



## ECOTOURISM DESTINATION NORTHERN BLACK SEA COAST AND NORTH EASTERN STARA PLANINA MOUNTAIN

### Action Plan for Ecotourism Destination

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Between August and November 2003 Ecotourism Action Plans for twelve potential ecotourism destinations were developed throughout the country. Many stakeholders participated in the development of the Plans. This work included the review and assessment of local resources and opportunities, setting priorities, and assembling the plans. The proposals prepared during the process have been used in the development of the National Ecotourism Strategy and Action Plan for Bulgaria.

The development of Action Plans for Ecotourism Destinations is a continual process engaging participants from regions' private citizens, municipalities and donor programs. As such, the Plans should not be repositories of exhaustive lists of projects from the destinations. Nor should the projects be viewed as definitive. Although considerable regional cooperation and coordination was undertaken during their development, the Action Plans have not been officially approved as a planning document at either the municipal or district levels. Additional work in the regions is needed to ensure duly approved and balanced action plans that fit with the National Ecotourism Strategy and Action Plan, that comply with the current regional development legislative framework and which fully reflect the regions' vision for ecotourism. The projects and activities listed in the Action Plans are important, but they should not be seen as the only regional priority actions in the tourism sphere.

## ***List of Acronyms***

<b>ABBM</b>	Association of the Bulgarian Black-sea coast Municipalities
<b>BCEG</b>	Biodiversity Conservation and Economic Growth Project
<b>FLGR</b>	Foundation for Local Governmental Reform
<b>MoEW</b>	Ministry of Environment and Water
<b>NGO</b>	Non-Governmental Organization
<b>PHARE</b>	EU Assistance for Economic Restructuring Program
<b>RAMSAR</b>	Convention on Wetlands adopted in the Iranian city of Ramsar in 1971. Ramsar is the only global environmental treaty dealing with a particular ecosystem
<b>RIEW</b>	Regional Inspectorate of Environment and Water
<b>USAID</b>	United States Agency for International Development
<b>VTAA</b>	Varna Tour Agents Association

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## **Introduction**

The regional action plan was developed as part of the preparation of the National Ecotourism Development Strategy and of the National Action Plan under the Biodiversity Conservation and Economic Growth –2 Project supported by the US Agency for International Development and the Bulgarian government.

Plan development was coordinated by the Varna Chamber of Tourism and supported by the Local Government Reform Foundation and by a BCEG II Project consultant.

The plan development process included a preparation stage during which a working team was created and a detailed plan was developed. The main parties interested in involvement in the planning process were identified including representatives of central and local authority institutions and organizations, representatives of protected area administrations, NGOs and businesses.

During the subsequent planning period an information campaign took place which included individual and group workshops. The first of two meetings was organized in Targovishte by the Regional Development Agency and LGRF on Sept. 16<sup>th</sup>. A second meeting was organized by the Association of Bulgarian Black-Sea Coastline Municipalities and LGRF in Varna on Sept. 17<sup>th</sup>. The purpose of the meetings was distribution of information materials (summaries, posters and bulletins) and presentation of the planning process to the media. This led to the involvement of approx. 80 representatives of main stakeholder groups in the planning process and information gathering of the available ecotourism resources in the region.

Three workshops with 40 to 60 participants were held during the final stage. Workshop one was held to evaluate available resources and to assess the needs of ecotourism (Sept. 23<sup>rd</sup>). The purpose of the second workshop was to identify the main ecotourism development priorities in the region for a five year period (Oct. 10<sup>th</sup>). A team was set up to draft an initial regional plan. The final workshop was organized for public presentation of the plan subsequently submitted for editing by the working group (October 30).

During the planning process BSPB representatives from the Varna branch, the Bulgarian Biodiversity Foundation, Zlatni Piasatsi Nature Park, OTOSUR, the Eco-Mission Youth Organization, the Vodenitsite protected area, the Shumen Plateau Nature Park and the Varna and Shumen RIEWs took part in planning working groups and gave their contribution to the improvement of this document.

The plan was developed between August and October 2003 for a period of five years, covering the period from 2004 to and including 2008. It will be sent to all stakeholders with a charge to each to update their strategic plans and/or to develop new strategies with objectives and priorities of relevance to their activities. Of particular importance are regional authorities and municipal authorities who should include ecotourism into regional and municipal development strategies and develop independent ecotourism development strategies.

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## **1. Description of the Region**

### ***Resource Diversity***

Typical of this destination is diversity of landscapes, including representatives of various ecosystem types in different protected areas and nature sites. This region includes uniquely specific marine landscapes along the northern Black Sea coastline with vertical rocky coasts, wide sandy beaches and dunes, slanting rocky slopes, picturesque bays and diverse underwater terrains, sea-steppe landscape in Dobrudzha near the sea, and plateau shaped forest landscapes along the northern slopes of Eastern Stara Planina Mountain.

The region is crossed by Via Pontica, the second largest European migration route for raptors, water fowl and song bird species nesting in North Eastern Europe and flying south for the winter. Two of Bulgaria's 10 wetlands listed in the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance are located in the ecotourism destination, including the very important Waterfowl Habitats (Shabla lakes and Durankulak lake).

This region is the location of natural wetlands (Durankulak lake, Shabla lakes, Varna lake, Beloslav lake etc.) and artificial wetlands (water reservoirs Eleshnitsa, Tsonevo, Ticha etc.); forests and steppe ecosystems rich in biodiversity that include most of the 19 globally endangered bird species occurring in Bulgaria. Also in the region is one of Bulgaria's two sea-side inundated forests surrounding the mouth of Kamchia River and one of the country's most beautiful phenomena, the Pobiti Kamani protected area. There are several plateaus in the region, the most significant being the Shumen and Provadia-Roiak plateaus.

The destination includes protected areas such as 2 nature parks (Gold Sands Nature Park and Shumen Plateau Nature Park), 12 nature reserves (Kaliakra, Kamchia etc.), 21 protected locales (Pobiti kamani, Durankulak lake, Shabla lake, Yailata etc.) and 13 nature landmarks. There are 14 CORINE sites and 10 important ornithological areas in the region.

It possesses a rich history and significant cultural and historical heritage including unique monuments of culture. The region contains the remains of the first two capital cities of Bulgaria (Pliska and Preslav), several medieval castles (such as Kaliakra), one of the Bulgarian monuments of culture included in the UNESCO list of monuments of global cultural and historical significance, the Madara Horseman and many rock monasteries, the most important of which is Aladzha Monastery. The destination also boasts gold artifacts from the Varna Chalcolithic Necropolis, defined as the world's oldest processed gold, and many other wonders and treasures.

### ***Political Framework***

State and local authorities still fail to recognize ecotourism development as a priority for local and regional development and have no plans for its stimulation. Most of them include tourism in their development strategies and ecotourism has found a place in some documents.

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Most protected nature areas have no management plans. Only the Durankulak Lake Protected Area has an approved management plan while the Shabla Lake Protected Area, Kamchia reserve, Golden Sands Nature Park and Baltata Protected Locale are currently in the process of developing and approving such plans.



## **Stakeholders**

There are 4 administrative regional administrations in the ecotourism destination (Varna, Dobrich, Shumen and Targovishte), 24 municipal authorities, the Black Sea Basin Directorate based in Varna, 2 RIEWs (in Varna and Shumen), 2 RDFs (in Varna and Shumen), 6 DDSs (Balchik, Veliki Preslav, Palamara, Tervel, Cherni Lom/Popovo, Sherba) and 13 forestry enterprises (Varna, Varbitsa, General Toshevo, Dobrich, Novi Pazar, Omurtag, Provadia, Smiadovo, Staro Oryahovo, Suvorovo, Targovishte, Tsonevo, Shumen). There are also several Tourism Councils that as of yet have made no substantial contribution for tourism development in their respective municipalities.

There is one regional association for local authorities, the Association of the Bulgarian Black-sea coast Municipalities (ABBM). There are also 2 regional tourist associations: the Varna Chamber of Tourism and the Varna Tour Agents Association (VTAA). Several nature conservation organizations exist (the Bulgarian Society for Protection of Birds Varna, Friends of the Sea Club Varna, the Bulgarian Biodiversity Foundation Le Balkan-Bulgaria) as well as several ecology and education organizations such as the Public Center for Environment and Sustainable Development in Varna. The Youth Ecology Organization Eco-Mission and several local tourist societies such as the Rodni Balkani Tourist Society in Varna are based in the region. Local NGOs and organizations are also involved in cultural and historical heritage tourism and are functional in each municipality.

### *Donor Projects and Programs*

The main donor program is the Bulgarian-Swiss Biodiversity Conservation Program implemented by the Swiss government.

The Bulgarian-French project “Conservation and Evaluation of Eco-Systems in the Primorska Dobrudzha Region and Establishment of Adequate Forms of Permanent Ecotourism Management and Development”, financed entirely by the French government and implemented by the Le Balkan Bulgaria Foundation is also very significant for the ecotourism destination.

### *Private Business Profile*

Ecotourism related private businesses are still making their first steps. Specialized ecotourism services (mainly related to bird and botanical tourism) are offered in the region by companies such as Pandion D, Ecotour, Neophron (the commercial company of the BSPB), Marine Products. Companies such as the EuxinoTour Tourism and Promotion Bureau offer products related to cultural tourism.

## **General Infrastructure**

### *Road network*

The region has a well developed road network. For the most part, these are second- and third-rate roads of the republican road network. Varna is accessed by 2 highways, 1 running between Varna and Burgas, 17 km long, and another between Varna and Shumen, approximately 60 km long. They are part of a national highway project connecting Varna and Sofia (Hemus highway) and Varna

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and Burgas (Black Sea highway). The roads outside large urban areas are poorly maintained and in need of rehabilitation.

### *Railway*

The railway system is poorly developed. The larger railway stations are Varna, Kaspichan, Shumen, Targovishte and Sindel. Sindel is a marshalling yard for the routes Varna-Russe and Varna-Karnobat, while Kaspichan serves Varna-Sofia (G. Oryahovitsa) and Varna-Russe. Most of the trains traveling along these sections are obsolete and physically old. The private wagons and locomotives servicing the Varna-Plovdiv line are comparatively newer.

### *Airports and air transport*

Air transport in Varna area is represented by Varna airport. Its main function is to serve the flow of foreign tourists towards tourist complexes along the northern Black Sea coastline. Flights are mainly charter flights to and from many European cities. Another airport facility in the region is Targovishte airport, located 13 km away from the town of Targovishte. It is used as a cargo airport and terminal.

### *Ports and water transport*

Water transport in the destination is offered mainly by Varna port (movement of cargo goods and containers), Varna Harbor Station (service of passenger cruise ships) and the Balchik port with small docks and wharfs along the sea coast.

### *Water supply, sewage services and waste treatment*

The water supply and sewerage network is well developed in densely populated areas but in need of rehabilitation due to its age. No sewage services exist in rural or sparsely populated urban centers. The ageing water distribution system causes exceptional losses and inefficient water supply. The network consists mainly of heavily corroded pipes that cause additional deterioration of drinking water quality. There are areas in the destination with an available water transfer network but without sewage services. Most villages and sparsely populated urban centers have no organized waste collection which causes the formation of micro dumps and environmental pollution.

### *Communications infrastructure*

Telephone exchanges are owned by the Bulgarian Telecommunications Company and mainly analog. A partial digitizing of subscribers in Varna has been completed. The cellular service providers have reached 70-80% coverage of the area.

### *Medical services*

Rural and sparsely populated urban centers do not have their own medical services or widespread availability of general practitioners. Specialized medical aid is provided only in larger administrative centers.

### ***Tourism Infrastructure***

The northern Black Sea coastline is the country's center for sea recreation tourism with a well developed and renewed tourism infrastructure north of Varna. This infrastructure is evident mainly near resorts and urban areas.

Ecotourism infrastructure, however, is still early in its development. There are

several completed visitor centers or still in construction: Kaliakra information center – Balgarevo village, created by the Bulgarian-Swiss Biodiversity Conservation Program, Nature conservation, visitor, education and information center Durankulak constructed by Le Balkan Bulgaria foundation and a visitor center in Golden Sands Nature Park. There are many ecotrails and routes with relevant visitor infrastructure.

## **2. Situation analysis**

The ecotourism development analysis in the region revealed the following problem groups:

1. Existing locations with exceptionally valuable natural resources whose protection is not at the required level. These needs delineated are:
  - Study of existing nature sites and update of information about them
  - Updating the status of protected areas on the basis of the updated information
  - Training of personnel and procurement of financial resources for protected area control and guarding
  - Inclusion of local communities in protected area management
  - Acceleration and construction the National Ecological Network according to the Biodiversity Act.
2. Near complete lack of use of the existing natural resource potential of ecotourism. Specific needs in this respect are:
  - Adequate exposure of protected areas in line with ecotourism demand and supply in Bulgaria and abroad
  - The need to awaken tourism business entrepreneurial initiative for ecotourism in the region
  - Initiation of interest among regional and municipal authorities in the region to provide tourism business incentives
  - A need to create partnerships between all ecotourism stakeholders to market the region as an attractive ecotourism destination

## **3. A vision for Ecotourism Development in the Region**

The destination offers opportunities for year-round visits to unique nature areas with rich and exceptionally well preserved biodiversity in combination with significant cultural and historical heritage. The second largest European migration route for raptors, waterfowl and song bird species (Via Pontica) crossing the region and the existence of significant wetlands create excellent opportunities for ornithology tourism. Combined with similar sites in neighboring destinations, trans-boundary tourism of international significance, such opportunities must not be wasted.

The Northern Black Sea and Northeast Stara Planina Mountain ecotourism destination is a sustainable tourism destination for ecotourism based on the territorially defined 7 cluster systems of Primorska Dobrudzha, Frangensko marsh and Batova river, Varna-Devnia valley, Kamchia, Provadia-Royak plateau, Shumen plateau and Preslavka mountain.

Ecotourism, in combination with other specialized forms of tourism, ensures opportunities to extend the summer season to become a year-round tourist season, and is a significant source of livelihood for local communities, especially in smaller urban centers.

The region offers opportunities for the following forms of ecotourism: hiking, education along education routes and training in natural environment, ornithology, underwater tourism (archeological and historical, and flora and fauna), botanical tourism and many others. Ecotourism can easily be combined with historical tourism (rock monasteries, old capital cities, places of worship), rural tourism and mass tourism among others. The areas around larger urban centers offers short-term recreation for local residents due to a well developed visitor infrastructure.

Ecotourism is an integral part of local strategies for development and contributes to the well-being of the local population while preserving biodiversity and the cultural heritage in a network of protected nature areas and monuments of culture.

The Northern Black Sea and Northeast Stara Planina Mountain region is a territory of integration of ecotourism which means:

- environmental responsibility – controlled tourism valorization of natural heritage in the region ensuring funds for the preservation and increase of this heritage;
- economic viability – employment of the local population in tourism and increased standards of living, particularly in poorer municipalities (Shabla, Omurtag, Antonovo, Dalgopol etc.)
- social justice – fair and democratic participation of all stakeholders in the process of planning, implementation and benefit of tourism practices in the region;
- cultural adaptability – integration of tourism into the culture of the local population, while retaining local culture and traditions.

#### **4. Strategic Goals and Priority Activities**

A situation analysis and the formulated vision catalyzed the creation of the following strategic goals and priority activities for ecotourism in the region:

##### **4.1 Preservation of Natural, Cultural and Historical Heritage**

Goal 1: Extension of the network of protected areas and improvement of their management

Goal 2: Improvement of the efficiency of protection (achieving of efficient control and guarding) and restoration of natural and cultural resources

Goal 3: Creation of positive attitudes towards preservation of natural and cultural heritage among local communities

#### **4.2 *Achieving sustainable ecotourism business development***

- Goal 4: Provision of incentives for use of ecotourism resource potential at regional and local levels
- Goal 5: Development of ecotourism products and construction of infrastructure
- Goal 6: Creation of conditions, distribution and exchange of information, promotion and marketing of ecotourism
- Goal 7: Creation of conditions for financing for the research and development of ecotourism products

#### **4.3 *Regional and Local Development***

- Goal 8: Understanding of ecotourism as a possible local and regional development strategy
- Goal 9: Creation of possibilities for planning, coordination and management of ecotourism development in the destination

## **5. Implementation of the strategy and priority activities**

The formation of the Northern Black Sea and Northeast Stara Planina Mountain region as a sustainable ecotourism destination should be considered a permanent process including:

1. Creation of a Regional Ecotourism Council. The organization should be voluntary, acting as a public authority and including ecotourism stakeholders in the region.
2. Regional NGO initiatives supported by the regional and municipal authorities to update the status of protected areas in the region and to create new such areas
3. Training of ecotourism stakeholders in order to stimulate business interests in ecotourism product development and to create interest among regional and municipal administrations to support such business.
4. Creation of a program for ecotourism marketing in the region. The program should be promoted to allow usage as a platform to seek of financing from stakeholders and different donor programs.

<b>Activity 1: Creation of management plans for protected areas and buffer zones</b>
<b>Description:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Development and implementation of management plans for Taukliman protected locale (the bay of birds), Yailata protected locale, Pobiti Kamani protected locale, the Varna-Beloslav lake complex and the Yatata protected locale.</li><li>• Adoption of a management plan for Golden Sands Nature Park and for Shabla Lake Protected Locale</li></ul>
<b>Justification:</b> <p>Management plans will improve biodiversity conservation and will create ecotourism development conditions</p>
<b>Territorial scope:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Taukliman protected locale (the bay of birds), Yailata protected locale, Pobiti kamani protected locale, the Varna-Beloslav lake complex and the Yatata protected locale.</li><li>• Golden Sands Nature Park and Shabla Lake Protected Locale</li></ul>
<b>Strategic objective(s):</b> <p>5.1.1, 5.1.2</p>

<b>Expected results:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Biodiversity conservation</li><li>• Creation of opportunities for use of protected area resources for ecotourism development</li><li>• Creation of pre-conditions for use of protected area resources in local development</li></ul>
<b>Actions:</b> <p>Study, planning, discussion, adoption, implementation and evaluation of management plans</p>
<b>Indicators:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Condition of biodiversity</li><li>• Developed ecotourism products</li><li>• Existing local initiatives for ecotourism</li></ul>
<b>Leading organization/Partner:</b> <p>Regional administrations, municipalities, RIEW, NGOs, protected areas administrations</p>
<b>Duration:</b> <p>2 years for each plan</p>
<b>Budget:</b> <p>250,000 Leva</p>
<b>Sources of funding:</b> <p>MOEW, international donors</p>

<b>Activity 2: Systematic inventorying and update of available information about natural and culture resources for biodiversity conservation and ecotourism development</b>
<b>Description:</b> <p>Study and preparation of a database. Promotion of the composition of flora and fauna in protected areas</p>
<b>Justification:</b> <p>Study of natural and cultural resources and of tourism infrastructure for management of biodiversity conservation and for ecotourism development</p>
<b>Territorial scope:</b> <p>The entire region</p>
<b>Strategic objective(s):</b> <p>5.2.1, 5.3.1, 5.3.5, 5.4.1, 5.3.7</p>



<b>Expected results:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Created databases</li><li>• Raised awareness</li><li>• Improved planning and management</li></ul>
<b>Actions:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Identification of the available regional studies</li><li>• Implementation of new studies</li><li>• Gathering of data</li><li>• Planning the creation of databases for the region</li><li>• Synchronization with databases in Bulgaria (the national geographic information system)</li></ul>
<b>Indicators:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Existing database</li><li>• Number and quality of indicators in databases</li><li>• Frequency and volume of use</li><li>• Degree of satisfaction of the users</li></ul>
<b>Leading organization/Partner:</b> <p>Regional administrations, municipalities, RIEW, NGOs, municipalities, State Forestry Boards, Protected areas administrations</p>
<b>Duration:</b> <p>2 years</p>
<b>Budget:</b> <p>100,000 Leva</p>
<b>Sources of funding:</b> <p>An enterprise managing environmental protection activities, municipal and state budgets, national programs, international donors</p>

### **Activity 3: Ecotourism infrastructure for ornithology in protected areas**

#### **Description:**

Construction of facilities and approaches for access to watch of birds in the wild in protected areas, allowing for visits of large groups of tourists.

#### **Justification:**

Increased interest in protected areas and an increase in the number of visitors will increase the probability of uncontrolled access to regions where birds and other wildlife can be disturbed during nesting or feeding. This is a pre-requisite for their systematic relocation away from their habitats and, subsequently, extinction as a species in the protected area. This will affect both the biodiversity in the area and tourism due to its lowered value as a location for specialized visits. The creation of an overall system of information boards, trails, marking and specialized facilities

(such as towers, hides and watch towers) is an opportunity for visual access and more information for tourists in the protected area, while at the same time solving a significant number of protection issues.

**Territorial scope:**

Protected areas Durankulak lake, Shabla lake and Yatata, and the reserves Baltata and Kamchia

<b>Strategic objective(s):</b> 5.2, 5.3.6, 5.2.1, 5.2.6
<b>Expected results:</b> Existing adequate conditions for access by large numbers of tourists to protected areas
<b>Actions:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Designing a network of ecotourism facilities for each individual protected area keeping with their management plans and the requirements of the MOEW, MAF, the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works, and the respective municipality</li><li>• Preparation of information presentation standards common for all protected areas</li><li>• Construction of the designed ecotourism infrastructure in all sites</li><li>• Creation of an efficient system for compliance with the rules of the protected areas</li><li>• Constant monitoring on the effect of existing facilities and determination of a maximum number of visitors</li></ul>
<b>Indicators:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Network of protected areas with adequate tourist visitor infrastructure</li><li>• New tourist service packages</li><li>• Increased number of visits</li><li>• Increased income generation</li></ul>
<b>Leading organization/Partner:</b> Bulgarian Society for Protection of Birds, municipalities, the Ministry of Environment and Water
<b>Duration:</b> 2 – 4 years
<b>Budget:</b> 100,000 Leva per protected area
<b>Sources of funding:</b> The Bulgarian government, MOEW, PHARE, other donors

<b>Activity 4: Preservation, restoration and maintenance of biodiversity</b>
<b>Description:</b> Preservation of biological and landscape diversity by means of: 1. extension of the protected areas of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Shumen Plateau nature park and inclusion of local rock cells and monasteries</li></ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kazashko protected locale</li> <li>• Creation of a real biosphere reserve along the entire lower stretch of Kamchia river meeting UNESCO criteria</li> <li>• Designation of Shabla Tuzla as protected area</li> <li>• Designation of the lower stretch of Kamchia river as a nature park including all territories where inundated forests had naturally spread in the past</li> <li>• Designation of the middle stretch of Goliama river as a protected area</li> <li>• Creation of buffer zones around Patleina and Dervisha nature reserves</li> </ul> <p>2. Improved efficiency of control on protection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limiting of poaching and construction in Durankulak Lake protected locale</li> <li>• Restriction of poaching and illegal fishing with nets in the Shabla Lake complex</li> <li>• Prevention of illegal construction in Taukliman protected locale</li> <li>• Restriction of poaching in Baltata locale</li> <li>• Restriction of industrial pollution of lake water and soil around lakes, and of illegal dumping in the Varna-Beloslav lake complex</li> <li>• Restriction of horse racing during the spring causing destruction of habitats and disturbance of birds in the Yatata protected locale</li> </ul>
<p><b>Justification:</b> A need exists for the preservation, restoration and control of biological diversity, extension of the boundaries of existing and designation of new protected areas</p>
<p><b>Territorial scope:</b> Various locales throughout the region</p>
<p><b>Strategic objective(s):</b> 5.1.2, 5.1.5</p>
<p><b>Expected results:</b> Preservation of biodiversity and of natural cultural and historical heritage</p>
<p><b>Actions:</b> Study, planning, conservation, restoration and preservation of biodiversity and of cultural and historical heritage</p>
<p><b>Indicators:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Condition of biodiversity and of natural, cultural and historical heritage</li> <li>• Number of implemented initiatives</li> <li>• Number of designated protected areas or updated regimes of existing ones.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Leading organization/Partner:</b> MOEW, municipalities, NGOs, RIEW, protected area, cultural and historical site management directorates</p>
<p><b>Duration:</b> 3 years</p>
<p><b>Budget:</b></p>

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100,000 Leva per protected area

**Sources of funding:**

State budget, international donors, local resources

<b>Activity 5: Presentation of methodological guidance for ecotourism development (training, consulting, information etc.)</b>
<p><b>Description:</b> The main objective is to develop and improve local tourism products and packages through increased ecotourism awareness</p>
<p><b>Justification:</b> There is a need to increase the competence of those employed in tourism and of local community representatives leading to improved planning, management, marketing and services</p>
<p><b>Territorial scope:</b> The entire region</p>
<p><b>Strategic objective(s):</b> 5.2.2, 5.2.1, 5.2.3, 5.2.4</p>
<p><b>Expected results:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More efficient business plans</li> <li>• Increased investment in tourism</li> <li>• Higher tourism business profitability</li> </ul>
<p><b>Actions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training, provision of information and consultation for the beginning and development of ecotourism related businesses</li> <li>• Training, provision of information and consultation for possibilities and the role of municipalities in ecotourism development</li> <li>• Introduction of specialized ecotourism programs for secondary and higher education</li> <li>• Implementation of a campaign for change in the attitude of local communities towards the preservation of natural and cultural resources and recognition of their local and ecotourism development possibilities</li> </ul>
<p><b>Indicators:</b> Number of training and participants, efficiency of training</p>
<p><b>Leading organization/Partner:</b> Training organizations, educational institutions, tourism associations</p>
<p><b>Duration:</b> 5 years</p>
<p><b>Budget:</b> 100,000 Leva</p>
<p><b>Sources of funding:</b> Donors, training fees</p>

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<p><b>Activity 6: Creation of ecotourism routes</b></p>
<p><b>Description:</b> Formation of new ecotourism routes in</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kavarna (Kavarna – the Ethnographic complex – Kaliakra cape – Bolata; Kavarna-sea museum – architecture reserve Yailata; Kavarna-sea museum – architecture reserve Yailata – Taukliman)</li> <li>• Pobiti kamani protected locale – route Northern groups, route Southern groups, route south of Beloslav lake</li> <li>• Kamchia nature complex</li> <li>• Sherba DDS</li> <li>• Suhata river locale</li> <li>• Balchik municipality – two hiking trails for people with disabilities</li> <li>• Asparuhovo</li> <li>• Shumen plateau nature park and nearby Osmar (Rock monasteries; Osmar village – rock monasteries – rural tourism (houses from the Renaissance); Shumen plateau nature park – eco-trail and the Bukaka reserve; nature park Sh. Plateau – rock monasteries – Biserna cave; Patleina reserve – Dervisha reserve – Veliki Preslav; Kabiyuk mound; Ticha water reservoir)</li> <li>• Patleina and Dervisha nature reserves</li> <li>• The locales Manastircheto, Patleina and Dervisha in the National History and Archeology Reserve with Museum Veliki Preslav-Parka locale – Targovishte</li> <li>• Municipalities Omurtag, Antonovo and Popovo</li> </ul>
<p><b>Justification:</b> A need for creation of new ecotourism routes and construction of the related visitor infrastructure in order to improve visitation interest</p>
<p><b>Territorial scope:</b> The entire region</p>
<p><b>Strategic objective(s):</b> 5.2 &amp; 5.1</p>
<p><b>Expected results:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New routes and products</li> <li>• Number of visits</li> <li>• Improved awareness</li> </ul>
<p><b>Actions:</b> Studying, planning, development and marking, and use of routes</p>
<p><b>Leading organization/Partner:</b> Municipalities, NGOs, protected area management directorates</p>
<p><b>Duration:</b></p>



1 year per trail
<b>Budget:</b> 50,000 Leva per trail
<b>Sources of funding:</b> National and international programs, mobilization of local resources

<b>Activity 7: Building of visitor centers</b>
<b>Description:</b> Creation of visitor (information) centers in the Palace in Balchik, Golden Sands Nature Park, municipality Balchik, Yatata protected locale, Pobiti kamani protected locale, Kamchia nature complex, Asparuhovo, Sladka Voda protected locale, Suha Reka locale, national historical and archeological reserves Madara and Veliki Preslav
<b>Justification:</b> There is a need to create possibilities for information services for the visitors
<b>Territorial scope:</b> The Palace in Balchik, Golden Sands Nature Park, municipality Balchik, Yatata protected locale, Pobiti kamani protected locale, Kamchia nature complex, Asparuhovo, Sladka voda protected locale, Suha reka locale, national historical and archeological reserves Madara and Veliki Preslav
<b>Strategic objective(s):</b> 5.2, 5.3.6
<b>Expected results:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Created visitor centers</li> <li>• Increased visits and visitor awareness</li> <li>• Increased income generation</li> </ul>
<b>Actions:</b> Study, planning, construction and functioning of a visitor center, promotion of visitor center's activities
<b>Indicators:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of established and effectively working centers</li> <li>• Quantity and quality of proposed services</li> <li>• Number of visitors in the centers</li> </ul>
<b>Leading organization/Partner:</b> Protected area management directorates, municipalities, NGOs, cultural institutions, tourism associations

*Ecotourism destination Northern Black Sea Coast and  
North Eastern Stara Planina Mountain*

<b>Duration:</b> 2 years
<b>Budget:</b> 200,000 Leva
<b>Sources of funding:</b> National and international programs, mobilization of local resources