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**1. BULGARIA**

**1.1. Tourism in Bulgarian Black Sea Region**

In recent years, the development of tourism on an international scale shows a significant increase in tourist services and a steady increase in the number of foreign tourists making tourist visits to Bulgaria for various purposes. There is also a trend in the growth of revenues from international tourism in the country.

The current Strategy for Business and Entrepreneurship for New Opportunities in Tourism presents studies on Bulgarian tourism internationally for the last 3 years, which show that the country has a positive direction for the development of the tourism sector.

According to the data of the Ministry of Tourism for International Tourism in Bulgaria for 2019, it is clear that there is an increase of 0.4% compared to 2018. According to the purposes of the visit, the following trends are observed:

* rest and vacation - 62.9%
* visiting - 6.7%
* business tourism - 18.9%
* other tourist destinations - 11.4%

The largest number of foreigners who made tourist visits in 2019/2018 are from Romania, Greece, Germany, Turkey, Macedonia and others. For 2019, the countries of the European Union remain the main ones for international tourism in Bulgaria - Romania, Greece, Germany, Great Britain, Poland and others.

Revenues for Bulgaria from international tourism for 2019 increased by 0.2% compared to 2018.

The trips of Bulgarians abroad in 2019 increased by 4.6% compared to 2018. The main tourist destinations for Bulgarians are Turkey, Greece, Romania, Serbia, Germany.

The tourist trips of foreigners in Bulgaria for 2018 also increased by 4.4% compared to 2017. According to the purposes of the visit, most of them are again those for the purpose of:

* rest and vacation - 62.6%;
* visiting - 7.2%;
* business - 18.6%;
* other goals - 11.5%.

According to the latest data from the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), the total contribution of tourism to Bulgaria's GDP by 2019 is BGN 12,844.5 million ($ 7,321 million), which shows that the share of tourist travel in GDP is 10.8% of the total economy. Tourism forms a GDP growth of 3.5% last year and provides jobs equal to 10.6% of Bulgaria's total employment. The costs of foreign visitors exceed BGN 8 million.This shows that the impact of international tourism is equal to 10.7% of the country's total exports ($ 4,657 million). The costs for tourist visits for recreation and leisure are 70%, and for business - 30% of the total for the country. The costs for domestic tourism are only 20%, and those for international travel - 80%.

The largest number of foreigners who made a tourist visit to Bulgaria for the period 2018/2017 are again from Romania, Greece, Germany, Turkey and Macedonia. For the same period the countries of the European Union remain the main market for international tourism in Bulgaria - Romania, Greece, Germany, Poland, Great Britain and others. Revenues are 6.6% more than in 2017, which is 9.3% more than in 2016.

The trips of Bulgarians abroad in 2018 increased by 7.6% compared to 2017. The main tourist destinations for Bulgarians are again Turkey, Greece, Romania, Serbia, Germany.

According to research, revenues from international tourism in 2018 exceed 3.7 billion euros. An increase of 6.5% compared to 2017 was achieved.

The total number of foreign tourist visits in Bulgaria in 2017 is 7.6% more than in 2016. The main goals for tourist travel are:

* rest and vacation - 61.95%;
* visiting - 7.44%;
* business - 17.58%;
* other goals - 13.03%.

Most tourist visits of foreigners for the period 2017/2016 are from the countries of Greece, Romania, Germany, Turkey, Russia. The countries of the European Union continue to be the main market for international tourism in Bulgaria - Greece, Romania, Germany, Poland, Great Britain (growth of 8.2%). In the realized revenues for 2017 there is an increase of 9.1% compared to the period January - November 2016. The trips of Bulgarians abroad is 15.5% more than in 2016. The main tourist destinations for them remain Greece, Turkey, Romania , Serbia, Germany.

*Source: National Statistical Institute*

Figure 1.1. Number of tourist trips of Bulgarians abroad by years

On a national scale, the contribution of tourism to the Bulgarian economy in 2017 amounts to BGN 3.1 billion, which is 3.1% of the country's GDP. The total contribution of tourism is 11.5% of GDP (BGN 11.4 billion). As of the same year, the sector maintains 90,000 jobs, which is 2.9% of the country's employment. The total contribution of the sector is expressed in 10.7% of employment or 335.5 thousand jobs. Investments in the tourism sector are worth BGN 1.45 billion or 7.4% of total investments in 2017. The forecast for ascending development of all commented aspects in the next 10 years is definite.

In recent years, Bulgarian tourism has contributed to the development of the state economy in terms of tourist infrastructure and material and technical base. The development of tourism along the Black Sea coast has made great progress. Of the surveys conducted for the region, as of 2017, 68.5% of the bed capacity, 66.5% of the overnight stays and 67.8% of the revenues were realized by the Black Sea tourist region. Black Sea tourist areas have an average tourist stay and the highest level of capacity utilization.

In the statistical regions of Bulgaria in the last three years the largest number of accommodation places has been reported in the Sofia tourist region and along the Black Sea coast - in the Northeastern and Southeastern region, where the Municipality of Avren also falls. Tourism in these areas is more efficient in terms of the presence of mainly high-category accommodation, which have a major contribution to the country's overall employment.

Table 1.1. Activity of accommodation establishments by statistical zones, statistical regions and by districts

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **2017** | **2018** | **2019** |
| **Accommodation****(number)** | **Accommodation****(number)** | **Accommodation****(number)** |
| **North-West** | 192 | 185 | 185 |
| **North-Central** | 253 | 280 | 295 |
| **North-East** | 709 | 729 | 735 |
| **South-East** | 953 | 994 | 1 140 |
| **South-West** | 606 | 595 | 593 |
| **South-Central** | 633 | 675 | 716 |

*Source: National Statistical Institute*

The number of categorized accommodation places in Avren Municipality is 46 with 3,024 beds, which means that the share of the region is 6.5% of the total number of accommodation facilities in the Northeast region. The accommodation places are with category 1, 2 and 3 stars, and most of them are located in Kamchia Resort.

For the same period (2017-2019) in the Southeastern Black Sea region were reported the most realized overnight stays in accommodation establishments and the highest revenues from overnight stays. In second place in terms of reported revenues from overnight stays is the Northeast region, where there is a growing trend to increase accommodation and revenue.

The development of tourism in the leading tourist regions is highly dependent on foreign tourists. In 2017, the revenues from overnight stays of Bulgarians on the Black Sea coast are below 15% of the total revenues from overnight stays. Revenues from overnight stays of foreigners are highest in the Northeast region and in 2018 reached 84.9%, and in the Southeast region were 84.1% of total revenues. Approximately the same is the relative share of income from overnight stays of foreigners in the Southwest region - 80.9%.

Competitive advantage of the country in the creation of tourist products is the spatial distribution of tourist resources with a high degree of overlap and territorial proximity of natural and cultural sites. This geographical specificity provides an opportunity to combine different recreational activities in time and space, an opportunity to overcome seasonality and increase the usability of tourist infrastructure. Based on the tourist resources located on the territory of Bulgaria, the country is divided into several tourist regions, which support the formation of regional tourist products and the implementation of regional marketing and advertising.

Table 1.2. Activity of accommodation establishments by statistical zones, statistical regions and by districts

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **2017** | **2018** | **2019** |
| Nights in accommodation – total | Income from overnight stays in accommodation establishments – total  | Nights in accommodation – total | Income from overnight stays in accommodation establishments - total | Nights in accommodation – total | Income from overnight stays in accommodation establishments - total |
| **North-West** | 560 310 | 19 830 063 | 545 035 | 19 228 722 | 566 530 | 21 482 928 |
| **North-Central** | 759 511 | 29 516 190 | 847 302 | 32 945 814 | 893 810 | 35 933 903 |
| **North-East** | 7 925 542 | 435 831 647 | 8 210 728 | 471 759 437 | 7 888 370 | 465 919 010 |
| **South-East** | 9 968 379 | 494 098 252 | 10 188 021 | 530 062 620 | 10 565 610 | 576 950 103 |
| **South-West** | 4 309 369 | 254 440 938 | 4 409 755 | 284 417 557 | 4 456 931 | 288 445 053 |
| **South-Central** | 2 530 985 | 107 179 911 | 2 644 172 | 117 288 004 | 2 783 540 | 133 134 803 |

*Source: National Statistical Institute*

The Black Sea coast has the most tourist resources. There the main tourist product is sea tourism.On the territory of the Municipality of Avren there are various natural and anthropogenic tourist resources, which contribute to the development of the tourist potential of the region. The geographical area, on which the territory of the Municipality of Avren is located and the rich tourist resource, creates conditions for combining different types of tourism and creating new tourist products that will contribute to the state economy in the future.

*Source: National Statistical Institute*

Figure 1.2. Number of tourist visits of foreigners in Bulgaria by years

The tourist potential of Avren Municipality is determined by the main tourist resources that are located on its territory. The geographical location, location and climate, as well as the historical events and the fact that through the territory of today's Avren Municipality, different cultures have passed and left their mark, have created preconditions for building and creating interesting natural landmarks, natural and historical heritage sites. They are used for the development of existing as well as new types of tourism - cultural and rural, ecotourism, sea, route-cognitive. According to the questionnaire survey, 50% of respondents noted that the landscape and historical monuments are the main elements that have a positive impact on tourism in the Black Sea basin. A small number of respondents noted that the environment and preserved traditions and customs are the factors that create a positive vision of the region.

Tourism is one of the main industries in the economy of the Black Sea region thanks to both active summer (sea) and cultural tourism and year-round tourism. For the development of the tourist potential in the region it is necessary to extend the period of the active tourist season, during which the most jobs are created, but at the same time there is a need for highly qualified staff in the field of tourism.

Many tourist sites are located on the territory of the municipality: Basic Astronomical Observatory, Avren village; Petrich Fortress - a medieval fortress; Keshishlik Rock Monastery; Kamchia resort complex; Museum complex Church-school "St. St. Constantine and Helena ”in the village of Tsarevtsi and others.

The protected areas in the Municipality of Avren cover 4% of the total area. They are connected with the Black Sea coast and the Kamchia River. One of the most famous protected areas is the Kamchia Reserve, inscribed on the UNESCO List of Biosphere Reserves. Other protected areas include Kamchiyski Pyasatsi, Longoza, and Liman. There are different species of fish, mammals and birds.The main problems facing the protected areas and biodiversity in the Municipality of Avren are the uncontrolled access to them and the lack of signs and information boards.

According to the Socio-economic analysis of the regions in Bulgaria, the share of protected areas in the municipalities occupied by sites of the National Ecological Network varies within extremely large limits. The municipalities are divided into 6 groups as the municipality of Avren falls into the fifth group, which is characterized by below the average level of nature protection of the country, but corresponds to the average European level.

The presence of a beach, biodiversity and environment, historical and architectural monuments, make the Municipality of Avren a tourist product for development of the potential of already existing and new types of tourism - eco and cultural tourism, balneal and bicycle tourism, rural and ornithological tourism, route-cognitive and scientific tourism.

According to the Questionnaire survey the following tourist events are held in the municipality of Avren: Folklore festival "Day of the native village, it is sung, sings", village of Zdravets, Festival of Martenitsa and Burning basket, Priseltsi village. In the historical park, the village of Neofit Rilski is also carrying out tourist activities.

The main tourist product of the Municipality of Avren is sea tourism, which is formed by natural and control resources, attractions, material and technical base and infrastructure. Is offeredthe availability of cultural, historical and natural resources, which is also practical of traditional traditional fishing, give the opportunity to create the largest tourist product that has developed potential in the Municipality of Avren as a tourist destination.

The development of tourism in the Municipality of Avren includes the development of Strategies to increase its potential as a tourist destination. The municipality is part of the Local Initiative Fishing Group Byala - Dolni Chiflik - Avren. Fishing is one of the main livelihoods practiced by the inhabitants of the three municipalities. He realizes part of the income and employment in the local economy.

***The road infrastructure*** in the Municipality of Avren is in good condition, characterized mainly by third-class roads, but there is no public transport, which makes it difficult to access tourist sites. Over the years, part of the street network in the villages of Benkovski, Bliznatsi, Zdravets has been rehabilitated. Under projects funded by the Rural Development Program, it is planned in 2020 to rehabilitate part of the street network in the settlements - Avren, Bliznatsi and Priseltsi, where most of the accommodation is located.The tourist infrastructure of Avren Municipality includes a well-developed but polluted beach, a variety of natural and anthropogenic resources.

The largest number of realized overnight stays and reported tourist visits in the Avren region is in 2018. According to studies, the reasons for the decline in the number of tourists and overnight stays by 2019 are associated with the low quality of tourist services, lack of accommodation in most settlements in the region and poor advertising of the region as a tourist destination.

From the point of view of the surveys and the research for the availability of accommodation, there are not enough hotels and guest houses in the region of Avren Municipality. According to data from the Municipality of Avren, the following number of nights have been realized in the last three years: 2017 – 143 391; 2018 – 158 670; 2019 – 149 236.

*Source: Avren Municipality*

Figure 1.3. Number of realized overnight stays in Avren Municipality

The total number of tourist visits reported on the territory of the Municipality are: 2017 – 31 250; 2018 – 32 926; 2019 – 24 218.

According to the Municipality of Avren, by 2020 there are 3 024 beds in 46 categorized accommodation places (mainly bungalows and guest houses with a one-star category), concentrated mainly in the Kamchia Resort and in the villages of Avren, Bliznatsi, Dobri Dol, Priseltsi and Zdravets. Their share is 6.5% of the total number of accommodation facilities in the North-East region and are classified as follows:

* Guest apartments with category 3 stars - 2 pieces;
* Bungalows with category 1 star - 25 pieces;
* Camping with 1 star category – 2pieces;
* Guest houses with category 1 star - 4 pieces;
* Guest houses with category 2 star - 3 pieces;
* Guest houses with category 3 star - 1 pieces;
* Holiday resort with category 1 star - 2 pieces;
* Family hotel with 2 star category – 1pieces;
* Guest rooms with 1 star category - 5 pieces;
* Hotel with category 2 stars - 1 pieces.

*Source: Avren Municipality*

Figure 1.4. Number of tourist visits in the Municipality of Avren

On the territory of the Black Sea region there is a well-developed transport and tourist infrastructure. The availability of natural and anthropogenic resources, tourist sites and accommodation create opportunities for the development of tourist potential in the region. Among them are offering quality products and services, creating innovations in the field of tourism and creating new forms outside the seasonal sea - cognitive, cultural, rural, eco- and cycling tourism, fishing, spa tourism and more.

***From the point of view of marketing in the Black Sea region and in particular in the Municipality of Avren*** the participation of business is low, although the region is an attractive tourist destination for practicing different types of tourism - cultural, rural and ecotourism, balneal and spa tourism and others. Opportunities to support marketing actions to promote and persuade potential visitors in the uniqueness of the experiences on the territory of Avren include researching potential events and targeting them through advertising and information campaigns, production of advertising materials, cooperation with tour operators and travel agents, creating innovations in the offered tourist attractions, organizing seminars and local events, together with neighboring municipalities and regional cities. To realize these opportunities, the Municipality of Avren has developed a Marketing Strategy for Tourism Development for the period 2015-2020, part of the project "Modernized Information Structure in the Municipality of Avren" for "Promotion of tourism activities" to the Program for "Rural Development" “2007-2013.

The North-Eastern region of Bulgaria is on the penultimate place in terms of intensity of negative demographic processes with an average annual population decline of 0.3% for the period 2011-2017. The lowest values of the average annual rate of population loss is Varna district (0.7 %). Avren is among the municipalities that are characterized by a slight increase in population.

The low level of education and qualification is an obstacle on the one hand, to the realization on the labor market, and on the other hand - to the entry of investments and the development of the local economy in the Black Sea region. Illiteracy, as well as language barriers are a problem for the establishment and development of the Municipality of Avren as a tourist destination of international importance. According to the municipality, there are no registered jobs in the field of tourism on its territory.

***According to the surveys, on the territory of the Black Sea region are organized courses for vocational training and retraining in the tourism industry only in the Agency for Economic Development in Varna.*** The activities of the organization include supporting and increasing the capacity and knowledge of service providers in rural areas and the creation of informal networks of service providers in the field of Black Sea tourism. The organization conducts informal training courses for providers of services in the field of rural tourism on projects funded by the Joint Operational Program "Black Sea Basin" 2014-2020. Again, according to the latest data from the surveys, the average annual number of participants who have completed training courses in the tourism sector is 30 participants in the PIRT project (Promotion of Innovative Rural Tourism) in 2013-2014. The objectives of the Agency are aimed at reducing the unemployment rate and assisting local and state authorities in preparing regional development plans.

According to the data of the National Statistical Institute for the last 3 school years, in the Municipality of Avren there are 6 general education schools for the academic years 2016/2017, 2017/2018 and 2018/2019. In the Secondary School “St. St. Cyril and Methodius” in the village of Sindel, staff is trained to work in the tourism industry in the field of confectionery and restaurant services. The number of graduates by level of education during the indicated years is indicated in Figure. 1.5. and shows growth, especially primary school graduates.

*Source: Avren Municipality*

Figure 1.5. Number of graduates in general education schools in Avren Municipality

**1.2. General and specific objectives for future business and entrepreneurship opportunities**

**General objective**

The overall goal is to support business and entrepreneurship in the use of natural resources and cultural heritage in the target regions by presenting new alternatives for development in accordance with current trends in tourism development.

**Specific objectives**

To achieve the major goals for tourism development, following specific objectives can be identified:

* *SO1- Improving the quality of the offered tourist services for the visitors.*

The main challenges facing the sustainable development of tourism in the region are population migration, shortage of well-trained staff in the field of tourism due to lack of contact between business and educational institutions, lack of professional institutions for training in tourism and lack of motivation for development. The seasonal nature of the destination also contributes to the lack of staff in the tourism sector from a quantitative and qualitative point of view.

In order to guarantee the workforce in the tourism industry, increase the opportunities for professional development and increase the quality of the offered tourist services, the creation of new jobs, organization of professional training programs for tourism specialists and conducting courses for acquiring qualification and raising the level of the skills of already graduated specialists in the field of tourism.Increasing the opportunities for professional development of the population will contribute to reducing unemployment, especially in the inactive tourist season. This will provoke the creation of new jobs in the field of tourism and retention of the population in smaller settlements, which is characterized by the Municipality of Avren.

The adaptation of such training programs to business would lead to improved quality of life in the region and increase the satisfaction of tourists with the services offered.

* *SO2 -Increasing the competitiveness of the Municipality of Avren as a tourist destination.*

Avren as part of the Black Sea tourist region has a rich resource, but still poorly exploited potential for tourism development. Territorial location, the presence of protected areas and favorable climatic conditions generates a number of opportunities to combine different types of tourism, create new tourism products and attract a significantly larger number of visitors.Given the busy daily life, when choosing a place to rest, tourists are increasingly turning to forms of leisure tourism. Given the construction of our Black Sea coast, the demand is growing in the direction of preserved nature, avoiding mass gatherings of vacationers, shelter, which offer more and more opportunities for full time - close to nature, distance from large settlements, additional attractions and entertainment. The availability of places for recreation and the provision of resources are essential for the development of tourism in Avren as a region of the Black Sea Basin.

The fishing industry is and will continue to be one of the most important factors in the development of the territory. The most suitable alternative to fishing and an opportunity for diversification is tourism. Tourism is also a very suitable sector for the sale of fishery products. In addition, many options are possible for a combination of fishing and tourism. The main guidelines for achieving this goal are:

- the development of a region-specific complex tourist experience;

- creation of tourist attractions, including the material, intangible, cultural and natural heritage typical for the region:

- creation of thematic tourist routes and inclusion of local industries in tourism;

- production of tourist information materials (guides, maps, brochures);

- encouraging the development of existing and new types of tourism;

* *SO3- Creation of a unified marketing plan for tourism promotion in the Avren region of the Black Sea Basin.*

According to research and surveys, tourism advertising in the region is relatively low, which is why the opportunities for tourism practice remain undiscovered or poorly popularized. Currently, information about tourism in the Avren region is available only on the municipality's website, which is not enough to promote the destination (including the promotion of sub-destinations and products).The lack of information security for the destination Avren, including the presence in the virtual space and social media, creates preconditions for a serious lag of the tourism sector in the region on a national and international level. The image of the Avren region of the Black Sea Basin is poorly known to the foreign public, which is why the region is not visited by foreign tourists.

To achieve this goal it is necessary to take the following measures related to the promotion of the region as a tourist destination:

- preparation of marketing policy for promotion of tourist services in the region together with tour operators and travel agents;

- optimizing the advertising of the region in the country and abroad to increase its effectiveness and achieve better results;

- organizing an advertising campaign at local, regional, national and international level.

**1.3. The priority areas of tourism development and expected results**

Tourism is a priority sector for the development and promotion of the Black Sea Region in Bulgaria.

Varna region has some of the most attractive natural and anthropogenic tourist resources in the country, which has led to a serious development of the tourist function. The potential for tourism development is characterized by a unique combination of natural resources (beaches, mineral waters) and cultural, historical heritage and traditions. Natural and anthropogenic resources determine good opportunities for the development of a year-round tourist product.

The favorable tourist conditions and opportunities of the district should include the good transport connections provided through the trans-European transport corridors and the presence of an international airport. The municipality of Varna has a major role in the tourist development of the district. Of the other municipalities in the district only, Dolni Chiflik, Avren and Byala own tourist shelters and carry out tourist activities.

Tourist resources located on the territory of the Black Sea Region - clean environment, beach, resort and reserve, as well as favorable climate are a prerequisite for the development of new types of tourism - cognitive, ornithological, business, ecological and cycling and fishing. The combination of all these tourist resources defines the Black Sea Region as a destination for the development of complex tourism emphasizing summer sea tourism, ecotourism, balneo (health), cultural tourism, business and family. Rural tourism in the municipality of Avren also has potential for development, given that the settlements are only of the "village" type.

The Black Sea Basin Region has the potential for future development of the tourism sector in various areas, thanks to the well-developed Black Sea coastal zone and well-maintained natural resources, rich cultural calendar, preserved traditions and customs. The availability of tourist resources creates conditions for combining maritime tourism with alternative forms - river, cruise, hunting and fishing tourism.

The favorable location of the Black Sea region creates opportunities for cruise tourism, which would have a positive impact on the local and regional economy and attract foreign tourists.The indicated types of tourismin combination with natural and anthropogenic conditions reveal a number of opportunities for the creation of potentially new tourism products that must be used wisely to ensure their sustainability in the future.

**Expected results**

***First specific obiective***: Improving the quality of the offered tourist services for the visitors

***Results indicators***:

1. organization of training courses in tourism;

2. job creation among the local population;

3. ensuring quality remuneration of employees in the field of tourism.

***Second specific obiective***: Increasing the competitiveness of the Municipality of Avren as a tourist destination

***Results indicators***:

1. newly created tourist routes;

2. newly created tourist producttogether with other municipalities or with Varna district;

3. concluded contract with tour operators and travel agents to provide professional assistance in organizing guided tours;

4. printed information materials;

5. participation in tourist events.

***Third specific objective***: Creation of a unified marketing plan for the promotion of tourism in the Avren region of the Black Sea Basin.

***Results indicators***:

1. monitoring and evaluation of the Marketing Strategy for Development of the Municipality of Avren (2015-2020) and Development of a new marketing strategy for the period 2021-2026;

2. update of the "Tourism" section on the website of the Municipality of Avren.

The conclusion that can be drawn is that it is necessary to properly manage and unite the efforts of tourism on the one hand and stakeholders, on the other, in order to achieve the goals and objectives set.

**2. GEORGIA**

**2.1. Tourism in Georgian Black Sea Region**

Georgia has received 9.3 mln. visitors in 2019, which was an increase of + 7.1% compared to the same period of the last year. Number of international tourist visits was 5 million, 6.8% more than the same period of the previous year.

The residents of the neighboring countries account for over half of all visitors, with visits from Russia showing the fastest growth before the recent flight ban. However, the share of EU citizens, a high-spending segment, is increasing (5.3% in 2018 in absolute numbers, up from 4.1% in 2015 and11.6% in total tourist receipts, up from 6.9% in 2015). There is still a need for further diversification - In 2018, the top 5 countries of origin accounted for 76% of all international visitors to Georgia, significantly higher compared with other countries.

The largest share of international visitor trips in Georgia, 5,314,984 (73.8%), were by land transport, followed 1,788,417 (24.8%) by air transport. Trips by rail and sea were 67,478 (0.9%) and 32,471 (0.5%), respectively.

The tourism accounted for 7.6 percent of GDP growth in 2018 and 8.1% in 2019 (3.268 USD). Below is provided the graph showing contribution of tourism to GDP (dollar amount and percentage).

In 2018, total tourism revenues accounted for 36% of exports of goods and services and 72% of service exports in Georgia, as the sector kept outgrowing other current account revenues in the Balance of Payments.

*Source: GeoStat, NBG*

Figure 2.1. Tourism revenues (BN USD) as % of GDP

*Source: GeoStat, NBG*

Figure 2.2. Tourism revenues contribution to exports (%)

The expenditures of foreign guests in Georgia have a huge effect on the national balance of payments. Approximately 71.8% of Georgia’s service export revenues come from tourism. On the asset side, the balance of payments reports Georgia’s income from foreign visitors; On the liabilities side, it shows the expenditure of Georgian residents while abroad. In 2018, the foreign exchange income from foreign tourism in Georgia amounted to 3.22 billion USD, which is 19.1% higher than in 2017. Foreign exchange expenditures for foreign tourism in Georgia amounted to 0.52 billion USD. Thus, in 2018, the balance of foreign tourism in Georgia amounted to 2.7 billion USD, an 20.4% increase over 2017.

The comparison to selected countries underlines the high significance of inbound tourism in the Georgian Economy. In 2018, the proportion of tourism revenues to Georgia’s GDP totaled to 20%, standing significantly higher than in select countries: tourism receipts stood at 9.9% relative to GDP in Armenia, 7.9% in Azerbaijan, 3.7% in Turkey and just 0.9% in Russia.

The international travel receipts reached 3.268 Bln. USD in 2019, by almost 46 Mln. USD increase compared to 2018. From this - 450,6 Mln. USD was generated from EU countries, which was a 19.5% increase compared to 2018.The table below provides detailed info about international travel receipts and its annual growth rate for each year.

Table 2.1. International travel receipts (thousands of USD) and annual increase (%) in Georgia

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **2007** | **2008** | **2009** | **2010** | **2011** | **2012** | **2013** | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **2018** | **2019** |
| 383.7 | 446.6 | 475.9 | 659.25 | 954.9 | 1 410.9 | 1 719.7 | 1 787.1 | 1 868.5 | 2 110.7 | 2 704.4 | 3 222.1 | 3 268.6 |
|  | 16.4% | 6.6% | 38.5% | 44.8% | 47.8% | 21.9% | 3.9% | 4.6% | 13.0% | 28.1% | 19.1% | 1.4% |

*Source: GeoStat, NBG*

The ratio of visitors to the population of Georgia stood at 1.9 in 2018, while the ratio of tourists to population stood at 1.4. As the proportion of tourist to visitors varies from country to country, we monitor both ratios. While Georgia ranks higher than many countries, comparison indicates a further upside potential.

Average expenditure of tourist in Georgia totaled toUSD 447 per visit in 2018, and by this parameter it is still a low-budget tourist destination. GNTA’s target for 2025 is to attract mid and high budget tourists, increasing this average to USD 600. According to the GNTA survey, citizens of neighboring countries spend considerably less per trip than other visitors, with Azerbaijanis, Armenians and Turkish people all spending an average of less than GEL 1,000 per trip. Table bellow shows total value added for last several years in Georgia. It shows that year by year it is increasing siginifianlty.

Table 2.2. Tourism value added 2015-2018 (thousands of GEL)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **2018** | **% Change 2018-2018** |
| **Total** | **1 842 131** | **1 978 295** | **2 206 698** | **2 681 791** | 21.5% |
| **Including** |  |
| **Accommodation units** | 284 380 | 344 041 | 429 000 | 482 277 | 12.4% |
| **Food establishments** | 409 548 | 478 084 | 520 518 | 605 584 | 16.3% |
| **Transport** | 444 045 | 460 005 | 513 293 | 625 937 | 21.9% |
| **Travel Companies** | 704 158 | 696 165 | 743 887 | 967 993 | 30.1% |

*Source: GeoStat, NBG*

**Tourism in Ajara region -** Tourism is vital sector of economy of Ajara region too. It has developed dynamically over recent years and as a cross-sectional industry is one of the region’s economic growth drivers. The hospitality market in Ajara is developing fast as the increased inflow of international visitors, business persons and missions attracts well-known international hotel chains. Ajara is most popular travel destination with more than 2.1 million visitors per year after Tbilisi (2019).

Ajara region is second main tourist destination after the capital city and around 20-21% of international trips were in Ajara region in 2018-2019. Ajara has also the highest number of hotel beds - 26,019 hotel beds according to 2018 data.

In 2018, according to official statistics around 7650 person was employed in hotels and Restaurants and 300 persons in tourism companies in Ajara region. Although, the number is not accurate as experts say and it can be quite higher by 20-25%.

The total visitor expenditure increased significantly in 2018, with growth visible in every spending category. According to GNTA Expenditure on served foods and drinks accounted for the largest share (28.6%), followed by accommodation (23.4%), cultural and entertainment services (18.1%), shopping (13.6%) and domestic ground transportation (7.1%). Other categories comprised only 9.2% of the total.

The tourism potential of Ajara region including the review of existing (and potential) types of tourism is described bellow.

Major types of tourism in Ajara region:

* **Sun & Beach Tourism -** Sun and beach tourism is one of the most popular types of tourism in Ajara. Subtropical climate, warm sea air, infrastructure of sea resorts, sea and mountain combination create favorable conditions for holidays. Sea resorts areas include – Batumi city, Kobuleti, Kvariati, Gonio, Sarpi beaches.
* **Eco Tourism -** is becoming one of the high potential type of tourism in Ajara. Foreign tourists are especially interested in ecotourism while visiting the region. Diverse flora and fauna as well as abundance of historical and cultural monuments created favorable conditions for ecotourism development. There are 4 protected areas on the territory of Ajara. Their diversity clearly indicates to the great potential of ecotourism in the region.
* **Rural Tourism -** Picturesque nature, diversity of flora and fauna as well as hospitable people creates the best preconditions for the successful development of rural tourism in Ajara. Tourist farms have been selected in Ajara villages where tourists have a chance to enjoy rural tourism and get involved into various types of activities. For Rural tourism main areas/villages in Ajara region are – Gobroneti, Nigazeuli, Chakvistavi, Vaio, Tskhemlara, Kedlebi etc. Rural activities include- Get familiar with traditional rules of cattle breeding, poultry raising, vegetable growing, gardening and bee keeping, hiking, camping, hunting. In addition, try fishing and learn popular national trades including long-basket plaiting, knitting and iron elaboration, tobacco refining, vodka brewing, and traditional ways of cooking local dishes, horse-racing, visiting historical and cultural sites.). There are many hunting and fishing places in Ajara with seasonal hunting of wild boar, hare and badger and trout fishing in the rivers. In the woods you can pick strawberries, bilberries and blackberries.
* **Birdwatching -** Black Sea - is one of the best places in the whole western Palearctic to watch migrating raptors. Here, it is possible to witness a migration spectacle that is rarely paralleled anywhere in the world: over 1.000.000 raptors belonging to 35 species are recorded here each autumn, as they make their annual journey south from Scandinavia, the forests of Russia and the steppes of Central Asia to their wintering grounds in Africa. Strong movements of storks, cranes, bee-eaters, swifts, swallows, and a diverse assemblage of other “songbirds” are also seen here. There is gradually increasing the number of tourists coming to see watch the migrating birds.
* **Wine & Gastronomy Tourism -** In the western regions of Georgia, Ajara is one of the oldest centers of viticulture and enology. Ajara holds a worthy place within the world viticulture and enology in the formation of the ancient traditions of vine cultivation. The region played a significant role in the creation of vineyards. In this small area - only 2,9 thousand sq/km - more than 40 cultural vine species have been created and approved. In addition to wine, the unique local cousin also plays important role in tourism product offerings
* **Ski & Mountain Resorts -** Ajara, the south-western region of Georgia, has great potential for the development of skiing resorts. The climate is humid in the Ajara highlands. Winter is relatively cold and long while summer is short and cool. Average mountain height is 2.000-2.500 m. The arrangement of skiing resorts has been widely conducted in Ajara recently. They have recreational-healthcare as well as entertainment purposes and are designed for all four seasons of the year. The infrastructure of the resorts is actively reconstructed in Shuakhevi and Khulo municipalities, namely the resorts of Gomarduli and GhomasMta in Shuakhevi and Kedlebi, Goderdzi and Beshumi in Khulo municipality.
* **Cruise Tourism -** Historically Batumi Sea Port has always functioned as the logistic center in the Caucasus. It was the first port granting the transit country status to Georgia. The announcement of the Batumi Port as “Porto Franco” in 1878 contributed to its further development. Oil was the most decisive factor of the development. At the beginning of 20th century Batumi Port held the leading position along the Black Sea littoral according to its significance and turnover. It became an international transporting corridor in oil transfer. Since 2006 Batumi Port has been the member of “MedCruise” – the Association of Mediterranean Cruise Ports. Also Ajara was participating in various tourism fairs focusing on cruise tourism in Istanbul, Hamburg, Maiami etc. After these events the number of cruise ships entering the Batumi Port has considerably increased. Although in last 2 years it is decreasing noticeably again.
* **MICE Tourism -** Recent local and international events held in Ajara recently have made Ajara region famous for MICE tourism activities as well in international market. New projects directed towards creating tourist infrastructure in the region promote conduct of international fairs and events, attracts professionals working in MICE-sector not only during summer season but all-year round too. The region of Ajara has gained the status of a cultural center and can host important cultural and other types of events, international music and cinema festivals such as: “Black Sea Jazz Festival”, International Film Festival “BIAFF”, Classical Music Festival, Animated Films Festival “Topuzi”. Also, it is important to point out traditional local festivals such as: “Shuamtoba”, “Kolkhoba”, “Kedeloba” etc. Five star hotels and the entire infrastructure, which is created in the city, give us an opportunity to host different types of international conferences, forums and meetings. In Batumi annually are organized international exhibitions.
* **Gambling Tourism -** Gambling business is very popular in Batumi. A vast choice of casinos is offered to the local as well as visiting gamblers. Gambling business is legally permitted in Georgia. The development of gambling business was much fostered by the conference of “Casino Investors” in Batumi participated by about 120 representatives of different fields (tourism, gambling, etc.) from 25 countries. The conference was of great importance for popularization of gambling business potential in Batumi as well as future development of casino business. At present, the majority of casinos in Batumi are located in the buildings of 5-star hotels in Batumi. The recent constructions of high-level hotels in Batumi point to the development of casino business in Ajara in as much as the hotels are the biggest casino operators.

**The major Tourism Events in Ajara region** - here can be mentioned following:

- BIAFF – Batumi International Art-house Film Festival

- Black Sea Jazz Festival

- Classical Music Festival

- Animated Films Festival “Topuzi”

- Rural tourism festival “Gandagana” (held in Batumi city)

- Batumoba (Batumi City’s Celebration Event)

- Traditional local folk/ethno festivals - “Shuamtoba”, “Kolkhoba”, “Kedeloba” etc.

- “Birdwatching Festival”

- SUMMER Fest – opening of Tourism season event

**Top Tourism Destinations in Ajara region -** Based on overview of the major tourism destinations/attractions, opinions of tourism stakeholders and survey of tourists, can be identified following major tourism attractions in Ajara region:

**Batumi and surroundings**

* Batumi botanical garden – located only 9 km away from Batumi city on the black sea cost on a hill with excellent panoramic view of seaside and city. It has more than 2,000 hardwood species grouped according to their origin in 9 phytogeography sections.
* Batumi Sea Boulevard and beach - The coastal line of the boulevard has been consecrated with bungalows, café-lounges, restaurants, children's attractions, benches, sculptures and dancing fountains-making it one of the city's most attractive tourist destinations.
* Batumi Dolphinarium
* Old city of Batumi - old part of city, that maintains the 18/19 century buildings, with some really exquisite facades, the Belle Époque-style architecture etc.
* Alphabet Tower and Nino & Ali moving sculpture
* Argo Cable Car / Ropeway - while passing 2586 m. ropeway fascinating views opens to tourists – horizon of distanced sea, mountain view and Batumi urban views.
* Piazza Square – located in old city, mixture of various cafes, restaurants in one place.

**Outside of Batumi city**

* Gonio Fortress - Gonio-Apsaros Fortress is located 12 km south to Batumi, on the left bank of the River Chorokhi. One of the Georgia's most ancient settlements was located around this fortress (dating back to roman times - 3rd-4th cc BC)
* Mtirala National Park – one of the most popular ecotourism place in region. You can find guesthouses, river/waterfall, marker and well-arranged trails, tourist shelters etc.
* Machakhela National Park – located in 30 km from Batumi, covered with forest, nice landscapes, hiking trails etc.
* Makhuntseti waterfall
* Mountain villages of Ajara - Gomarduli, Gobroneti, Chirukhi etc., located in mountain region of Ajara are attractive for tourists due its beautiful landscapes, forests, hiking trails, ethnography etc.
* Green Lake –is 7 km away from Goderdzi pass (Khulo district), 2058 m. above sea level, surrounded by the forests. The popular destination amongst hikers.

# 2.2. General and specific objectives for future business and entrepreneurship opportunities

The tourism development in Ajara region has a positive trend during last decade. Taking into account the current stage of development, the tourism potential and existing resources, we can identify the following objectives for the further development.

**General objective**

To promote Ajara region as a major tourist destination in Georgia and attract more international tourists via means of improved infrastructure, high quality services, sustainable use of tourism resources and effective Marketing/PR.

**Specific objectives**

To achieve the major goals for tourism development, following specific objectives can be identified:

* *SO1 - Improve the accessibility to region that will increase the mobility of visitors to and within the tourist destination* - to reach higher number of tourists, each tourism destination needs to be easily accessible by international tourists (transport infrastructure, frequent flights, transportation prices etc.) and also its important to have well developed infrastructure in region that will allow tourists easily to travel and visit tourist destinations there.
* *SO2 - Sustainable use of Cultural and Natural Heritage of Region that creates the significant part of tourism potential and tourism products* ***-*** cultural and natural heritage represents one the most important part of tourism resources for any region. Majority of tourism products develop around these resources - tourists are interested to see local culture, the cultural monuments, city architectural heritage and to visit various protected areas, nature etc.
* *SO3* - *Creation/modernization of the tourist infrastructure in order to increase the attractiveness and competitiveness of the destination* ***-***tourism development significantly depends not only on existing of tourism resources but also on tourism infrastructure. While assessing the tourism competitiveness and chances to attract the tourists, each destination’s position significantly depends on how well developed infrastructure it has and the service standards provided to tourists. Tourism infrastructure includes not only Hotels and restaurants, but also various Spa & wellness, sports, cultural spaces etc. Further improvement of competitiveness of Ajara region’s tourism sector is strongly connected to development of infrastructure in various direction and adjusting it to current tourism demands on international market.
* *SO4 -* *Human Capacity development and upgrading the competencies, skills of labor force involved in tourism sector.* Tourism Service quality is essential factor for defining the competitive position in tourism industry since tourist pay big attention to service level / quality and failure to provide the necessary standards can result in losing the tourists. Accordingly, in tourism industry the human resources competency, skills are major success factor for creating and selling high quality tourism product and services.
* *SO5 -* *Consolidate the image of the destination and achieve a unitary promotion.* Marketing and PR promotion of tourism destinations are essential to achieve the recognition among the tourists, successfully position itself on global tourism map and consolidate the image/reputation of attracting tourism destination.

Ajara region, as well as Georgia in a whole has a positive tendency in terms of increased awareness among the tourists, more and more tourist are getting familiar with it. Although, still important steps should be taken to reach out the European tourists (high income segment) and attract their interest via effective promotional campaigns.

Creating the tourism brand for Black Sea Basin through active coordination among partner countries, can have positive impact on whole BS region and each partner country participating in common BS tourism brand / product can benefit from it – via cross-marketing, cross-selling.

**2.3. The priority areas of tourism development and expected results**

The major focus areas of tourism development (based on its tourism potential) in Ajara region can be identified as follows: Ecotourism, Rural Tourism, Ski Tourism, Cultural Tourism, Wine & Gastronomy, MICE Tourism – International conferences, exhibitions, Cultural events and festivals.

**Ecotourism** – during last years, ecotourism is becoming step by step popular direction for tourists coming in Ajara region. Local tour companies also realize gradually its importance and started offering some ecotourism packages, as well as in mountain areas guesthouses are developing which creates a good basis for further promotion of Eco-tours.

**Rural tourism -** The geographical and ethnographical characteristics of the region’s rural area are worth to be taken into consideration by the great majority of tourists wishing to spend a holiday in the countryside, far from the noise of the city. In Ajara region there is already started and several areas offer guesthouses although more developments in facilities are necessary.

**Ski Tourism** – can be one of the priority for winter tourism. With its perfect snow condition, long winter season, wide slopes, mix forest and alpine meadows and unlimited opportunities it is great potential for Winter ski-snowboarding riding and ski-touring, with great opportunity of powder skiing by heli-skiing and “cat-skiing” around Goderdzi resort, village Kedeli and village Beshumi.

**Gastronomy & Wine** – is always essential part of tourism in any regions. Gastronomy can be considered as important tourism offering in combination with rural, eco or any other type of tourism. Even can be developed specific Cross-border tour product - “Black Sea Gastronomy Tour” which will provide tourist with opportunity to taste cousin of several BS regions, participate in culinary master classes (allowing them to prepare some meals by themselves) etc. Wine degustation, visit to wineries also undeniably interesting part of tourism packages which can be developed – promote the new wineries development, traditional winemaking (QVEVRI wine) etc.

**Cruise Tourism -** Batumi Sea Port is major passenger port in the Caucasus. Batumi port is a member of “MedCruise” – the Association of Mediterranean Cruise Ports, which is positive factor for future. Batumi in recent years had a growing number of cruise ships coming (although decreased in past 2 years).

**Educational tours** – active networking with tourism schools / institutions in region can facilitate cross-border education exchange of student/researchers for specific projects (for ex: botanical gardens, national parks etc.). The local universities can develop close cooperation which will involve organizing joint conferences, internships for students, joint research projects in tourism, ecology etc.

**Weekend tour-packages** - this can be excellent good solution bothfor domestic and international tourists (cross-border region – for ex: Turkey). Even it can be one day tours to enjoy “escape from the crowded sea beach” to diversify travel experiences and enjoy mountain spirit of holiday.

**MICE Tourism** - another major direction for cross-border tourism between countries. For MICE tourism Georgiahas good potential in Caucasus to become a major MICE tourism destination taking into account its geo-strategic location, rapidly developing tourism infrastructure and what is important it is Neutral placefor meeting for many countries in our region which might not have direct relationship.

**Expected Results**

***First specific objective***:Improving accessibility, in order to increase the mobility of visitors to and within the tourist destination.

***Results indicators***:

1. improved road infrastructure;

2. more frequent air-flights and improved airport infrastructure;

3. improved Cycling routes / “Green Transport”**;**

4. eco-trails in mountain areas / protected areas;

5. improved signage on roads and on tourism facilities**.**

***Second specific objective***: Restoration, protection and sustainable use in tourism of the cultural and natural heritage of the Black Sea Basin Region.

***Results indicators****:*

1. developing the wine cellars and ethnic restaurants;

2. organized gastronomic workshops and gastronomy festival;

3. ethnography/folklore in tourism packages;

4. promotion of natural protected areas**.**

***Third specific objective***: Creation/modernization of the tourist infrastructure in order to increase the attractiveness and competitiveness of the destination.

Developing the tourism infrastructure by creating new and transforming or preserving old (traditional), will be important positive factor contributing to attraction of tourists in Ajara region.

***Results indicators****:*

1. creating at least one ethno village complex in Ajara mountain area

***The fourth specific objective***: Ensuring the labor force resources in the tourism sector in the Black Sea basin, both quantitatively and qualitatively.

***Results indicators****:*

1. introducing/upgrading the vocational learning programs;

2. training for trainers/exchange programs with international education centers;

3. improved cooperation education centers and business sector**.**

***The fifth specific objective***: Consolidate the image of the destination and achieve a unitary promotion

***Results indicators****:*

1. modified and better adjusted image / brand of Ajara region as tourism destination created;

2. modified promo paterials for Ajara region;

3. effective influencer marketing campaigns carried out**;**

4. improved internet & social media presence for Ajara as tourism destination.

In order to successfully develop any tourism sector in Adjara, it is necessary to have a clear vision and plan. It should be adjusted to on-going trends in the tourism industry throughout the world in order to respond to the change, and to have an understanding of the tourism clientele in order to respond to their needs.

**3. ROMANIA**

**3.1. Tourism in Romanian Black Sea Region**

UNWTO statistics show that Europe remains the most attractive tourist destination in the world. In this context, European cohesion policy aims to mobilize tourism massively, so that it contributes substantially to regional development and job creation. However, at regional and local level, there is a diversity of situations regarding the tourist attractiveness, respectively the interest manifested to this sector.

The first element taken into consideration in order to evaluate the tourist attractiveness of a region is its internal and abroad image. The questions that this strategy tries to answer, especially in the first part are: What are the real tourist resources of the Black Sea Basin in Romania that should be capitalized? What is the brand of the region? Who/ how/what can make the Romanian Black Sea Basin a tourist destination? These are just some of the questions that arise in any strategic business development approach in which tourism could be a winning stake.

It is obvious that the Black Sea Basin of Romania has a purely modest tourist dimension. On the other hand, tourism is a fairly versatile concept, and the development of a tourism activity can also occur in connection with non-canonical resources and objectives, if there is a favorable situation for the crystallization of support initiatives. However, in the case of the Black Sea Basin, such initiatives coming from various areas of responsibility and competence of central&local actors (Ministry of Tourism, Anat, local administration, SMEs, NGOs etc.) have manifested themselves as non-unitary and discontinuous. Or the local development of tourism, as a real and lasting process, requires a strategic planning carried out according to scientific, technical, methodological and practical rules, to have the certainty that the proposed policies and programs will correspond to the needs of the community, local resources available, but especially business environment.

In this context and taking into account the following aspects:

* the modest visibility and the poor international promotion of the Black Sea Basin in Romania;
* the minimal and unsystematic approach to the region's tourism in a series of documents in which the potential of the entire Black Sea Basin is not distinctly highlighted, both for objective reasons (the strategy targets all levels of development) and from an incomplete vision of tourism potential for the entire region;
* signals from civil society, non-governmental organizations, the media, various public institutions regarding the underutilization of certain tourist resources and certain types of tourism present in the region;
* the interest and availability of cooperation expressed at round tables, meetings, workshops of local and national tourism operators in its promotion;
* the evaluation of the region's tourism potential was carried out in the first part of the strategy based on the methodology described in the project, following which 4 types of questionnaires were applied.

A decisive driver on which to focus for the success of a tourism development strategy of the Black Sea Region, is the concept of integration: between cities, territories, objectives, policies, actions, actors and current and potential tourist resources. Applying this approach, from now on the territories and cities of the Black Sea Region are considered and named as "Destination", to underline the need both for their integration into the system and for the enhancement of its distinctive characterizing resources.

Romania, along with other tourist destinations in Eastern Europe, has recorded a continuous increase in tourist arrivals over the last decade, which has implicitly led to an increase in tourism contribution with obvious economic and social implications for local communities.

The geographic position offers Romania three natural defining components for its landscape and landscape structure, which outlines the country's tourism potential: the Carpathian Mountains, the Danube River and the Danube Delta, the Black Sea with the seaside strip. The tourist transit function was generated by its location, Romania ensuring the connection between the Central, Northern and Eastern European countries with those in the southern continent and the Middle East. Accession to E.U. in 2007 and the possibility to travel much easier, both for Romanian citizens to other EU member states, as well as for the citizens of Western and Central Europe to Romania, was meant to increase the inbound and outbound tourist flows in Romania during the last decade.

The analysis of the inbound tourist flows shows that in 2018, the number of arrivals in the accommodation units in Romania was 12905131 people, the largest share being recorded by Romanian tourists (78.3%), while foreign tourists had only 21.7%.

*Source: INS, Tempo-Online Database*

Figure 3.1. The inbound tourist flows in Romania in 2018, by types of tourists and accommodation units

Regarding the structure of arrivals by types of accommodation units, most tourists, both Romanians and foreigners preferred in 2018, hotels (69.7%), followed by guesthouses (9.5% of arrivals), agritourism guesthouses (9% of arrivals), tourist villas with 3.4%, hostels with 2.9% of arrivals, only 2% of tourists arriving in Romania preferring motels (figure 3.1).

The majority of the tourists, especially the Romanians, preferred in 2018, the 3 stars accommodation units (43.4% of the Romanian tourists), while the foreign tourists (46.5%) mostly stayed at 4-star hotels.

The hierarchy of destinations chosen by both Romanian and foreign tourists, according to the size of the inbound tourist flows, shows that in Romania the business and transit tourism are still preferred, most of the arrivals, especially for foreign tourists (31.2% of Romanian tourists, 76.5% of foreign tourists) being in Bucharest and other county-capital cities (figure 3.2.).

The analysis of the evolution of arrivals in Romania during 2006-2018 allowed us to identify the following major conclusions, with an important role in shaping the trends of the inbound tourist flows in the near future:

* the number of tourists has recorded over the last decade a considerable leap (+107,7%), from about 6.21 million in 2006 to about 12.9 million in 2018, the foreign tourists flows being below (+102,6%) the Romanians (+109%). Unfortunately, although the number of foreign tourists increased considerably, the Romanian/foreign weight in the total arrivals was almost identical (78.3% Romanians and 21.7% foreigners in 2018);
* the 3,4 and 5 stars accommodation units, registered a significant increase in the number of arrivals in 2018 compared to 2006 (+ 160,5% at 3 stars, + 465,8% at 4 stars + 205,5% to 5 stars), in contrast to the 2-star units (-26%), the latter being the most booked in Romania in 2006 (37% of the total arrivals in 2006);
* the dynamics of the arrivals during 2006-2018 in the most representative tourist regions of Romania shows that the highest increase was recorded by the Danube Delta&Tulcea City (+202,9%) followed by mountain resorts (+151% in 2018 compared to 2006), "other localities and tourist routes" (+143,7%) and Bucharest and County Capital Cities (+101%). These are followed by the notorious Romanian tourist regions, which have registered increases of less than 70% (Black Sea resorts, excluding Constanta City with 61,9% and the spa resorts with + 45.1%);
* the dynamics of foreign tourists' arrivals in the Romanian regions mentioned above shows that the largest increase was recorded by mountain resorts (+127%), Danube Delta&Tulcea City (+115,1% in 2018 compared to 2006), followed by Bucharest&County Capital Cities (+111.4%), other localities and tourist routes (+109.6%) and spa resorts (+8,6%).

***Black Sea resorts without Constanta City are no longer in the top of foreign tourists' preferences, being the only Romanian tourist region that has recorded a significant decrease of foreign tourists arrivals (-42,8% in 2018 compared to 2006).***

*Source: INS, Tempo-Online Database*

Figure 3.2. The inbound tourist flows in Romania in 2018, by types of tourists and Romanian destinations

The wide variety of ***natural tourist attractions*** available in the Romanian Black Sea Basin offers the possibility to practice a wide range of types of tourism, many of them undeveloped to their real potential: heliomarine cure, spa treatment and medical recovery, water sports, hiking, walking, cycling, birdwatching, diving, caving, wine tourism, cruises on the Danube or the sea, sport fishing, scientific tourism and, of course, recreational tourism.

***Sea water***, through its chemical composition, relatively low salinity compared to other seas, thermal contrast with the air and action of waves, is an important factor in healing in specific forms, such as bathing in sea water and thalassotherapy. At the same time, the sea water creates a suitable environment for water sports, scuba diving or cruising.

***The beaches*** are differentiated by a series of features such as: orientation to the east and southeast, which causes a long exposure to the sun (about 10 hours a day), descent into the sea with a gentle slope, relatively wide width, sand quality type, purity, granulation, drying degree), ensuring excellent conditions for heliomarine cure (sunbathing, sea bathing, sand bathing), from this point of view having few competitors in Europe (southern coasts of Italy and partly, those of Bulgaria).

***Freshwater lakes*** ***in the coastal area*** - enrich the landscape of the area and are especially important for recreation. Practically, each summer resort with a few exceptions (Eforie Sud, Cap Aurora, Saturn) includes in its organization a lake on the shores of which the material base for water sports has been installed.

***The Lower Course of the Danube*** and the ***Danube Delta*** represent an important tourist attraction, through its landscape, scientific, fishing value, as well as through its tourist transport and leisure. The river offers possibilities for water tourism, ecotourism, birdwaching, sport fishing or hunting tourism (pond birds).

The Murfatlar, Ostrov, Sarica-Niculițel and Istria-Babadag vineyards can be found in the region. Within them there are 9 viticultural centers (Istria, Cernavoda, Medgidia, Murfatlar, Aliman, Băneasa, Ostrov, Oltina, Niculițel), and outside them, 7 more independent viticultural centers (Dăeni, Hârşova, Mangalia, Adamclisi, Chirnogeni, Măcin, Tulcea).

The types of tourism practiced appear in close connection with the varied tourist potential existing in the region. Thus we mention:

***Leisure and relaxation tourism*** - the most important form of tourism, favored by the existence of an exciting-demanding bioclimate;

***Spa tourism*** - favored by the presence of natural therapeutic factors. It is practiced in the Techirghiol resort, located on the shore of the lake Techirghiol, but also in other resorts where spa treatment bases have been established (North Eforie, South Eforie, Neptun, Saturn, Mangalia);

***Cultural-historical tourism*** - favored by the existence of numerous historical vestiges, some capitalized (Adamclisi Monument and Fortress), and others that could be capitalized;

***Cultural-religious and pilgrimage tourism*** - The Monasteries of Cocoș, Celic-Dere, Saon, Dervent and "St. Andrew's Cave" are among the most important pilgrimage sites in Dobrogea;

***Business tourism*** - favored by the existence of spaces and facilities for seminars, conferences, meetings in hotels in Constanța, Tulcea, Galați, Eforie Nord or Mangalia;

***Event tourism*** - the existence of cultural-artistic events such as "Neversea" are attractive factors for the region. The use of such events at the end of the season and even outside the tourist season, would have the role of attenuating the seasonality. Also, the sports infrastructure in cities (Galați, Brăila, Tulcea, Constanța), creates opportunities for sport events;

***Sports tourism*** - favored by the presence of the Black Sea and Lake Siutghiol, where numerous facilities for water sports are developed;

***Cruise tourism*** - favored by the presence of the Tomis Tourist Port and the Passenger Terminal within Constanța Port;

***Wine tourism****.* This area is also known for the Sarica-Niculițel Vineyard, Ostrov, with Ostrov and Lipnița Wineries, the Wine Museum, the winery station (where presentations of the technological flow can be made). Also, in recent years it has become a tradition to organize the "New Wine" Festival;

***Nautical leisure tourism*** - favored by the Danube River and the presence of numerous lakes;

***Ecotourism and rural tourism*** - favored by the large number of protected natural areas, but also by the rural character of this area;

***Equestrian tourism*** - can be practiced within the Ostrov Domains, where an equestrian center is arranged;

***Cycling tourism*** - the little-traveled roads in this part of the county can be used for cycling routes. In fact, the area is frequented by cyclists who follow the course of the Danube. Unfortunately, there are no specially designed routes;

***Sport fishing*** – Danube river can be used for such activities;

***Hiking and adventure tourism***: Măcin Mountains

The tourist programs offered by the travel agencies in Romanian Black Sea Basin include tourist services (accomodation&leisure) in seaside resorts, for the summer and/or spa treatment packages in the resorts near the seaside. Several agencies have made certain offers for the end of the season (Seaside for all, Start Summer), but also offers for certain periods/events (1st of May, Easter, Neversea Festival).

The capitalization of the tourist potential, both natural and anthropic, in the Romanian Black Sea Basin, is closely related to the quality of the tourist infrastructure that requires permanent investments to maintain the tourist attractiveness. It aims at both the accessibility of the region and its connection to the major transport infrastructure, but especially the quality of the latter. At the same time, the tourist circulation is decisively influenced by the number, capacity and quality of the tourist reception structures with accommodation, food, treatment facilities, conference rooms, exhibition centers, golf courses, "Blue Flag" approved beaches, nautical leisure facilities, amusement parks, studs, etc.

**3.2. General and specific objectives for future business and entrepreneurship opportunities**

Romania has a very large, low-intensive, fast-growing travel and tourism market, according to the World Tourism and Travel Council (WTTC).

The Romanian Black Sea basin region can become a competitive tourist region at european level, and not only, developed on sustainable principles, attractive for 365 days a year, with a wide range of attractions and tourist experiences offered, balanced spread throughout the area.

**The general objectives** for future business and entrepreneurship opportuni are**:**

1. Development of tourist destinations in the Black Sea Basin Region

2. Development of the tourist business

**Specific Objectives**

To achieve the major goals for tourism development, following specific objectives can be identified:

* ***SO1- Improving accessibility, in order to increase the mobility of visitors to and within the tourist destination of the Black Sea Basin Region*** (Constanta-Mangalia, resorts, ancient fortresses of Dobrogea, Danube Delta, Danube course along the cities of Galati, Braila, Tulcea and Macin Mountains);
* ***SO2 - Restoration, protection and sustainable exploitation in tourism of the cultural and natural heritage of the Black Sea Basin Region*** (Constanta-Mangalia, resorts, ancient fortresses of Dobrogea, Danube Delta, Danube course along the cities of Galati, Braila, Tulcea and Macin Mountains);
* ***SO3 - Creation/modernization of tourist infrastructure in order to increase the attractiveness and competitiveness of tourist destinations in the Black Sea Basin Region*** (Constanta-Mangalia, resorts, ancient fortresses of Dobrogea, Danube Delta, Danube course along the cities of Galati, Braila, Tulcea and Macin Mountains);
* ***SO4 - Development of a varied range of tourist products, attractive to different segments of tourists, which contributes to improving the tourist experience and directing tourist flows to the Black Sea Basin Region*** (Constanta-Mangalia, resorts, ancient fortresses of Dobrogea, Danube Delta, Danube course along the cities of Galati, Braila, Tulcea and Macin Mountains);
* ***SO5*-** *Ensuring labour resources in the tourism sector in the Black Sea Basin Region* (Constanta-Mangalia, resorts, ancient fortresses of Dobrogea, Danube Delta, Danube course along the cities of Galati, Braila, Tulcea and Macin Mountains)*, both quantitatively and qualitatively;*
* ***SO6 - Strengthening the image and achieving a unified promotion of tourist destinations in the Black Sea Basin Region*** (Constanta-Mangalia, resorts, ancient fortresses of Dobrogea, Danube Delta, Danube course along the cities of Galati, Braila, Tulcea and Macin Mountains).

**3.3. The priority areas of tourism development in Romanian Black Sea Region and expected results**

Dobrogea has a high cultural tourism potential generated by an ancient millennial history from which a multitude of cultural objectives have resulted; an equally old folk with an ethnic diversity, each of the ethnicities contributing to the specifics of the human settlements of the region, while also having a rich religious heritage. It also benefits from a significant number of "potential tourists" due to the presence in the vicinity of large urban centres (Galati, Braila, Constanta) as well as traditional tourist areas (Delta Danube and the Black Sea coast), thus there are the prerequisites for the contouring of important tourist flows.

Cultural tourism can become an important link for Dobroga's economic development. Cultural tourism is the instrument for economic development, which leads to economic growth by attracting visitors from outside the host community and who are partly or generally motivated by an interest in historical, artistic, scientific or related components of lifestyle, realities, traditions and information relating to a community, region, group or institution. Such a journey focuses on deepening the cultural environment, including landscapes, visual and theatrical arts, lifestyles, values, traditions and events.

A wider involvement in the promotion of local resources and values would generate advantages for various categories: for the inhabitants of the Black Sea Basin Region, to increase the standard of living by expanding and developing economic activities, opening up to what means value system in tourism and sustainable tourism and for authorities and economic agents- attracting foreign investors, new business opportunities, increasing the confidence of the population in the local business environment , attracting international funds for tourism development projects in all forms etc.

**Expected Results**

The central objective of this strategy is to confirm the Black Sea Basin Region as a successful tourist destination by identifying new business opportunities through which the needs of the market can be adapted to quality products and services as well as optimizing the potential of the market.

***First specific objective****:* Improving accessibility, to increase the mobility of visitors to and within the tourist destination.

***Results indicators:***

1. ensure that adequate, consistent tourism related messages are provided to the public in the whole area;

2. establish criteria to assess the suitability/eligibility of attractions for signposting so that the tourist may have a high level of confidence in the quality of experience at the attraction and to ensure that tourist operators are treated equitably;

3. establish principles for sign design and location so that the tourists may have a high level of confidence in the quality of the factual information given on the sign and to ensure that tourist operators are treated equitably;

4. articulate the administrative procedures that apply to the assessment of applications and the maintenance of standards (quality assurance), as well as the funding arrangements that apply to the erection of approved tourist signs.

***Second specific objective****:* Restoration, protection and sustainable use of the cultural and natural heritage of the Black Sea basin region outside of the beaten tracks.

***Results indicators:***

1. the promotion of new cycle routes starting from the coast and reaching more rural areas;

2. the increase tof attractiveness with regards to both the tourists already arriving on the coast and the ones interested in more sustainable activities, probably already engaged by the famous EV6;

3. the long-distance bike route linking France to Danube’s Delta.

***Third specific objective***: Creation/modernization of the tourist infrastructure to increase the attractiveness and competitiveness of the destination.

***Results indicators:***

1. the promotion of the opportunities given by the sharing economy in the hosting business;

2. the values and mindsets of millennials created a new trend of shared accommodation, which opened the doors for people who never thought about linking their life to hospitality industry and allowed them to gain good money, learn new cultures, find new friends and for some of them - even become entrepreneurs.

3. benefits to restaurants, shops and facilities in general that usually are known and visited only by residents.

***Fourth specific objective***: Tourist products.

***Results indicators:***

1. vacations that will clear the mind and change life;

2. "volunteer holidays" where tourists will work not for money, but for noble causes, conservation works, building a school;

3. holiday party with an ordinary family in another country;

4. searching for new types of trips, such as those on the water with different boats;

5. "ethical holidays" where the tourist will be concerned about the impact of his trip on the host community;

6. health vacations.

***Fifth specific objective***: Ensuring the labour force resources in the tourism sector in the Black Sea basin, both quantitatively and qualitatively.

***Results indicators:***

We propose a distance learning certificate program in sustainable tourism management giving students a general foundation in tourism management that can be completed in 6 months. Students gain behind-the-scenes knowledge of food and beverage management, meeting planning and sanitation regulations, given these circumstances. These programs are fully online. While not required for a certificate, students can choose to participate in an internship experience.

The programs may offer students a flexible choice of specializations in the following areas, including:

* Lodging management
* Food and beverage management
* Recreational activity management

***The sixth specific objective***: Consolidate the image of the destination and achieve a unitary promotion

***Results indicators:***

1. brand management is the way for managing a tourist trademark, particularly its identity;

2. tourist brands contribute to the creation of added value for guests;

**4. REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA**

**4.1. Tourism in Moldova Republic Black Sea Region**

Moldovan tourism has several advantages in both national and regional competition, demonstrates an analysis detailed information on the sector, developed by experts of the Association for Tourism Development in Moldova (ADTM), including:

***a) at the regional level***

* Moldova is a travel provider but also a visited regional destination
* Relatively sufficient regional connection of Moldova as a tourist destination
* There is a positive evolution of the receiving tourism market in the countries of the region
* Moldova is promoted as a tourist destination and has an open international collaboration

***b) internally, nationally***

* Moldova has important tourist attractions
* The tourist market is dynamic
* The institutional framework is favorable for the development of tourism
* There are new development opportunities in tourist destinations

Being a service sector, tourism contributes to the development of the economy by accumulating capital in about 12 types of activities specific to the branch, attracting in its activity about 20 branches related to about 140 services related to the tourism sector: public catering, transport, production and sale of goods, equipment, souvenirs, cultural, sports, leisure activities, medical services, etc.

In 2018 destinations worldwide received 1.323 million international arrivals. In total, Travel & Tourism generated $7.6 trillion (10.2% of global GDP) and 292 million jobs in 2017, equivalent to 1 in 10 jobs in the global economy. The sector accounted for 6.6% of total global exports and almost 30% of total global service exports. In this context, tourism must necessarily be a priority for the development of the Republic of Moldova.

The total contribution of the tourism industry to Moldova's economy in 2018 was 4.9 billion lei or only 3.3% of the country's gross domestic product (GDP) in 2018. However, although they seem considerable, these figures show that tourism is not developed to the full potential available. Armenia, a comparable country in size and population, obtains from tourism about six times the direct income, and Romania more than 30 times.

According to the World Tourism Council, the direct contribution of tourism to the GDP of the Republic of Moldova, against the background of the reduction in the number of tourists arriving, has a decreasing trend, although cash in tourism activities, in 2018, increased by 12 times more than in 2017 ($443,000,000 – in 2017; $500,000,000 – in 2018).

Table 4.1. International travel receipts (thousands of USD) and annual increase (%) in Republic of Moldova

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **2011** | **2012** | **2013** | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **2018** |
| 253000000 | 279000000 | 324000000 | 328000000 | 300000000 | 344000000 | 443000000 | 500000000 |
|   | 10.28 | 16.13 | 1.23 | -8.54 | 14.67 | 28.78 | 12.87 |

*Source: https://www.worldbank.org/*

*Source: https://www.worldbank.org/*

Figure 4.1. Annual increase (%) of international travel receipts in Republic of Moldova

*Source: <https://statistica.gov.md/>*

Figure 4. 2. % Employment, by sectors of the economy

*Source: <https://statistica.gov.md/>*

Figure 4.3. % Employment, of the tourism sector

From the previous graph, we can see a downward trend in the employed population in the tourism sector, so that from 2013 (53.5%), there is a decrease of about 1% in the population occupied in tourism: 51.6% in 2015, 49.2% in 2016, 47.4% in 2018, with the exception of 2017, where there was a level of 51%.

*Source: <https://statistica.gov.md/>*

Figure 4.4 Number of foreign tourists staying in collective tourist reception structures with accommodation functions, by countries of origin

According to the graph shown above, the higher weights in the total number of foreign tourists and hikers arriving in the Republic of Moldova went to the citizens of Romania (20.2%), Russian Federation (13.4%), Ukraine (10.4%), Germany (5.6%), Turkey and Italy (4.3%), United States (3.9%), Israel (3.6%), Netherlands (3.3%), United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (2.9%), Belarus and Lithuania (2.3%) , Sweden (2.1%), Bulgaria (1.7%), Poland (1.6%), Armenia, France and Austria (1.3%), Spain (1.2%), Azerbaijan (1.1%) Greece (1.0%).

*Source: <https://statistica.gov.md/>*

Figure 4.5. Existing capacity of collective tourist reception structures with accommodation functions (number of rooms)

Based on the previous chart, the reception capacity of hotels and motels in 2009-2018 ranges from 2056 rooms (2009) to 1738 rooms (2018), decreasing by 15.47%. We observe at apartment-type hotels, where the number of rooms during the period analyzed increases from 67 rooms (2009) to 102 rooms (2018), recording an increase of 34.31%. The number of rooms in hostels for visitors decreased by 40.38%, from 369 rooms (2009) to 220 rooms (2018). The retirement structures, holiday villages and other rest facilities, as well as the children's holiday camps during the period analysed, decreased their respective room numbers as follows: from 975 to 1046 (up 7.28%), from 1876 to 1,976 (increase by 5.33%) and from 1869 to 2777 (up 48.58%). In general, we can say that during the years 2009-2018 the total number of rooms available is in a permanent increase from 7296 rooms in 2009 to 8149 rooms in 2018, increasing by 11.69%.

*Source: <https://statistica.gov.md/>*

Figure 4.6. Existing capacity of collective tourist reception structures with accommodation functions (number of places)

The number of hotels and motels during 2009-2018 increased by 11 units from 47 to 58, which is 23.40%. Apartment hotels in 2009 were 6 units, then their number increases to 8 units in 2018. We can see that the number of tourist and agrotourism hostels, hostels for visitors and retirement structures, during 2009-2018, does not change radically, constituting when 6 when 7 units. We can also appreciate that the number of holiday villages and other rest structures is decreasing, so from 62 units in 2009 they reached 55 units in 2018, falling by 12.73%.

*Source: <https://statistica.gov.md/>*

Figure 4.7. Number of collective tourist reception structures with accommodation function

In January-June 2018, compared to the corresponding period of 2017, the number of tourists and hikers participating in domestic and transmitter tourism increased by 44.5% and 11.7%, while in receiving tourism the number decreased by 2.0%. The number of tourists and hikers, participants in tourism organized by travel agencies and tour operators, according to the purpose of the visits, is presented as follows:

*Source: <https://statistica.gov.md/>*

Figure 4.8. Tourism organised by travel agencies and tour operators

According to the above graph, for 2018, of the 5.3 thousand foreign tourists and hikers who visited the Republic of Moldova and benefited from the services of travel agencies and tour operators, 54.4% arrived for rest, recreation and leisure purposes, 31.7% - business and professional reasons and 6.0% - treatment.

The geographic location of the Republic of Moldova on the border between the CIS and the EU makes regional integration possible but also offers possibilities for transit tourism – a typical form of tourism that involves crossing one or more countries, with the holiday country as its destination. The development of this form of tourism for the Republic of Moldova will have a positive impact on the development of receiving tourism. Tourists crossing Moldova to their final destination will contribute to the use of various services complementary to tourist consumption. It is also absolutely necessary to initiate mixed programs between countries bordering Moldova, in order to serve tourists who are to transit the Republic of Moldova, the final destination being Romania or Ukraine.

In the image below we can see the evolution of the total number of tourists in the territory of R.M. in the period 2016-2020. It is visible that there has been a positive development of the increase in the number of tourists.

Table 4.2. Number of tourists staying in collective tourist reception structures with accommodation function



*Source: https://statistica.gov.md/*

Law no. 352 of November 24, 2006 on the organization and development of tourism in the Republic of Moldova defines tourism as one of the priority areas of the national economy. Being a service sector, tourism contributes to the development of the economy by accumulating capital in about 12 types of activities specific to the branch, attracting in its activity about 20 branches related to about 140 services related to the tourism sector: public catering, transport, production and sale of goods, equipment, souvenirs, cultural, sports, leisure activities, medical services, etc.

Tourism is an important force for the development of the economy, as evidenced by statistical data. In 2018, the Republic of Moldova registered an economic growth of 4.1%, the value of GDP in current prices reaching 11.4 billion USD. The given evolution took place in the conditions of an average annual MDL / USD exchange rate of 16.8 Lei and of an annual inflation of 3 percent.

Based on the UNWTO definition of foreign tourists, the Republic of Moldova was visited in 2018 by a number of 160 thousand foreign tourists, which is over 8 times higher than the number of tourists who came to the country through travel agencies, but in at the same time 10 times less compared to estimating the number of potential foreign tourists based on the number of border crossings.

Analyzing **comparatively the share of the tourism industry in the economy** between the Republic of Moldova and the EU according to the Eurostat methodology for classifying activities related to the tourism industry, it can be noted that both the share of total sales per economy (3.3 compared to 3.9%), but especially in terms of the share of employment (4.3 compared to 9.5%), the sector's contribution to the national economy is lower than the EU average. These figures are explained in terms of two factors: on the one hand the sector is more underdeveloped and there is room for growth, and on the other hand the component of the informal sector is much higher.

Regarding the estimates on the share in GDP, the data for 2018 show that the HoReCa sector has a share of 1.22%, and the share of the tourism industry in this regard reaches 2.9%.

Another relevant macro indicator on increasing the base of the country's tourism potential refers to the expenditures of non-residents in the Republic of Moldova which in the period 2014-2018 recorded an average annual increase of 11.1% from USD 324 million in 2014 to an amount of 500 million in 2018. These expenses represent foreign exchange in the country and export of services, respectively, and data from the Balance of External Payments indicate that on average every third dollar of Moldova's export of services is represented by the expenses of non-residents in our country. This share increased from 28.7% in 2014 to 33.9 in 2018 and was one of the most important factors in balancing the external balance of payments.

**4.2. General and specific objectives for future business and entrepreneurship opportunities**

Moldova is happy of a successful location, being in a region easily accessible to tourists from the European Union.

**General objective**

Stăuceni commune is an important tourist destination in the center of the country with a stable flow of visitors satisfied with the arranged attractions, variety and quality of services, offering a wide range of possibilities to know an old wine destination, through aesthetic and interesting attractions, professional guidance and service. The development of the tourism sector of Stăuceni commune for the next four years will be achieved in the direction of improving infrastructure, increasing the attractiveness and competitiveness of the destination, capitalizing on cultural heritage.

**Specific objectives**

To achieve the major goals for tourism development, following specific objectives can be identified:

* *SO1 - Improving accessibility, in order to increase the mobility of visitors to and within the tourist destination* - will contain activities on modernizing the access infrastructure both in the locality and within the commune, the aesthetic arrangement of public transport stations, stopping places, for to increase the attractiveness as a tourist objective.
* *SO2 - Restoration, protection and sustainable use in tourism of cultural and natural heritage* - will contain activities to create a list of tourist attractions in the municipality, creating and capitalizing on local tourist routes, identifying sources for local Museum, historical sites ( the hearth of the locality), activities to capitalize on the active forms of tourism at the current stage (development of wine, business tourism, dynamization of cultural, gastronomic, social, sports, weekend tourism), supporting the creation of local folk groups and boosting handicrafts.
* *SO3 - Creation/ modernization of the tourist infrastructure to increase the attractiveness and competitiveness of the destination* - will contain activities on the development of land use plans, technical projects for landscaping, promotion of the Central Park in the locality with leisure facilities, recreation and sports; establishing public-private partnerships in order to arrange the pedestrian area in the locality, with specific infrastructure (cafes, places arranged in national style); application of technologies for the modernization of services (creation of the mechanism for online reflection of the location and information about the tourist objectives in the locality and region, creation of the digital map of the tourist potential).
* *SO4 - Development of human capacities in the tourism sector, both quantitatively and qualitatively* - will contain actions on the appointment of the person responsible for tourism development in the City Hall, its training and participation in training courses, organizing seminars, conferences, thematic round tables, exchange of experience etc.
* *SO5 - Strengthening the image of the tourist destination Stăuceni and achieving a complex promotion* - will contain actions on collaboration with all stakeholders to promote local tourism, attracting diaspora representatives to promote the country's image, including local destination, by distributing leaflets about traditions, customs and tourism national; supporting, on the basis of partnerships, projects of national and international importance in the field of tourism, between the economic agents in the country and the Moldovan diaspora; undertaking actions for the inclusion of the locality in the National Route "Kingdom of Moldovan Wines"; creating the calendar of annual cultural-artistic events; elaboration of a tourist brochure; creating the dedicated section on the official page of the City Hall and on the social networks, promoting the local tourist route on the specialized portals.

Moldova can be promoted as an annex of Romania, with a specific focus on rural and wine tourism known globally. Iasi, a Romanian city near Chisinau, registered a higher number of tourists than the Republic of Moldova, 12 million tourists, of which 2.7 million were foreigners. Thus, the proximity to such a city could bring enormous benefits to the Republic of Moldova.

Another opportunity in this regard is the proximity of the southern part of Moldova with the Danube Delta or why not Constanța which again surpasses the Republic of Moldova by the total number of tourists more than 4 times. In conclusion, another strategic opportunity to promote tourism Republic of Moldova would be the elaboration of common tourist routes with areas of Romania such as is Iași and Constanța / Danube Delta. Both cities are at the same time and close and removed from the Republic of Moldova to be a challenge of their tourist diversityareas.

Being in the age of digitalization and online communication, tourism is largely promotedbut also influenced by online search engines such as TipAdvisor, Booking, Expedia, AIRbnb, Google, tourism marketing blogs, etc.

When requesting identification on the booking.com site of a location for the Republic Moldova, 562 properties were identified, and for Chisinau we have a number of 398 locations. Thus we come to the conclusion that over 70% of accommodation locations are in the country's capital, which denotes a very high concentration.

We conclude that the distribution of tourism is mainly for the Chisinau area and the regions are forgotten. For comparison, the share of the number of accommodations in the Bucharest region is only 13% of the total number of accommodation available in Romania.

In the context of the obtained results, one of the ideas by which the Republic of Moldova appearsit must redistribute and promote both urban and rural or regional tourism. One one of the simplest and least expensive opportunities we have is of course access to the international market for online accommodation reservations such as booking.com.

Just as the OrheiulVechi region is promoted, the locations are to be promoted Moldovan natives and households to familiarize tourists with the specific taste and at the same time to benefit from the financial flows obtained from tourism. In this purpose, it is recommended to restructure local councils and establish training directions locals and tourism promotion through international search engines.

**4.3. The priority areas of tourism development and expected results**

The Republic of Moldova is a small country with a great diversity of objects of tourist interest located at short distances from the main cities – centers hotel. There are over 15,000 anthropogenic tourist attractions in Moldova and over 300 important natural areas. Several thousand prehistoric resorts have been attested, approx. 400 settlements from different historical epochs, about 50 ancient fortified fortresses, approx. 500 early medieval settlements, numerous medieval fortresses in the land, 6 fortresses medieval stone (in various stages of preservation), over 1000 monuments of protected architecture, about 50 Orthodox monasteries. This heritage is relative uniformly dispersed on the national territory, and its value motivates sufficiently tourist visits. Unfortunately, the state of heritage degradation makes it unattractive.

To ensure a general understanding of the forms of tourism through which the tourist potential can be capitalized, were examined opinions of visitors, tourist companies from Moldova and abroad, of foreign journalists and experts in the field of tourism. The opinions were exposed in the surveys conducted at the exit of foreign visitors from the country, as well as during 3 study visits to Moldova of journalists and experts’ foreigners.

The main tourist attractions and the competitive advantage: among the major elements of tourist attractions are cultural events and activities, cuisine, adventure activities, nature, rural environment, cultural heritage, historical monuments, wine etc., these elements being important for the development of forms of tourism in Republic of Moldova.

At the same time, it is found that cultural, gastronomic, social, sports, automotive, weekend, urban, nostalgic and ecological tourism is less capitalized.

Key products suggested for development include wine tourism, rural tourism and cultural tourism, it is considered that if they were combined with "light" activities, such as craft workshops, hiking or horse-drawn carriage rides, Moldova could promote a very attractive offer.

In the context of the tourist potential of Stăuceni commune, the *leisure* is identified as a *distincttourist motivation*.

Leisure is an important element in satisfying the needs of tourists, regardless of the main motivation of the holiday or the form of tourism practiced (rest, spa, excursion, etc.). Moreover, regardless of the age or socio-professional profile of tourists, the demand for leisure during the holidays has become so high that it has acquired the status of a tourist motivation itself.

The leisure is a decisive argument in choosing a tourist destination, because it is able to differentiate the offers proposed by the agencies of the tourist markets, to determine the extent of the tourist circulation. Thus, the diversity and originality of the leisure offer can be decisive elements in attracting tourist flows.

At the same time, the leisure, as part of the tourist service packages, is capitalized insignificantly, the deficiencies being at present:

• the activities are not permanent;

• there is no annual calendar of leisure events and activities;

• most leisure activities are carried out in urban areas;

• the insufficiency of the leisure units is noticed;

• most tourist service offers do not provide for their individualization.

For the development of the tourism sector at local level, the Strategy contains several actions regarding the diversification of leisure. In the future, it is proposed:

* individualization of the tourist offers and diversification of tourist products;
* stimulating the tourist circulation, which represents an important source of revenues for the rural area included in the tourist circuit;
* ensuring the competitiveness of rural areas where leisure is developed;
* motivating tourists to visit leisure areas.
* ensuring the effective involvement of the tourist in the development of entertainment programs. His training in an activity may lead him in the future to choose this particular destination for rest.

*Tourist routes. The current situation.*

1) Excursions in the Republic of Moldova are cheap tourist products and accessible to a large number of customers. The most requested destinations are Chisinau, wineries, monasteries, cities, nature reserves and rural guesthouses, which form the general offer for domestic and hospitality tourism.

2) At present, 20 national tourist routes and 7 wine routes are being promoted more intensely, covering the entire territory of the country.

For the commune of Stăuceni, a specific objective is the inclusion of the locality in the national route “Kingdom of Moldovan wine”, offering an attraction with a historical element.

**Expected Results**

***First specific goal:*** Improving accessibility, in order to increase the mobility of visitors to and within the tourist destination.

***Results indicators:***

1. modernization of the destination access infrastructure

2. improving accessibility within the destination:

***The second specific goal***: Restoration, protection and sustainable use in tourism of the cultural and natural heritage of the Black Sea Basin.

***Results indicators:***

1. elaboration and approval of the strategic framework for tourism development in Stăuceni;

2. creating the destination tourism database;

3. arrangement and endowment of the local Museum;

4. arranging top tourist attractions in the destination.

***Third specific objective:***Creation/modernization of the tourist infrastructure in order to increase the attractiveness and competitiveness of the destination.

***Results indicators:***

1. elaboration of feasibility studies, business plans and investment projects for tourism infrastructure;

2. promoting partnerships for the creation and location of tourist structures in Stăuceni;

3. modernization, arrangement and extension of visitor service spaces in Stăuceni;

4. ecological classification / certification of visitor service units.

***The fourth specific objective:*** Ensuring the labor force resources in the tourism sector in the Black Sea basin, both quantitatively and qualitatively.

***Results indicators:***

1. organizing training courses for people involved in tourism;

2. carrying out study visits to outstanding tourist destinations;

3. capacity building in tourism for local museum employees.

4. development of tourism marketing skills.

***The fifth specific objective******:*** Consolidate the image of the destination and achieve a unitary promotion

***Results indicators:***

1. realization of the concept of tourist promotion;

2. promoting Stăuceni web / fb pages with tourist information;

3. creation of the network of information panels and tourist orientation;

4. supporting a cycle of radio / TV shows, articles in the written press Publication of the Tourist Guide of the destination;

5. participation in fairs, forums, specialized exhibitions.

In general, in Moldova tourism statistics are fragmentary and do not include all aspects of hospitality for specific destinations.

The situation regarding the pandemic caused by the COVID-19 virus will leave a substantial mark on the field, whichis one of the most economically affected. In this sense, it is opportune to intervene with certain to there duction of the negative impact (loss of jobs, loss of income, impossibility to pay taxes). These measures could provide for economic intervention by the state (exemption or reduction of taxes, granting subsidies), as well as orientation to ward sactions to increase the number of tourists locally.

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