

## **BULGARIAN MINISTRY OF ECONOMY, ENERGY AND TOURISM**

8 Slavyanska Str., BG-1000 Sofia  
Tel: +359 2 94071  
fax: +359 2 987 2190; 981 9970; 981 5039  
[www.mee.government.bg](http://www.mee.government.bg)

### **ANNUAL TOURISM REPORTING TEMPLATE 2012**

(Last update: 2013-04-30)

#### **1. INTRODUCTION**

Council Decision 86/664/EEC of 22 December 1986<sup>1</sup> 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.

---

<sup>1</sup> 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 regulations under the Bulgarian Tourism Act;
- Harmonization and elaboration of 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**

- 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 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 and reporting under Operational Programme "Regional Development" regarding new projects.

**3.2. Other financial instruments:**

- Development, implementation, monitoring, control and reporting of 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).

- Update and maintenance 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 EC Travel Advisory Committee, European Travel Commission, UNWTO, CEI, BSEC;
- Preparation of bilateral governmental agreements on cooperation in tourism;
- Development of cross-border and international tourism products.
- [Joint coordination with Romania \(the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Administration\) of Priority Area 3 \(Culture and Tourism\) of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region. Participation in working groups/committees in order to facilitate a stable and effective implementation of the Strategy.](#)

#### **6. Promotion of the Bulgarian tourism product**

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

#### **7. Development of electronic thematic routes**

- Offering tourism diversity and promoting new forms of tourism such as - cultural tourism, ecotourism, eno-gastronomy tourism, thermal tourism, 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](http://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)

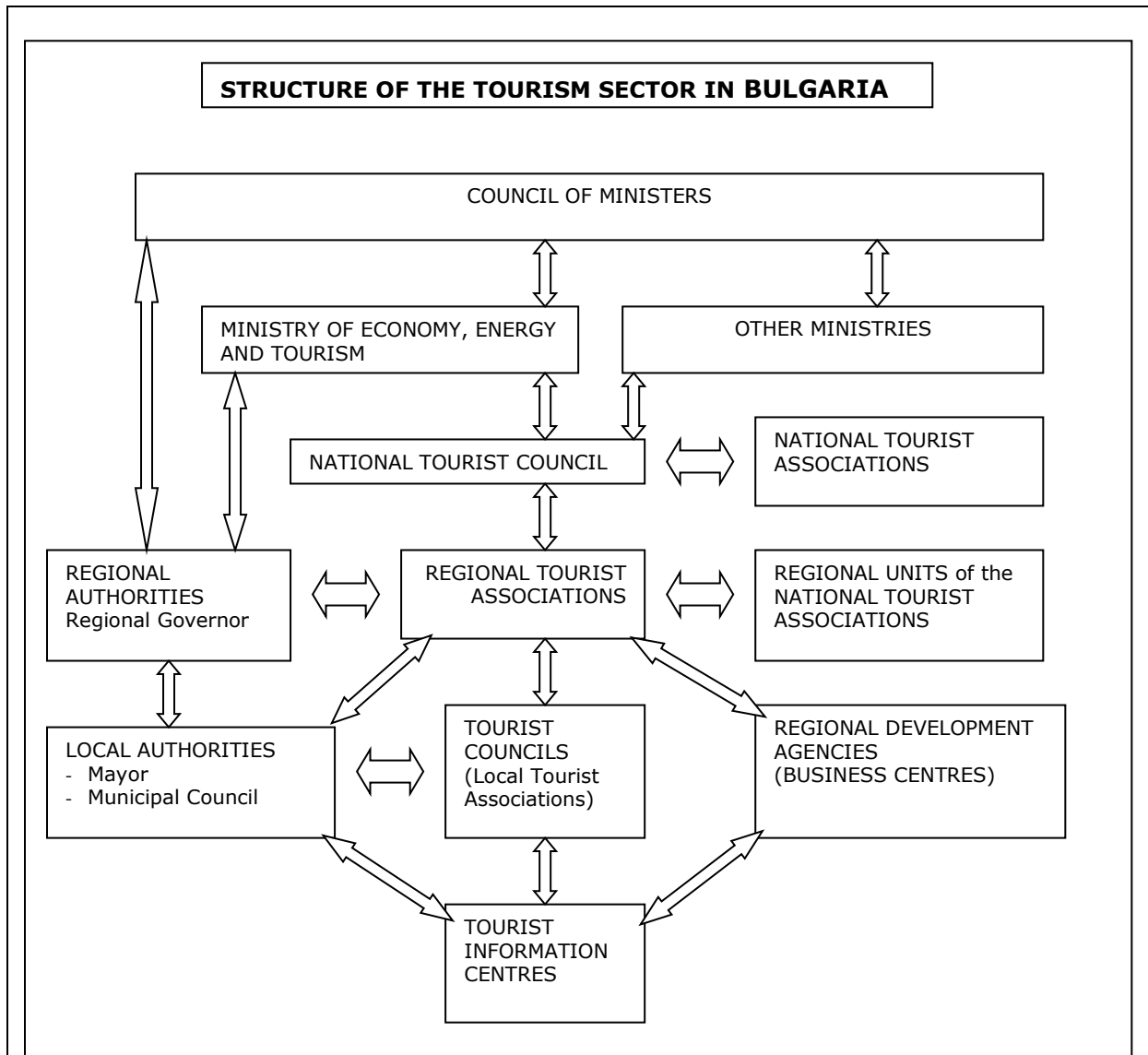
**The National Tourist Council (NTC)** functions as a governmental consultative body under the authority of the Minister of Economy, Energy and Tourism. It aims to assist in the implementation of a national tourism policy.

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, 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 the Tourism Act the municipal administrations are the institutions responsible for tourism development at 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 2012 the spent national budget for tourism in Bulgaria amounts to 11 130 961 BGN or 5 691 170 EUR.
  - The amount of 8 004 647 BGN (4 092 711 EUR) is allocated for national funding support for the Bulgarian tourism marketing in 2012.

Under Priority Axis 3: "Sustainable Tourism Development" of the Operational Program "**Regional Development**" 2007 – 2013, up to now 322 728 966 BGN have been contracted. Activities to be supported under this priority are structured in 3 operations:

**3.1. Enhancement of tourist attractions and related infrastructure-** Contracted Amount is 250 816 137 BGN

**3.2 Regional tourism product development and marketing of destinations-** Contracted Amount is 18 425 212 BGN

**3.3 National tourism marketing-** Contracted Amount is 53 487 617 BGN

- Under Operation 3 3 "National tourism marketing" from Operational Program "Regional Development" 2007-2013, the Bulgarian Ministry of Economy, Energy and Tourism is direct beneficiary of 53 487 617 BGN for the period 2007 – 2013. The operation objective is to enhance the effectiveness and impacts of national marketing efforts and related activities, market intelligence and transparency to facilitate diversification of tourist products and markets and sustainable tourism development.

- The Bulgarian Ministry of Economy, Energy and Tourism does not have official financial information for the general amount of the EU funding support made available for tourism. The reason is that all operational programs have measures which contribute to the development of the tourism – directly or indirectly. Under these operational programs indirectly are allocated amounts, for example for strengthening the administrative capacity and trainings, protection of the biodiversity, modernization of transport infrastructure, etc., which indirectly benefits the tourism sector.

- 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 approved by the Council of Ministers at the 2<sup>nd</sup> of April 2009.

In this respect 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 SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT**

- Bulgaria will become well-known and preferred all-year-round destination for both Bulgarian and international tourists, chosen for its rich history, tradition, culture and unique natural heritage. The national hospitality, positive international image, competitive and high quality tourist products are preconditions for the country to provide opportunities for business, holiday and environmentally harmonious life.
- Tourism in Bulgaria is a key priority sector. Its main purpose is to contribute to the implementation of the principles of sustainable development – protection of nature, prosperity of local communities and economic growth.
- Tourism sector will be based on successful long term partnerships at national, regional and local level between all involved parties – the national, regional and local authorities, businesses, NGOs, local communities and foreign partners.

**MISSION**

Bulgaria supports a purposeful consistent tourism policy based on partnerships between government and local authorities, NGOs, the Bulgarian business and civil society in promoting opportunities for investments, new skills and jobs and thus stimulating competitiveness of the tourism industry.

**AIMS**

The main objective in tourism development in Bulgaria until 2013 is enhancing the competitiveness of the sector through effective use and preservation of natural and anthropological resources in compliance 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. Implementation of international standards, best European practices, innovations concerning products, high technologies and human resources in tourism industry.
3. Preservation, 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*);

Subordinate legislation e.g.:

- Ordinance on organization of the Integrated Tourist Information System;
- Ordinance on classification of different accommodation establishments, food & beverage and entertainment establishments;
- Ordinance on classification of tourist huts and adjacent food & beverage establishments;
- Ordinance on classification of tourist cottages and catering establishments;
- Ordinance on certification of the beaches; Ordinance on certification of the ski tracks;
- Ordinance on tour operator's liability insurance
- Ordinance on requirements concerning tour-operators, tourist agents staff;
- Ordinances on different professions in tourism (such as mountain guides, bartenders, 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 to the National Strategy for Sustainable Development of Tourism in Bulgaria 2009-2013:

**Priority 1. «Diversification of the national tourism product, promotion of tourism-related service quality and to secure consumers protection »:**

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

- to encourage diversification of the national tourism product, improvement of tourism environment in resorts and populated areas, increasing the share of tourist establishments for all-seasons use;
- organizing events as festivals, open air happenings, folklore activities, presentations of traditions, national cuisine, handy crafts and arts, sporting and other recreational actions at national and regional level etc.
- [collaboration with regional stakeholders - NGOs, municipalities, business organisations in development of regional products and implementation of projects, related to alternative forms of tourism.](#)

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

**In the National Environmental Strategy (2009 – 2018)** are envisaged some of the following measures:

- Improvement of city bus transport by making it more environmentally friendly and more efficient incl. gradual modernization of public transport in accordance with the European legislation concerning CO2 emissions;
- Implementation of a taxation policy towards encouraging the delivery and operation of the hybrid motor vehicles;
- Improvement of railway structure and quality of the services provided;

- Electricity supply for railway transport along the TransEuropean transport network on the territory of Bulgaria;
- Decommission of old diesel engines towards decreasing fuel consumption and thus decreasing the SO2 emissions;
- Enlargement of the electricity supply network in internal city transport;
- Planning of a tax policy which encourages the production and use of bio-fuel for the transport sector with the aim to reach 5,75% market share of the bio-fuel in Bulgaria until 2010 and a minimum 10% share in the energy balance of the country until 2020;
- Ensuring the security systems for decreasing the noise;
- Gradual renewal of bus transport and promoting use of eco-engines;
- Establishment of "Green wave" systems in the big cities;
- Creation of cycling paths;
- Planning of pedestrian zones in the cities (over 50 000 inh.);
- Development of the inter-modal transport network and systems.

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

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

#### **Priority 8. "Strengthening of the role of tourism as a key factor for improving the professional skills and development of the labour market in the field of tourism":**

*Specific aim 1: „To increase the productivity and adaptation of the labour force in tourism and respectively enhancement of the competitiveness in compliance with the strategic aims of the Lisbon Strategy”, the measures include the following activities:*

- Development of "alternative" methods of training and education – distance learning, multimedia, interactive;
- Encouragement of the employers in tourism industry to invest more in the professional training of their teams incl. trainings in the companies' offices;
- Better tourist responsibility and SME-s training in smaller populated areas;
- Use of flexible forms of employment - part time, seasonal, etc.;
- Support lifelong training programs and exchange of good practices in providing tourism services; development of networks and clusters;
- Development of terms and conditions for "green card" for foreigners from third countries.

*Specific aim 2: „To improve quality of education and training in tourism in compliance with the labour market demands thus forming knowledge based economy”:*

- Use of ICT in the tourism industry;
- Improvement of the quality of education and staff qualification in tourism industry at all levels – services, marketing, management, etc.
- Monitoring of the staff qualification and training system and promotion of mechanisms for sustainable partnerships between trainers and businesses;
- Synchronizing procedures for issuing work permissions for the foreign tour-operators and tour agents' staff 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 role of tourism in economic diversification and especially in rural areas. The planned activities are as follows:

- Diversification of the rural economic activities according to the tourist demands and principles of sustainable tourism development;
- Stimulation of craftsmanship in certain areas in Bulgaria - on one hand as a source of profit for local people and on the other - to guarantee that the Bulgarian traditions and culture are preserved;
- Encouragement of SMEs to make use of the local agricultural resources so that guests and hosts can profit;
- Improvement or development of existing and new tourism services in rural areas that will influence positively the tourists' choice of destination and will enhance community prosperity;
- Enhancement of cultural identity of the local communities;
- Reduction of the marginalization of the national "peripheral" rural areas – better accessibility to the tourist attractions, higher annual tourist incomes stimulating the supporting industries;
- Limitation of the depopulation process 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 Implementation of energy efficiency measures and standards in the tourism industry:**

*Specific aim:* „Sustainable management of tourism activities, preservation and improvement of tourism resources and their sustainable use“ the measures are focused on:

- increasing the use of effective innovative systems – energy saving technologies, use of renewable energies etc.;
- exchanging of know-how with regard to the good practices in energy and eco management in the accommodation structures;
- supporting investments for increasing the energy efficiency in accommodation facilities;
- developing of programs and measures related to energy saving and eco-friendly technologies designed for building and management of tourist sites;
- minimizing the energy use (e.g. air conditioning and heating systems);
- controlling the quality of water and air; sustainable management of waste and sewers;
- Introducing of environmental management systems and standards, EMAS, EU Eco-Label for accommodation services, etc.
- making use of the protected natural areas potential as a resource of sustainable tourism development;

#### 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 preserving and giving value to tourist resources –

natural and anthropological. The Strategy stresses on the need of environmentally friendly measures for development of sustainable forms of tourism e.g.

- preserving the high recreational capacity of the ecosystems and landscapes;
- promoting effective management of protected areas;
- monitoring the impact of the tourism activities on biodiversity.

These types of measures are proposed in the Strategy Action plan.

At the end of 2009 the Council of Ministers of Bulgaria adopted **the Strategic Plan for Development of the Bulgarian Cultural Tourism**, developed in cooperation with an Italian team. According to its concept the historical, cultural and natural valuables are considered as a complex element of a certain territory and local identity rather than as an isolated (single) monument; The Strategic Plan identifies **13 – territories/ regions called “LoCuS-es”** with their relevant resources and infrastructure. There is an elaborated strategy for development of each of them including 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 includes measures related to all sectors on the territory of a certain LoCuS. The Strategic plan is a working (open) document because apart from the described 400 sites, new sites (places of interest) can be included in the existing LoCuS-es. In this way, new LoCuS-es can be defined and relevant actions can be updated. The implementation of the planned actions can be financed through the Structural Funds, namely European Regional Development Fund.

[The participation in EDEN initiative in 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011 and 2012 also supports the sustainable and responsible use of natural and cultural heritage.](#)

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

The requirements according regulation of classification of different kinds of accommodation structures, the food and entertainment establishments are in accordance with Regulation N°6/26.XI.2003 for friendly urban environment.

According to **Tourism Act**, refusal of providing tourism services in tourist sites, as well as their delivery 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 providing tourism services in tourist sites pursuant to art. 3, para 3 shall be obliged to announce their prices 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 published on the Internet, in advertisements, 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)

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

- Overcoming the seasonal and territorial concentration of the Bulgarian tourism sector;
- Undertaking measures for adaptation of the national tourist product to the climate change;

- Protecting of environment – support to implementation of energy efficiency measures, waste management and protection of the biodiversity and the landscape;
- Carrying capacity – development of carrying capacity indicators for vulnerable nature areas and places of tourist interest;
- Overcoming the excessive construction in the seaside and mountain resorts by means 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)

In the context of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region in 2012, Bulgaria was taking part in **“DanubeHike” project**, in partnership with Austria, Germany, Slovakia and Serbia. The project is focused on development of “green” tourist product. Its overall aim is to link existing hiking areas along the Danube and set the base for infrastructure and product development for hiking tourism.

The project implementation contributed to the exchange of experiences between Danube destinations in terms of needs and expectations of hikers concerning infrastructure, information, signalisation and safety and also set the base for a long lasting trans-national and inter-sectorial cooperation of different stakeholders along the Danube including by outlining common marketing activities.

Another initiative as an example of trans-national cooperation towards positioning the Danube region as a tourism destination, reducing the seasonality of demand and preserving and giving value to natural and cultural (living) heritage is the project **“EU CULTURAL ROUTES in the Middle and Lower Danube– “The Roman Emperors Route and The Danube Wine Route”**. The project activities are focused on developing integrated communication and marketing strategy and action plan for “The Route of Roman Emperors” and “Danube Wine Route”, creating networks of stakeholders along the route (national, regional and local administrations and tourism authorities, development agencies, private businesses etc.), creating impulse for new trans-national and national private-private/private-public partnerships and designing/delivering high-quality marketing tools offering international visibility of existing and newly developed products for the cultural tourists.

## 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)

The Ministry of Economy, Energy and Tourism is planning changes in the legislative framework through the preparation of a new Tourism Act aimed at ensuring the development of sustainable destinations. Actions are thus focused on the scope of the **municipal programs for tourism development**. On account of the possibility to reinvest collected tourist tax in construction and development of tourist attractions incl. cultural ones.

**Another part of interventions** under the Bulgarian Operational Programme “Regional Development” 2007-2013 aims to enhance the regional tourism potential to develop and market sustainable and diversified, territorially specific and higher value-added tourist

products and increase the sector's contribution to sustainable regional development, through the following actions:

**- Operation 3.1.** Enhancement of tourist attractions and related infrastructure

This operation is focused on developing tourist attractions through developing integrated and distinctive tourism products based on competitive and marketable attractions that contribute to diversification of the national tourist product and territorial spread of tourism.

**- Operation 3.2.** Regional tourism product development and marketing of destinations;

This operation is focused on destination's marketing and will encourage exclusively "soft" activities. The operation objective is to increase the number of visitors and visitor days, to improve seasonal and territorial distribution of tourism development in different regions and areas based on integrated destination management and marketing and to use different tools, techniques and systems ensuring effective tourism information and marketing. These operations are financed through the European Regional Development Fund which is the main financing instrument for sustainable tourism development in Bulgaria.

**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:

- Introduction 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 energy use 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 products. 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.



- The Ministry is a concrete beneficiary under a Grant scheme Support for effective national marketing of the tourist product and improvement of the information service and implemented a project "**Promoting the quality and sustainable development of tourism establishments**" financed by the Operational Programme "Regional Development"/Regional Development Fund. Its aim is to establish a **national voluntary certification system** for quality and sustainable development and its relevant criteria and label. Based on the results of studies were prepared two proposals - a national system of quality certification of tourist services and a national certification system for sustainable development of tourism enterprises. Each of the systems developed standards for seven groups of companies divided according to the specifics of the process, as well as national quality marks and sustainable development.
- Participation in **EDEN 2012 initiative with the project „Communication campaign to promote EDEN destinations in Bulgaria“**. The project builds on the results of previous editions of EDEN by enhancing the popularity of EDEN destinations as well as the principles of sustainable development in Bulgaria while expanding their vision on different European markets. Cooperation between individual destinations in the country, as well as between Balkan countries, will create conditions for the development of large-scale tourism products that are more visible and more competitive on the European tourism market.

## 6. DATA AND INDICATORS

Eurostat will provide, as an annex, the key statistical data required to support the reporting process covering around 20 indicators<sup>2</sup>. 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 Eurostat, particularly in relation to social and environmental issues (other indicators from the TSG report, visitors/ residents satisfaction, etc.). (maximum 500 characters)

### **The following indicators are being used to the range of information provided by Eurostat:**

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 new Tourism Act** initiated by the Ministry of Economy, Energy and Tourism is currently adopted. The legislative measures facilitate the coordination of the management in the tourism sector at national level by expanding the activities of the National Tourist Council. Thus, the main actors in tourism industry could actively

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

participate in the formulation and carrying out of the national tourism policy. Furthermore, involvement of the local communities is ensured by extending the scope of the municipal programs for tourism development. The new Tourism Act is developed in full compliance with the EU regulations on tourism services provided by tour operators and travel agents. The foreseen regulations for providing additional tourism services will guarantee a higher level of service quality and will improve consumer protection.