nature and anthropological resources in accordance with the principles of sustainable development.

STRATEGIC AIMS are:

1. Ensuring higher profile of Bulgaria as a tourism destination in the global tourist market.
1. Improving the infrastructure at national, regional and municipality level.
2. Application of international standards, best European practices, innovations concerning products, high technologies and human resources in tourism industry.
3. Storage, protection and quality improvement of current tourism resources.

3.2 Who was the initiator and who is responsible for its implementation? (Maximum 200 characters)

Bulgarian Ministry of Economy, Energy and Tourism

other ministries and public organizations;
Municipalities (local authorities);
Regional authorities;
NGOs;
Tourist enterprises;
Hotels;
Restaurants.

3.3 How is the strategy monitored and how often? (Maximum 500 characters)

The Strategy is monitored every two years.

3.4 What tourism specific legislation exists? (Maximum 500 characters)

1. Tourism Act (*Amendments under preparation in compliance with Services Directive 2006/123/EU*);
2. Subordinate legislation e.g.:
 - Ordinance on unified system of tourist information;
 - Ordinance on classification of the kinds of places of shelter, the places of accommodation, the food and entertainment establishments;
 - Ordinance on classification of tourist cottages and catering establishments;
 - Ordinance on beaches;
 - Ordinance on terms and conditions for conclusion of preliminary insurance, under art.

42, Para 1;

- Ordinance on requirements concerning tour-operator, tourist agents staff and the person, who manages the tour-operators or tourist agents activities; appropriate premises for implementation of tour-operator or tourist agent activity;

- Ordinance on ski tracks;

- Ordinances on different professions in tourism (such as mountain guides, barmen, chefs, etc.)

There are other laws which influence tourism (e.g. Value Added Tax Act, Local Taxes and Fees Act) but other line ministries have competence over them.

4. MEASURES AND INITIATIVES

This section provides Member States with an opportunity to outline specific initiatives and policies that are or are going to be adopted to manage and develop tourism activity in ways which respond to the key challenges of the Agenda and which fall within the six main aims of the Agenda itself.

1 Economic prosperity

a. To ensure the long term competitiveness, viability and prosperity of tourism enterprises and destinations.

b. To provide quality employment opportunities, offering fair pay and conditions for all employees and avoiding all forms of discrimination.

2 Social equity and cohesion

a. To enhance the quality of life of local communities through tourism, and engage them in its planning and management

b. To provide a safe, satisfying and fulfilling experience for visitors, available to all without discrimination by gender, race, religion, disability or in other ways.

3 Environmental and cultural protection

a. To minimise pollution and degradation of the global and local environment and the use of scarce resources by tourism activities.

b. To maintain and strengthen cultural richness and biodiversity and contribute to their appreciation and conservation.

4.1 Please set out, briefly, the steps which have been or will be taken, if any, to address the 7 key challenges for the delivery of sustainable and competitive tourism, covered in the TSG report and referred to in the 'Agenda'.

4.1.1 Reducing the seasonality of demand. (Maximum 200 characters)

According the draft of the National Strategy for Sustainable Development of Tourism in Bulgaria 2009-2013:

Priority 1. «Diversification of the national tourism product, increasing quality of provided services and protection of the right of consumers»:

Specific aim 1: „Diversification of the national tourism product» includes the following activities:

- Encourage diversification of the national tourism product, improvement of tourism environment in resorts and populated areas, increasing the share tourist establishments for all seasons use;

Organizing events at regional and national level as festivals, open air events, sport competitions, folklore activities, presentations at local and regional level of traditions, national cuisine, handy crafts etc.

4.1.2 Addressing the impact of tourism transport. (Maximum 200 characters)

In Transport part of the National Strategy for the environment (2009 – 2018) are predicted some of the following measures/ activities:

- Improving the city bus transport in relation with ecological aspects - gradually renewal of bus parks in accordance with European legislation concerning CO2 emissions from engines;
 - Implementing a policy of taxation, encouraging the delivery and operation of the hybrid motor vehicles;
 - Improvement of rail way structure and provided services;
 - Electricity of railway lines along the Tran European transport corridors on the territory of Bulgaria;
 - Remotorisation of old diesel engine in order to decrease fuel consumption and from there decreasing the sulphur dioxide emissions;
 - Enlargement of the electricity in internal city transport;
 - Maintaining the tax policy, which encourage the producing and spreading of biofuel for the transport with the propose to reach 5,75% share market of the biofuel in Bulgaria until 2010 and minimum 10% share in the energy balance of the country until 2020;
 - Ensuring the security system for noise decreasing and blocking in the internal transport;
 - Gradually renewal of bus parks and initiating of eco engines;
 - Establishment of "Green wave" systems in the big cities;
 - Creation of paths for cycling;
 - Closing the streets and initiating of pedestrian zones in over 50 000 population cities;
- Building and exploitation of "freight settlements" and continuing development of the network and systems of the intermodal transport.

4.1.3 Improving the quality of tourism jobs. (Maximum 200 characters)

According the draft of the National Strategy for Sustainable Development of Tourism in Bulgaria 2009-2013:

Priority 8. Stimulating role of tourism as a key factor development of the label market, implementing of current training the specialists in the field of tourism:

Specific aim 1: „Increasing the productivity and adaptation of the labour force in tourism and respectively competitiveness in compliance with the strategic aims of Lisbon Strategy“, includes the following activities:

- stressing alternative methods of training and education – distant, multimedia, interactive;
- encourage the employers in tourism industry to invest more in professional training providing an integrated training included at the place of work;
- better tourist responsibility and SME-s training in smaller populated areas;
- use of flexible forms of employment;
- enlargement al live training programs development of activities for good practices in tourism services and cluster activities development;
- Terms and conditions for green card for foreigners from third countries to be in conformity with the need.

Specific aim 2: „Better quality of education and training in tourism in compliance with necessity of the labour market forming knowledge based economy“:

- use of high communication technologies and instruments in tourism industry;
- Improvement the quality of education and professional qualification of the cadres in tourism industry at all levels – services, marketing, management, etc.
- monitoring of the system of training and qualification of the staff and mechanisms for sustainable partnerships between trainers and business;
- Synchronizing procedures for issuing work permissions for the staff of foreign tour-operators and tour agents on the territory of Bulgaria during the active season.

4.1.4 Maintaining and enhancing community prosperity and the quality of life, in the face of change. (maximum 200 characters)

National Strategy for Sustainable Development of Tourism in Bulgaria 2009-2013 takes into special consideration the development of the rural tourism and its role for:

- diversity in the field of agriculture according to tourist demands;
- stimulating or breathe new life into handicrafts in certain areas in Bulgaria, as a source of profitableness for locals on one hand and a guarantee for old Bulgarian traditions and culture on the other;
- encouraging or improving the activity of food industry through local SMS-s on the base of local raw materials for the need of tourist and native demands;
- stimulating improvement or creating a new kind of services in rural areas with double effect - give satisfaction to the tourists and local people on one hand and raising quality of local life on the other;
- improving identities of local communities;
- diminishing of territorial disproportions in infrastructure through development of tourist facilities in thinly populated or rural areas of the country;
- breaking off or delay the process of depopulation in rural areas of the country through raising incomes and quality of life for local communities;

4.1.5 Minimising resource use and the production of waste. (Maximum 200 characters)

Priority 6 Implementing of current standards for applying of energy saving technologies (energy efficiency measures) in the tourism industry and the standards for conservation and preservation of the environment usage solar energy technologies:

Specific aim:

„Sustainable management of tourism activities, conservation and improvement of tourism resources and their sustainable use“

- encouragement the implementation of effective innovation systems – energy saving technologies, usage of renewable energy sources etc.;
- encouragement the implementation of good practices in energy and eco management in places of shelter and places of accommodation;
- encouragement the investments for increasing the energy efficiency in places of shelter and places of accommodation;
- developing programs and measures for sustainable development, related to energy saving and eco-friendly technologies used in building and management of tourist sites;
- use and applying of eco-friendly technologies and systems;
- use of protected natural areas as a resource for sustainable development of tourism;
- minimizing the energy use (for example the air conditioning and heating systems);
- controlling the quality of water and air, effecting management of the system of sewers and sustainable management of waste;

Encourage the use of European quality standards, EMAS, EU Eco-Label for accommodation services, etc.

4.1.6 Conserving and giving value to natural and cultural heritage. (Maximum 200 characters)

One of the strategic aims of the National Strategy for Sustainable Development of

Tourism in Bulgaria 2009-2013 is conserving and giving value to tourist resources – natural and anthropological.

The Strategy stresses on the need of complex measures for development of the forms of sustainable tourism - friendly to the environment and biodiversity, creating conditions for effective management of protected areas in conditions of fast developing tourism, keeping of high recreational capacity of ecosystems and landscapes, monitoring the impact of the tourism activities on biological diversity.

Such measures are proposed at the action plan.

The Bulgarian Ministry of Economy, Energy and Tourism is in a process of development of two product programs – National Programs and Action Plans for the development of Ecotourism and Rural tourism in Bulgaria. These programs envisage measures for the protection and sustainable usage of the natural and cultural heritage.

The participation in EDEN Project/ 2008 and 2009 also supports the sustainable and responsible usage of the natural and cultural heritage.

At the end of 2009 the Council of Ministers in Bulgaria adopted **Strategic Plan for Development of the Bulgarian Cultural Tourism**, developed in cooperation with an Italian team. Its idea is that it's more effective to consider the historical, cultural and natural valuables as an element of the certain territory and local identity rather than as an isolated (single) monument; The Strategic Plan identifies **13 – territories/ regions called "LoCuS-es"** with their resources and infrastructure. There is an elaborated strategy for development of each of them including its product specialization, market positioning, action plan and pilot projects. In the framework of each LoCuS, the **cultural tourism** is perceived as a product of a system of resources – cultural and natural, the available infrastructure and tourist offer, not only as cultural sites. In this context, the action plan should include measures related to all sectors on the territory of the certain LoCuS. The Strategic plan is a working (open) document because beside, the described 400 sites, new sites (places of interest) can be included in the existing LoCuS-es. In this way, it can be set up new LoCuS-es and to be updated the planned actions. The implementation of the planned actions can be financed through the Structural Funds, namely European Regional Development Fund which is the main financing instrument for the Bulgarian Operational Programme "Regional Development" in particular the operations aimed at strengthening of the sustainable tourism development:

- **operation 3.1.** Enhancement of tourist attractions and related infrastructure and
- **operation 3.2.** Regional tourism product development and marketing of destinations.

4.1.7 Making holidays available to all. (Maximum 200 characters)

The requirements according Regulation of classification the kinds of places of shelter, the places of accommodation, the food and entertainment establishments are in accordance with Regulation №6/26.XI.2003 for friendly urban environment.

Under Tourism law, Art. 3a. Refusal of rendering tourist services in tourist sites of art. 3, para 3 as well as the rendering them with lower quality or at more unfavourable conditions based on the characteristics of art. 4, para 1 of the Law of protection against discrimination shall not be admitted. The persons rendering tourist services in tourist sites of art. 3, para 3 shall be obliged to announce their prices in equal extent for all tourists not admitting different treatment of the tourists or placing part of them in more unfavourable position with regard to other part of them based on the characteristics of art. 4, para 1 of the Law of protection against discrimination. The requirements of para 2 shall be applied also in the cases when the announced prices of the tourist services are pointed out in Internet, in advertisement and trade brochures and publications as well as in the radio and television programs.

4.2 As key challenges may change over time, please identify any other areas that are becoming a new challenge. (Maximum 600 characters)

The most important challenges for the Bulgarian tourism sector for the moment are as follows:

- Economic and financial crisis in the main source markets and targets markets for Bulgaria
- Overcoming the serious seasonal and territorial concentration of the Bulgarian tourism sector.
- Undertaking measures for the minimization of the effect of the tourism sector for the climate change / global warming and adaptation of the national tourist product to the climate changes;
- Environmental protection – encouragement of implementation of measures for energy efficiency, waste management and protection of the biodiversity and the landscape in the tourism sector;
- Carrying capacity – development of carrying capacity indicators for vulnerable nature areas and places of tourist interest;
- Overcoming the over-construction in the seaside and mountain resorts through application of legal regulations.

4.3 Please identify and describe a specific initiative, which is related to the 7 key challenges, that is innovative/ successful and which would be of interest to or of help to other Member States. (Maximum 2.000 characters)

- Initiatives related to challenge № 6 Conserving natural and cultural heritage:
 - Participation in EDEN Project/ 2009 – “Tourism in protected areas”.
 - Green House National Competition of the Bulgarian Association for Alternative Tourism and Bulgarian State Agency for Tourism for eco accommodation under ECEAT criteria’s for sustainable tourism.
 - 2009 – Year of Ecotourism and Rural Tourism in Bulgaria – includes a number of marketing activities for encouragement the development of these types of tourism in Bulgaria.

5. MECHANISMS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Three mechanisms for implementing the Agenda were identified in the “Agenda”: sustainable destinations, sustainable businesses and responsible tourists.

5.1 Sustainable destinations: What support is given to strengthen destination management at the regional/ destination level (supportive policy environment, knowledge networks, training programmes, establishment of measures/indicators for benchmarking, etc.)? (Maximum 600 characters)

Since 2010 the Ministry of Economy, Energy and Tourism started planning changes in the legislative framework, the preparation of a new Tourism Act, which will ensure the development of sustainable destinations. To achieve these aim, our actions will be focused on:

- The scope of the **municipal programs for tourism development**. It will become broader due to possibility money collected by the tourist tax to be allocated for construction and development of tourist attractions incl. cultural ones. So far the options were only for financing of marketing activities and partly municipal roads to the tourist sites.

- Introduction of **tourist regions and their management organizations**. These management organizations will have a special status under the new Tourism Act and will involve local governmental administrations and local and regional tourist associations. The management organizations of the tourist regions will take necessary measures and will plan activities for promotion of tourism at regional level (like regional marketing and branding, development of regional tourist products, providing services to the tourists in the destination, coordination at the regional level, etc. The idea is regions of Bulgaria to be associated with regional brands and regional tourist products. The management organizations will be funded mainly through the money collected by the tourist tax.
- **Operations** aimed at strengthening of the sustainable tourism development under the Bulgarian Operational Programme "Regional Development":
 - **operation 3.1.** Enhancement of tourist attractions and related infrastructure and
 - **operation 3.2.** Regional tourism product development and marketing of destinations;

These operations are financed through the European Regional Development Fund which is the main financing instrument for sustainable tourism development.

5.2 Sustainable businesses: What support is given to strengthen the sustainability and competitiveness of businesses (supportive policy environment, orientation of business support services to sustainability, training, financial incentives, etc.)? (Maximum 600 characters)

The tourist enterprises in Bulgaria can apply for funding under the Operational programme „Development of the Competitiveness of the Bulgarian Economy“ 2007-2013 /European Regional Development Fund/ for:

- Introducing energy-saving technologies in enterprises;
- Introduction of renewable energy resources satisfying the needs of the enterprise;

Bulgaria is one of the three countries in Europe where the first pilot test of the HES E-Toolkit will be carried out. According to a Framework Agreement 25 Bulgarian hotels in Bourgas region have to be trained to use the software application. All chosen accommodation places will be consulted how to benefit from different suppliers and programmes aimed at fostering the effective usage of the energy and renewable energy technologies.

5.3 Responsible tourists: What support is given to promote responsible choices by tourists (e.g. sustainability in education, national marketing and media campaigns, and promotion of certification schemes)? (Maximum 600 characters)

Regarding the promotion of certification schemes:

- Green Lodge® is a quality mark offering addresses of B&Bs and small hotels specially chosen for their authenticity and care to the nature. Green Lodge® is a certificate issued to guesthouses and small hotels that correspond to ECEAT label and Eurogites criteria for sustainable tourism. Each Green Lodge® is making its guests feel themselves at home and experience their personal discovery and adventure. Green Lodge® is a long-term project of Bulgarian Association for Alternative Tourism supported in 2008 by Bulgarian tourism administration.
- Authentic Bulgaria is an independent quality mark in Bulgarian tourism awarded to accommodations that offer original and unique tourism product. The initiative was

supported by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). This quality mark emphasises on given experience which is offered by the authentic tourism.

6. DATA AND INDICATORS

Euro stat will provide, as an annex, the key statistical data required to support the reporting process covering around 20 indicators². These are mainly related to the aim of 'economic prosperity'.

Please, identify indicators that are being used or developed which could add to the range of information being provided by Euro stat, particularly in relation to social and environmental issues (other indicators from the TSG report, visitors/ residents satisfaction, etc.). (maximum 500 characters)

The following are the indicators that are being used to the range of information provided by Euro stat :

1. Total visitor arrivals or bed nights per month;
2. Number of bed spaces (by accommodation type);
3. Annual average % bed space and bedroom occupancy of accommodation;
4. Average spending per head;
5. Number of bed spaces per 1000 local population;
6. Ratio of number of tourists to local population;
7. Average length of stay;
8. % of visitors arriving by means other than car or plane.

7. COMPLEMENTARY ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

If necessary use the following box to provide additional complementary information that has not already been covered.

The Ministry of Economy, Energy and tourism initiated last year (2010) the preparation of a new Tourism Act. In addition to the changes mentioned in 5.1 regarding the Bulgarian Tourism Act, the others are related to:

- Establishment of **Bulgarian Tourism Organization** as a state enterprise. It will implement marketing activities related to the promotion of the Bulgarian tourism. It's planned in the Board of Managers of the Bulgarian Tourism Organization to be included representatives from the professional organizations of hoteliers and tour operators.
- Introduction of regulations for **providing services of tourist guides**, mountain guides and ski instructors/teachers. It's envisaged the processes of regulation of these activities to be carried out by professional and branch associations.

² These indicators have been selected from the 50 TSG indicators on the basis of the possibility to calculate them at the European level.