Beyond Borders – Introducing Smart Tourism and Sharing Economy

Study of Sustainable Tourism in Cross-Border Region

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Contents

Executive summary ........................................................................................................ 8

1. INTRODUCTION ............................................................................................. 10

1.1 Study objectives ............................................................................................. 13

1.1.1 Significance of the Study and Research Hypotheses ............................... 14

1.2 Methodology .................................................................................................. 14

1.2.1 Methodology of the assessment ................................................................. 14

2. TOURIST-GEOGRAPHICAL POSITION ............................................................. 16

2.1 Geographic position ........................................................................................... 16

3. WHAT IS SUSTAINABLE TOURISM? ................................................................. 17

3.1 Introduction to Tourism ..................................................................................... 17

3.2.1 Economic Sustainability of tourism ............................................................ 22

3.2.2 Socio-cultural Sustainability of tourism ..................................................... 23

3.2.3 Environmental Sustainability of tourism .................................................... 23

3.3 Geographical context of tourism and sustainable development ......................... 25

4. ASSESSING CURRENT SUSTAINABILITY OF TOURISM IN CB REGION .. 27

4.1 Indicator of sustainability of tourism ................................................................. 27

4.1.1 ETIS - European Tourism Indicators System for sustainable destination
management ..................................................................................................................... 28

4.1.2 Why implement the European Tourism Indicator System? ......................... 30

4.1.3 The seven-step guide to the implementation of the European Tourism
Indicator System .............................................................................................................. 31

4.1.4 Implementation of ETIS in CBC region ..................................................... 37

5. HOW TO ENCHASE SUSTAINABILITY OF TOURISM SECTOR IN CB
REGION .................................................................................................................................. 40

5.1 What does it mean in practice? ........................................................................ 40

5.2 Why to go green? ............................................................................................. 41

5.3 Green accreditation ............................................................................................ 43

5.3.1 European ECOLABEL ............................................................................... 48
Table of figures:

Figure 1. Geographic position of the municipalities .................................................... 16
Figure 3. Sustainable tourism according to UNWTO ................................................ 18
Figure 4. Sustainable tourism characteristics .............................................................. 20
Figure 5. Sustainability concept .............................................................................. 21
Figure 6. Geographical context of tourism .............................................................. 25
Figure 7. Assessing sustainability .......................................................................... 27
Figure 8. European Tourism Indicators System for sustainable destination management ................................................................. 29
Figure 9. ETIS approach ...................................................................................... 29
Figure 10. ETIS criteria ...................................................................................... 30
Figure 11. European Tourism Indicators System for sustainable destination management ........................................................................................................... 31
Figure 12. ETIS steps ......................................................................................... 31
Figure 13. Meetings with municipality representatives and SWG ......................... 32
Figure 14. Solar collectors on the roof of the hotel ................................................... 36
Figure 15. Attempt to assess sustainability using ETIS of municipality of Ohrid .... 39
Figure 16. "Going green" steps .......................................................................... 42
Figure 17. Main goals of Eco-label ....................................................................... 48
Figure 18. Eco-label effect on hotel operation ...................................................... 49
Figure 21. Eco labeled hotel in Vienna .................................................................. 51
Figure 22. Eco labeled hotel in London .................................................................. 51
Figure 23. Eco labeled in Halkidiki ....................................................................... 52
Figure 24. Green Key label of hotel Sonia ............................................................. 53
Figure 25. Benefits of Eco label ......................................................................... 53
Figure 26. Environmental policy template for hotels ............................................. 55
Figure 27. Local governments are responsible ..................................................... 57
Figure 28. The sustainable tourism planning toolkit steps .................................... 58
Figure 29. Benefits of tourism ............................................................................ 60
Figure 30. The synthetic scheme of the opportunities created by sustainable tourism development in cross-border areas ................................................................. 64
Figure 31. Sharing economy concept ................................................................. 67
List of Abbreviations

APA Administration of Protected Area
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CFM</td>
<td>Community Forest management</td>
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<td>CPUE</td>
<td>Catch per Unit Effort</td>
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<td>CBC</td>
<td>Cross border cooperation</td>
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<td>CB</td>
<td>Cross border</td>
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<tr>
<td>DCM</td>
<td>Decision Council of Ministers</td>
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<td>DFB</td>
<td>Directorate of Forest and Biodiversity</td>
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<td>DFS</td>
<td>Directory of Forestry Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>EU</td>
<td>European union</td>
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<td>EC</td>
<td>European commission</td>
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<td>ETIS</td>
<td>European Tourism Indicator System</td>
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<td>EMAS</td>
<td>eco-management and audit scheme</td>
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<td>FCRP</td>
<td>Fire Control and Rescue Police</td>
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<td>FMO</td>
<td>Fishery Management Organisation</td>
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<td>FYROM</td>
<td>Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia</td>
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<td>GSTR</td>
<td>Global sustainable tourism review</td>
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<td>GDSEE</td>
<td>Green Destinations of South East Europe Toolkit</td>
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<td>HBIO</td>
<td>Hydro biological Institute Ohrid</td>
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<td>HM</td>
<td>Hunting Manager</td>
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<tr>
<td>IoM</td>
<td>Inspectorate of Mining</td>
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<tr>
<td>IUCN</td>
<td>International Union for Conservation of Nature</td>
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<td>KRWM</td>
<td>Korça Regional Waste Management Association</td>
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<td>LA</td>
<td>Lake Administration</td>
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<tr>
<td>LOCP</td>
<td>Lake Ohrid Conservation Project</td>
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<td>LOMB</td>
<td>Lake Ohrid Management Board</td>
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<tr>
<td>LOWC</td>
<td>Lake Ohrid Watershed Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>MAFWE</td>
<td>Ministry of agriculture, forestry and water economy</td>
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<td>MARDWA</td>
<td>Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Water Administration</td>
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<td>MC</td>
<td>Management Committee</td>
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<td>MH</td>
<td>Ministry of Health</td>
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<tr>
<td>M&amp;E</td>
<td>Monitoring and Evaluation</td>
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<tr>
<td>METS</td>
<td>Management Effectiveness Tracking Sheet</td>
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<tr>
<td>MoE</td>
<td>Ministry of Environment</td>
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<tr>
<td>MoESP</td>
<td>Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning</td>
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<tr>
<td>MP</td>
<td>Management Plan</td>
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<tr>
<td>MTI</td>
<td>Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure</td>
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<td>MTC</td>
<td>Ministry of Transport and Communication</td>
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<tr>
<td>MUDT</td>
<td>Ministry of Urban Development and Tourism</td>
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<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Nongovernmental organisation</td>
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<td>NEA</td>
<td>National Environmental Agency</td>
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**Study of sustainable tourism in Cross-border region**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tr>
<td>NP</td>
<td>National Park</td>
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<td>NPS</td>
<td>Non point sources</td>
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<td>NUCI</td>
<td>National Urban and Construction Inspectorate</td>
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<td>NUTS</td>
<td>Nomenclature des Units Territoriales Statistiques</td>
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<td>PA</td>
<td>Protected Areas</td>
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<td>PL</td>
<td>Protected Landscape</td>
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<td>PME</td>
<td>Participatory monitoring and evaluation</td>
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<td>PS</td>
<td>Point sources</td>
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<tr>
<td>PTATPLA</td>
<td>Pogradec Terrestrial/Aquatic Territory Protected Landscape Area</td>
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<tr>
<td>R&amp;D</td>
<td>Research and Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>REA</td>
<td>Regional Environmental Agency</td>
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<tr>
<td>SAC</td>
<td>Special Areas of Conservation</td>
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<td>STPT,</td>
<td>Sustainable Tourism Planning Toolkit for the Local Governments of South East Europe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SI</td>
<td>State Inspectorate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIEFWF</td>
<td>State Inspectorate of Environment, Forest, Water and Fishery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STPT</td>
<td>THE SUSTAINABLE TOURISM PLANNING TOOLKIT</td>
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<tr>
<td>TVC</td>
<td>Tourism Value Chain</td>
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<td>UNWTO</td>
<td>United Nations World Tourism Organization</td>
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<td>WB</td>
<td>World Bank</td>
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<tr>
<td>WFD</td>
<td>Water Framework Directive (of the European Union)</td>
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<td>WRM</td>
<td>Water Resources Management</td>
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Executive summary

This study has been performed as a part of the 1st Component GET READY - the Research and Development (R&D) component of the project “Beyond Borders – Introducing Smart Tourism and Sharing Economy”. The project has been funded by the European Union’s Cross border cooperation program 2014-2020. Project activities are in line with the world trends and acknowledging 2017 as an International year of sustainable tourism for development.

The results from this study will help us to tailor training programs in the field of sustainability and provide support to the beneficiaries to become certified by the European Ecolabel system, and propose a strategy for sustainable and responsible tourism for the cross border region(CB region). The Study aimed at strengthening the protection of globally significant ecosystems in tourism destinations in Albania and North Macedonia, while booming economy and improve living standards at the same time- under the moto “Knowing for admiring, respecting for preserving”. Its activities were designed as model projects for the implementation of the sustainable Tourism Development in cross border region. This is being achieved through the development of new and innovative management systems with a special focus on tourism-related uses of the sites. The innovative aspect of the methodology for R&D component is the use of European Tourism Indicator System (ETIS). For the first time attempt will be made to use in the region. The use of ETIS in this project will provide a measuring and monitoring tool for tourist destinations in CB region and support the beneficiaries through trainings and guidance to adopt a more intelligent approach to tourism planning (including process and methodology) and a sustainable management approach and to enhance their sustainability performances. The general benefits to CB region are that it creates a vision and guidelines for accessible and sustainable tourism development of the destination and a framework for benchmarking, communications & good practices learning exchange.

Sustainable tourism is becoming so popular that some say that what we presently call ‘alternative’ will be the ‘mainstream’ in a decade.
It is very important to emphasize that these project activities are very innovative and will be done for the first time for the CB region.

Awareness raising and capacity building systems will ensure long term sustainable impacts. Tourism model initiatives and activities have been initiated to ensure distribution of returns for conservation purposes as well as to local stakeholders. The location of the ten municipalities along national borders together with the countries efforts for integration into the European Union makes cooperative integrated management essential for the protection of trans-boundary ecological corridors to ensure the conservation of biological diversity and to manage sustainable tourism development, which is at an increasing level. Therefore, the project intended to place the project activities into a cross-border context whenever possible, thus contributing to the enhancement and further development of cooperation, not only of the protected areas, but also of other stakeholders such as municipalities, districts and regional governments (which were focus group in the conducted survey) to share economy via sustainable tourism development.
1. INTRODUCTION

Tourism is one of the world’s fastest growing industries and is a major source of income for many countries. Being a people-oriented industry, tourism also provides many jobs which have helped revitalize local economies. However, like other forms of development, tourism can also cause its share of problems, such as social dislocation, loss of cultural heritage, economic dependence and ecological degradation. Learning about the impacts of tourism has led many people to seek more responsible holidays. These include various forms of alternative or sustainable tourism such as: ‘nature-based tourism’, ‘ecotourism’ and ‘cultural tourism’. All tourism activities of whatever motivation – holidays, business travel, conferences, adventure travel and ecotourism – need to be sustainable. According to UNESCO Sustainable tourism is defined as “tourism that respects both local people and the traveler, cultural heritage and the environment”. It seeks to provide people with an exciting and educational holiday that is also of benefit to the people of the host country. Tourism sector according to David Diaz Benavides (2001) is probably the only services sector that provides concrete and qualified trading opportunities for all nations, regardless of their level of development. According to him, the sector also provides an uneven distribution of benefits, which is threatening the social, economic and environmental sustainability of tourism in some developing countries (Benavides 2001). It must be clear that the term “sustainable tourism” refers to making all types of tourism more sustainable.

Therefore, it is not a type of tourism (i.e. ecotourism) but rather it is a condition!

Sustainable tourism management practices are applicable to all forms of tourism and in all types of destinations, including mass tourism and the various niche tourism segments. It is a continual process of improvement applying equally to tourism in cities, resorts, rural and coastal zones, mountains, and protected areas applying to all forms of business and leisure tourism. Achieving sustainable tourism is a continuous process and it requires constant monitoring of impacts, introducing the necessary preventive and/or corrective measures whenever necessary. It should also maintain a high level of tourist satisfaction and ensure a meaningful experience to tourists, raising their awareness about sustainability issues and promoting sustainable tourism practices amongst them.
Starting with the first European tourism policies, this sector’s sustainable development was treated as one of European Communities/Union’s main responsibilities (European Commission II). At present time, with EU as world’s leading macro-tourist destination, important challenges need to be tackled in order to defend and maintain this important market position.

Cross-border tourism development has become increasingly popular the last decades and especially within the European Union. According to the 2017 edition of the Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Report about the Regional Results of Europe and Eurasia is mentioned that “the region continues to lead the rankings thanks to its cultural richness, its excellent tourism service infrastructure, its international openness as well as its perceived safety, despite slightly declining security perceptions in Western and Southern Europe. Significant divides remain among sub-regions, including the prioritization of the sector, environmental sustainability policies and an enabling business environment.”

Bearing in mind that fact, as well as the fact that the project region is rich with natural areas which are not managed on sustainable way, it was initiated to make efforts to make strategy for better conditions.

The cross-border area can be considered as a region with agrarian or industrial-agrarian economy. However, the countries have decided to join the trial to diversify their economy to create more employment opportunities and to generate more foreign income. Cross border cooperation (CBC) is a rich region when it comes to tourism because, the region is blessed with all it takes to be a tourists’ destination. The region’s tourism potentials range from natural,  

\[\text{Study of sustainable tourism in Cross-border region}\]

\[\text{National Geographic Traveller and USAID special supplement made special edition which included outstanding ways to experience the countries in Western Balkan. CB region’s countries are mentioned as SPIRITUALLY SERENE and DINE ON TRADITION.}\]
manmade, and cultural attractions but they lacks management, enhancing and supporting infrastructure around the attractions for easy access and development (the last one is especially emphasised in Dibra county). However, this area is the business potential in the country now. Sustainable tourism concept is used to harmonize and reconcile issues of intergenerational equity, the goals of economic growth, environmental protection, and justice. It recognizes the need for fairness between local individuals and groups, and between hosts and guests (Mbaiwa 2005). Western Balkan just like other region is a good location for tourism and travelling.

The Programme Area aims to tap into strategic opportunities arising from the broader potential of the entire continent, which is in line with the concept of sustainable and cultural tourism. Tourism has been recognized as one of the priority economic opportunities that are of interest of the CBC population (at least from one of the countries). Although hospitality industry is unevenly distributed in the Programme Area, the industry in Albania and North Macedonia is growing. At present, tourism related activities are the main source of income for the population in the Ohrid Lake region in summer months but there is underutilized potential for the development of cultural, adventure and more sustainable tourism across the whole CB region. Cooperation between different institutions and organization in the CB region is increasing but yet there is a virtual absence of sustainable joint initiatives on a larger scale. The activities encompassed in this study will also support cooperation between institutions based on valorization of the heterogeneous offer and potential of different cultures and traditions present in the area and people to-people actions. These should contribute to address challenges like: preservation of natural and cultural resources, promoting the wellbeing of local communities, improving the quality of tourism jobs, limiting environmental impact of tourism related transport, etc.

The contemporary research has mainly focused on the advantages and challenges associated with such collaborations with a perspective on visitors and private entrepreneurs in border regions. There are however an unfortunate lack of research on the role of local governments such as municipalities in cross-border tourism collaborations. Therefore the aim of this study is to analyze the interest and attitudes among public actors towards cross-border sustainable tourism development, and to identify challenges facing these on an interregional level in cross-border tourism collaborations.
The European Commission has long been involved in supporting the sustainable development of tourism in Europe. To date, they have introduced several instruments for better environmental management firms, such as the EU Eco-label and the Community eco-management and audit scheme (EMAS) and (European Tourism Indicators System (ETIS). All of these indicators were analysed in this study.

For this study, an effort was put on the review of literature on meaning of the subject background tourism, tourism industry, tourism development and sustainability. An emphasis was made on tourism industry and sustainability of it. For the success of this study work, the researchers were able to extend their pentacles to reviewed different journals, articles, research paper and books by different authors and attentions was also paid on previous research carried out by different scholars on same subject.

1.1 Study objectives

The aim of the study is to make research of the sustainability of the tourism sector in CB region. Focus is on the roles of public actors for tourism development in regional cross-border cooperation, the perceived advantages and challenges of such cooperation’s, and the perceived impacts of an international border in cross-border projects. This will be executed by analyzing public actors located in the municipalities in CB region involved in sustainable tourism development.

The objectives of the research study are:

1. To examine the necessary factors needed for the development and sustenance of tourism industry in CBC;
2. To identify the benefits of tourism to the development of CBC economy;
3. To identify the steps toward sustainability of tourism in in CBC;
4. To enhance the academic knowledge of sustainable cross-border tourism development and its associated challenges, but also to provide new knowledge of challenges associated with sustainable cross-border tourism to the public sector in the CB region;

Study of sustainable tourism in Cross-border region
5. To analyze the interest and attitudes among public actors towards cross-border sustainable tourism development, and to identify challenges facing these on an interregional level in cross-border tourism collaborations.

1.1.1 Significance of the Study and Research Hypotheses

This study will help in providing necessary information needed for the development and sustainability of tourism industry in CB region. Firstly it will be good baseline i.e. it will provide enough data that will add value to the research and development component and after it will be of benefit the private sector, public and academic environment. However, the following are the research hypotheses;

1. Sustainable growth and development can be achieved in the tourism industry in CB region.
2. Tourism is beneficial to the growth and development of CB region.
3. There are environmental problems and challenges facing the growth and development of tourism in CB region.
4. There are ways of improving tourism in CB region.

1.2 Methodology

1.2.1 Methodology of the assessment

The methodology of the research and development component is a form of surveys, questionnaires, focus groups, analyses and quantification, design thinking and benchmarking standard and reports.

• Surveys and questionnaire were done within the cross-border region in order to learn more about the thinking of the current situation with the sustainability of tourism sector in CB region. This was done by gathering as much information as possible from municipalities which can help us to learn about the tourism and will be interested in this platform.

• Analysis and quantification of the gathered information is done towards summarizing the survey material into valid data that was used to learn more about the target touristic region.

• Focus groups were used to acquire relevant information from the field.

• Design thinking methodology was done through creating profiles of potential beneficiaries of our project. This will help to discover the habits and behaviours of the average Study of sustainable tourism in Cross-border region
of domestic and international tourist that would use the tourism packages developed through this project. At the end of this step we expect to have a clear picture of who the targeted tourists are, their demographics, characteristics, buying behaviours and average profiles.

- Benchmarking standard and reports will be used to acquire relevant information from the field of tourist services and potential, sustainability of tourism and cultural and natural tourism.

In order to answer the primary research question, the following sub-research questions will be addressed:

1. What are the necessary factors needed for the development and sustenance of tourism industry in CBC?
2. What are the benefits of tourism to the development of CBC economy?
3. How to be certified by European Ecolabel system?
4. How to use ETIS system?
5. What are the problems and challenges of tourism in CBC?
6. How does tourism influence the environment and the protected areas?
7. What are the environmental impacts of tourist activities, such as production of waste, environmental risks, compromising natural resources?
8. How to protect the heritage and preservation of the natural and cultural integrity of destinations?
9. What are the ways of improving tourism i.e strategy for sustainable and responsible tourism for the CBC - Macedonia and Albania?
10. What is the role of local authorities in making tourism more sustainable?

In order to create the concept for the development of the region in a sustainable tourist destination, it is necessary to see the basic elements of the destination, which have a crucial impact on the development of tourism:

- Tourist - geographical position of the region
- The presence of natural and anthropogenic tourist activities, as the main drivers of the motive for visiting the destination
- The traffic connection and availability, i.e. traffic connections at the destination with the tourist regions and markets, traffic infrastructure and organized transport within the destination

Study of sustainable tourism in Cross-border region
2. TOURIST-GEOGRAPHICAL POSITION

2.1 Geographic position

The territory of the eligible area for the cross-border program covers total 6,377km² (1,811 km² from the right side and 4,566 km² from the left side of the border line), with a total population of 396 404 inhabitants (156 515 from the right side and 239 789 from the left side of the border line). The border line predominantly parallels the Adriatic coast and is 192km long (total), while for this project it is cca 50 km.

Figure 1. Geographic position of the municipalities

The eligible cross-border area (fig. 1) is determined in accordance with article 88 of the IPA implementing regulations where it is stated that NUTS level 3 or equivalent areas along land borders between beneficiary countries are eligible for cross-border programs.

On the eastern part of the side of CB region, the eligible areas consist of three NUTS level 2 equivalent statistical regions (Southwest and Polog). The country is divided into eight statistical regions, established in 2001 by a decision of the government (National Nomenclature of Statistical Territorial Units).
The border area of eastern part of the eligible area includes the Southwest and Polog NUTS level 2 equivalent statistical regions covering 1,811 km², with a total population of 156,515 inhabitants.

It consists of 6 municipalities including 105 settlements (3 towns and 102 villages).

- Southwest region includes 13 municipalities, but only 5 are part of this project: Debar, Centar Zupa, Ohrid, Struga and Vevcani;
- Polog region includes 9 municipalities, but only Mavrovo and Rostuse is part of this project.

Western part of the eligible area consists of one administrative region (the country is divided into 12 regions) corresponding to NUTS level 1 equivalent.

The border area of the western part of the eligible area cover 4,566 sq. km, with a total population of 239,789 inhabitants. They are divided into 1 districts (Diber county) and 4 smaller territorial units:

- Diber Region includes the districts of Diber, Mat, Klos and Bulqiza.

3. WHAT IS SUSTAINABLE TOURISM?

3.1 Introduction to Tourism

According to the UNWTO definition “Tourism comprises the activities of persons travelling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes”. Although, they might also enjoy in various activities like hiking, sunbathing, horse rides touring, photo safari, snorkeling, reading, or relaxing in nature. It is obvious that this people use one form of transportation or the other, it could be by air, water or land. It could be by car, motor coach, train, taxi, bicycle, or motorbike, which ever means implies they are taking trip which mean they are engaging in tourism. Achieving a comprehensive description of tourism, the various group that participated to the tourism industry should be considered and mansion because their perspectives are important in deriving comprehensive definition. (Goeldner & Ritchie 2012).

The tourism industry can be referred to as tourism sector, which can simply be identified as the range of businesses and organizations which are involved in the delivering of the tourism product. However, for the purpose of this study, here are some of the various industrial sectors;
tour operator and the travel agents are involve in making of arrangement for the travel to take place that is, traveler-generating region, hospitality and attractions represent the destination region, while the transportation industry represent the transit route region. The various sectors in tourism are interrelated and connected.

**So what is sustainable tourism?**

The UNWTO\(^2\) has defined sustainable tourism as an enterprise that achieves a balance between the environmental, economic, and socio-cultural aspects of tourism development so as to guarantee long-term benefits to recipient communities. According to UNWTO, it should (fig.3):

This is commonly called the triple bottom line for sustainable development: environmental, economic, and cultural returns on investment. Some identify a fourth benefit of well-managed tourism: public education for both visitors and residents to deepen understanding of cultures and ecosystems, though this is also a cultural benefit.

A lot depends on the situation in which a destination finds itself. How wealthy or poor is the region? How well do locals understand and support the characteristics that make their place attractive to tourists? How vulnerable are those assets? Which type of potential tourist is most appropriate? How many tourists come, what do they do, and who gets their money?

When an attraction such as a popular national park or renowned cultural monument is involved, impacts depend a lot on tourist interaction with neighboring towns, called gateway communities. So good management means thinking about the destination as a whole — not just the protected site, but also its human, natural, and cultural settings.

Sustainable tourism is characterized by (fig.4):

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\(^2\) [www.unwto.org](http://www.unwto.org)

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*Study of sustainable tourism in Cross-border region*
Study of sustainable tourism in Cross-border region
3.2 Defining sustainable tourism

Enhancing the well-being of communities
Sustainable tourism development supports and ensures the economic, social and cultural well-being of the communities in which tourism takes place.

Supporting the protection of the natural and cultural environment
Sustainable tourism allows the use of natural and cultural resources for gaining economic profit while at the same time guaranteeing that these resources are not deteriorated or destroyed. Additionally, tourism is expected to be a driving force with regard to the establishment or the enhancement of nature protection and the maintenance of cultural values.

Recognizing product quality and tourist satisfaction
The quality of tourism products offered by a region is a key factor for the economic success of tourism. It is not only characterized by material criteria like the quality of transport, experiences.

Applying adaptive management and monitoring
To ensure that tourism is developed in a way which is ecological, economic and socially sustainable, adequate management and monitoring must be established, following the basic principles of sustainable use of resources. It is important to note that different stakeholders involved in the tourism business are responsible for the implementation of different parts of the principles. Governments, tourism businesses, local communities, NGOs and the tourists can all contribute to make tourism more sustainable. In order to achieve the goals of sustainable tourism, the different actors should cooperate and stimulate each other to put the principles into practice.

International efforts fostering sustainability in tourism
Various bad occurrences related to tourism as well as the sudden increase in mass tourism in the 1960s triggered a lot of tourism critique and led consequently to the introduction of the phenomenon sustainable tourism or, as it was more commonly known at that time, «green» (gentle) tourism into the debate. It is also a phenomena that has developed out of the growth of the concept of sustainable development.

Figure 3. Sustaianable tourism characteristics
Reaching a specific definition for the term “Sustainability” has been a long journey due to the broad nature of the analytical framework which comprises of economics, environmental and socio-cultural issues (Cooper, Fletcher, Fyall, Gilbert & Wanhill 2005). In 1987 at the world commission on environment and development, Brundtland Commission releases their report which was tagged with the concept “Sustainable development”. The concept was successful and gains recognition as one of the most successful of its kind which could be used for years. The concept was helpful in international agenda and the international community’s attitude with economic, social and environmental development (United Nations Economic Commission for Europe 2004-05). According to Brundtland Commission’s report sustainable development was identify as “development which meets the needs of the current generations without compromising the ability of the future generations to meet their own needs”. Explaining the concept(fig.5), economic and social development, and environment where strongly supported. The concept makes it clear that environment should not be destroyed with policy designed for improvement in economic and social well-being of the people. (UNECE 2004-05). However, sustenance of environmental development in the community’s immediate environment becomes undisputed and vital in the mind of the local people. This interest was not only limited to the community but extended globally by forming part of the wider alliances to preserve the environment globally “acting local, thinking global

"Sustainable tourism development meets the needs of present tourists and host regions while protecting and enhancing opportunity for the future. It is envisaged as leading to management of all resources in such a way that economic, social, and aesthetic needs can be fulfilled while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, biological diversity, and life support system.” [WTO 1998: 19]

**Sustainable tourism development is ecologically sustainable, economically viable as well as ethically and socially equitable.** It is development on one industry which respects the fragile nature that characterizes tourism destinations, particularly in sensitive areas; and should

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3 Strategic Development and Sustainability of Tourism Industry in Nigeria Ekundayo, Yusuf O (2014)
be based on a long term perspective. The different declarations of principles for sustainable tourism can be summarized as following. Sustainable tourism is characterized by:

Enhancing the well-being of communities
Sustainable tourism development supports and ensures the economic, social and cultural wellbeing of the communities in which tourism takes place.

Supporting the protection of the natural and cultural environment
Sustainable tourism allows the use of natural and cultural resources for gaining economic profit while at the same time guaranteeing that these resources are not deteriorated or destroyed. Additionally, tourism is expected to be a driving force with regard to the establishment or the enhancement of nature protection and the maintenance of cultural values.

Recognizing product quality and tourist satisfaction
The quality of tourism products offered by a region is a key factor for the economic success of tourism. It is not only characterized by material criteria like the quality of transport, accommodation and food, but also by non-material criteria like hospitality or the quality of experiences.

3.2.1 Economic Sustainability of tourism
According to Beech & Chadwick (2006), economic development is achieved when there is an increase in real output per capita income of a country, generally measured by references to changes in gross national product (GNP) over an economic period of time. Tourism been considered as a major element of the service economy, is as a result of its sustained and rapid growth in the world economy (Cooper et al 2005). However, economic sustainability is referred to the maintenance and utilization of economic or productive resources and keeping it intact for continuity. For sustained economic, the economic resources should not be over used or used off without replacement (Goodland 2014).
3.2.2 Socio-cultural Sustainability of tourism

The term “socio-cultural” entails two different words, social and culture. The word social is simply referred to as rank and status in a society. (Oxford Dictionaries 2014). Culture on the other hand, according to Beech & Chadwick (2006) it “consists of behavioral patterns, knowledge and values that have been acquired and transmitted through generations” (Beech & Chadwick 2006). Socio-cultural sustainability is the act of maintaining and safeguarding the rank and status of the society and their culture for the present generation and the future generation. Under this aspect of sustainability, all living soul are said to be equal and no difference irrespective of the community they belong, the culture they practice, the language they speak, and whatever they do. Socio-cultural sustainability can be attained and achieved if there is mutual interest, tolerance, patience, love, honesty, discipline and ethics, general acceptable rules and regulation, law and information (Goodland 2014).

3.2.3 Environmental Sustainability of tourism

According to Beech & Chadwick (2006), “environment is defined as a relative concept, encompassing different contexts including the cultural, social, political and economic”. However, high-quality natural environment is essential for tourism development which is subject to the maintenance. It is noted that, the number of users of natural resources is partly negative impacts of tourism which is also a reason for environmental sustainability. Environmental sustainability, “carrying capacity analysis” this technique was introduced and defined by the World Tourism Organization as being “fundamental to environmental protection and sustainable development. It is therefore, refers to the maximum utilization of any tourist destination or site without establishing or causing any negative effects on; the resources, reducing visitor satisfaction, or contributing inauspicious impact upon the society, economy and culture of the area. Carrying capacity limits can sometimes be difficult to quantify, but they are essential to planning for tourism and recreation” (Beech & Chadwick 2006).

3.3 Principles of sustainable tourism

Due to the dimension of the tourism industry (according to the State statistical office, total number of 930 128 arrivals are observed around the world until 01.09.2018) – and because tourism is related so essentially to natural areas especially in CB region, it is one of the major threats to biodiversity and natural resources. The challenge of sustainable tourism development is to make use of positive impacts of tourism in CB region, while enhancing and
channeling the benefits into the right directions to local people, and to avoid or mitigate the negative environmental impacts.

Referring to the different natural, cultural and economic resources tourism is affecting, various international organizations have developed definitions, principles, charters, codes and criteria for sustainability in tourism. The principles mention below is the one from “Agenda for a sustainable and competitive European tourism”.

To achieve a competitive and sustainable tourism the Commission invites all actors to respect the following principles:

1. Take a holistic and integrated approach - All the various impacts of tourism should be taken into account in its planning and development. Furthermore, tourism should be well balanced and integrated with a whole range of activities that affect society and the environment.

Plan for the long term - Sustainable development is about taking care of the needs of future generations as well as our own. Long term planning requires the ability to sustain actions over time.

Achieve an appropriate pace and rhythm of development - The level, pace and shape of development should reflect and respect the character, resources and needs of host communities and destinations.

Involve all stakeholders - A sustainable approach requires widespread and committed participation in decision making and practical implementation by all those implicated in the outcome.

Use best available knowledge - Policies and actions should be informed by the latest and best knowledge available. Information on tourism trends and impacts, and skills and experience, should be shared across Europe.

Minimise and manage risk (the precautionary principle) - Where there is uncertainty about outcomes, there should be full evaluation and preventative action should be taken to avoid damage to the environment or society.

Reflect impacts in costs (user and polluter pays) - Prices should reflect the real costs to society of consumption and production activities. This has implications not simply for pollution but for charging for the use of facilities that have significant management costs attached to them.

Set and respect limits, where appropriate - The carrying capacity of individual sites and wider areas should be recognised, with a readiness and ability to limit, where and when appropriate, the amount of tourism development and volume of tourist flows.

Undertake continuous monitoring - Sustainability is all about understanding impacts and being alert to them all the time, so that the necessary changes and improvements can be made.
3.3 Geographical context of tourism and sustainable development

Sustainability can be managed at a national, regional and/or local level (fig.6). When it comes to sustainability of tourism is an important issue to address independently where it takes place within the tourism industry. The issue must be of concern to everyone who is involved in the tourism industry. All levels have a bearing on each other and each level is embedded in every other. Developing cross-border tourism means taking into consideration International regulations, regulations from the European Union, as well as countries’ national regulations. Sustainable tourism as a concept should therefore be present at all times when tourism is discussed.

![Figure 5. Geographical context of tourism](image)

**National level** is considered as the highest extent for sustainable tourism in a given economy. There are policies and/or initiatives involving the whole territory and establishing sustainability in all industry levels. At a national level, the conclusion is that the issue of sustainable tourism must be addressed with a common strategy by stakeholders within the tourism industry. If the tourism is not sustainable, it will not survive in the long term. Tourists are looking travelling not just to destinations, but often to countries where they travel around the country. It is therefore crucial that the countries work towards sustainable tourism.

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*Can Tourism Be Sustainable? Service Experiences from Tourism Destinations in Europe*
Sustainable practices can apply to regional level, concerning a specific geographical area defining regional plans or different protection or development processes.

At the destination level one conclusion is that there is a need to working together at a destination level to create a more sustainable tourism. Sustainable tourism on destination level could be on:

- Specific destinations like coastal zones, local municipalities and communities that include both tourism products and resources.
- Key tourist sites within destinations such as protected areas, beaches, historic district within cities, areas of special interest where sustainable practices can play an important role in site control, management and future development of tourist attractions.

The tourists come to the destination and it is every tourist producers responsibility to create a memorable and yet sustainable tourism experience. It is also important to realize that tourists look for different experiences when travelling to different destinations and the co-creation process, therefore, can find different experiences for different tourists. The destinations often have some main attraction and if the cross-border destinations together work with the three sustainability elements this will lead to more satisfied tourists. The tourists will not travel to destinations that have sustainability problems that are economic, social or environmental. At the destination level they must work together in creating sustainable tourism with regards to all three aspects.

After all tourists must be included in the creation of tourism experiences and these should be done in a more sustainable way.
4. ASSESSING CURRENT SUSTAINABILITY OF TOURISM IN CB REGION

4.1 Indicator of sustainability of tourism

Indicators are tools that help tourism managers to measure and evaluate the status of a dimension. Indicators must be specific, measurable, relevant and time-specific. They measure the existence or severity of current issues, signals of upcoming situations or problems, as well as risk and potential need for actions; they also measure the results of our actions (fig. 7). Depending on the type of information they are measuring, indicators can be classified as:

- Quantitative (i.e. number of tourism certifications held by a destination)
- Qualitative (i.e. employee satisfaction)

It is recommended that indicators are used successively during a period of time to measure evolution and changes that are of importance for tourism development and management. Three different concepts can be measured:

1. Changes in tourism’s own structures and internal factors
2. Changes in external factors affecting tourism
3. Impacts caused by tourists

Good indicators provide a large amount of benefits that include:

- Better decision-making
- Identification of potential issues
- Identification of impacts
- Performance measurement of the implementation of plans and management activities
- Identification of limits and opportunities
- Greater accountability
- Constant monitoring that can lead to continuous improvement

Indicators of sustainability should be defined at an early stage in the process of formulating the tourism strategy for a destination. They can be used for:

Study of sustainable tourism in Cross-border region
• Baseline assessment of conditions and needs
• Setting of targets for policies and actions
• Assessment of actions
• Evaluation, review and modification of policies

Indicators can be applied at different geographical levels ranging from national level down to individual tourism establishments. However, these are often strongly interrelated and can be used for comparisons, or aggregated in order to obtain much more relevant indicators.

Indicators can be classified according to their utility to decision-makers:

• Indicators of predicting problems
• Early warning indicators
• Indicators of current state of industry
• Indicators that measure the impact of tourism development on the biophysical and socio-economic environments
• Management efforts and effects indicators

4.1.1 ETIS - European Tourism Indicators System for sustainable destination management

Tourist destinations are increasingly being called upon to tackle social, cultural, economic, and environmental challenges. In order to be measured destinations’ competitiveness and sustainability, European Commission (EC) has created an official and supranational initiative European Tourism Indicators System (ETIS)6. This system of indicators are made by the University of Surrey (United Kingdom of Great Britain), Sustainable Travel International (United States of America) and Intasave (United States of America) through e study on the Feasibility of a European Tourism Indicator System for Sustainable Management at Destination Level, and ETIS emerged as a result. At this stage, ETIS is (fig.8):

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6 ETIS toolkit for sustainable destination management (2015)
ETIS is currently being tested in a group of destinations across Europe. Despite its “system” denomination, ETIS is a document containing a collection of core and optional indicators—which are explained in detail as part of the toolkit—that the authors suggest destinations implement, so they can monitor their own progress over time and make informed decisions based on such information. Hence, the motivation to use it is self-benchmarking. Mainly ETIS is a system of indicators suitable for all tourist destinations, encouraging them to adopt a more intelligent approach to tourism planning. It is (fig.9):

For the first time ETIS system will be used in the region. For this Study, an attempt has been made to assess ETIS in CB region in Ohrid and Mavrovo Rostushe.

Study of sustainable tourism in Cross-border region
The system has been created to support sustainable destination management, while being an extensive tool to help monitor, manage, and improve sustainable tourism development. In a simple manner, ETIS is in fact a sustainable management system for tourism destinations based on a number of indicators at the same time offering an innovative approach to tourism planning. The role of ETIS is that of providing information support for assessing the sustainable development of tourism in the European tourist destinations. The system consists of a set of indicators (27 obligatory and 40 optional) divided into four categories (fig.10).

The development of a European Tourism Indicator System for Sustainable Management at Destination Level is one of the key initiatives, which the Communication calls the European Commission to implement.

### 4.1.2 Why implement the European Tourism Indicator System?

The ETIS represents a common methodology towards sustainable destination management. It is not a certification system or an eco-labelling scheme, but a highly effective management tool provided by the European Commission. The ETIS is specially designed for tourism destinations to allow monitoring of performance and for helping destinations to develop and carry out their plans for greater sustainability with a long-term vision. Since tourism competitiveness is closely linked to its sustainability, the ETIS allows policy and decision-makers to monitor the main elements that determine the destination attractiveness and competitiveness on the market so they can enhance the visitor experience and ensure customer satisfaction (fig.11).
4.1.3 The seven-step guide to the implementation of the European Tourism Indicator System

There are 7 steps toward implementing ETIS (fig.12).

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Figure 10. European Tourism Indicators System for sustainable destination management

Figure 11. ETIS steps

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http://www.culture-routes.net/sites/default/files/files/STUDY_REPORT%20on%20ETIS%20implementation_C%26R.pdf
Study of sustainable tourism in Cross-border region

Step 1: Raise awareness
We decided municipality of Ohrid and Mavrovo and Rostushe to be pilot destination to measure its sustainability using the ETIS and municipality of Mat from the other side of the border.

Step 2: Create a destination profile
Defining the boundaries of the destination and providing other stakeholders with a general overview on it are crucial steps in data collection. The ETIS tool provided to facilitate this is the destination profile form, which is the key starting point to implementation. European Commission’s form was used. The form helps define the destination and provides a useful frame (i.e. about the geography, tourism amenities, transport links and visitor numbers) of reference for stakeholders.

Step 3: Form a Stakeholder Working Group
ETIS was introduced to all municipalities but it was decided only two to be pilot destination. The next step is to establish a Stakeholder Working Group. The SWG is a collection of organisations and individuals in the destination with an involvement and interest in the tourism industry. Hosted by the local destination coordinator with his/her staff and, if appropriate, the national or regional tourism organisation (fig.13).
Because there isn’t existing committee for ETIS in the region; we started with a small group of only few key stakeholders because it is more manageable than starting with a very large group.

**Step 4: Establish roles and responsibilities**

As mentioned above, clear responsibilities of SGW members’ roles and interests, as well as for the data collection, were agreed at the SWG meeting.

**Step 5: Collect and record data** Initially, the SWG should aim at establishing a steady workflow of data collection.

Some indicators have data that are missing. For example some of the stakeholders mentioned that they have problems with hosts because they don’t give them information about the tourist that use their accommodation. For that reason this type of information was sourced by conducting interviews, surveys, questionnaires and other types of activities (like analysing previous research). ETIS Toolkit available on the European Commission’s website was used for the surveys. If the destination lacks the resources to implement surveys, coordinators can collect the available data for the other indicators and discuss with the SWG how they may be able to address the resource requirements to undertake the surveys in the future. Four types of questionnaires were used: destination management, enterprise, visitor and resident survey.

**Step 6: Analyse results**

Prioritising needs and setting an action plan. Because the data collection wasn’t working smoothly and the indicator data are not collected and submitted by stakeholders, this step was difficult to submit.

**Step 7: Enable ongoing development and continuous improvement**

Defining a strategy, maintaining the use of the European Tourism Indicator System and communicating results. This step is after the SWG has an action plan in place to tackle immediate priorities, a strategy for longerterm improvement can be developed. The SWG should aim to draw up a 3-year plan which outlines what the group expects to achieve and when, with areas of responsibility clarified. Each member should be able to commit to some small improvements in their own particular area of work, which over time will add up to significant changes and improvements. It is important that the indicators and the data are

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8Source: http://ec.europa.eu/growth/sectors/tourism/offer/sustainable/indicators_en
regularly reviewed and that additional supplementary indicators are included when possible, as appropriate to the destination. Broadening the range of indicators measured will help build a more complete picture of the destination. It will also allow for improvements of a larger scope of performance. Another issue to consider is whether funding could be obtained to support the long-term use of the ETIS and cover the cost of improvements, data collection and other work undertaken by the SWG.

Data on numbers of tourists who stay in registered accommodation, obtained from this source, were used to calculate the following four indicators in the system: number of tourist nights per month (occupancy rate in commercial accommodation per month and the average for the year (B.2.2.), number of beds available in commercial visitior accommodation per 100 residents (C.1.1.2), and the average length of stay of tourists (nights) in commercial accommodation per month (B.2.1). Because the separation of different types of waste is not practise in target municipalities, it wasn’t possible to estimate an optional indicator: percentage of tourism enterprises separating different types of waste (D.3.1.1). About the D.3.2 Percentage of tourism enterprises separating different types of waste information was getter by Pakomak whose main activity is management of packaging waste.

Table 1. List of hotels, restaraunts and coffee bars in municipalitiesOhrid, Struga, Vevcani, Debar, Centar Zupa, that are selectin plastic, paper and glass waste (according to PAKOMAK)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HOTELS, RESTAURANTS, COFFEE BARS</th>
<th>MUNICIPALITY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hotel Radika</td>
<td>Mavrovo and Rostushe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restoran Mal Odmor</td>
<td>Mavrovo and Rostushe</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hotel Bistra Mavrovo</td>
<td>Mavrovo and Rostushe</td>
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<td>Restoran Glamur Mavrovo</td>
<td>Mavrovo and Rostushe</td>
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<td>Hotel Fersped Mavrovo</td>
<td>Mavrovo and Rostushe</td>
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<td>Restoran Trnica</td>
<td>Mavrovo and Rostushe</td>
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<td>Kuka na Mijaceje</td>
<td>Debar</td>
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<td>Hotel Tuto</td>
<td>Debar</td>
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<tr>
<td>Restoran Kabala</td>
<td>Mavrovo and Rostushe</td>
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<tr>
<td>Restoran Evropa</td>
<td>Mavrovo and Rostushe</td>
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<td>Hotel Dva Biseri</td>
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<td>Hotel Metropol</td>
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<td>Hotel Belvedere</td>
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<td>Location</td>
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<td>Restoran Tino</td>
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<td>Evropa</td>
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<td>Hotel Ineks</td>
<td>Ohrid</td>
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<td>Zenska plaza</td>
<td>Struga</td>
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<td>Struga</td>
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<td>Rest. Arberi</td>
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<td>Bara Bar</td>
<td>Struga</td>
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<td>Rest. Dva Bisera</td>
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<td>Hotel Izgrev</td>
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<td>Rest. Centar</td>
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<td>Rest. Roma</td>
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<td>Art kafe</td>
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<td>Kafe Luks</td>
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<td>Kafe Bonaca</td>
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<td>Kafe London</td>
<td>Struga</td>
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</table>

Study of sustainable tourism in Cross-border region
Rest. Via Ignacia  Vevcani
Rest. Kutmicevica  Vevcani
Kafe Gospj  Vevcani
Gang bar  Vevcani
Gang bistro  Vevcani
Rest. Pupuna kuka  Vevcani
Pab Pjaca  Vevcani

For D.6.2 Percentage of tourism enterprises that take actions to reduce energy consumption good example is gallery hotel Belvedere – Ohrid which installed reusable source of energy – collector (fig. 14) .

- Surface of the collector 40 m²
- Vacuum pipes with diameter Ø58 and length 1.8 meters
- Total vacuum tubes 240
- The system is expected to produce 55-65 MWh per year
- this is equal to the 6 minute work of the R.K.K. Bitola, and for that it is
- Even more precisely in the money of 230 000-270 000 denars.
The system was put into operation on June 15, 2007. The whole project was completely carried out by NATURRAFT in cooperation with a performer from Ohrid. The whole process was done in 10 days.

Vacuum collectors are 25-50% more efficient per year level of plate collectors depending on the collector which compares whether it is aluminum, copper or with selective coating.

*What did Hotel BELVEDERE get by installing the solar collectors?*

1. Permanently hot water 24 h for the hotel's needs.
2. The system works completely automatically; no one needs it to manage it.
3. Less cost per person (guest) for staying in the hotel with opportunity to be more competitive in terms of other hotels.
4. Facilities intended for electricity, oil or gas can be redirected to invest on another place. For example: an average of 4,200 euros / year for 10 years, is 42,000 euros.
5. The guarantee of the system is from 3-5 years.
6. The durability of the system is more than 20 years.
7. Let's not forget that Belvedere Hotel does not depend on a rise in the price of electricity, diesel or natural gas.
8. The solar system will produce an average annual average of 55 to 65 MWh and to be even more money in it it would be on the occasion of 230 000 - 270 000 denars.
9. The solar system will return the investment for less than 2 years (the hotel has already been installed boilers with modifiers).
10. Good example of filling one of the Eco Label criteria

*4.1.4 Implementation of ETIS in CBC region*

In light of our objective of assessing the sustainability of tourism sector using ETIS, in this section we identify the main problems that we encountered during the phase of evaluating the indicators. First of all missing data affected the reliability of the indicators and in others; it was difficult to contact the respondents who had not completed the entire questionnaire (a lot
of gaps). We tried to “arrive” to 5 step. Below, we elaborate on our experiences in collecting the data that we used during the process of calculating the indicators.

The State Statistical Office is specialized and independent organization within the state administration in the country from the right side of the border. The basic functions of the institution are collecting, processing and disseminating statistical data about the demographic, social and economic situation. The problem arise from the fact that almost all of the information about the indicators are for regional or national level, not on municipal level.

Another problem was the little number of respondents of all 4 types of the questionnaires. Difficulties were encountered in both data collection and stakeholders’ involvement in the implementation process. Insufficient knowledge and familiarity with the complex technical aspects of the indicator toolkit among primary stakeholders was another constraint associated with its implementation. We administered the questionnaire to residents, visitors, enterprises applying the face-to-face modality, and experience difficulties in collecting the preset number of questionnaires, some of the respondents in this survey did not answer all the questions.

On our meeting we tried to establish ETIS and prepared base for future application of the horizontal approach for the ‘Operators’ and the vertical approach for the “key destinations”. ETIS has been promoted by researchers to public sector stakeholders in Mavrovo and Rostuse, Ohrid, Vevcani and Mat, with the aim of managing and marketing the above destination in collaboration with the private sector and other primary stakeholders in tourism. The project was developed to assess and implement a pioneering sustainable tourism performance measurement system in collaboration with the IECE. Our experience showed that there is lack of data, mainly because of lack of knowledge. Capacity building and trainings are needed for municipalities in order assess the sustainability of tourism sector.

On European level there are few applications of the ETIS reported in the tourism literature. Examples include “ATL del Cuneese” in Italy; Malta; and Brasov County in the Romanian Carpathians. The findings of this analysis can provide guidelines and inputs for destinations to implement ETIS. In particular, the pioneering attempt can be adapted to meet local needs.

Destination planning and development occurs in a complex set of institutional and public-private arrangements among different organizations, including the nongovernmental organizations. Given that one organization cannot individually tackle complex policy problems
such as the ones occurring in the tourism sector, partnership should become the dominant “common sense” of tourism policy, especially on local level. It should become an element of tourism governance which is taken for granted either for tourism marketing and promotion or for urban redevelopment projects where tourism is integrated through retail, sport, entertainment and property development.

Figure 14. Attempt to assess sustainability using ETIS of municipality of Ohrid
5. HOW TO ENCHASE SUSTAINABILITY OF TOURISM SECTOR IN CB REGION

Sustainability is a growing global trend across a whole range of industries around the world. In tourism, sustainability is a practice of attempting to make as low an impact as possible on the environment and local culture, while helping to generate income and employment for the local economy. Actually it is the puzzle, which needs to be done so that the region can be more attractive, poses the issue of initiating the cross-border branding process.

5.1 What does it mean in practice?

Sustainable tourism is not the same as eco-tourism, which focus on conservation and environmental implications respectively. Rather than being a ‘tourism product’, SUSTAINABLE TOURISM IS A WAY OF DOING THINGS TO PROTECT AND ENSURE THE FUTURE OF THE LOCAL TOURISM INDUSTRY!

Benefits to sustainability are:

- cost savings,
- increased profitability,
- improved reputation and
- access to an increasing market of environment and culture conscious customers.

What is green tourism?

Green tourism is tourism that respects the environment and the local community as well as making good business sense. A green tourism business is as interested in a healthy profit

Study of sustainable tourism in Cross-border region
margin as any good business, but it does this in a way that helps - or at the very least doesn’t harm – local people and the local environment.

Based on the literature that examines the nature of the green brands, brands classifiable as green are those whose users’ primary associations are environmental conservation and sustainable practices (Insch, 2011). Hartmann et al., (2005: 10) characterizes a green brand identity as having “a specific set of brand attributes and benefits related to the reduced environmental impact of the brand and its perception as being environmentally sound.” In this line, Keller (2003) argues the necessity to be focused on green values as a feature of green brands, which leads to a clearly defined identity. Aaker and Joachimsthaler (2000) emphasize the brand essence, while First and Khetriwal (2008) note the benefit that appeals to users.

**It is responsible!** There is no blue print for green tourism. Every tourism business is different and therefore each one will have a different approach to going green. While a guest house might make home grown organic food their focus, a large hotel may be more interested in investing in renewable technologies. What every green tourism business has in common is that they are doing something to help the local community or environment.

There are many offshoots of green tourism, sustainable tourism, eco-tourism, responsible tourism, ethical tourism, and volunteerism. While they all have a slightly different focus, they share one common principle – that **tourism should respect the host destination.**

**5.2 Why to go green?**

Generally, tourism accounts for about 5% of Green House Gassess emissions worldwide, out of which the largest proportion of 75% is associated with transportation, whereas 40% is caused by air traffic (GIZ, 2014:74). Another factor that contributes to the environmental footprint of tourism is accommodation. This sector represents approximately 20% of GHG emissions generated from tourism (UNWTO-UNEP-WMO, 2008:10). The varieties of tourism types, which rely on clean nature and unpolluted environment as core values, impose the necessity to strive for sustainable tourism. Consequently, the hotel management introduce such energy practices that enable environmental protection by reducing carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide and other harmful emissions that provoke global-warming and climate changes. Yet, despite the gain in efficiency, the emissions from global tourism sector are predicted to grow 161% by 2035 (UNWTO-UNEP-WMO, 2008:36). This
actually means that tourism implicates many negative effects that must be prevented or at least, decreased.

Small steps (fig.16) in tourism sector in CB region can help being more sustainable, from:

[Figure 15. "Going green" steps]

Keeping in mind that today’s tourists are highly aware of the negative tourism impacts on the environment, many places have started their promotion as eco-friendly destinations. The contemporary tourists often search for unique features to discover first-hand something new and interesting. They abandon tourist destinations in poor environmental conditions and trace for hospitality industry establishments with Eco label, eco-certificate, and certificate for energy efficiency. In order to enhance sustainability of tourism in the region few steps need to be taken by the businesses and hotels (B. Petrevska and V. Cingoski, 2017).

That forced hoteliers to rearrange priorities and to make the establishments green, due to the fact that environmentally-conscious and adequately informed tourists are more willing to pay than others (Han and sustainable tourism in Cross-border region)
Kim, 2010; Kostakis and Sardianou, 2011) and rather consume green products and stay at green hotels (D’souza and Taghian, 2005; Chen and Tung, 2014). Yet, tourists are willing to participate in energy reduction efforts if it does not greatly diminish their holiday experience, if it is easy, or if it saves them money (UNWTO-UNEP-WMO, 2008). Consequently, hotels, as primary accommodation facilities, urge to apply environmental protection programs for reducing the energy consumption, recycling and composting food scraps (Bruns, 2000; Dodd et al., 2001; Bowe, 2005; Chen et al., 2005; Karagiorgas et al., 2006; Lu et al., 2012; Radwan et al., 2012; Xin et al., 2012; Kallbekken and Saelen, 2013; Pirani and Arafat, 2014). Recently, worldwide hotels have noticed the benefits of being transformed to eco-friendly hotels, thus leading to increased demand and competitive advantage (Vazques et al., 2001; Bohdanowicz, 2005a, 2005b; Le et al., 2006).

According to the research of B. Petrevska (2017) Macedonian hotel management rarely prepares written plans for environmental protection which is not in favor of supporting the European environmental impact assessment regulation. This legislation started to develop in the 1970s and since then, many documents, action plans and standards have been established by the European Union. Besides industry, energy, transportation and agricultural sections, tourism is also introduced as a segment that must conform to the Fifth Environmental Action Program. Due to the fact that CB countries Albania and North Macedonia are a candidate countries for EU membership, much attention should be put so that hospitality industry stakeholders meet the internationally set standards.

5.3 Green accreditation

Green Tourism Certification is the largest and most established scheme of its kind in the world, as a key part of its drive towards sustainability. There are also over a hundred global and regional certification programs for sustainable tourism (e.g. Green Globe, Green Key, TourCert, Travelife) which support hotel management in the establishment of appropriate EMS through the use of labels (Font, 2002). In this line, Ecolabels and Eco certificates are widespread tools for policy and marketing tourism strategies and are used frequently to show quests’ reliability. Additionally, they may add credibility to green brands, but are unlikely to actively communicate the array of functional and emotional benefits consumers, other than the greenest seek.
According to www.ecolabelindex.com/ecolabels, the most used and relevant tourism eco-labels are presented here:

**EarthCheck:** It is the world's largest certifier of sustainable travel and tourism operators with more than 1300 clients in over 84 countries. Its environmental management program involves the implementation of a policy of sustainable development and commitment with local communities. It also deals with the use and management of water, energy efficiency, paper, waste, and the use of pesticides and cleaning and hygiene products.

**AENOR Medio Ambiente:** Type I ecolabel system aimed at recognizing environmentally friendly products or services. Certification procedure based on auditing and labs test. The program will mark those products with less environmental impacts. It is mainly oriented to consumer products.

**B Corporations** are a new type of corporation which uses the power of business to solve social and environmental problems. B Corporations are unlike traditional responsible businesses because they meet comprehensive and transparent social and environmental performance standards, institutionalize stakeholder interests, and build collective voice through the power of a unifying brand.

**BIO Hotels:** This certification covers organic and regional products in Hotels. BIO Hotels uses only organic certified products that meet the standard of Bioland or similar ecolabels. Up to three exceptions are allowed. For wild harvesting exceptions are generally allowed but the product must be sustainably certified. For beverage the standard is also only organic quality.

**The Blue Angel** was initiated by the German government and awarded by an independent Jury to products that are environmentally friendlier than others serving the same use. Each label specifies that the product or service focuses on one of four different protection goals: health, climate, water, and resources.

**Blue Flag:** An ecolabel awarded to over 3200 beaches and marinas in 36 countries across Europe, South Africa, Morocco, New Zealand, Canada and the Caribbean in 2006.

**A Carbon Neutral Certification** is a label given to businesses that offset their Scope 1 and 2 carbon footprint. Verus Carbon Neutral first calculates the carbon footprint of a business wanting to be Carbon Neutral Certified. They then offset the carbon footprint by retiring carbon credits.
**The Carbon Reduction Label** is a public commitment that the carbon footprint of a product or service has been measured and certified and the owner of the product or service has committed to reduce that footprint over the following two years. The footprint that has been calculated will have been rigorously measured and be comparable based on the PAS2050 standard and Footprint Expert.

**Climatop**: The aim of climatop is to label the most climate friendly products and services (best-in-class). Similar products of a product family (functional unit) are compared with respect to their environmental emissions. Products that cause CO2-eq emissions that are generally 20% lower, receive the label.

**Earthsure**: The purpose of the Earth sure program is to provide comprehensive environmental data to purchasers (business and individuals) so that the power of the market can move the economy towards overall environmental improvement.

**ECO certification** is an ecolabel given out by the Malta Tourism Authority to hotels on the islands of Malta. Approximately 15% of hotels on the Maltese Islands are ECO certified translating to almost 30% of hotel rooms. To participate, hotels must comply with a number of criteria all aimed at improving their environmental performance and increasing environmental awareness amongst employees.

**Eco Hotels Certified**: This certification stands for more ecology, more sustainability and more regionality in a business. It is certification of sustainably operating tourism businesses and takes account of their total resource use.

**Green Globe**: The Green Globe Certification is a global certification for sustainability that rewards different businesses in the tourism sector; from hotels and conference centres, to attractions, or transportation and travel companies. The environmental criteria for this international label are wide and include the conservation of biodiversity, ecosystems and landscapes.

**- Green Key**: This is a worldwide eco-label for tourism facilities, which is awarded to hotels, campsites and attractions. It is notably based on education for sustainable development, raising environmental awareness among the owners, staff and clients of leisure establishments and environmental preservation by reducing the...
establishment’s impact on the environment. Each country develops national criteria consisting of all the international baseline criteria plus 20% of specific national criteria.

The TripAdvisor GreenLeaders Program showcases a variety of eco-friendly hotels and B&Bs, from budget to luxury – and they’re all committed to green practices like recycling, local and organic food, and electric car charging stations. All GreenLeader hotels and B&Bs must apply to the TripAdvisor GreenLeaders Program. If accepted, GreenLeaders achieve one of four statuses: Bronze, Silver, Gold, and Platinum. The higher the status, the greater the impact of a property's green practices.

In CB region especially in municipality of Ohrid and Struga, places have Certificate of Excellence which honors hospitality businesses that deliver consistently great service. This designation is presented to approximately 10% of total businesses on TripAdvisor that have consistently achieved great reviews over the past year. Accommodations (Hotels, B&B / Inns, and Specialty Lodging), restaurants, attractions, and vacation rentals are eligible to receive a Certificate of Excellence. To qualify for a Certificate of Excellence, a business must: Maintain an overall TripAdvisor rating of at least four out of five; Have a minimum number of reviews; Have been listed on TripAdvisor for at least twelve months.

European Ecolabel on Touristic Accommodation: It is part of the voluntary European eco-label scheme, established in 1992 to encourage businesses to market products and services that are kinder to the environment. Tourist accommodation displaying this award limits energy and water consumption, reduces waste production, prefers the use of renewable resources and substances that are less hazardous to the environment, and promotes environmental education and communication. The physical structure must respect all relevant laws existing in their region, including those related to biodiversity.

The Green Dot is the financing symbol for the organisation of recovery, sorting and recycling of sales packaging. On packaging, the Green Dot means that for such packaging a financial contribution has been paid to a qualified national packaging recovery organization set up in accordance with the principles defined in European Packaging and Packaging Waste Directive 94/62 and the respective national law. Clients of the Pakomak system - member (for the country from the right side of the border) of the international network Pro Europe, get a free Green Dot symbol. This way, the companies are designated as companies that comply with environmental standards defined by the Law and
the EU directives. Only a responsible attitude towards packaging waste will minimize negative environmental impact and ensure a better quality of life for all.

In addition, many sustainable tourism networks have been created at national, European and international level since 2000 to promote sustainable practices. For instance, the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) is a global initiative dedicated to promoting sustainable tourism practices around the world. It includes a diverse global membership (UN agencies, leading travel companies, hotels, national tourist boards and tour operators) and its Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria are a reference in the tourism sector for being the minimum requirements to reach in order to claim a sustainable tourism activity. At European level, ECOTRANS is a leading sustainable tourism multi-stakeholder network of experts who are seeking to promote and disseminate best practices.

Network of European Regions for Competitive and Sustainable Tourism (NECSTouR), it is an open network of European regions, whose aim is to develop and strengthen a coherent framework for the coordination of regional development programmes and research on sustainable and competitive tourism.

NEARLY ZERO ENERGY HOTELS neZEH encourages and proposes concrete solutions to EU hotel owners willing to become a nearly Zero Energy Hotel. Providing technical advice for nZEB renovations, demonstrating the sustainability of such projects and promoting front runners, neZEH sensitized more than 56,000 hotels across Europe, engaging them in the EU nearly zero energy building (nZEB) strategy. neZEH demonstrates best examples of neZEH buildings across Europe, thus influencing the hotel industry to move towards the nearly Zero Energy era, contributing in parallel to the EU efforts for CO2 reduction; saving up to 95,000 tCO2eq/y till 2020.

The European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas of the EUROPARC federation is a good example of a practical tool for the development of sustainable tourism in European protected areas. This charter aims to increase awareness of, and support for, Europe’s protected areas and improve
the sustainable development and management of tourism in protected areas, taking into account the needs of the environment, local residents, local businesses and visitors. Based on a five-year commitment from members, its principles involve working in partnership, preparing and implementing a strategy, and addressing key issues. It is neither a conventional quality label, nor a traditional partnership agreement, but combines elements of both.

To conclude, there is already a wide range of initiatives aiming to help willing tourism stakeholders to have a more sustainable activity with positive effects on biodiversity. However these initiatives need to be coordinated at global level to make their aims and results more understandable at tourists’ level.

5.3.1 European ECOLABEL

Among all eco certification EU Eco label is analysed in details in this study. The EU Ecolabel covers a wide range of product groups, from major areas of manufacturing to tourist accommodation. Key experts, in consultation with main stakeholders; develop the criteria for each product group in order to decrease the main environmental impacts over the entire life cycle of the product. Because the life cycle of every product and service is different, the criteria are tailored to address the unique characteristics of each product type. Every four years on average; the criteria are revised to reflect technical innovation such as evolution of materials, production processes or in emission reduction and changes in the market.

The main goals of the eco-labels (fig.15) are to advance management of:

![Figure 16. Main goals of Eco-label](image)

Eco – labelling proposes measures such as educating guests for waste reduction, preventative actions and offer local and seasonal products.

In 2003, the EU established label for tourist accommodation by establishing ecological criteria that:
- limit the consumption of energy and water,
- reduce waste generation and contribute to better management of generated waste,
- encourage the use of renewable sources and substances which are less harmful to the environment,
- promote training, information and better communication with guests in terms of preserving the environment.

On figure 16 it is shown how does the introduction of the eco-label affect the operation of the hotel.

In 2017 European Commission published a Manual (http://ec.europa.eu/environment/ecolabel/documents/TA UM-final-2018.pdf) to guide the applicant through the process of applying for an EU Ecolabel, in accordance with the criteria requirements published in the Commission Decision (EU) 2017/175 on establishing EU Ecolabel criteria for Tourist Accommodation. Criteria for awarding the EU Ecolabel to Tourist Accommodation are divided in mandatory criteria, common for all the accommodations, and optional criteria (with a maximum score of 124 points). At the same time, the product group criteria are included in different sections: General Management, Energy, Water, Waste and wastewater, and Other criteria.

This guide provide support to the beneficiaries to become certified by the European Ecolabel system!!!
5.3.2 Procedure for getting national\(^9\) eco-label

\(^{10}\) The ecological labelling of products and services is significant a voluntary tool that can reduce the harmful influence on the environment caused by the products and services for time of their full life cycle, and as a policy of the environment is present in the development programs of more countries in the world. Macedonian Ministry of Environment and spatial planning (MOEPP) follows the development programs of the EU and insists on the basic directions for developing such a policy to them incorporated in its legal acts. The country introduced a national system for environmental labelling of products and services Type I in accordance with ISO 14024 - (Eco-labels and declarations - Eco-labelling Type I - Principles and Procedures). In accordance with the “Law on Environment”, the Rulebook on the form and content of the ecological label, the manner, the conditions and the procedure for its allocation and use, as well as the composition and the manner of establishment and operation of the Commission for Ecological labelling. Namely, the ISO 14024 standard provides for the preparation of an Environmental Protection Program which will represent a set of environmental criteria for different product groups and services adopted by the competent ministry according to a specific procedure.

The ecological designation is given by the MOEPP on the basis of a request from a legal entity and on a proposal of Commission for ecological label, in accordance with this Law and the regulations adopted on the basis of this law. The eco-label is used on the basis of a contract for use on the ecological label concluded between the state administration body responsible for the affairs of the environment and the user. In the agreement, they are determined in particular the conditions for using the label and the usage fee of the label\(^{11}\).

5.3.3 Criteria for assigning EU ecological label for tourist accommodation

See Anex 1.

\(^{9}\) Relevant to municipalities of Ohrid, Struga, Vevcani, Debar, Mavrovo and Rostushe and Centar Zupa

\(^{10}\) Ecological labelling in Macedonia. Vlado Karovski Head of Standards Unit Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning Skopje, February 7, 2014

\(^{11}\) The Macedonian Chamber of certified architects and certified engineers - Designing the ECO-HOTELS
5.3.4 Successful examples from eco-friendly hotels

1. Hotel Stadthalle-Vienna, Austria

This hotel in 2009 managed to have 0% consumption electricity from fossil fuels sources. This sustainability has been achieved through the installation of 130 m² solar panels that produce enough energy to please consumption of electricity energy and water at the hotel. Isolation of the hotel is achieved with green walls as it could be seen on the figure 21.

After receiving the Austrian Eco-label they were better prepared to apply and pass the process of obtaining the EU Eco-label."With the acquisition of the EU, the Eco-label has started to build an international one a reputation as a sustainable eco-hotel whereby we now have a regular eco-friendly tourists from around the world "- Claudia Plot - Director. By gaining the EU Eco-label, the hotel has built an international reputation as a sustainable eco-hotel and received many eco-tourism and sustainability awards12

2. The Rubens at the Palace

A green wall of the hotel is touristic attraction witch catches rainwater into a warehouse with a capacity of 10 000 L from which the wall is irrigated (fig.22). Standing at 350 square metres and with a total of 10,000 herbaceous plants, the striking Living Wall at The Rubens at the

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13 http://tugc.co.uk/portfolio-item/maintaining-one-of-the-biggest-living-walls-in-london/

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Palace boasts a number of unique innovations. Designed to provide waves of blossoming plants throughout the year, the Living Wall is a unique talking point in the area. Plus, it provides wildlife habitat, helps keep the hotel cooler in summer and warm in winter, so is very environmentally friendly, minimising the hotel’s impact on the environment but also improve the air quality and aesthetics in this part of London. The plant list includes a wide variety of native species and those deemed by the Royal Horticultural Society as attracting insect pollinators – drawing bees, butterflies and birds, which is crucial in light of the decline in the bee population.

**Eagles Palace- Halkidiki, Greece**

One of the things that make Eagles Palace so unique is the environment surrounding it (fig.23). Whether it be the clear blue sea, the golden seashore, the green hills or the glorious sunlight of Greece, one cannot but be mesmerized by the exquisite nature of the resort’s ambience. What greater treasure can there be but the environment itself. One of the few Eco-friendly hotels in Greece, Eagles Palace blends in with the natural surroundings and respects the environment not only with its architecture but with its strong philosophy of ecological conscience and daily eco-acts.

Low consumption light bulbs in public areas and garden lighting, Master electricity switch in all bedrooms, Hot and cold water pipe insulation, one hand controlled bath taps, Variable linen change, Waste separation in metal, plastic and paper Battery recycling, Liquid soap dispenser in public area toilets and fitness douches, Continuous filtering of pool water and regular monitoring of the water quality.
4. The **SONIA VILLAGE HOTEL** – Greece has implemented the following energy saving measures (fig.24):

1. Solar hot water systems
2. Replacement of climates without an inverter with a new air-conditioning inverter Class A +++
3. Replacing all the bulbs with new long-life lamps of type 'pl'
4. Replacement of old water heaters with new more efficient water heaters
5. Installation of photovoltaic panels with a nominal power of 20 kW for getting electricity

The hotel was rewarded for the energy upgrade of its facilities (fig.25); with the first European award “RELACS 2013” for Green energy in tourism.

**5.3.5 GAP analysis regarding criteria fulfilment European Ecolabel system**

Ohrid hotels: "Belvedere", "Granit", "Lebed" and "Flamengo" submitted formal applications for acquiring eco-label for tourist accommodation. These are the first tourist facilities in that have submitted such a request. These are the first formal reports of 2009, when the Rulebook was adopted. By meeting the criteria for obtaining an eco-label, the four hotels undertake to reduce the harmful impact on the environment while continuously raising the awareness of the tourists by informing them about ways to contribute to saving energy, water and reducing of the quantities of waste.

It was also found that MK hotel management rarely prepares written plans for environmental protection which is not in favor of supporting the European environmental impact assessment regulation. This legislation started to develop in the 1970s and since then, many documents, action plans and standards have been established by the European Union.

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Besides industry, energy, transportation and agricultural sections, tourism is also introduced as a segment that must conform to the Fifth Environmental Action Program. Due to the fact that it is a candidate country for EU membership, much attention should be put so that hospitality industry stakeholders meet the internationally set standards.

The fact that people from municipalities have no information about certification scheme (Eu Ecolabel system) i.e. are they being used to identify businesses compiling sustainable standards is devastating. This is opposite to some facts that certification programs provide benefits and impose more efficient operations (Haaland and Aas, 2010).

According to our research bigger hotels on the Ohrid riviera such as Inex Gorica, Metropol, Millennium Palace, and Belvedere have built solar collectors, while Granit and Desaret still have no electricity savings. Most of the hotels use energy saving bulbs, have their own wells for water, select the waste, and have contracts with an authorized buyer of burnt oil. With these procedures, hoteliers show interest in introducing environmental standards. Based on the survey findings, we may conclude that Macedonian hotel management possesses relatively low level of environmental quality, resulting in poor and insufficient base for initiating creation of a national green tourism brand. Therefore, some recommendations may be followed which may allow creating more pro-environmental marketing strategies to enhance country’s distinctiveness. The hotel management must take steps to become more environmentally sustainable, even if initially there are costs for the implementation of the changes (technological, behavioral and organizational) in their everyday business, which will lead to cutting the operating costs and resulting in constantly improvement of the efficiency. First of all they should write an environmental policy to clearly state what want to change. Research has shown that people who write down specific goals are far more likely to achieve them than those who don’t. Environmental policy template might help businesses in the region to get started (template is given on fig.26). This should be done even if tourists do not demand it as part of their expectations. Additionally country can do more frequent penalizing of the environmentally unsound concepts practiced in hotels. In the same line, in order to meet tourism sustainable development goals, hotel management must find a way to avoid the fragmentation driven by the competitiveness, and work along in order to shape policies, not just react to them. This fully fits with the findings of Mihalič (2000) and Dwayer et al., (2012)

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who state that the emerging destinations are by far challenged to achieve competitive advantage.

Figure 23. Environmental policy template for hotels

6. MANAGEMENT OF SUSTAINABLE DESTINATIONS

As regions and countries develop their tourism industry, it produces significant impacts on natural resources, consumption patterns, pollution and social systems. The need for sustainable/responsible planning and management is imperative for the industry to survive as a whole. Having that in mind, Network of Associations of Local Authorities of South East Europe (NALAS) have produces Green Destinations of South East Europe Toolkit (GDSEE) as step that follows the development of the Sustainable Tourism Planning Toolkit for the Local Governments of South East Europe – STPT. This toolkit can help the local authorities cross-border region to use it for development and management of sustainable tourism destinations and creation of common reference point for municipalities and local government associations.

16 Toolkit for management of sustainable destinations of South East Europe. Network of Associations of Local Authorities of South East Europe (2015)
This toolkit is based on integration of indicator systems such as ETIS (European Tourism indicators System) and GSTR (Global sustainable tourism review).

6.1 Municipalities’ role in sustainable tourism management

Tourism is a relevant economic option, which requires careful planning in order to ensure successful, and continuous positive impact in the course of time. According to UNWTO World Tourism Barometer, International tourist arrivals are expected to continue the growth in order to reach 1.8 billion by 2030. Thus, it is expected that the next 20 years will offer immense possibilities to SEE’s economies. In particular, opportunities for local development which does not only support creation of jobs in the accommodation sector and related tourism services, but induce the local market for goods and services in sectors as diverse as transport, retailing, construction, culture, food processing, fishing and agriculture. Indeed, tourism is a resource-based industry, unlike the other sectors.

**LOCAL GOVERNMENTS PLAY DECISIVE ROLE IN MANY FORMS OF TOURISM, GIVEN THAT THEY USUALLY INCLUDE MANAGEMENT OF MANY KEY ELEMENTS OF THE TOURISM!!!**

Central government often provides the overall institutional framework for environmental management and sustainable tourism development upon which decisions and regulations can be specified at the provincial level according to the local context and economic strategy. Local departments of tourism are crucial to the implementation of these plans and policies and in providing baseline information for statistical responsible bodies. As providers of social services, builders of economic infrastructure, regulators of economic activities and often managers of the cultural and natural environment, local governments dispose of many direct instruments to influence the course of local tourism development (as shown on fig.27). In general, it includes a relevant investment of public money, which means that the local government is perhaps the largest “tourism operator” in many countries. On the demand side, local governments also enable the regional marketing and provide information for visitors in order to ensure quality experience for visitors.
The sustainable tourism planning toolkit (STPT) is produced by ANCI – The Italian National Association of Local Municipalities - as an output of the SeeNet Program with the specific aim to sustain capacity building for SEE municipalities in the field of sustainable tourism planning. It followed the adoption of the position paper “SEE Tourism Goes Local” which has the purpose to:

a) Build common understanding about sustainable tourism development on local level in South Eastern Europe (SEE);

b) Encourage sustainable tourism planning and development across SEE by deploying the potential of NALAS; and

c) Build a common reference point for local municipalities and local government associations (LGA’s).

Benefits of STPT:

- Understanding about the local tourism industry
• Formulation of tourism policy objectives
• Long term-focus
• Recognition of local governments role
• Formulation of policies according to local needs
• Facilitation of planning and development
• Better marketing
• Identification of financial requirements

The steps to implement STPT are as follows (fig.28):

![Figure 25. The sustainable tourism planning toolkit steps](image)

STPT is focused on strategic sustainable tourism development in destinations including:

• Awareness rising in the destination about the importance of sustainable tourism / education, motivation, benefits
• Determination of roles and responsibilities for development
• Data collection with focus on responsibilities, resources and ways of improvement.
• Details and good structure STPT also includes recommendations about the selection of indicators based on the indicators produced by UNWTO in 2004.

Guided by GDSEE, the local authorities in CB region should follow the steps prepared for the ETIS system upgraded them with wider information gained from STPT. Thus, GDSEE becomes a simple, easy to implement tool intended to help destinations in management and monitoring to ensure greater sustainability. According to our research and attempt to implement ETIS in municipalities in CBC region, we encountered resistance mainly due to gaps in knowledge. The pervasive weakness of local governments and the lack of capacity of municipal institutions are major impediments to sustainable development and require capacity building initiatives at various levels.

In order to be developed STPT these actions should be taken (it is familiar with ETIS):

Study of sustainable tourism in Cross-border region
1. Awareness rising = once the destination decides to implement the toolkit, it needs to raise awareness among all stakeholders and involve them to participate.

2. Stakeholder management = determination of key stakeholders from among the public, private and non-governmental sector, tourism and other fields; their inclusion in the process; setting up a working group; definition of key stakeholders and group members roles and tasks and setting the concept of the work. Strong destinations rely on local stakeholders and entrepreneurs, who are encouraged to invest in quality and sustainability as basis for strong local economy. Profit on local level should in turn enhance the investments and creation of jobs on local level.

3. Data collection and analysis of results = creation of destination profile that defines the destination input in terms of size and traffic, collection of statistics, surveys, and self-evaluation. Use of indicators: global, European, regional, national indicators = Think globally, act locally. Analysis of results is used for the purpose of setting goals.

4. Strategic planning = SWOT analysis, setting goals, action plan, development strategy, monitoring. Establishment of sustainable management system along with strategic planning, evaluations on regular basis and improvements. Required activities must be integrated into the municipal work programs, the work programs of DMO, as well as in the activities of individual stakeholders. Measurement of the progress in order to ensure sustainability in the long run.

5. Marketing and positioning = planning of sustainable marketing and communication strategy, global positioning, benchmarking in order to provide competitive advantage in comparison with other destinations.

It should be mentioned that Ohrid lake region is considered a major tourist destination, ranking first in terms of tourist opportunities. Ohrid lake region also consists of a number of other tourist destinations with well-defined profiles. Thus, there are destinations focused on summer tourism (beach tourism) on cultural-historical tourism (monastery), on rural mountain tourism (on Galicica), on eco-tourism (Studenciste swamp), and so on. In addition, other forms of tourism, such as business tourism, health tourism, transit tourism, or gastronomic tourism add to this range of tourism types. At the same time, it is important to note that Ohrid lake region is one of the test destinations where ETIS testing was conducted. In fact, the testing consisted of a three-day visit of a team of consultants that involved meetings with the destination coordinator, but the results weren’t as we expected (details in 5.3.2).
7. BENEFITS OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM IN CBC

7.1 Green Jobs: Towards Decent Work in a Sustainable, Low-Carbon World

Tourism is indeed one of the economic activities with most significant potential to generate future growth and employment in the EU (fig.29). In its narrow definition, tourism currently contributes some 4% to EU GDP, varying from about 2% in several new Member States and 12% in Malta. Its indirect contribution to GDP creation is much higher - tourism indirectly generates more than 10% of EU GDP and provides about 12% of all jobs17.

Tourism is particularly important when it comes to offering job opportunities to young people, who represent twice as much of the labour force in tourism than in the rest of the economy. Employment growth in the tourism sector has been significantly higher than in the rest of the economy in recent years, making the sector a significant contributor to the Lisbon objective to create more and better jobs. The importance of tourism in the EU economy is likely to continue to increase in the coming years with the expected annual growth of tourism demand slightly above 3% in the coming years.

“Cross-border tourism collaborations have an important role in social and regional development”

The creation of new jobs, higher standard of living, increased regional income, and more efficient management are additional benefits of cross-border cooperation (Timothy, 2001). Tourism today offers more perspectives at the local, regional and global levels, which are estimated to have the potential to be not only a profitable but also a leading economic branch in CB region. It is often a way to obtain hard currency and have the possibility to improve the

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17 Tourism and the European Union Recent trends and policy developments. EPRS | European Parliamentary Research Service Author: Maria Juul (2015)
balance of payments. Therefore it has become an integral part of economic restructuring (Timothy, 2001).

The tourism business opportunities in CBC centered on tourist attractions which range from beautiful river and lake beaches good for swimming and other water sports, endemic and unique wildlife, vast tracts of unspoiled nature such as green forests, waterfalls are particularly good and conducive for holidaying. Among others are traditional way of life of the people which are preserved in local customs; varied and rich, handicrafts and other colorful products depicting or illustrative of native arts and lifestyle, and the authentic unsophisticated but friendly characters of many in the CBC’s population. Nevertheless, many of these attractions are still in their raw state. They are still being enjoyed by very few numbers of persons either rich or poor.

To mansion, the following are some of the areas of business potentials in the tourism industry:

- heritage/cultural tourism resources development of slave trade relics,
- establishment of museums and preservation of monuments,
- eco-tourism, including wildlife watching tourism,
- development of hiking trails and Jeep tracks in the national parks Galichica, Mavrovo, (future NP) Jablanica, Lura and Zall Gjoçaj,
- development of picnic and camping sites at strategic locations within the trail circuit system in the national parks,
- building of tourist lodges,
- building of reception centres at natural/physical attractions,
- provision of cable bus system to take tourist through the very rugged but scenic terrain of the mountains especially on mt. Korab,
- construction of lodge cabins for expedition tourist and rangers,
- establishment of accommodation near waterfalls, springs, caves and temperate climate areas such as in Lura NP Plateau,
- beach tourism potentials establishment of boating and sport fishing facilities, development of water transportation,
- provision of educational facilities for water skiing and swimming,
- establishment of holiday resorts along the coasts,
- development of amusement parks, zip lines, swings etc
- entertainment facilities and shopping services, and
In order to achieve the objectives set in the sustainable tourism strategy, good marketing is essential. Despite well-known websites like Booking and Trip Advisor there are new one which are targeted for sustainable tourism like:

**BookDifferent.com** is a sustainable tourism booking website based in the Netherlands, which makes it easy to find EU Ecolabel hotels. The site, who won the Sustainable Travel Award in 2018 features 7000 eco-certified accommodations. Search filters allow users to identify hotels depending on their certification, country, city and estimation of their CO2 emissions, determined by an applied algorithm. Furthermore, BookDifferent.com contributes 10% of its gross turnover to organisations such as The Travel Foundation, The Global Forest Fund and the WWF. To this day, BookDifferent.com remains the only affiliate of Booking.com that has sustainable tourism at the core of its business model.

**Adventus Travel** is a booking site reserved exclusively for EU Ecolabel tourist accommodations launched by Mauro Sanna and Fiona Goodfellow in late 2017 as a passion project. Adventus Travel, which is a registered travel agency in Barcelona called BarcelonaTours.net, has a long-standing reputation of providing quality services to travellers. Years of experience in online marketing for the tourism industry and the team’s dedication to promoting eco-travel, encouraged a number of EU Ecolabel hotels to be featured on AdventusTravel.com (click on these links to visit the pages of these hotels here: France & Spain).

**SumWhere** is a recommendation platform, which lets users explore the world according to their areas of interest. The app and website offer a network of thematic maps created by experts, brands, communities and friends. These themes are connected together through a worldwide map, which give users a chance to discover unknown locations based on their interests.

### 7.2 Cross-border tourism collaborations - catalyst for innovation and knowledge transfer

Regions have become important in order to create and transfer knowledge; this is much due to the globalization of economic order and the increased knowledge- and creativity-based economy. Clusters of actors and organizations in border regions become especially important as they may contribute to knowledge transfer across the border. Benefits of engaging in innovative clusters may result in access to knowledge and learning processes that cannot easily
Study of sustainable tourism in Cross-border region

be acquired on the market (Park, 2014). Sustaining regional competitiveness is of great importance within the global market (Hartman, 2006), and therefore public regional actors involved in tourism development might benefit greatly by taking part in broader collaborations across national borders. By doing so, they get access to new valuable knowledge and have greater chances in maximizing the tourism potential of the region.

7.3 Positive outcomes of cross-border tourism collaborations

There is obviously a relation between different levels of cross-border collaborations, and a complex network destinations and attractions in cross border regions. It is therefore also suitable to discuss what outcomes and advantages there are with tourism related cross-border collaboration. The tourism industry can be credited with certain parts of some emended relationships in the world. It is argued to be able to be used as a mean to improve local infrastructure (Timothy, 2001). More specifically in the context of border regions, tourism also has the ability to alter political boundaries and the surrounding physical landscape. These changes are due to the increased demand of additional border crossings, boundary demarcations, and border-related services tourism creates in a region (Timothy et al., 2014). Effective and functional infrastructure is of great importance for the tourism industry, and with an internationalization of infrastructural development in border regions the transportation standards can be maintained better. Expensive infrastructural developments such as airports, hotels and shopping centres are commonly used by tourists. However, cross-border cooperation and networking concerning infrastructure developments can decrease expensive and possibly needless duplication of facilities and services such as these (Timothy, 2001). Hence, by cooperating across borders it is possible to better utilise tourism related infrastructure and services.

Other outcomes of further cross-border tourism developments in border regions might include a general increase of travel across the border and social change. There are regions were tourism has not been a major agent of changing the function of the border. However, subsequently to changes in border formalities and the function of border tourism has often become a salient user of the border territories (Timothy et al., 2014). Tourism is sometimes seen as a symbol of

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freedom as it allows citizens to travel freely, and also as a catalyst for social change by allowing and encouraging closer interaction between tourists and host communities (Timothy, 2001). Consequently cross-border tourism developments might lead to more effective use of border territories, as a mean to allow and encourage citizens to travel across borders and to strengthen the interaction between tourists and the region (fig.30).

Effective marketing and strengthened regional identity is another advantage of cross-border tourism development. Borderlines separating nations sometimes become historic markers or attractions in themselves. When this is the case, tourism have the possibility to alter the way a border is viewed and interpreted (Timothy et al., 2014).

**Cross-border tourism collaborations can be understood as a significant force for changing the function of borders.**

The emergence of transnational identities is a result of increased mobility and deeper cross-border partnerships in border regions (Prokkola et al., 2015). A strong international identity is highly valued within the tourism industry in order to reach a broad market. In this context multination efforts for promotion and marketing are especially important in border regions. By working together in marketing there is a greater chance to maximize the tourism potential of the whole region and bring greater benefits to the involved parties (Timothy, 2001).
7.4 Collaborative Processes for Sustainable and Competitive Tourism in CB region

Efforts to develop tourism cross borders have gained interest during the last decades. The European Union (EU) serves many functions and regional cooperation and integration are two of these. EU countries are beginning to see the importance of tourism and the needs for economic diversification. There are many travelers who want to pay attention to the environmental impact of their travels and the way local authorities are managing it. Tourism for CBC region could become a channel of employment creation, income generation and revenue mobilization for the Albania and North Macedonia. If it is properly done (on sustainable way) the countries could begin to take advantage of the huge opportunities. The huge advantages in tourism can be achieve with the availability of natural, manmade, cultural, and enhancing infrastructure supporting the growth and development of tourism in the cross-border region. 19 There is a great societal value of research on cross-border sustainable tourism development as this is an indicative process of European integration (Prokkola, 2010). Additionally there are several benefits and positive outcomes associated with joint cross-border collaborations. These include joint infrastructural developments, strengthened regional identity and marketing, improved regional economy i.e. shared economy and catalyst for innovation and knowledge transfer (Timothy, 2001; Timothy et al., 2014; Park, 2014; Hartman, 2006; Weidenfeld, 2013). However, cross-border tourism development projects often encounter challenges of different character and this project wasn’t exception. These challenges are associated with difficulties to establish cohesiveness due to different cultural, social, economic, political, and organizational systems in two countries.

However, there is a need to apply new perspectives of the contemporary research within the field. Current research have mostly emanated from the perspective of private entrepreneurs and visitors in border regions. There is a gap in the literature of the perspective on public actors involved in tourism development which is unfortunate as local governments often control planning for tourism, and are closely associated to challenges with tourism development (Ruhanen, 2013). There current research have also emanated from extensive contributions of a few authors (Ioannides et al., 2006; Prokkola, 2008; 2010), contributing to a need for new

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needed knowledge and insights to the literature. With both the benefits and challenges associated with cross-border tourism development in mind, it is relevant to analyse the experienced and expected thoughts and views of these among partner organization from Albania and North Macedonia.

This study can broaden the knowledge of tourism developments in cross-border regions by focusing on the public actors involved in tourism.

The spatial distribution of attractions can have great influence over the potentiality of a tourism destination. Hence, instead of delimitating destinations by administrative borders, there is a great opportunity to define the tourism destination based on the tourists’ consumption space and the spatial distribution of attractions (Blasco et al., 2014b). It is possible to view destinations as multiple layers overlapping ranging from community, region, country, and continent.

Borders add additional dimensions to the complex process of organizing tourist destinations in cross border regions. A form of regionalization leading to more autonomous levels of governance on a subnational level have influenced many national political systems (Blatter, 2004). This global trend for regional commerce and economic development is difficult to achieve without close cooperation between nations in border regions (Tosun et al., 2005). By implementing a destination management, cooperation across borders can become more effective, professional, sustainable, and closer to the targeted market (Hartman, 2006). The emergence of effective cross-border structures and management become easier when there are bridging institutions and actors present. In order to establish trust among involved actors, it is important to establish close and power-symmetric personal relationships (Blasco et al., 2014a).

7.5 Sustainable tourism and sharing economy

In CB region tourism services have mainly been provided by businesses such as hotels, motels, hostels or tour agency. Recently, a growing number of individuals are proposing to share with tourists what they own (for example their house, an apartment, a car, a bicycle, travel equipment) or what they do, skills and competencies (e.g. cooking and photography skills, knowledge of a town, places to visit).

This type of sharing is referred to as the 'sharing economy'. Sharing goods and services between individuals is nothing new in itself. The developments of the internet and, as a consequence, the creation of online platforms as Airbnb, Booking etc has made sharing easier than ever.
This type of sharing or exchange of goods or services is generally facilitated via online platforms that match demand and supply (fig 31). In many cases, these platforms are created and managed by private companies, also referred to as peer-to-peer companies or sharing economy companies.

The sharing economy has had a positive impact on tourism as well as a negative one. Its advocates think that it provides easy access to a wide range of services that are often of higher quality and more affordable than those provided by traditional business counterparts. Critics, on the other hand, claim that the sharing economy provides unfair competition, reduces job security, avoids taxes and poses a threat to safety, health and disability compliance standards. The response to the sharing economy remains fragmented in the EU. Some activities or aspects have been regulated at national, regional or local level. In June 2016, the European Commission published a communication on a European agenda for the collaborative economy, to offer some clarification on relevant EU rules and provide public authorities with policy guidance. The European Parliament and advisory committees have also touched upon the issue in various resolutions and opinions.

in 2016 pointed that tourists are, in general, more open to self-guided holidays and look more at information from other tourists (friends and family or anonymous tourists who post reviews on the internet) than in the past. Many tourists use digital technology and social media to plan,
purchase or review travel experiences. They demand sustainable tourism products as well as more unique and personalized tourism experiences.

The migration of people from region, unemployment and reduced purchasing power has pushed citizens to pay increasing attention to prices and value for money. People are also increasingly open to the idea of sharing resources and to new flexible work opportunities. All these factors have favored the development of the sharing economy.

Some other developments, such as increasing attention to safety and security, on the other hand, are having the opposite effect. Furthermore, the market share composed by older tourists, who are often less open to the sharing economy business models, is also growing there is no clear demarcation between those companies that are included (wholly or partially) in the sharing economy and those that are not.20

7.6 Mobile applications as solutions to enhance sustainable travel behaviour

Our research recognize the need for online presence and good marketing of all tourism niches from this region; digital communications and social media skills of tourism operators are needed.

Tour Guide mobile apps eliminate the need for brochures, maps, guides and other material which is eco-friendly way of promotion. Guided tour apps not only replace traditional methods of travel, navigation and exploring, but also enable users to share experiences on social media as well.

These apps are cropping up more in today’s times when tourism and hospitality is a buzzing industry all over the world. A reason for it is they are another successful mode of promoting world famous destinations, resorts, museums, galleries, hotels. Also, tour apps can monetise and promote a destination, rather than individual apps for hotels, airlines, care-hire, etc.

Tour guide apps are quite a novelty as they are extensively being adopted by tour operators and travel agencies, tourism boards and DMO’s, hotels and resorts, travel publishers, and others.

There are some interesting statistics to show how internet and tour guide mobile apps have been changing trends in the recent years (source: www.rezdy.com)

- Survey done by Statistic Brain showed that in the last 5 years internet travel booking revenue has grown by more than 73%
- 20% of Google searches being for local information (HubSpot)
- Almost 40% of all tour and activity bookings are being made online (Rezdy data)
- More than 148.3 million people use the Internet to make reservations for their accommodations, tours and activities. That’s more than 57% of all travel reservations each year!
- 60% of leisure and 41% of business travelers are making their own travel arrangements, generally via Internet (Amadeus)
- Tourism Research Australia says travelers use their mobiles 33% of the time to go online during their trips to find activities.
- The 5 most common things travelers are willing to spend more on as a treat: Sightseeing (53%), special dining experiences (41%), accommodation (41%), activities (35%) and shopping (24%) (Trip Barometer)
- 52% of travelers used a smart phone or tablet to complete travel bookings. Of those 52%, 23% opted to use their smart phone while 29% made their reservations on their tablet (JiWire)

A survey results (prepared for this project) shown that 65,38% of the visitors of Ohrid, Struga, Debar, Vevacani, Centar Zupa ansd Mavrvovo and Rostushe and 60% of the visitors from Mat, Klos, Diber and Bulqize visitors prefer to shop/book electronically and that the number of electronic buyers has increased in relation of past years.

**These results set a good grounding for achieving the aim of this research – enhancing sustainable tourism behaviour at travellers and SMART tourism in Cross-border region!**

### 7.7 Challenges associated with cross-border tourism development

Just as there are advantages and positive outcomes of tourism related cross-border collaborations, there are challenges associated with these types of collaborations. Even though borders have an obvious influence in international travel are there some authors who have
examined them within a tourism context (Timothy & Tosun, 2003). Most of the challenges related to factors such as social, culture, economy, politics and regulations, and organization and governance.

According to our research, conducted field surveys in Albania and North Macedonia of the cross border region, the social mindset, institutions, and public administration systems of a tourist destinations could be unprepared of the rapid changes in the way the tourism will be developed. It is usual to hear someone from the region to be pessimist about the sustainability of the tourism sector and the new offers.

Even though countries in CB region have already started to work closer together over borders, their border regions might not be sufficiently prepared for the clash of different social way of life. As a result this influence the collaborations as the degree of functional barriers increase. It is not only municipalities and inter-regional organizations working with tourism development that become affected by social differences, but also tourists. Travelers specifically notice negative attitudes among people who work in border crossings which influence their experience of the region. This issue arises as border officials usually not see themselves as a part of the tourism industry (Timothy & Tosun, 2003). Hence, the social climate of border regions influences both collaborations on a higher level as well as ordinary travelers visiting the region.

Many local tourism business operators have very limited understanding of the needs and wants of travelers, and expectations of international tour operators. There is limited access to market knowledge that can guide tourism businesses in their decisions to invest in new experiences and offerings. Despite that there is limited public investment in infrastructure that gears towards the targeted segments due to the lack of priority on outdoor forms of tourism.

These problems arise because:

Alongside social cohesion and understanding, are cultural and linguistic differences of great importance to consider in human interaction (Timothy & Tosun, 2003), as in collaborations across borders. The cultural similarities or dissimilarities are usually strongly related to the history and function of the border, as to what extend residents in the area has been able to interact (Timothy, 2001).

Every border region possesses unique features different from other geographical locations. Different national regimes on each side of a border influence the lifestyle and culture of the

Study of sustainable tourism in Cross-border region
population. Therefore border regions and adjacent areas become highly influenced culturally by their proximity to an international border (Gellman & Timothy, 2011). Even though the geographical distance is not far, cultural dissimilarities in border regions can lead to an increased perceived distance. This is usually tied to the perception among people of entering an unfamiliar sphere. The cultural difference between each side of a border will similarly to the social factors influence the degree of barrier the border cause (Timothy & Tosun, 2003). Different language and culture are more specific examples attributes which possibly lead to barriers to tourism and cross-border collaborations (Timothy, 2001). Some countries are of course closer to their neighbors than others, but cultural differences might still create barriers for people, even at friendly borders. Formalities tied to crossing the border especially increase this type of barrier (Timothy & Tosun, 2003). There is a risk of an ‘us vs. them’ perspective, consequently leading to failed collaborations and lost opportunities for learning. The benefits of successful integration become limited as a result of the cultural barriers and language problems creating major obstacles (Björkman et al., 2007). As public organizations are influenced by national values the cultural distance among tourism developers in border regions might create barriers for further collaborations across the border. Depending on the contemporary relationship between the sovereign nations in a border region the economic difference might influence collaborations variously. As regions are highly influenced by their own national economic system new relationships across borders might be difficult to form. It is argued that ties among economic actors in border regions not always occur naturally (Blasco et al., 2014a), which certainly influence cross-border collaborations. Separate and distinct taxation systems on each side of the border sometimes increase the competitive relation between countries and create barriers for collaboration (Ioannides et al., 2006; Hampton, 2010). The multiplicity of involved actors in the process of developing cross-border projects combined with distinct taxation systems often lead to a complex process of setting up financial plans. A great consequence of this complexity is the difficulty of finding funding for cross-border projects (Durand, 2014).

Another challenges associated with cross-border tourism collaboration concern political related factors. International borders are politically inflicted in their crude nature (Sofield, 2006) as they mark a line that usually separate different political systems and sometimes also ideological views (Timothy & Tosun, 2003). Areas in close proximity to border regions therefore become heavily influenced by the political relationship between the bordering countries. This also
influence to what extent and degree the border become a functional barrier (Gelbman & Timothy, 2011; Timothy & Tosun, 2003). As international tourism always include crossing borders (Timothy, 2001), the tourism industry become affected by political related issues in border regions. For tourists the functional barrier of borders as a consequence of political disputes has great influence over their experience of the destination (Timothy & Tosun, 2003). There are also chances of constraining the tourism flow across borders as may tourism become entangled in sensitive political issues (Sofield, 2006), which possible affect the local tourism actors and perception of the destination. Political frontiers caused by functional borders often lead to difficulties in achieving collaboration, cooperation and integration. These difficulties derive from the political environment on each side of the border.

Unfortunately, uneven economic development, socio-political dynamics and severe military conflicts of the near past, including unresolved issues between the countries has made cooperation in the region difficult. To function as one integrated travel destination (as frequently desired from the demand perspective) countries in the region must establish effective cooperation to develop joint tourism products (cross-border routes, common themes, joint attractions, etc.), deliver authentic regional experiences and market them selves as one destination. Lack of knowledge and expertise among local officials of the neighbouring country’s territorial also negatively affect cross-border cooperation. The lack of knowledge and uneven power structures are major weaknesses especially contributing to constraints in participatory planning (Timothy, 2001; Durand, 2014). Under-developed organizational and governance structures might have serious impacts on the development of cross-border regions.

In some regions have there been a great reliance of short-term Interreg-programmes. Becoming too reliant of a few key actors increase the vulnerability is some actors encounter problems or decide to end the project (Prokkola, 2008). In order to avoid serious failures due to sub-standard organizational and governance structures, it is important to establish horizontal networks among local actors, and vertical networks in order to link higher levels of administrators to the local actors are of great importance (Perkmann, 1999).

Lack of coordination on an institutional level on each side of a border is a big challenge. The juxtaposition of different territorial systems contributes to the main challenge of coordination in cross-border regions (Durand, 2014). This is why well-structured organization and
governance are of great importance in cross-border developments. Another common constraint is when there are administrative differences between nations give rise to barriers among politicians and organizations for further collaborations (Zhang et al., 2006). As involved actors on each side sometimes have different priorities for the development of the region, administrative difference also might increase difficulties in building consensus around common goals.

8. TOURISM POLICY AND GOVERNANCE

8.1. Institutional Frame-work for Sustainable Tourism Development in CBC

Having the interest of tourism development in mind, the Federal Government of CBC has made an institutional arrangement for the development of tourism in the country. The institutional arrangements are classified into three groups which are; Federal, State and Local level. Each of this group has their own responsibilities, duties and contributions to the success of tourism development in their various levels. (CBC High Commission 09-2014). For the purpose of this study, the bodies responsible for the development of tourism in the various groups mentioned earlier will be identified with their functions in turns;

8.2 Tourism governance and institutional setup

There are five key stakeholders of tourism on a national level in country right side of the border:

Key stakeholders – national level Ministry of Economy (tourism department)

The tourism department within the Ministry of Economy is currently responsible for the tourism policy/strategic planning and licensing, research, categorization and cooperation. Currently 11 people are employed - five dealing with tourism policy/strategic planning and four with the other areas (plus one Head of Department and one Advisor). The annual budget for the tourism department had been MKD 5 million in 2013 and 2014 and had been increased to MKD 27 million in 2015 – the same budget could be available also for 2016.

Agency for Promotion and Support of Tourism
The Agency for Promotion and Support of Tourism was founded in 2007 and is a government organization whose primary function is the promotion of Macedonian tourism resources and facilities abroad. The annual budget for the agency had been MKD 204 million in 2015, slightly less than in 2013 and 2014 - an increase to around MKD 270 million is expected for 2016. The main function of the Agency for Promotion and Support of Tourism is promoting tourism resources of the Republic of North Macedonia for foreign markets, as well as management and support of projects aimed at developing tourism in general. APSTRM was founded in 2008 under the "Law establishing the Agency for Promotion and Support of Tourism in the Republic of Macedonia" ( "Official Gazette" No. 103/2008).

The bodies of the Agency for Promotion and Support of Tourism are: Management Board (composed of 7 members) and the Council (composed of 15 members). The Government of the Republic of Macedonia gives consent to the Statute of the Agency for Promotion and Support of Tourism, the annual work programme and the annual financial plan, while the Ministry of Economy supervises the legality of the operations of the Agency for Promotion and Support of Tourism. The Agency for Promotion and Support of Tourism has two sectors: promotion sector and support sector.

Competencies and strategic priorities

- Active advancement and promotion of tourism and professional presentation of all segments and regions of the tourist offer, and preparing an analysis of the potentials of domestic and foreign tourism market;
- Preparation and implementation of the programme and providing informational material to promote and support tourism values;
- Establishment and development of a single tourist information system and its connection with other information systems;
- Active promotion of the overall tourism potential of the Republic of Macedonia in the country and abroad and cooperation with world famous tour operators to attract as many tourists as possible;
- Positioning of new tourist markets;

- Promoting and coordinating all tourism organizations, chambers, associations, organizations and other institutions in the field of tourism and hospitality in order to improve and promote tourism;
- Initiating and guiding inter-municipal, regional and international cooperation for the promotion of tourism;
- Participation in attracting investments in the tourism sector in the Republic of North Macedonia;
- Promoting and supporting the development of the total tourism potential of the country.
- The Agency for Promotion and Support of Tourism implements all other activities in accordance with law and Statute.

**HOTAM and ATAM**

HOTAM is a voluntary association of hotel and catering businesses in North Macedonia. It is a non-profit and non-government organization; however members are required to pay a small annual fee. All collected funds are used to cover the expenses, to promote and protect the members. Currently the association has 67 members – 50 hotels (the majority of them at Lake Ohrid), 3 camping sites, 2 private accommodation facilities, 3 tourism education institutes, 6 restaurants and 3 tour operators.

**ATAM is the Association of Travel Agencies of Macedonia** – the majority of the members are outgoing agencies. Economic Chamber for Tourism The Economic Chamber for Tourism (ECTM) was established in 2008 and currently has around 200 members – from travel agencies to transportation companies and accommodation facilities and restaurants. The members are divided into three categories: premium, regular and associate. The main goal of ECTM is to improve the business environment in the tourism industry and to create favourable conditions for its members. It is financed by voluntary membership fees.

**Institutions and organizations related to tourism in Albania**

*Institutions of central government*

- Ministry responsible for tourism (Ministry of Tourism and Environment)
- National Tourism Agency (NTA)
- National Coastal Agency (NCA)
- national Agency for Protected Areas (AKZM)
- Albanian Agency for Investment Development (AIDA)

*Other public institutions affecting tourism at national level, are shown below:*
- Ministry of Culture
- Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports
- Ministry of Health and Social Protection
- Ministry of Interior
- Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy
- Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
- Ministry of Finance and Economy
- Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs
- Bank of Albania
- Institute of Statistics
- Institute of Culture Monuments
- Agency of Archaeological Services
- National Agency for Regional Development
- Agency for Economic Regional Development
- Advisory Committee of Tourism Private Sector

*Local Government Bodies and their responsibilities regarding tourism*
- Associations of Tourism Private Sector
- International Donors with an active role in tourism sector

**8.3 Strategic Development and Sustainability of Tourism in CBC**

In this chapter, the researcher had made an attempt to analyses the background of tourism development in the country by explaining the origin of tourism in CBC. Equal emphases had also been made in discussing the institutional frame-work for sustainable tourism development in CBC, the government plans for developing sustainable tourism and strategies for development and sustenance of tourism in the country. This chapter was used to share the overview of tourism in CBC, the starting point, the present position and the future plans for development and sustenance in tourism industry.
8.4 Hindrance of Tourism Development and Sustainability in CBC

Poor Planning and Corruption
Despite the machinery put in place by every regime in the CBC government, the power of fighting corruption to its final state is still missing in CBC. Corruption has eaten very deep into all sector of the country. The tourism sector is not left out of these crises. The rate of corruption in CBC is a huge discouragement to tourism and tourist in the country which hinders the country from been a tourist destination. Corruption is a very big disease that kills slowly and never allow a bit of development instead devalued the country in the world. However, there is need for quality and effective management of tourism and tourist destinations in the country which will bring investors into CBC to develop tourism sector and other undeveloped industry in the country. Planning and management entails personnel and qualified individuals who are skilled in this area.23

The links between tourism and biological diversity are not strongly regulated but depend on cross-industry measures. Due to its complexity, the tourism sector is influenced by regulations in different fields: land and town planning, transportation infrastructures, etc. And these regulations are related to competencies from various national and regional administrations. The coordination of public and private initiatives in tourism is mostly done at local level.

8.5 Sustainable tourism development and European policies

EU is taking actions promoting sustainable tourism:

1. Balanced approach to economic, environnemental and socio-cultural aspects
2. European Charter for a sustainable and responsible tourism set of general principles and guidelines to encourage sustainable/responsible practices
3. European Tourism Indicator System (ETIS) for Sustainable Management of Tourist Destinations. A comprehensive and simple to use system, aiming at helping destinations to monitor, manage, measure and enhance their sustainability performances. Toolkit, guidance, surveys etc. currently under revision after the two testing phases - new version presented at


Study of sustainable tourism in Cross-border region
Since management is becoming a more urgent and complex task, there are many examples throughout the world on how policy planning, physical measures (fencing and shelters), legal regulations (e.g. zoning and protection provisions), site-specific visitor strategies (e.g. information boards and guiding), often in combination with various kinds of economic instruments (taxation incentives, governmental funding policies, use of penalties, access fees) have increasingly been taken into use. Responding to the unprecedented increase in visitation to certain vulnerable nature areas and sites in CBC countries, using economic instruments for regulating the volume of visitors can be proposed by some policymakers, managers and tourism businesses, often by reference to established practices in other parts of the world. However, these kinds of instruments are particularly challenging in the CBC countries due to how the freedom to roam and traditional open access have been transformed into general public rights (Kaltenborn, Haaland, and Sandell, 2001; Sandell, 2006a/2006b). Restricting access by using physical barriers and user fees will not only encounter legal barriers. Measures like these can also be contested on political and moral grounds, since dominant socio-cultural practices of outdoor recreation are closely associated with the legal principles of public rights of access (see Øian, 2013; Øian and Skogen, 2016; Sandell and Svenning, 2011). On the other hand, environmental codes, as well as planning acts represent an instrument for political and administrative authorities to decide how different interests are to be balanced and prioritized at any given time with concern to land use (see e.g. Overvåg, Skjeggedal, and Sandström, 2016; Olesen and Carter, 2017; Jóhannesson, Huijbens, and Sharpley, 2010). In Norway for instance, arrangements which in practice imply quotas of visitors have been implemented to prevent traffic from adversely affecting specific wild reindeer migration routes (Andersen, Gundersen, Strand, Wold, and Vistad, 2014).

8.6 Tourism and Local Agenda 21
Traditionally, tourism development has depended on initiatives taken by the private sector. In many countries local authorities have not been closely involved in tourism and have little experience of its planning, development and management.
In recent years this has been changing, and the key role of local authorities is now recognised. This is due to:

- The complexity of the tourism sector, where it is the consumer who is brought to the product and not the other way round, as happens with most other goods and services.
- Increasing awareness that tourists select and respond to destinations, not just individual products. The visitor experience is made up of a complex range of elements including expectations, transport, information, accommodation, attractions, activities, local infrastructure, natural environments, cultural heritage, a welcoming host population, security and other services.
- The disparate nature of the private sector in tourism, much of which comprises small and micro enterprises.
- Acceptance that, in the interests of sustainability, public authorities need to be involved in regulating tourist development in destinations, and not simply leaving it up to the laws of the market.
- The trend towards administrative decentralisation underway in many countries, which increases the ability of local authorities to intervene.

Local authorities are often the best placed organisations for establishing a sustainable approach to tourism in destinations, setting a strategy and balancing the interests of tourism enterprises, tourists and local residents. Their ability to manage tourism sustainably is related to:

- Their democratic legitimacy;
- Their relative permanence and ability to take a long term view; and
- Their responsibility for a range of functions that can influence tourism development, including spatial planning, development control, environmental management and community services.

1.3 The Local Agenda 21 approach

Chapter 28 of Agenda 21 binds local authorities to implementing at a local level the commitments made towards sustainable development by the international community.
A Local Agenda 21 is an approach through which a local community defines a sustainable development strategy and an action programme to be implemented. The approach is usually initiated by the local authority, which provides leadership for the process. Its success hinges on close cooperation between the population, NGOs, private enterprises and other local interests.

The process normally involves five steps (fig. 32):

1. Setting up a Local Agenda 21 Forum and/or working groups;
2. Discussion and analysis of the main local issues;
3. Identification of goals and ideas for action for the sustainable development of the local area;
4. Integration of these goals and ideas into a Local Agenda 21 action plan that is adopted by the local authority and others;
5. Implementation of the action plan, with the involvement of all relevant players.

There is no prescription for what issues and activities the process should address, as all places are different and the principle is to enable partners in each location to identify their own priorities. However, in accordance with Agenda 21, the process should focus on economic, social and environmental sustainability.

Municipality of Ohrid has its own local 21 agenda but it needs update.

### 8.6.1 The role of local authorities in sustainable tourism

Little attention has been given to purposefully investigating the roles and responsibilities of local government in addressing sustainable development within tourism destination contexts (Dinica, 2009; Wray, 2009; Beaumont & Dredge, 2010). Governments nevertheless have a critical role in creating the context and stimulating actions to ensure that
tourism is more sustainable in the future. Local government has become an important arena for discussions about the interpretation and implementation of sustainable development (Commonwealth Department of Environment and Heritage 2004; UNEP 2003). Discussions at international and national levels reinforce the importance of local government because it is at this local level that local policy debates unfold and decisions about resource use are made. Governments should provide an environment that enables and encourages the private sector, local community, tourists and other stakeholders to respond to sustainability issues. This can best be achieved by establishing and implementing a set of policies for tourism development and management, drawn up in concert with others. The principles of sustainable development put emphasis on local determination and implementation of policies and actions. This should be placed within a supportive national policy framework.

Indeed, it is often local governments which assume much of this responsibility as they are closest to many of the problems associated with tourism development (Aronsson, 2000) and they control most of the development planning aspects associated with tourism (Dredge & Jenkins, 2007). Local governance get fast information’s about the problems that have the community. Also local governance know with details natural resources and human capital so through the careful assessment it can plan the future to help the community in employments, local business, infrastructures etc. Local governments are faced with a range of challenges to the effective planning and management of tourism at their destination level. The most important challenge is that of integrating the management of tourism with other functions and activities of local government. Table indicates some areas of local government responsibilities as they relate to tourism.

Seeking sustainable tourism development in order to achieve the best balance between the economic benefits and the social and environmental impacts is nowadays a challenge to many governments in the world (McKercher, 2003)

According to our research if municipalities Ohrid, Struga, Vevcani, Centar Zupa, Mavrovo and Rostuse, Debar and Dibra region are following the ideas of the Agenda 21, that are based on the results of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro (1992) when focusing on sustainable tourism, they are facing a gap due to missing indicators focusing on topics in the field of sustainable tourism.
The analysed sustainability reporting guidelines, such as the Global Reporting Initiative 3.1 or the United Nations Global Compact, lack to support municipalities due to missing indicators and support in defining the sustainability report’s boundaries.

Municipalities in Cross border region as well as companies are currently addressed by their stakeholders to report their (environmental, social and economic) impacts.

In the line of assisting Municipalities from the region to be a step closer to be identified as “sustainable” some initial actions are recommended (fig.33). For example:

8.6.2 The role of hotels in sustainable tourism

8.6.2.1 Food waste

This topic was further discussed in the section on Eco label. A new trend for sustainable tourism in EU is reducing food waste and over packaging.

With lengthy kitchen operating hours for room service, individually packaged portions of jam, butter and sugar, as well as generous hotel buffets, the tourist accommodation industry is a contributing player in food waste generation. New criteria for the EU Ecolabel, draw attention to the role this sector can play in

24 http://ec.europa.eu/environment/ecolabel/index_en.htm
reducing food waste. It sets voluntary standards for hotels and other accommodation establishments to better manage and monitor food waste and packaging levels.

Today, 20% of the food produced in the EU is wasted while 55 million people live in food insecurity. The waste generated by the food service industry, which includes tourist accommodations, accounts for 12% of total food waste. While this sector is a relatively smaller contributor to EU food waste in comparison to households, which account for 53% of total food waste, reducing food waste in this industry is necessary to lower global food waste levels, especially since the global population is expected to reach 9.8 billion people in 2050.

Research has shown that guests eating at hotel buffets may only consume about half of the food that they serve themselves. Due to EU food safety regulations, unconsumed food that has been set out on self-serve or that remains on plates must be thrown away. Therefore, only leftover food surplus in the kitchen that respects storage and hygiene criteria can be redistributed to food banks. As there is a maximum redistribution potential of only 10 to 15% of the total surplus food, according to the food use hierarchy, it is favorable to prevent food waste at its source instead of trying to implement recovery solutions after food surplus has already been generated.

The European Commission actively encourages initiatives for the reduction of food waste within the Tourist Accommodation sector through the voluntary EU Ecolabel criteria for this industry. Published in January 2017, these criteria introduced requirements for certified tourist accommodations to establish a food waste management plan, monitor food waste levels, and to communicate on their prevention and management actions to guests. Furthermore, an optional requirement encourages tourist accommodations to recover their food waste via composting or biogas production (a mixture of different gases produced by the breakdown of organic matter and considered to be a renewable resource).

The use of single dose packages for non-perishable foodstuffs (sugar, coffee, chocolate) is also prohibited for EU Ecolabel certified establishments in order to reduce food packaging waste. The EU Ecolabel tourism criteria on packaging and the use of disposable items follows the EU Action Plan for a circular economy adopted by the Commission in December 2015 which identified plastics as a key priority and committed itself to ‘prepare a strategy addressing the challenges posed by plastics throughout the value chain and taking into account their entire
lifecycle’. Indeed, in 2017, the Commission confirmed it would focus on plastics production and use and work towards the goal of ensuring that all plastic packaging is recyclable by 2030.

The introduction of these new food waste requirements in the EU Ecolabel criteria for Tourist Accommodations was adopted at the beginning of the United Nation’s International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development. Through this project, the UN pushed for several elements addressed within the EU Ecolabel criteria including resource efficiency, environmental protection and climate change. Furthermore, specific to food waste, by being awarded the EU Ecolabel, tourist accommodations can collectively contribute to meeting the Sustainability Development Goal 12.3 to halve food waste by 2030 (UN SDG 12.3) via compliance with food waste criteria.

In addition, the tourist accommodation sector may encounter several benefits in implementing food waste reduction strategies: tax deductions and fiscal incentives for food donation, cost savings thanks to better stock management or even better reputations for establishments that communicate about these activities.

An April 2018 report published by UK charity organization WRAP highlights the benefits of taking action to prevent food waste in hotels thanks to its compelling business case. Reducing food waste can represent a large financial opportunity for hotels to lower costs, increase revenues while making a significant contribution to the UN SDG 12.3. Over a three-year time frame, the average benefit-cost ratio for food waste is nearly 7:1 and over 70% of the establishments (42 hotel sites located in 15 countries) recouped their investments within the first year of implementing a program.

With this business case in mind, EU Ecolabel tourist accommodations can therefore take the steps to limit and better manage food waste while reaping business benefits.

8.6.2.2 Integrating biodiversity into hotel and resort operations

During the operational stage, hotels and resorts can have significant impacts on biodiversity through their levels of energy and water usage, how they dispose of and manage wastewater and solid waste, and the purchasing and landscaping decisions they make (as it was...
mention in the EU ecolabel criteria. There are many ways that hotel managers can minimize impacts on biodiversity in the different areas of a hotel:

- In hotel restaurants, seek sustainable sources of food supplies, especially of fish fruits and vegetables, farmed meats and wild game (fig. 35). Local production is always preferable, with good practices applied in the production process.

![Figure 32. Using local products as Apple from Ohrid, Quince from Diber, Cheese from Mavrovo](image)

- In guest rooms and public areas, make responsible choices in terms of wood used for expansion or renovation projects and furniture, medicinal and aromatic plants and amenities for spa products, and ornamental plants and animals for public areas.

- In hotel souvenir shops, avoid souvenirs produced from threatened or protected plant and animal species.

- In hotel grounds and gardens, use indigenous plants for landscaping, choosing species that can be maintained with low or no use of chemicals, and minimize light and noise. • In the destination, promote responsible recreation activities and excursions and support local biodiversity conservation efforts.

While specific practices will vary depending on the resource concerned or the specific area of the hotel, there are some key approaches that apply to all actions designed to minimize biodiversity impacts:

- Work internally to introduce management practices and procedures that contribute to biodiversity conservation. This includes designating individuals responsible for the effort, setting clear targets and monitoring your progress, providing training and incentives to staff,

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and offering explanations of actions and the motivations behind them to staff, guests, suppliers and stakeholders.

- Whenever possible, use products that are from sustainably harvested and/or sustainably produced sources, and, if relevant, are certified and labelled under certification schemes that include biodiversity criteria.
- Work closely with other key players, including suppliers, clients, and public authorities and local organisations to ensure that they support and promote the hotel’s efforts to conserve biodiversity.

9. CONDUCTING RESEARCH IN CBC region

The research included survey conducted in the period from July-October 2018 when a questionnaire that was tailored to focus group- local administrators, with the aim of gathering information relating to the sustainability of the tourism. Questionnaires were provided to the boards of the 10 municipalities involved in the CBC project: Ohrid, Struga, Vevcani, Centar Zupa, Debar, Mavrovo and Rostushe, Klos, Bulquize, Mat and Diber aiming at gathering a relevant information for the Study of sustainable tourism in CBC - Macedonia and Albania. Representatives of municipalities were mainly specialists of environment impact assessment, consultants, tourism consultants, inspectors, LER advisor, etc.

The local administrators from municipalities from each side of the border evidently demonstrated different degrees of interest. For instance, 10% of the respondents from the left side of the border think that the protection of natural resources, cultural heritage and development of tourism in the border region can’t be compatible. This is partly attributable to the fact that 60% of representatives from the left side of the border believe that the most important activities aiming at increase of sustainable tourism is related to “Increase of range and quality of hotel services”, while 66% of representatives from the right side of the border believe that the most important activities aiming at increase of sustainable tourism, are related to “Increase the protection of the environment, improve the stat of solid and liquid waste management”. Although, all respondents from ten municipalities confirmed that well-managed tourist attractions attract more tourists.
Question 3: Do you think that the protection of natural resources, cultural heritage and development of tourism in the border region can be compatible?

The majority of the respondents (90%) declare that there must be an accordance of tourism development in both regions. As shown in the chart, there is a dominating idea that protection of resources in Albania and North Macedonia might be possible thanks to coordinated cross-border cooperation. Only 10% of them remain skeptical in this fact (fig.36).

Figure 33. Answer on question no. 3 (left pie is answer of municipalities from Albania and right pie is municipalities from North Macedonia)

Question 4: Do you think that well-managed tourist attractions attract more tourists?

100% of the interviewees from Albania and North Macedonia are of the opinion that better tourism management and organization, would attract more tourism in the area. This represents a basis to start developing a coordinated development of sustainable tourism in the project area (fig. 37).

Figure 34. Answer on question no.4 (left pie is answer of municipalities from Albania and right pie is municipalities from North Macedonia)
Question 5: Do you think that the community will benefit from the development of sustainable tourism?

As indicated by the Chart No. 4, 100% of those interviewed from left and right side of the border among tourism responsible people in the municipalities and association representatives, believe that developing a sustainable tourism would be beneficial for the area’s communities (fig.38).

![Figure 35. Answer on question no.5 (left pie is answer of municipalities from the country left side of the border and right pie is municipalities from the country right side of the border)](image)

Question 6: Assess how effective policies and activities are for preserving and promoting natural and cultural heritage in the direction of sustainable tourism

Regarding the use of natural and cultural heritage, some 50% of people interviewed from the left side (table 12) of the border and 3.67% from the right side (table 13) of the border believe that national Tourism Strategy needs improvement, whereas 30% of the left side of the border and 20% of the right side of the border believe that there is need for emergency interventions due to poor quality. 40% of interviewees from the left side of the border believe that development of sustainable tourism is done on a satisfactory manner by National Parks, while 30% of them think that there is need for immediate interventions. 43.33% of the respondents from the right side of the border think the Improvement is required, while 36.7% could not assess this because do data was available for them.
Table 2. Results of Question 6: Assessment of effectiveness of policies and activities for protection of natural and cultural heritage (answers of respondents from North Macedonia)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area of particular need/opportunity – highest priority for action/intervention</th>
<th>Improvement required – should also be considered for intervention/support</th>
<th>May benefit from some improvement – but less current need for intervention</th>
<th>Appears to be satisfactory – maintain</th>
<th>Area of apparent strength – may provide an example to others</th>
<th>No information available to answer the question /This could not be assessed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do the priorities of the National Strategy for Tourism and Regional Development Strategy cover optimal use of natural and cultural heritage in function of tourism growth?</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is sustainable tourism being part of the National parks management plans?</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is tourism being effectively planned and managed in National parks and other natural and cultural heritage areas and sites?</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are homogeneous tourist destinations/regions comprised of several municipalities grouped around natural resources (e.g., Ohrid Lake, Mavrovo) being defined in the region?</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is tourism included in specific policies and actions to plan and protect the Ohrid Lake coastal zone?</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is there a well-established tourism product/offer related to natural heritage in the country?</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3. Results of Question 6: Assessment of effectiveness of policies and activities for protection of natural and cultural heritage (answers of respondents from Albania)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area of particular need/opportunity – highest priority for action/intervention</th>
<th>Improvement required – should also be considered for intervention/support</th>
<th>May benefit from some improvement – but less current need for intervention</th>
<th>Appears to be satisfactory – maintain</th>
<th>Area of apparent strength – may provide an example to others</th>
<th>No information available to answer the question /This could not be assessed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do the priorities of the National Strategy for Tourism and Regional Development Strategy cover optimal use of natural and cultural heritage in function of tourism growth?</td>
<td>20.00%</td>
<td>36.67%</td>
<td>20.00%</td>
<td></td>
<td>23.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is sustainable tourism being part of the National parks management plans?</td>
<td>10.00%</td>
<td>43.33%</td>
<td>6.67%</td>
<td>3.33%</td>
<td>36.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is tourism being effectively planned and managed in National parks and other natural and cultural heritage areas and sites?</td>
<td>16.67%</td>
<td>30.00%</td>
<td>6.67%</td>
<td>6.67%</td>
<td>3.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are homogeneous tourist destinations / regions comprised of several municipalities grouped around natural resources (eg Ohrid Lake, Mavrovo) being defined in the region?</td>
<td>30.00%</td>
<td>26.67%</td>
<td>3.33%</td>
<td>10.00%</td>
<td>3.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is tourism included in specific policies and actions to plan and protect the Ohrid Lake coastal zone?</td>
<td>20.00%</td>
<td>23.33%</td>
<td>6.67%</td>
<td>6.67%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is there a well-established tourism product/offer related to natural heritage in the country?</td>
<td>16.67%</td>
<td>30.00%</td>
<td>10.00%</td>
<td>16.67%</td>
<td>10.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 7: Assess the extent to which tourism development respects sustainability

Concerning the definition of development level, some 50% of people interviewed from municipalities left side of the border maintain and 33% of interviewed from municipalities right side of the border thinks that there is need for further improvement while another 30% believe that when preparing local ecological plans, limitations for a sustainable use were not taken into account. The issue of the conflict between development and preservation of physical

Study of sustainable tourism in Cross-border region
parameters of water, earth and air, the interviewees were divided in 3 equally responding
groups of 30% each: a) there is need for immediate interventions, b) there is need for
interventions and further improvement, and c) current situation is satisfactory. With regard to
land exploitation related to individual tourism development, 305 responded not to have
information on the point, whereas 20% believe on the need for improvement and a final 20%
are happy with the current situation.

It is interesting that 30% of people interviewed from municipalities left side of the border
maintain on question about Are the countries natural resources supported by tourism or
threatened by it? Answered that it is area of apparent strength – may provide an example to
others , while that 56,67% of people interviewed from municipalities right side of the border
think that Improvement is required and should also be considered for intervention/support .
Results are shown on table 14 and 15.

Table 4. Results of question: Assess the extent to which tourism development respects sustainability (answers of respondents from municipalities from the country Albania)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area of particular need/opp ortunity – highest priority for action/intervention</th>
<th>Improvement required – should also be considered for intervention's support</th>
<th>May benefit from some improvement – but less current need for intervention</th>
<th>Appears to be satisfactory – maintain</th>
<th>Area of apparent strength – may provide an example to others</th>
<th>No information available to answer the question /This could not be assessed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Are sustainability issues, including resource constraints, taken into account in municipalities Local Environmental Action Plans?</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In general, is there considered to be a problem with the tourism growth and condition of the environmental mediums (water, air, soil)?</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are individual tourism developments controlled by effective land use planning processes?</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Are recommendations from Strategic Environmental Assessment and Reports for environmental protection effectively applied to tourism developments? | 30% | 20% | 20% | 10% | 20%
---|---|---|---|---|---
Are economic instruments used to influence the sustainability of tourism developments? | 10% | 70% | 10% | 10% | 10%
Overall, are the country’s natural resources supported by tourism or threatened by it? | 20% | 10% | 10% | 20% | 30% | 10%

Table 5. Results of question: Assess the extent to which tourism development respects sustainability (answers of respondents from municipalities from North Macedonia)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area of particular need/opportunity – highest priority for action/ intervention</th>
<th>Improvement required – should also be considered for intervention’s support</th>
<th>May benefit from some improvement – but less current need for intervention</th>
<th>Appears to be satisfactory – maintain</th>
<th>Area of apparent strength – may provide an example to others</th>
<th>No information available to answer the question /This could not be assessed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Area of apparent strength – may provide an example to others</td>
<td>16.67%</td>
<td>33.33%</td>
<td>26.67%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Are sustainability issues, including resource constraints, taken into account in municipalities Local Environmental Action Plans? | 20.00% | 26.67% | 6.67% | 23.33% | 0.00% | 23.33% |
In general, is there considered to be a problem with the tourism growth and condition of the environmental mediums (water, air, soil)? | 23.33% | 30.00% | 30.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 16.67% |
Are individual tourism developments controlled by effective land use planning processes? | 16.67% | 13.33% | 33.33% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 36.67% |
Are recommendations from Strategic Environmental Assessment and Reports for environmental protection effectively applied to tourism developments?
Are economic instruments used to influence the sustainability of tourism developments?  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overall, are the country’s natural resources supported by tourism or threatened by it?  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.33%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 8: Assess the extent to which tourism operations meet sustainability standards

40% of those interviewed from the left side of the border, are happy with the sustainability of services, whereas 53.33% of those interviewed from the right side of the border think that improvement required – should also be considered for intervention/support.  
40% of those interviewed from the left side of the border and 63.33% of interviewed from right side of the border maintain they have no information on the use of certification schemes (European Ecolabel System) for identification of businesses according to standards on sustainability. This demands urgent interventions. Results shown in table 16 and 17.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area of particular need/opportunity – highest priority for action/intervention</th>
<th>Improvement required – should also be considered for intervention/support</th>
<th>May benefit from some improvement – but less current need for intervention</th>
<th>Appears to be satisfactory – maintain</th>
<th>Area of apparent strength – may provide an example to others</th>
<th>No information available to answer the question /This could not be assessed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Study of sustainable tourism in Cross-border region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In general, are tourism service providers taking steps to improve the sustainability of their operations?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Are tour operators taking account of sustainability issues in the products they promote and information they provide?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Are economic instruments being used to influence the sustainability of tourism operations?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Is there an offer for alternative sustainable transport to tourist destinations? 50% 20% 20% 10%

Are certification schemes (European Ecolabel system) being used to identify businesses complying with sustainability standards? 30% 20% 10% 40%

Is capacity building and advice being provided and promoted to tourism businesses on enhancing the sustainability of their operations? 20% 10% 40% 10% 20%

Have actions been taken to make tourists aware of sustainability issues in the country and to influence their activities? 40% 10% 30% 20%

Does sustainable tourism offer opportunities for new jobs for local tourism service providers, individual entrepreneurs, etc.? 30% 30% 20% 20%

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area of particular need/opportunity – highest priority for action/intervention</th>
<th>Improvement required – should also be considered for intervention/support</th>
<th>May benefit from some improvement – but less current need for intervention</th>
<th>Appears to be satisfactory – maintain</th>
<th>Area of apparent strength – may provide an example to others</th>
<th>No information available to answer the question /This could not be assessed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In general, are tourism service providers taking steps to improve the sustainability of their operations?</td>
<td>20.00%</td>
<td>53.33%</td>
<td>13.33%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>13.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are tour operators taking account of sustainability issues in the products they promote and information they provide?</td>
<td>23.33%</td>
<td>56.67%</td>
<td>10.00%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>10.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Are economic instruments being used to influence the sustainability of tourism operations?  
- 53.33%  
- 13.33%  
- 10.00%  
- 6.67%  
- 16.67%  

Is there an offer for alternative sustainable transport to tourist destinations?  
- 63.33%  
- 13.33%  
- 13.33%  
- 3.33%  
- 6.67%  

Are certification schemes (European Ecolabel system) being used to identify businesses complying with sustainability standards?  
- 23.33%  
- 10.00%  
- 0.00%  
- 3.33%  
- 63.33%  

Is capacity building and advice being provided and promoted to tourism businesses on enhancing the sustainability of their operations?  
- 20.00%  
- 46.67%  
- 23.33%  
- 6.67%  
- 3.33%  

Have actions been taken to make tourists aware of sustainability issues in the country and to influence their activities?  
- 36.67%  
- 23.33%  
- 16.67%  
- 0.00%  
- 23.33%  

Does sustainable tourism offer opportunities for new jobs for local tourism service providers, individual entrepreneurs, etc.?  
- 16.67%  
- 46.67%  
- 20.00%  
- 13.33%  
- 3.33%  
- 0.00%  

**Question 9: What do you think are the important activities that need to be taken to realize the potential for sustainable tourism? (multiple answers allowed)**

60% of representatives from the left side of the border believe that the most important activities aiming at increase of sustainable tourism are related to “Increase of range and quality of hotel services”. The second alternative is represented by “Sustainable use of biological diversity for tourism needs” (50%) as well as “Creation of platform for further investment and generation of new job places” (another 50%). The obtaining of Ecolabel is considered at the level of 40%.

60% of representatives from the left side of the border believe that the most important activities aiming at increase of sustainable tourism, are related to “Increase of range and quality of hotel services”.

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*Study of sustainable tourism in Cross-border region*
66% of representatives from the right side of the border believe that the most important activities aiming at increase of sustainable tourism, are related to “Increase the protection of the environment, improve the stat of solid and liquid waste management”. The second alternative is represented by “Sustainable use of biodiversity and natural resources for the needs of tourism”. The obtaining of Ecolabel is considered at the level of 43.33% (fig.39)

Figure 36. Answers on question no.9 (upper graphic is answer of municipalities from Albania and down graphic is municipalities from Macedonia)

Question 10: What measures should be taken so that the local population is motivated to develop sustainable tourism? (multiple answers allowed)

80% of those interviewed from the left side and 90% of those interviewed from the right side of the border, believe that #1 measure that need to be taken in order to motivate local population, notably is: Raising awareness of the highly skilled and talented youngsters about business opportunities in the tourism field and regional development. It is interesting that 80%
of the respondents from the left side think that Organization of forums, seminars and trainings is one of the measures that should be taken too. Yet, a considerable number (some 50%) believe in integrated offers for protection of natural and cultural resources.

For 70% of the respondents from the right side of the border, “Increasing access to finance (guarantee funds, subsidized loans schemes, scholarships for postgraduate / doctoral studies abroad)” is the second measure that can motivate local population to developed sustainable tourism (fig.40).

Figure 37 Answers on question no.10 (upper graphic is answer of municipalities Albania and down graphic is municipalities from North Macedonia)
Question 11: What marketing tools should be used for greater access to tourism markets and increasing market share? (choose three of the offered five answers)

Participation in the tourism fairs (80%) together with creation of contemporary touristic services for independent travelers such as cellphone dynamis applications aiming at promotion of natural and cultural resources (70%), represent 2 options selected by the majority of the interviewees from left side of the border as marketing instruments to extend touristic markets. They are followed by the following tools (40% of support): A more intensive economic propaganda (TV and radio programs, preparation/distribution of leaflets and newspapers), together with innovative webpages dedicated to touristic offer.

“Creation of modern digital services for independent travelers as modern dynamic mobile applications for the promotion of natural and cultural wealth” represent the main marketing tool according to 63% of the interviewees from right side of the border, followed by “An innovative web site with a regional tourist offer, mobile applications” (fig.41).
Figure 38. Answers on question no.11 (upper graphic is answer of municipalities from Albania and down graphic is municipalities from North Macedonia)

**Question 12:** Do you think that in addition to improving the overall physical condition of the environment should be improved interpretation (with the inclusion of some modern technological solutions, mobile applications and more) to improve the overall experience of visitors?

Use and involvement of new technological solutions, was considered by 100% of people interviewed from the both sides of the border, as a valid alternative to improve the overall experience of the visitors, apart from improvements to be introduced to the physical condition of environment (fig.42).
70% of those interviewed from the left side of the border believe that in order to increase tourism opportunities in the cross-border area, there is great need of joint functional institutions, and jointly managed webpages; 80% of them maintain that continuous exchange of experiences and information in tourism field through joint forums, represent the most appropriate alternatives for tourism development between Albania and North Macedonia. Organization of joint tours in Albania and North Macedonia together with formalization of agreements through meetings between respective mayors, are appreciated by 50% of people interviewed.

70% of those interviewed from the right side of the border believe that in order to increase tourism opportunities in the cross-border area, there is need to prepare tourist initiatives in both countries, which will lead to the utilization of natural resources for the purposes of tourism, while 60% of them think that All mayors from this cross-border region to sign a Memorandum of Inter-Municipal Cross-Border Cooperation in the field of sustainable tourism (fig.44)
Figure 40. Answers to question no. 13 (upper graphic is answer of municipalities from Albania and down graphic is municipalities from North Macedonia)

**Question 14:** Have you ever visited a sustainable tourism workshop and would you like to be part of training capacity building training to support the development of sustainable tourism in the cross-border region of North Macedonia and Albania?

60% of people interviewed from the Albania from the municipality/association target group, have undergone trainings on tourism, but they would like to become part of trainings on capacity building themes in support to sustainable tourism in the cross-border area. 40% of them would like to be part of such training initiatives, without having undergone any similar experience. From the North Macedonia situation is opposite 60% haven’t been, but would like to attend, while 40% have been (table 18).
Table 8. Results of question: Have you undergone any training of sustainable tourism?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answers</th>
<th>Left side</th>
<th>Right side</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes, I have been, but I would like to attend again</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, I have been and would not like to attend again</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No, I haven’t been, but I would like to attend</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, I haven’t been and would not like to attend</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 15: Please feel free to leave any additional comment, recommendation or information you think would be valuable in project implementation

Free opinion: People in Dibra suggest raising the current cooperation through a better coordination of tour operators and institutions of both countries.

- A higher attention visible cultural tourism
- Increase capacities for all those involved in this field
- Creation and promotion in the future of certified goods
- The questions “Is sustainable tourism being part of the National parks management plans” and “Is tourism being effectively planned and managed in National parks and other natural and cultural heritage areas and site’s, should be addressed to NP Galichica management
- National parks management plans are in preparation phase
10. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

From the study, it can be deduced that the municipalities in “CBC” just like other developing countries have huge of tourism potentials which are calling for exploration. CBC tourism sector needs help and support to be a beneficial of the huge opportunities surrounding the sector globally. The analysis above has shown that the country’s economy can be diversified and tourism is seen as the best alternative. However, the sector needs serious development for these dreams to come through. Although, the governments has realised the huge benefits attached to development of tourism in a countries and strategic plans has been set aside for tourism development to become a reality especially in Ohrid lake Region. Besides this, the private individuals and organizations’ support are also very important in this regards. And also, all tourism firm or organizations should endeavour to work hand in hand for the development of tourism industry from their various areas in the sector. The country’s natural and human resources should be combined and used wisely in transforming the tourism industry into employment creation and inflow of foreign exchange. Despite the slowness in the country’s tourism industry, some bit of progressive work can still be perceived in the industry in some part of the country. It was revealed in the finding that some companies’ GDP has been boosted by tourism through the influence of funds from abroad, that it also promotes foreign investment and creates job opportunities for residents, and some states in the country has been greatly influenced and transformed by tourism. There is future for CBC tourism industry. Albania and North Macedonia have natural, man-made and cultural attractions which are still underutilised. However, from the result analysis above, the researcher has been able to summarize some concrete measures that can be used for achieving development and sustainability in the country’s tourism industry. Also, the governments should inject funds into the tourism industry for upgrading facilities needed in the industry. Facilities like good roads, bridges, electricity, internet, and others should be developed and upgraded to world class standard. Apart from these, the governments should encourage private and foreign investors into the industry by making available different forms of supports to boost their enthusiasm. There are so many business opportunities in CBC tourism industry which are yet to be tapped. Most of the beautiful beaches locations are still lacking accommodation facilities. More so, the
country’s tourism potentials should be advertised worldwide through digitalisation. Publicity is very important when it comes to marketing and promotion. However, this should not be the function of the government alone, but also private individuals and organizations. The image of the country needs to be rebuilt internally and internationally, and the good news should be spread out to the world in general.

**HOW CROSS BORDER TOURISM CAN BECOME MORE SUSTAINABLE?**

Decisions about tourism development in CB region are made on the lowest level of governance where it is appropriate to make decisions centrally, and the local stakeholders affected by tourism are to be consulted and encouraged to participate. This in turn requires local administrators from municipalities from Ohrid, Struga, Vevecani, Centar Zupa, Deba, Mavrovo and Rostuse, Mat, Diber, Bulqize and Klos to be fully equipped with competences and skills to formulate, implement and evaluate sustainable tourism planning. The local community should also be fully engaged in the formulation of tourism policies and plans, through a process of wide consultation and participation, including the provision of skills and knowledge that people need for effective participation in the decision making on local level.

With regard to sustainable tourism, local governments should in particular implement systematic strategic planning and development of sustainable tourism, which would include:

- The control of volume, nature and location of tourism development in order to prevent undue pressure on local resources and biodiversity
- The protection of natural and cultural heritage by sound planning controls and sufficient management capacity
- The promotion of destination management partnership bodies, bringing together the public sector, private sector and civil society, including organizations that represent the environmental, cultural and local interests of the community.
- Involve representatives of local communities and promote the consultation and participation of stakeholders to identify priority issues and related sustainability indicators, by use of smart governance tools to help tackle the conflicting objectives, gain commitment for effective implementation of decisions, and
ensure effective communication about decisions and risks associated with tourism development options.

→ Apply a sustainable tourism performance management and measurement system, which is strategically oriented, selected and managed according to the priority issues identified in the destination.

→ Adopt a realistic system of sustainability objectives, indicators and measurements in all development plans which are directly and indirectly associated with tourism and carried out by the local government, including the land use and development of infrastructure.

→ Deliver capacity building activity, dissemination of good practices and establishment of stakeholder networks, including inter-municipal cooperation, twinning and exchange of best practices within the SEE and with European partners to tackle the challenges of tourism sustainability.

Tourism has the potential to create positive effects on the environment and contributes to the protection and preservation of nature. Tourism can serve as tool for awareness rising about environmental values and at the same time it brings positive effects for protected areas and increases their economic value. Tourism also affects both the environment and the local community. The sustainable management of tourism empowers the destination, the community and the local government to reduce the negative impacts and brings positive values for all stakeholders, as well as economic benefits and protection of resources. The sustainable tourism approach is concerned with tourism being the most appropriate form of development regarding the economic, social and physical resources of a region, in a manner that conserves the social and physical environment and promotes the long-term goals of the community.

However, tourism must be considered within the context of **sustainable local development rather than just sustainable tourism**, so that it can play its role in high-road strategies, especially with reference to access, amenity and services. From this aspect, sustainable planning should be the key concept in any tourism destination planning. It provides tourism which is in line with the development of healthy community and offers unique and interesting experience to the consumer. In order to develop sustainable tourism, the destination needs to develop and adopt sustainable management plan. Sustainable destination management means management of sustainable tourism development in a destination that meets both the needs of tourists and destinations, and protects and enhances the opportunities for future development.
development. It means management of all resources in a way that meets economic, social and cultural requirements, while maintaining cultural integrity, nature protection and biodiversity. It is a widely accepted concept of development and a key objective in the destination.

Sustainability should be considered throughout the Tourism Value Chain (TVC) from organisation and booking, to accommodation, restaurant, shopping and tourism site experiences. Sustainability should be considered for the different stakeholders who participate directly (e.g. accommodation, restaurants and natural and cultural tourism sites) and indirectly (e.g. support services such as suppliers to the direct stakeholders).

The main reasons for municipalities to use this toolkit are:

2. they will get clear picture about their sustainability, the problems that need to be addressed and the respective goals to be achieved.
3. They will be able to develop an local action plan for long-term improvements and will gain tools for monitoring of achievements.
4. The will assess and organise the tourism potential on local level and its integration in the official local government planning.

It supports the interrelated approaches of “community oriented tourism planning” and “sustainable tourism”, meaning that tourism decisions should pursue at least four basic planning goals, related to satisfied visitors, profitable tourism Industry, engaged community and protected environment.

Local authorities need to follow on the path of reaching those goals:

- Awareness raising and gaining support,
- Stakeholders management,
- Data collection and keeping records,
- Data Evaluation,
- Use of indicators,
- Strategic Planning,
- Implementation,
- Marketing and Positioning.

Thus, it shall ensure the following:

→ Encourage local governments to implement systematic strategic planning and development of sustainable tourism.
→ Involve representatives from local communities and promote the consultation and participation of stakeholders to identify priority issues and related sustainability indicators, by use of smart governance tools to help tackle the conflicting objectives, gain commitment for effective implementation of decisions, and ensure effective communication about decisions and risks associated with tourism development options.

→ Application of sustainable tourism performance management and measurement system, which is strategically oriented, selected and managed according to the priority issues identified in the destination.

→ Adoption of realistic system of sustainability objectives, indicators and measurements in all development plans which are directly and indirectly associated with tourism and carried out by the local government, including the land use and development of infrastructure.

Also, it can be used to tackle specific issues associated with the development and management of tourism, including data collection, as well as development of comprehensive tourism strategy to assist the planning and funding of key projects. Furthermore, it can be used as an efficient tool to develop and implement successful marketing strategy and global positioning.

Achieving the objectives of the European sustainable tourism agenda and tackling the above mentioned challenges will require a coherent action which can be supported by appropriate public policies: sustainable management of destinations, integration of sustainability concerns by businesses and sustainability awareness by tourists.

Sustainable destination management is critical for tourism development, especially through effective spatial and land use planning and development control and through investment decisions on infrastructure and services. In ensuring that new cross-border tourism development is of a scale and type in keeping with the needs of the local community and environment, a sustainable management can reinforce the economic performance and competitive positioning of a destination in the long-term. It requires a supportive framework with the involvement of all regional and local stakeholders and an efficient structure within which partnership and effective leadership are facilitated.
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