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- The Magic of Synergies -

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DEVELOPING JOINT SUSTAINABLE TOURISM PROGRAMME IN THE CROSS- BORDER AREA ELIN PELIN AND LESKOVAC

- Sustainable Tourism Toolkit-

Place: Elin Pelin & Leskovac

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I. Introduction

This toolkit was prepared under the project "The Magic of Synergies". The leading partner in the project is the municipality of Elin Pelin, Bulgaria. Project partners are Leskovac Tourist Organization, Republic of Serbia and Development Center - Jablanica, Pcinja County, Republic of Serbia.

Among the goals of the project are:

- To create a synergistic effect of the joint influence of the participants in the field of connecting festivals, development of common policies for tourism development and new tourist products in the cross-border region Elin Pelin and Leskovac;
- Carry out marketing activities aimed at tour operators and tourism service providers to promote new joint tourism products (new festivals);
- To increase the capacity of participants in the cross-border region of Elin Pelin and Leskovac to implement a model for sustainable tourism development by sharing best practices, experience and know-how.

1. Purpose of the toolkit

The purpose of this toolkit is to provide those interested in the development of tourism in the cross-border destination Elin Pelin - Leskovac parties the most important and effective tools for the development of sustainable tourism, as well as guidelines for their practical implementation.

All presented tools, techniques, guidelines and recommendations in this document are specially selected and individualized according to the needs and tourist profile of the cross-border destination Elin Pelin - Leskovac.

The Toolkit for Sustainable Tourism Development should be seen as a useful guide to the effective management of the destination by all stakeholders. It brings together the professional experience of the experts who developed the toolkit, providing practical advice and guidelines for action based on extensive expertise, and includes many good practices, ideas, tips and useful tools from various guides, tools and documents related to sustainable development of tourist destinations. Some of the recommendations, guidelines and tools in the considered manuals and documents overlap, which is respectively an indicator of their importance for the sustainable development of tourism. On the other hand, each guide focuses on specific methods and tools for work, thus completing each other in the best possible way.

These tools will contribute to the development of variable and comprehensive sustainable tourism, which the cross-border region strives for, and which in a way is to support the social-economic development of the local community and the tourism industry in the areas of Elin Pelin and Leskovac.

The specific goals of the manual are:

- To assist the target group in managing the cross-border destination together with the various stakeholders
- To provide the necessary theoretical and practical information to be used both as a guide and for reference regarding the development of tourism in the destination
- To provide guidelines and steps for working with the individual tools
- To clarify frequently asked questions regarding the development of sustainable tourism
- To promote good relations between the participating partners by setting a k roadmap for the successful and sustainable development of the cross-border tourist destination Elin Pelin - Leskovac.

2. Target audience

The current toolkit is aimed mainly at the teams and representatives of the municipality of Elin Pelin, the Tourist Organization of the town of Leskovac and the Development Center - Jablanica, Pcinya counties, Republic of Serbia, as partners in the project "Magic of Synergies". These are the main groups of people who will be directly responsible for the sustainable development, management and overall performance of the cross-border destination Elin Pelin - Leskovac.

At the same time, the toolkit contains guidelines, advice and tools that can be useful to all stakeholders in the region directly or indirectly related to tourism, including tour operators and travel agents, hotels and guest houses, non-governmental organizations and tourism-related associations, transport companies, schools and universities, representatives of other sectors indirectly related to tourism, etc. In addition to learning more about the opportunities they have as interested in the sustainable development of the destination, they will be able to enrich their knowledge of specific methods and tools, as well as use the tools as a guide for their activities.

In a broader sense, this guide can be a source of useful information for those working in tourist attractions, centers, businesses, institutions and in general the representatives of the tourism industry in both countries as one, and they should keep in mind that the presented advice and guidance specifically related to the cross-border destination Elin Pelin - Leskovac may not be relevant to their tourist destinations and should not apply them literally, but rather use them as a starting point for development.

II. The concept of creative tourism as a type of tool for effective, responsible and sustainable development of tourism

1. Definition of creative tourism

One of the tasks of this toolkit is to combine the interconnected approaches of "community-oriented tourism planning" and "sustainable tourism". Therefore, as a kind of tool for their unification is considered creative tourism as a form of sustainable tourism that meets the demands and expectations of modern tourists and at the same time respects and preserves the culture and traditions of the community. The term "creative tourism" ("creative tourism") was introduced by Greg Richards and Crispin Raymond in 2000. The idea for more creative forms of tourism occurs during the European project EUROTEx, whose purpose is to stimulate the development of crafts through tourism. Although the idea of developing creative experiences is not new in itself, creative tourism is quickly being adopted and made more concrete through the development of courses, workshops, conferences and seminars, as well as a number of publications on the subject.¹

Creative tourism is developing, metaphorically speaking, as a branch of cultural tourism, as a natural continuation due to the change in the needs and desires of people to discover things and experiences at night. It can help promote the social and cultural development and growth of the local economy. This type of tourism includes not only incoming, foreign tourists in a country, but also its own population, the society that creates and helps to preserve the traditions and values of a destination.

The main idea of the various definitions and concepts of creative tourism include the participation of the tourist in various activities and gaining authentic experience, which is the main goal of creative tourism. It is aimed not only at the participation of the tourist, but also the participation of the local community. Unlike creative tourism, in cultural tourism the community plays an insignificant role, as only the most beautiful cultural routes and the most popular places are shown.

And what is the role of creative tourism in the development of tourist destinations? Each tourist destination tries to adapt to the new requirements of the tourist market and to stand out by developing innovative products. Many cities and regions are starting to look for new models of development, drawing more attention to the idea of "creative industries", including tourism.

2. Consumers of creative tourism

- It is difficult to make a "portrait" of these new tourists because they want to be unique.
- They can be single, couples, families, a group of tourists or traveling alone.
- They can plan their own trip or seek professional services.

1 Journal of Tourism Consumption and Practice Volume 4 No.2 2012

- The nature of their creative activities can be educational (courses, workshops), can be related to creating something (art workshops, co-creation with local artists and creators) or be a presentation (performance of a concert, acting, exhibition) .

What are the main characteristics of creative tourists?

- They share the same values based on ethical principles, authenticity, know-how, continuous training, experience and interest in DIY activities.
- They want to experience the local culture by actively participating in artistic and creative activities.
- They want to experience experiences in which they feel “like a local”.
- They spend a significant portion of their budget on these experiences.
- They combine different types of tourism during the same trip.
- They are adamant about practicing tourism: once they have experienced what creative tourism is, they no longer want to travel in a conventional way.

3. Benefits

Creative tourism provides a double benefit - tangible and intangible. The material or tangible benefits of creative tourism can be easily measured as costs before, during and after the trip, and these costs are related to the trip and the sites that will be visited. It is important to note that both cultural and creative tourism are sectors of the economy like other types of tourism and thus are an important part of the country's GDP.

Apart from the material benefit, the intangible one, generated by the creative tourism, is distinguished, ie. local identity and peculiarity, social capital, protection of cultural values, human interaction and cultural exchange and adding diversity to the local culture.

Creative tourism brings many benefits in every sense, helps to preserve both tangible and intangible values, preserves heritage, protects old traditions, promotes the country abroad and creates new jobs for residents, which is especially important in the context of today's events, in which the whole world is involved. In addition, it creates direct cooperation between people of different nationalities and forms a new tourist market. All these factors allow to contribute to the improvement of the local economy through incomes of local residents, companies and municipal budgets through various taxes, etc..²

2 Prof. Dr. Jurėnienė Virginija. “Tourism - From Empirical Research Towards Practical Application”, chapter 7 Interaction between Cultural/Creative Tourism and Tourism/Cultural Heritage Industries; 2016. p. 146

The above benefits of creative tourism clearly shows the project partners involved, the municipality of Elin Pelin, Leskovac Tourist Organization and Development Center - Yablanitsa, Pcinja districts how much they can get, both individually and as a whole for society. in their regions. In addition to creating a more sustainable joint tourism products, creative tourism will promote the cross-border destination Elin Pelin - Leskovac in a much more inspiring and memorable way than traditional forms of tourism..

In order to attract tourists interested in creative tourism, the representatives of Elin Pelin Municipality, Leskovac Tourist Organization and Development Center - Yablanitsa, Pchina districts should apply a more interactive approach to the presentation of joint tourism products, to include tourists themselves in the preparation of various local specialties, the presentation of local culture, traditions, etc.

III. Guidelines for effective, responsible and sustainable management of the cross-border tourist destination Elin Pelin - Leskovac

1. Sustainable management of the destination and stakeholders

The management, development and marketing of a tourist destination is a multi-layered process, the effectiveness of which is related to the participation of various experts and representatives of both the public, the private and non-governmental sector. The success of the development of sustainable tourism in the destination depends to a large extent on the synergy that all these participants and stakeholders manage to create, as the experience, knowledge and capabilities of the whole are always greater and more effective than the efforts of individuals, organizations, institutions or businesses.

Numerous studies, as well as various experts and organizations, confirm that the sustainable management of destinations is crucial to involve all stakeholders in order to make the process as effective as possible for all those whose activities and well-being are directly or indirectly related to tourism development. In order to be involved in the process of sustainable management of the destination and the stakeholders, the experts from the European Commission and NALAS (Network of Associations of Local Authorities of South East Europe) recommend the establishment of a working group of stakeholders and the following basic steps:

- Appointment of a local coordinator
- Identification of key stakeholders and establishment of a working group
- Allocation of roles and responsibilities among stakeholders

The activities of the **local coordinator** are usually related to coordination, planning, management, marketing and promotion, and may include training and quality standards. His role is extremely important, as he is expected to be responsible for the implementation and development of the included tools, techniques and recommendations regarding the sustainable management of the cross-border tourist destination Elin Pelin - Leskovac. The local coordinator can be a representative of the local authorities, the Ministry of Tourism, business or non-governmental tourism organizations, as well as a specially hired external expert.

The local coordinator should be a highly motivated and enterprising person, with management experience, who can unite and direct the efforts of the stakeholders.

Identifying key stakeholders and setting up a working group is the next important step.

It should be carried out before the start of any planning by the local government related to the development of tourism in the destination, in order to be able to carry out the necessary analysis of stakeholders, their prioritization, selection and distribution according to their strength, importance. and activity. In the field of tourism, the following groups of stakeholders can most often be identified:

- At the local level - mayor, city council, local tourism council, local council for sustainable development, regional councils, destination management organization, NGO sector, PR experts and others.
- At the national level - Ministry of Tourism, Ministry of Regional Development, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Transport and Communications, etc.
- At the level of the private sector - Chamber of Commerce, associations of tourist guides, associations of hoteliers and restaurateurs, associations of travel agencies, travel agencies, media / media, universities related to tourism, employers' union, etc.
- At the international level - international and European organizations related to tourism, European Commission, National Chambers of Commerce, ANCI, CIFCA, associations of cities and regions related to history and art, associations of cities with protected areas, organizations for sustainable development, etc.

The local coordinator will need a working group with people from different fields, with different knowledge and skills who can participate in gathering the necessary information, to express reasoned opinions on different policies and perhaps most importantly - to be motivated and committed to the process of sustainable development of the destination. Ideally, the group should include as many representatives of various public, private and non-governmental institutions, organizations, associations, etc. as possible, while the number of its members should not become too large for decision-making in the working group. not to become too complicated and too slow as a process.

If the destination already has such a working group or council with similar objectives, it is worth first trying to integrate the activities related to the sustainable tourism development indicators of the destination with the other activities of the working group / council. This can be done by explaining all the benefits and expected results, by discussing the different activities and responsibilities and agreeing on their nature and distribution, or by inviting new members to the existing group / council.

In this case, the cross-border destination Elin Pelin - Leskovac already has a working group whose activities are currently related to the activities of this project, but it can continue to exist after the end of the project, including all its tasks and objectives. related to the system of indicators, their monitoring, collection, processing and evaluation of data on indicators, identification of priority cases / problems identified with the help of the results of the indicators, preparation of an action plan according to the defined priorities, etc.

The most effective method of involving all stakeholders is by organizing a workshop to which they can be invited. During this event, the system of indicators for sustainable development of tourism in the destination, its benefits and applicability should be presented. At this workshop, the local coordinator should also present the specific indicators that have been selected to discuss with the invited stakeholder representatives their usefulness and relevance, as well as the possibilities for gathering the information needed for each indicator. Other aspects related to the sustainable management of the destination can be discussed during the workshop, the main goal of which should be the awareness and understanding by the stakeholders of the overall process of sustainable management with the help of the system, as well as reaching an agreement on the most important and current topics and issues.

The third step, according to NALAS experts, **is the distribution of roles and responsibilities between stakeholders**. This stage is directly related to the workshop described above, as during it the stakeholders should agree on who will be responsible for which activities and on the collection of information on which / which indicators. The time intervals for gathering information on the various indicators, the methods for collecting the information, as well as the time frame for gathering it should also be determined. For example, the municipality of Elin Pelin and the tourist organization Leskovac may be responsible for indicators related to the number of tourists. , visitors and overnight stays, schools - for some indicators related to the level of education, etc.

2. Data collection, storage and evaluation

Data collection is the most important but also the most difficult stage of the evaluation process. To gather the necessary information, the destination must involve all stakeholders, providing clear, understandable and effective methods of analysis. Some of the relevant information can be collected from statistics, but for another it is necessary to conduct the relevant surveys. Therefore, it is necessary to prepare in advance samples of surveys for surveys of visitors and locals, as prepared and included in Part V of this toolkit. The data needed for the tourism business can be collected both through surveys and through workshops, focus groups or interviews.

- The data collection process consists of the following steps:
- Create a destination profile
- Collection of statistical data and information from the public sector
- Collection of information about visitors
- Collecting information about the local community
- Collection of information about the tourism industry

Creating a destination profile is a key step because it provides a summary of the most important information and destination data to stakeholders to ensure that everyone is familiar with the key aspects. The profile of the destination needs to include information about the geography, tourist facilities, transport connections and the number of visitors to the destination.

The second step is **collecting statistical data and information from the public sector**.

Each city has its own profile in terms of seasonality of demand, the share of holiday homes and day visitors in relation to its permanent population, as well as for visitors arriving at the destination for business purposes. This demand must be managed through appropriate utilities and infrastructure, including public roads, water, wastewater and waste services, car parks, signs, museums, art galleries, sports facilities, tourist centers, reserves, parks and other amenities, while identify the places, products and services in need of development. Updated information on the use of public infrastructure by visitors will allow local authorities to make better plans for tourism development. It also allows for an informed debate on public infrastructure charging policies and helps secure additional funding for infrastructure development..

For the collection of the necessary statistical data and information in Part V of this toolkit a special sample of a survey for the study of the destination has been prepared, with the help of which the stakeholders in the cross-border destination Elin Pelin - Leskovac will be able to collect the necessary data more easily, quickly and conveniently and to carry out the study accordingly.

Visitors are one of the main stakeholders in the destination, given that on the one hand they have a direct interest in sustainable tourism, and on the other hand, they are the ones who have the main impact on the destination. That is why **gathering information from visitors is key to understanding** their expectations and interests, as well as other useful information. At the same time, it is important to make decisions that limit the negative and increase the positive impact of tourists on the destination. Getting to know the visitors, their number and how they use the infrastructure during their visit to the destination is essential for the local government and the tourism business to be as effective as possible in planning. This section will provide guidelines to check what is known about visitors in a particular area and ways to obtain data on current and future visitor numbers. It is also important to note that in this case the term "visitors" includes both foreign and local tourists who spend the night in the destination, and foreign and local day visitors who do not stay overnight. The tourism industry would not exist if there were no visitors, so it is crucial to understand the characteristics and behavior of tourists who visit the destination. This ensures that decision-makers re-developing and managing the destination are well informed and able to deal with the various cases that exist or may arise in the future. In addition to tourists who come to visit tourist attractions and engage in various activities (eg participation in festivals, visits to cultural sites, wine tasting, sunbathing), visitors include families who visit another city for one day, to attend a sporting event or festival, participants in various conferences and workshops, as well as people whose purpose is to visit friends and / or relatives.

The success of the tourism industry is directly related to the satisfaction of visitors. Failure to meet the expectations of visitors will lead to a reduction in their number and, consequently, the associated economic benefits for the destination, the tourism industry and the local community. Therefore, local authorities should regularly measure visitor satisfaction, especially by conducting surveys that would also help identify the strengths and weaknesses of the destination vis-à-vis its competitors.

In Part V of this toolkit is prepared a sample survey for tourists specifically for the cross-border destination Elin Pelin - Leskovac, which stakeholders can use and develop in the future, according to possible changes in the tourist flow to the destination, in the offered tourist products from country of destination, etc.

Conducting surveys to measure visitor satisfaction is important as it provides a customer-oriented basis on which to identify priority activities that would improve the destination's tourism products. They can provide extremely useful information for setting priority goals and allocating funding to improve tourism products and services.

The fourth step in data collection is **to collect information about the local community**. As a specific industry, tourism often uses the same services as the local community. Thus, it predetermines the high level of interest and participation of the community, unlike other industries such as agriculture, for example, which are often carried out out of the sight of the local community. Negative impacts, whether real or just part of subjective perception, can attract significant attention to the tourism industry. Therefore, destination management must ensure that tourism meets both the expectations of visitors and the expectations of the local community. This toolkit includes both the most appropriate indicators for the cross-border destination Elin Pelin - Leskovac related to the local community

(Part IV) and a sample survey for the study of the local community (Part V, point 3).

On the one hand, tourism can benefit many of the sectors in which the local community is directly involved, but on the other hand, it also poses potential challenges that the local community may have to deal with by finding and using appropriate strategies. The process of surveying the views and opinions of the local community on tourism and its impact can be both time-consuming and quite expensive, so the sources of information should be carefully selected, and may include:

- Elected representatives
- Groups of local representatives - associations of local residents, youth groups and associations, etc.
- Interest groups - recreation groups, groups related to the environment, culture, heritage, etc.
- Business representatives - not only the tourism business, but also other sectors that are directly or indirectly related to tourism
- Individuals - people who are interested in specific problems, but do not belong to an organization or association

The number of respondents needed to survey the opinions and attitudes of the local community regarding the impact of tourism is determined mainly for statistical reasons. According to NALAS experts, it is usually necessary to have 384 respondents to achieve a standard error of plus or minus five percent in any estimate of a (large) population. There is no recommendation on the absolute size, it is considered that if the sample is smaller, a larger standard error / deviation should be considered. For smaller cities, the size may be reduced, however, it is considered that a sample of at least about 200 respondents is needed, even when it comes to a smaller city..

This type of extensive research usually requires computer analysis of the data to obtain the necessary information more quickly and reliably. Comparisons between different variables are unlikely to be successful without specific programs (or technical support), with the most commonly used and recommended programs being Excel, Access, and SPSS.“.

The last stage in data collection is **the collection of information about the tourism industry** or the so-called. "Supply" in tourism - accommodation, meals, transport, tourist attractions and activities available to visitors to the destination, etc. Gathering the necessary information for the tourism industry helps to better identify the tourism products that exist in the destination, as well as all the gaps and opportunities for development. And while the private sector is the main supplier of a tourism product, the responsibility for the overall planning and development of tourism in the destination lies with the local government. When the demand in the strongest periods is planned in advance, there is an opportunity to get maximum benefits for all participants in the tourism sector and accordingly to meet the expectations of the local community, not just to respond immediately and without a preliminary strategy of peaks and declines in demand. To fulfill this responsibility, the local authority must be aware of the levels of demand for all key elements of the tourism product, such as accommodation, transport, food, and be active to ensure that supply can match demand from tourists.

A municipality can take a proactive approach to ensure that it has tourism products to attract and retain visitors, and among the activities it can carry out are:

- Periodic review of the number, scope and quality of attractions for visitors to make an analysis of the so-called. A "gap" related to market needs. Accordingly, it is subsequently necessary to work with the tourism industry and investors to identify opportunities for development..
- Carrying out specific studies related to hotels and accommodation, so as to ensure that the increase in demand from tourists will not lead to too large a shortage of accommodation and the opening of new sites, given that the shortage of accommodation cannot be serious "barrier" for the effective and sustainable development of the sector.
- Increasing the attention to all tourism products so as to take a proactive approach and ensure adequate supply of demand for various tourism products and services by visitors.

In terms of the impact on the economy, tourism contributes to both income generation and job creation.

Knowing the impact of tourism on the economy is important in order to know the benefits that tourism can bring directly and indirectly to the community and the tourism industry as a whole. These benefits can be assessed both directly through the direct tourist costs of goods and services and indirectly - through intercompany transactions in the local economy. However, the economic impact of tourism at the municipal level is difficult to quantify from existing national statistics.

Namely, this impact on the local economy is most important for local government and business, as it provides information about what is happening at the local level and allows for comparison with competing destinations.

In the IV part the indicators are presented, and in the V part, 2 points the prepared sample of a survey for research of the tourist industry in the cross-border destination Elin Pelin - Leskovac is presented.

According to the World Tourism Organization, indicators are a kind of indicator of the existence or measurement of the severity of current problems, signal future problems, possible risks, and warn of the potential need for action and measures by local government.

Indicators also play the role of a tool for identifying and measuring the results of local government actions. In general, indicators can measure:

- Changes in the structure of tourism in the destination and its internal factors;
- Changes in external factors that affect the tourism in the destination;
- The effect created by tourism in the destination.

Both quantitative and qualitative data and information can be used for sustainability indicators.

Typically, an indicator is chosen from a number of possible data sets, as it provides important information on key issues that tourism managers and destination managers need to address. The use of the relevant indicator may lead to actions to anticipate and prevent unwanted or unsustainable development of tourism in the destination. In the context of sustainable tourism development, the indicators are considered as a variable over time, which is important from a strategic point of view for the sustainability of the destination, its assets and ultimately for the state and development of the local tourism industry. Part IV of this toolkit for the sustainable development of tourism in the cross-border destination Elin Pelin - Leskovac includes and presents indicators that are based on ETIS - the European System of Indicators in Tourism. Of course, if interested, they can further discuss and implement some of the indicators presented by the World Tourism Organization or the indicators presented by the GSTC - Global Council for Sustainable Tourism. At present, in order to balance between a sufficient number of indicators to cover the various aspects of sustainable tourism development in the cross-border destination Elin Pelin - Leskovac, without overdoing too many indicators that require time and resources, which could not realistically be covered by the destination, these indicators from the ETIS system have been selected and included, which will be of the greatest practical benefit to all stakeholders in the process of sustainable tourism development in Elin Pelin and Leskovac.

The last stage in the collection, processing and storage of information is **the evaluation of data**. Once the information on the indicators has been gathered and presented by the stakeholders, the local coordinator can organize an additional meeting during which to analyze and discuss the results, to take decisions for action or to adjust the goals, to discuss a plan. how to act in the future, etc.

According to the results of the analysis, the working group must evaluate each indicator. They must be checked and agreed. Each member of the group can prepare a proposal for improvements, to what extent an indicator can be improved for a certain period of time. This should be in line with the prepared strategy for sustainable development of the cross-border destination, as well as with the planned other activities and measures.

Once the goals have been set, a number of actions need to be envisaged to achieve them. They should be summarized in an action plan, with a detailed allocation of responsibilities, deadlines for implementation, etc. The results of the indicators can also be used for benchmarking with similar destinations within the country, region or Europe as a whole.

3. Application of indicators in the processes of planning, marketing and positioning

Once the working group has prepared an action plan and discussed how to address the immediate situations and priorities, a longer-term strategy for the improvement and development of the destination can be developed. The aim should be to prepare a plan that outlines what and when it is expected to be achieved, the responsibilities are distributed, the deadlines for implementation are set, etc. Each member of the group should be able to commit to some small improvements in their own field of work, which in turn will contribute to larger and more significant changes and improvements over time.

The local destination coordinator can decide together with the members of the working group what the priority issues are for the destination and then come together and take action. Once the tasks have been prioritized, those that require the most urgent attention can be included in a specific plan (ie which indicators and problems require action, in what order, when, how and by whom).

Why, in fact, is both short-term and longer-term strategic planning for destination development necessary at all? There are many reasons and benefits of this strategic planning, and the main ones that should be addressed are:

- Better understanding of the local tourism industry
- Formulation of specific goals for the individual tourism policies
- Longer focus
- More precise formulation of the role of local government
- Formulate policies that are better tailored to local priority needs
- Supporting and facilitating planning and development
- Improving marketing activities
- Identification of the necessary financial resources, etc.

It must be ensured that the indicators and data collected are subject to regular review, and new indicators may be included if necessary. The set of indicators can be expanded, which helps to create a more complete picture of the destination. However, due consideration must also be given to whether funding can be obtained for the long-term maintenance of the system and to cover the costs of improvements, data collection and other work-related issues. It is also useful to discuss and decide on ways to communicate the results and possible success stories and case studies to wider stakeholder groups, the local community and other organizations and people outside the destination. It is also advisable to include this information in marketing activities and communication with visitors.

Ultimately, the data and information collected can help create a destination history that will be further integrated into marketing and communication plans and will inform long-term strategy and policy. A study can then be made of new target groups of tourists to visit the destination and the different possibilities by which the destination can be presented to potential visitors. In this way, the economic benefits can be maximized as a result of better governance and a more sustainable destination.

Marketing planning should provide the necessary information to potential tourists about the offers and various tourist activities that they will be able to enjoy during their stay in order to motivate them to visit the destination. Therefore, marketing planning should be considered as part of the overall process of tourism planning. It should include several activities - formulation of marketing goals, formulation of marketing strategy and development of tourism products, preparation and implementation of the program for positioning and promotion and appropriate monitoring of its implementation.

The marketing strategy must be linked to both long-term and short-term goals, and it should be reviewed at sufficiently frequent intervals to ensure that everything is up-to-date and evolving according to a pre-defined plan. The marketing strategy may also undergo certain modifications, if necessary, depending on market trends and possible changes in the development of the tourism product.

IV. Main categories of indicators for development of sustainable tourism in the cross-border destination Elin Pelin - Leskovac and their measurement and evaluation

Indicators are a key tool and a kind of starting point for measuring the level of sustainability of tourism in the destination. Initially, it may be difficult to collect data for all indicators. In this case, it is recommended to start with the available data and in a timely manner to look for ways and opportunities to collect the remaining necessary data in the future.

The indicators are divided into basic ones, which, as implied by their name, include the most important indicators related to the sustainable development of tourism, and additional indicators, which are generally considered more suitable for destinations that have more advanced systems. for sustainable development, but nevertheless they are also useful for destinations that are just starting to work harder and focused on the sustainable development of tourism. Both the main and additional indicators are grouped into four categories:

- 1) Destination management indicators
- 2) Economic value indicators
- 3) Indicators of social and cultural impact
- 4) Environmental impact indicators

In this guide, the additional indicators are written in italics to distinguish them from the main indicators..

1. Basic indicators for destination management (including visitor satisfaction)

Below are the most appropriate indicators for destination management for the cross-border destination Elin Pelin - Leskovac.

Basic indicators for destination management				
Criteria	Basic indicator	Unit	Proposed goal	The result
1. Public policy for sustainable tourism	1.1 Percentage of tourist enterprises / institutions in the destination using voluntary certification related to environmental protection / quality / sustainability and / or corporate social responsibility.	%		
2. Visitor satisfaction (Customer satisfaction)	2.1. Percentage of tourists and visitors from the same day who are satisfied with their overall experience at the destination	%		
	2.2. <i>Percentage of repeat / returning visitors (within 5 years)</i>	%		

2. Key indicators of economic value (incl. Profitable tourism industry)

Below are the most appropriate indicators of economic value for the cross-border destination Elin Pelin

- Leskovac.

Key indicators of economic value				
Criteria	Basic indicator	Unit	Proposed goal	The result
1. Tourist flow (volume and value) within the destination	1.1. Number of tourist nights per month	Number of nights		
	1.2. Number of visitors for the same day per month	Number of visitors		
	1.3. Relative contribution of tourism to the economy within the destination (% of GDP)	%		
	1.4. Daily spending per tourist per night	BGN		
	1.5. Daily spending per visitor for a single day	BGN		
2. Efficiency of the tourist enterprise	2.1. Average length of stay of tourists (overnight stays)	Number of nights		
	2.2. <i>Occupancy of accommodation facilities per month and average for the year</i>	%		
3. Quantity and quality of employment	3.1. Direct employment in tourism as a percentage of the total employment in the destination	%		
	3.2. <i>Percentage of seasonal jobs in tourism</i>	%		
4. Supply chain in tourism	4.1. Percentage of locally produced food, beverages, goods and services produced by tourist enterprises in the destination	%		

3. Main indicators for social and cultural impact (including engaged community)

Below are the most appropriate indicators for social and cultural impact for the cross-border destination
Elin Pelin - Leskovac.

Main indicators for social and cultural impact				
Criteria	Main indicator	Unit	Proposed goal	The result
1. Community / social impact	1.1. Number of tourists / visitors per 100 residents	Number of tourists		
	1.2. <i>Percentage of residents who are satisfied with tourism in the destination (per month / season)</i>	%		
	1.3. <i>Number of available beds in accommodation facilities for visitors per 100 inhabitants</i>	Number of beds		
	1.4. <i>Number of housing for rent per 100 homes</i>	number of housings		
2. Health and safety	2.1. Percentage of tourists who register a complaint with the police	%		
3. Gender equality	3.1. Percentage of men and women employed in the tourism sector	%		
	3.2. <i>Percentage of tourism enterprises in which the position of general manager is held by a woman</i>	%		
4. Inclusion / Accessibility	4.1. Percentage of rooms in accommodation facilities accessible to people with disabilities	%		
	4.2. <i>Percentage of accommodation participating in recognized accessibility plans</i>	%		
	4.3. <i>Percentage of public transport accessible to people with disabilities and people with specific access requirements</i>	%		
	4.4. <i>Percentage of tourist attractions that are accessible to people with disabilities and / or participate in recognized accessibility plans</i>	%		
5. Preservation and improvement of cultural heritage, local identity and resources	5.1. Percentage of residents who are satisfied with the impact of tourism on the identity of the destination	%		
	5.2. <i>Percentage of events in the destination that focus on traditional / local culture and heritage</i>	%		

4. Main indicators for environmental impact (incl. protected environment)

Below are the most appropriate environmental impact indicators for the cross-border destination Elin Pelin - Leskovac.

Main indicators for environmental impact				
Criteria	Basic indicator	Unit	Proposed goal	The result
1. Reducing the impact of transport	1.1. Percentage of tourists and visitors for the same day who use different modes of transport to arrive at the destination	%		
	<i>1.2. Percentage of tourists and visitors on the same day who use local / flexible travel / public transport services to see the destination</i>	%		
	1.3. Average travel (km) of tourists and visitors for the same day from their home to the destination	Km		
	<i>1.4. Average carbon footprint of tourists and visitors for the same day traveling from home to destination</i>	Kg		
2. Climate changes	2.1. Percentage of tourism enterprises engaged in climate change mitigation schemes, such as CO2 offsets, energy saving systems, etc., and with "adaptation" reactions and actions	%		
	2.2. Percentage of infrastructure of tourist accommodation and attractions located in "vulnerable zones"	%		
3. Solid waste management	3.1. Production of solid waste per tourist night compared to the production of waste by the population per person (kg)	Kg		
	<i>3.2. Percentage of tourism enterprises in which different types of waste are collected separately</i>	%		
	3.3. Percentage of total recycled waste per tourist compared to the total number of recycled waste per capita per year	%		
4. Water waste treatment	4.1. Percentage of water waste from the destination that is treated at least to a secondary level before discharge	%		
5. Water management	5.1. Water consumption per tourist night compared to water consumption by the general population per person per day	Lt		
	<i>5.2. Percentage of tourism enterprises taking action to reduce water consumption</i>	%		
	<i>5.3. Percentage of tourism enterprises using recycled water</i>	%		

Main indicators for environmental impact				
Criteria	Basic indicator	Unit	Proposed goal	The result
6. Energy consumption	6.1. Energy consumption per tourist night compared to the energy consumption of the general population per person per day	%, coefficient		
	6.2. <i>Percentage of tourism enterprises that take action to reduce energy consumption</i>	%		
	6.3. <i>Percentage of annual amount of energy consumed from renewable sources (Mwh) compared to total energy consumption at destination level per year</i>	%		
7. Nature conservation and biodiversity	7.1. Percentage of local enterprises in the tourism sector that actively support the protection, conservation and management of local biodiversity and nature	%		

V. Guidelines and templates for surveys and research

The current survey questionnaires are based on the main and additional indicators for the study of destination management, included in "The European Tourism Indicator System - Toolkit for sustainable destinations". The included main and additional indicators, as well as the respective survey surveys, are in accordance with the profile and specifics of the cross-border destination Elin Pelin - Leskovac. When preparing this type of research, it is extremely important to select an adequate number of indicators so that they are neither too small and do not gather enough information, nor are they too many and too time-consuming to determine, because there is a risk that the study is carried out. It is recommended that such a study be carried out once a year by the Stakeholder Working Group.

1. Destination management study template

Below is a template for a survey that contains questions that can be used for indicators related to the management of the cross-border destination Elin Pelin - Leskovac.

Survey to conduct a study of the management of cross-border tourist destination

Elin Pelin - Leskovac

Date.....

Please take a few minutes to complete this survey and help create a better idea of the cross-border destination Elin Pelin - Leskovac.

Thank you for your cooperation!

1. Please indicate the total number of local population in your destination?
.....
2. How many tourists / visitors do you welcome annually?
.....
3. How many permanent homes are there in your destination?
.....
4. How many housings are for rent in your destination?
.....
5. What is the percentage of the contribution of tourism to the economy in your destination (% of GDP)?
.....
6. How many residents are directly employed in tourism?
.....
7. How many tourist nights were registered in your destination last year?
.....
8. What is the total number of available beds in your destination?
.....
9. Please indicate last year's occupation in your destination by months:
 - 1) January
.....
 - 2) February
.....
 - 3) March
.....
 - 4) April
.....

5) May

.....

6) June

.....

7) July

.....

8) August

.....

9) September

.....

10) October

.....

11) November

.....

12) December

.....

10. What is the average price for accommodation in a room in your destination?

.....

11. What is the average length of stay of tourists (on average, how many nights do they stay in your destination)?

.....

12. Please indicate (up to 10) the largest events taking place in your destination.

Please mark with X in the provided cells those events that take place on the basis of traditional / local culture:

1) ☐

2) ☐

3) ☐

4) ☐

5) ☐

6) ☐

7) ☐

8) ☐

- 9) ☐
- 10)..... ☐

13. How much of the public transport in your destination is accessible to people with disabilities and people with specific access requirements?

2. Enterprise survey template

Below is a survey questionnaire template that contains questions that can be used for indicators related to data on enterprises in the cross-border destination Elin Pelin - Leskovac.

Survey for conducting a study of enterprises in cross-border tourist destination Elin Pelin - Leskovac

Date

Please take a few minutes to complete this survey and help us improve the quality of our cross-border destination Elin Pelin - Leskovac.

Thank you for your cooperation!

Name of the enterprise:

Please indicate the type of your activity:

- ☐ Accommodation
- ☐ Nutrition
- ☐ Entertainment service provider
- ☐ Outdoor recreation service provider
- ☐ Transport

☐ Other, please specify:

.....
Your first and last name:

.....
Your position in the company:

1. How many employees do you have during the year?

- Full-time employees:
- Part-time employees:
- Seasonal employees:

- Trainees / Interns:
 - Others, please specify:
2. Is the general manager of your company a woman or a man?
 3. If you are an accommodation company, what is your average price per room?
 4. Do you participate in a recognized accessibility plan (certification or labeling system that categorizes the accessibility of the accommodation and attractions for visitors with reduced mobility)?
 5. If you are an accommodation company, do you have rooms that are adapted to the special needs of visitors with disabilities or limited mobility? And If so, what proportion are they of the total number of rooms?
 6. Is your company certified in the field of environment or sustainability?
 7. If you are an accommodation company, what was your energy consumption for the last month for which you have data available?
 8. If you are an accommodation company, how many tourist nights have you registered for the same month?
 9. Does your company benefit from energy from renewable sources (eg solar panels, biomass, wind turbines, etc.)? If yes, what percentage of your energy needs do they cover?
 10. Are the different types of waste collected separately in your enterprise?
 11. Do you use recycled water in your business?
 12. Does your company participate in any activities to support local biodiversity, nature protection, conservation and management (eg cooperation in educational activities related to the environment in natural areas / habitats, sponsorship of activities or facilities in nature parks, etc. .)? If yes, what actions?

3. Resident survey template

Below is a survey questionnaire template that contains questions that can be used for indicators related to data on residents of the cross-border destination Elin Pelin - Leskovac.

Survey for conducting a survey of residents in cross-border tourist destination Elin Pelin - Leskovac

Date

Please take a few minutes to complete this survey and help us improve the quality of our cross-border destination Elin Pelin - Leskovac.

Thank you for your cooperation!

1. Overall I am very happy with the tourism in my destination

	I strongly agree	I agree	Neutral	I do not agree	I strongly disagree
During autumn					
During winter					
During spring					
During summer					

2. The community benefits from tourism and the tourists who visit my destination.

I strongly agree	I agree	Neutral	I do not agree	I strongly disagree

3. I benefit from tourism and the tourists who visit my destination.

I strongly agree	I agree	Neutral	I do not agree	I strongly disagree

In your opinion, what is the impact of tourism on the distinctiveness and local identity, culture and heritage of your destination? (Please tick X.)

- ☐ It damages
- ☐ Helps maintain
- ☐ Helps to improve
- ☐ It has no effect

4. Your gender is:
- ☐ Man
 - ☐ Woman
5. Your age is between:
- ☐ 15-24 y.
 - ☐ 25-49 y.
 - ☐ 50-64 y.
 - ☐ 65-79 y.
 - ☐ 80 y. or more.
6. Which of the following answers best describes the status of your employment?
- ☐ Full-time employment (30+ hours per week)
 - ☐ Part-time employment (<30 hours per week)
 - ☐ Temporary job
 - ☐ Student
 - ☐ Retired
 - ☐ Currently without paid work

4. Visitor survey template

Below is a survey questionnaire template that contains questions that can be used for indicators related to data on visitors to the cross-border destination Elin Pelin - Leskovac.

Survey to conduct a survey of visitors to cross-border tourist destination Elin Pelin - Leskovac

Date.....

Please take a few minutes to help us improve your stay at our destination.

Thank you for your cooperation!

Date of your visit to our destination:

1. What is the country and postal code of your place of residence?
- Country:
 - Postal code:
2. What was the main mode of transport you used to get here?

- ☐ Train
- ☐ Airplane
- ☐ Bus
- ☐ Car (personal, friends, business owned)
- ☐ Car (rented)
- ☐ Motorbike
- ☐ Bicycle
- ☐ On foot
- ☐ Caravan / van / truck
- ☐ Other, please specify:

3. What type of transport did you use / plan to use during your stay here?

- ☐ Bicycle
- ☐ Local public transport
- ☐ Other (private cars, tourist buses, taxis, etc.)

4. Did you spend the night here?

- ☐ Yes. Please indicate how many nights you spent in this destination:
- ☐ No. Please indicate how many hours you spent in this destination:

5. Was this your first visit to the destination?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No. Please indicate how many times you have visited this destination in the last five years:

6. How much did you spend per person per day during your stay here? (including accommodation, transport within the destination, food and drinks, shopping and entertainment costs)

- ☐ < 25 euro
- ☐ 25-50 euro
- ☐ 50-100 euro
- ☐ 100-200 euro
- ☐ > 200 euro

7. Overall, I am pleased with my visit to this destination.

I strongly agree	I agree	Neutral	I disagree	I strongly disagree

8. Do you or anyone traveling with you have any disability or reduced mobility?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

9. If the answer to the above question is "Yes", please fill in the answer that best represents your opinion. This destination recognizes the special needs of visitors with disabilities in all areas of its activity (accommodation, public transport, tourist attractions, etc.).

I strongly agree	I agree	Neutral	I disagree	I strongly disagree

VI. Conclusion

This tool for sustainable tourism reviewed and presented tools, advice and guidelines for the development of sustainable tourism in the cross-border tourist destination Elin Pelin - Leskovac, based on local needs and context that stakeholders can apply in the management of the destination.

The toolkit includes the specific indicators for sustainable tourism with the unit of measurement for each indicator, divided into four categories - destination management, economic value, social and cultural impact and environmental impact. In addition to the indicators, the toolkit contains survey templates for research on the management of the cross-border destination Elin Pelin - Leskovac, the tourism industry in the destination, the residents and visitors of the destination. With the help of these surveys, stakeholders will be able to gather the information needed for the indicators much more easily, quickly and in a structured way.

In addition to the survey templates, the toolkit also provides valuable advice and guidance on the overall collection, processing and evaluation of data, as well as information and guidance on the application of indicators in the planning, marketing and positioning processes.

With the help of the tools, the teams of the Municipality of Elin Pelin, the Tourist Organization of Leskovac and the Center for Development - Jablanica, Peinja Districts, Republic of Serbia will be able to more effectively manage the development of sustainable tourism in the cross-border destination. Applying the presented system of indicators in practice, they will be able to identify current and potential problems much faster and more effectively, as well as to anticipate and prevent undesirable and unfavorable for the sustainability of the destination situations.

The toolkit also presents the concept of creative tourism as a kind of tool for responsible, efficient and sustainable development of tourism in the cross-border destination. By laying the foundations and applying the ideas of creative tourism, stakeholders will help to adapt the destination to the new requirements of the tourism market, while giving it the opportunity to stand out by developing joint new tourism products. The most important challenge for achieving sustainable tourism development is to provide tourist offer that meets the interests of tourists and the well-being local population while preserving natural and sociocultural resources for future generations. Sustainable tourism should integrate the natural, cultural, and human environment and it must respect the fragile environmental balance that characterizes many tourism destinations, particularly in environmentally sensitive areas. Global tourism market increasingly offers products tailored to individual preferences and requirements of tourists or specific market segments, where competitive advantages and special features of tourist destinations are particularly important, such as natural and climatic conditions, rich and also high-quality gastronomy offer, as within the observed destination. Food and beverage segment provide the basis for further diversification of tourism offers and adjustment to the requirements of users focused on health preservation - back to nature, organic food consumption, use of medical herbs and natural cosmetics, etc. In addition, food (small packages of jam, ajvar, jelly, Rakia, cosmetic creams of herbs etc.) and handcrafts

products should be developed in such a manner to become souvenirs which are important marketing tool in the tourism offer. Improvements to leisure and entertainment tourism products that appeal to local and regional visitors can help empower the position of travel organizers. Most tourists expect a guaranteed cost-effective holiday filled with activities. These tourists enjoy sharing their holiday experiences and guided by the idea of a "hard-working holiday", they combine visits with a variety of events, festivities, and an activity holiday, which brings the special added benefit of coming home with a new set of skills, such as cooking or painting. It is expected that this way of thinking will take root in the holiday expectations of most tourists. Travel organizers must be able to forge relationships with global tour operators to access customers. In the area of accommodation, the focus must be on small family accommodation capacities have emerged, allowing the organisation of travel and stay according to one's choices and, furthermore, satisfying the ever-greater needs of the modern tourists for contact with nature and the local culture and environment. Tourists are looking for a more authentic holiday experience and many companies are now offering travellers the chance to enjoy hidden gems alongside traditional tourist attractions. In addition to travel, blogs and social networks are an interesting way to discover hidden hotspots for a strong authentic experience. The current trend of growth in arrivals and overnights of tourists is undoubtedly a great business opportunity for the development of both existing and new micro and small enterprises in the tourism and hospitality industry and related activities.

VII. References

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