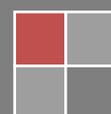


2018

## SURVEY OF THE NATURAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE OF HASKOVO DISTRICT

"Prepared in accordance with Contract of 15.06.2018 with subject: "Development of methodology and surveys" under the project "Promotion and development of natural and cultural heritage of Bulgarian-Greek cross-border region through smart and digital tools" with the acronym "eTOURIST" under the INTERREG V-A Cooperation Programme "Greece-Bulgaria 2014-2020", ref. No 1714, Subsidy Contract No B2.6c.07/09.10.2017

Sofia, 2018



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## I. INTRODUCTION

This document in implementation of Action 1. Study of the Natural and Cultural Heritage of Haskovo District has been prepared by EFTA SERVICES Ltd. - Contractor in execution of the Public Procurement Contract with Regional Municipalities Association "Maritza" – Contracting Authority, with subject "Development of methodology and surveys" under the project "Promotion and development of natural and cultural heritage of Bulgarian-Greek cross-border region through smart and digital tools" with acronym "eTOURIST" under the INTERREG V-A "Greece-Bulgaria - 2014-2020" Cooperation Programme, Ref. No 1714, Subsidy Contract No B2.6c.07/09.10.2017

The purpose of this document is to examine the natural and cultural heritage of the Haskovo district, including to collect data on all existing natural and cultural sites on the territory of Haskovo district, to analyze and evaluate their accessibility, degree of preservation for tourist visits and rate of recognizability among the population, as well as to identify the sites in terms of their historical periodization.

## II. DEFINITION OF CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE. INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL CONTEXT

The term "**heritage**" is extremely broad and is always associated with the subject matter it relates to: value, meaning, quality, integrity, authenticity and, above all, its lasting presence through the generations. Thus, the term "**natural heritage**" relates to the ethical decision and, at the same time, the responsibility of society to pass on a healthy environment, along with its complex and diverse biological components, to future generations. The main perception of nature as a source of "heritage" is important because it is thus associated with the environment, with the concept of cultural heritage which is defined as an expression of the way of life the community has developed and which has been transmitted from generation to generation, including traditions, practices, artifacts, expressions and artistic values. For the European Council, "**cultural heritage**" is a phrase that reflects the safeguarding and promotion of ideals and principles. It entails a material representation of the systems of values, beliefs, traditions and lifestyles, and bears these traces - visible and tangible, from antiquity to the recent past. Our heritage leads us to reflections about the past, and in the present moment it is deeply related to the way we use the "past" as an unlimited source, a source of rediscovery and social power. Moreover, although not all forms of heritage are universally valued, heritage as a whole is regarded as a major source of personal and collective identity and vital for one's feeling of self-esteem.

The concept of cultural and natural heritage is under constant change, growth and completion, since the importance of the heritage to the community and the individual increases by its penetration deep into the planes of society, leading to the realization of the close and indissoluble links between the cultural properties, including in the broadest sense also natural resources and local identity. A well-preserved natural and historical environment associated with knowledge and traditional customs can reduce the risk factors for social exclusion and discrimination, enhance the capacity for community sustainability and save lives.

## CULTURAL HERITAGE

The recognition of this definition has been gradually expanding over the last 50 years since its start at the historic moment of the adoption of the *UNESCO Convention on the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage* in Paris in November 1972. Since then, nearly 200 countries have acceded to the Convention by agreeing to identify and designate places suitable to be listed on the World Heritage List. The number of World Protected Heritage sites in recent years has been growing substantially/exceptionally, reaching at present a total of 1092 sites<sup>1</sup>. The enthusiasm for enlisting places on the World Heritage List demonstrates the political and public support not only for the World Heritage Convention but, above all, for the recognition of the symbolic value that the act of designating a site as part of the world heritage holds for the community and the individual, for its economic, cultural and social utilization, etc.

This growing care is also expressed at a local level where an increasing number of regulated protected monuments, protected natural areas or intangible cultural resources are recorded on lists of local, national or European importance depending on their value, integrity or uniqueness. This is why the cultural and natural sites identified in this study create the requisite conditions for tourist activity with important benefits for the region and the local community even though the tourist flow is unevenly distributed at present.

The cultural and natural heritage is composed of tangible and intangible resources that are well-defined by international institutions yet each country can apply its own methodology and criteria for their identification and classification. Thus, the type and importance of cultural and natural heritage can vary from one country to another. What remains invariable is the importance of the heritage in the context of sustainable development.

As a reference term, the framework for defining cultural and natural heritage adopted by the World Heritage Convention is the most comprehensive and, at the same time,

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<sup>1</sup> <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/>

strict. Thus, the definition framework determines the heritage features that are the subject of the Convention and that lead to four types of heritage:

- Cultural heritage
- Natural Heritage;
- Mixed heritage, the properties that, in part or as a whole, satisfy the definitions of cultural and natural heritage, and the analysis of how these definitions are met is done in an independent manner for these two components.
- Cultural landscapes representing "the combined works of nature and of man" which are illustrative of the evolution of human society under the influence of the physical constraints and/or opportunities presented by their natural environment and of successive social, economic and cultural forces, both internal and external. In the case of this type of heritage, the analysis of these two components - cultural and natural - takes place in an interdependent and integrative manner.

The Convention on the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage has identified a set of criteria for recognition, at present ten criteria<sup>2</sup>, under constant revision, so as to reflect the development of the concept, in itself, of the world heritage. To be included on the World Heritage List, the proposal must, first and foremost, be of outstanding universal value and satisfy at least one of the following criteria for analysis:

❖ **in respect to cultural sites:**

- to represent a masterpiece of the human creative genius;
- to exhibit an important interchange of human values, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture or technology, monumental arts, town-planning or landscape design
- to bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or which has disappeared;
- to be an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history;
- to be an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement which is representative of a culture (or cultures), or human interaction with the environment especially when it has become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible change;
- to be associated with events or living traditions, with ideas, or with beliefs, with artistic and literary works of outstanding universal significance.

❖ **in respect to natural sites:**

- to contain superlative natural phenomena or areas of exceptional natural beauty and aesthetic importance;
- to be outstanding examples representing major stages of earth's history, including the record of life, significant on-going geological processes in the development of landforms, or significant geomorphic or physiographic features;

<sup>2</sup> <http://whc.unesco.org/en/criteria/>

- to be outstanding examples representing significant on-going ecological and biological processes in the evolution and development of terrestrial, fresh water, coastal and marine ecosystems and communities of plants and animals;
- to contain the most important and significant natural habitats for in-situ conservation of biological diversity, including those containing threatened species of outstanding universal value from the point of view of science or conservation.

In addition, in order to be considered to be of outstanding universal value, all properties nominated for inscription must meet well-defined criteria of integrity and/or authenticity and should benefit from an adequate management which could ensure their protection. The integrity conditions relate to the wholeness and intactness of the cultural and/or natural heritage and its attributes, therefore require an assessment of the extent to which the property:

- includes all the elements necessary to express its outstanding universal value;
- is of adequate size to ensure the complete representation of the features and processes which convey the property's significance;
- suffers from adverse effects of development and/or neglect.

Authenticity is assessed according to the type of heritage and its cultural context through a variety of parameters, including:

- form and design;
- materials and substance;
- use and function;
- traditions, techniques and management systems;
- location and setting;
- language and other forms of intangible heritage;
- spirit and feeling;
- other internal and external factors.

Cultural heritage is much more than simply monuments and large artworks. Currently, it comprises all aspects relating to the past and present which a community considers to be worthy of being preserved and which it wishes to hand down to posterity. In other words, heritage is important and cannot be recreated (it does not self-regenerate).

Expanding the notion of cultural heritage to an increasing variety of cultural properties allows, at the same time, for an ever-wider and more diverse audience to benefit from the direct or indirect influence that arises from including a cultural site on the heritage list.

In accordance with the Convention on the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, cultural heritage is defined and grouped into **three** categories:

- ❖ **Monuments:** architectural works, works of monumental sculpture and painting, elements or structures of an archaeological nature, inscriptions, cave dwellings and combinations of features;
- ❖ **Groups of buildings (ensembles):** groups of separate or connected buildings which, because of their architecture, their homogeneity or their place in the land-

scape, are of outstanding universal value from the point of view of history, art or science;

- ❖ **Sites:** works of man or the combined works of nature and man, and areas including archaeological sites which are of outstanding universal value from the historical, aesthetic, ethnological or anthropological point of view.

In respect to cultural landscapes, they are classified by the UNESCO World Heritage Committee as follows:

- ❖ **Designed landscape:** landscapes that have been designed and created intentionally by man, such as historical gardens and parks.
- ❖ **Organically evolved landscape:** refers to both landscapes for conservation and newly created landscapes coming to life as a result of a social, economic, administrative, and/or religious imperative and which have developed their present form by an association with or in response to their natural environment.
- ❖ **Associative landscape:** these are the landscapes that focus on the powerful religious, artistic or cultural associations of the natural element, placing strong emphasis on the respective influence, rather than on the material cultural evidence.

In Bulgaria, the Cultural Heritage Act promulgated in State Gazette, Issue 19 of 13.03.2009, effective from 10.04.2009, defines the general framework for regulating the preservation and protection of the country's cultural heritage, which encompasses intangible and tangible immovable and movable heritage as an aggregate of the cultural properties bearing historical memory and national identity and having their own academic or cultural value:

1. Surface, underground and underwater archaeological sites and objects and reserves;
2. Historical sites and compounds;
3. Architectural sites and compounds;
4. Ethnographic sites and compounds;
5. Specimens of horticulture and landscape design;
6. Natural properties (specimens), including anthropological remains established during field work, palaeozoological and cultivated plants;
7. Industrial heritage;
8. Works of fine and applied arts;
9. Folk crafts;
10. Documentary heritage;
11. Audiovisual heritage;
12. Oral tradition and language;
13. Literary artifacts;
14. Customs, rites, feasts and beliefs;
15. Music, songs and dances;
16. Traditional medicine;
17. Culinary traditions and oenology;
18. Folk games and sports.

These proposed definitions of the Cultural Heritage Regulatory Framework can be grouped into two categories of heritage sites: tangible heritage sub-categorized into immovable or movable, and intangible heritage.

- The tangible heritage can be described as an expression or a physical representation of the cultural expression or traditions of a society living in a particular area. Monuments, traditional buildings, archaeological excavations, temples, historical cities, etc. are all examples of tangible heritage sites.
- Immovable tangible heritage: sites of the tangible heritage that can not be moved from their setting (monuments, archaeological excavations, gardens, etc.);
- Movable tangible heritage: this type of sites can be moved from one place to another: artistic works, artifacts, books, traditional craft items, etc.
- Intangible cultural heritage is seen as a non-physical representation of the cultural expression or the traditions of a society as it has its roots in the cultural values or practices of previous generations: music, dance, local traditions, crafts, spiritual beliefs, social values, language, theatre, literature and others.

## NATURAL HERITAGE

The same gradual expansion of the concept of natural heritage, as in the case of cultural heritage, has made it possible that a larger number of types of natural resources could be protected, preserved and returned to the community in an improved form for useful utilization. As in the case of cultural heritage, natural heritage is defined with clarity by the ***The Convention on the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage***:

- ❖ Natural features consisting of physical and biological formations or groups of such formations, which are of outstanding universal value from the aesthetic or scientific point of view;
- ❖ geological and physiographical formations and precisely delineated areas which constitute the habitat of threatened species of animals and plants of outstanding universal value from the point of view of science or conservation;
- ❖ Natural sites or precisely delineated natural areas of outstanding universal value from the point of view of science, conservation or natural beauty.

Additionally, to further specify the definitions of the World Heritage Convention, ***The Convention on Biological Diversity adopted by the United Nations in 1992*** defines the ecosystem as a dynamic complex of plant, animal and micro-organism communities and their non-living environment interacting as a functional unit. Regarding biodiversity, it is defined as the variability among living organisms from all sources including, inter alia, terrestrial, marine and other aquatic ecosystems and ecological complexes of which they are part - in other words, the biological diversity includes diversity within species, between species and of ecosystems.

Thus, the general characteristics of natural heritage resources relate to well-defined geographical areas recognized as such, regulated by law or otherwise, so as to achieve long-term conservation of nature by an association with their ecosystems and cultural values.

*The Protected Areas Act (1998)*<sup>3</sup> identifies six categories of protected areas in line with current international requirements (IUCN categories) and categories differing in status and degree of conservation of natural elements, purpose and mode of management:

- Strict Nature Reserve (IUCN category I) – examples of natural ecosystems, hosting typical and/or remarkable wild plant and animal species and the habitats thereof, shall be designated strict nature reserves.
- National Park (IUCN category II) – areas which host natural ecosystems of high diversity of plant and animal species and habitats, with typical and remarkable landscapes and non-living natural features, shall be designated national parks.
- Natural Monument (IUCN category III) – typical or remarkable non-living natural features of outstanding value shall be designated natural monuments.
- Managed Nature Reserve (IUCN Category IV) – includes ecosystems of rare and/or endangered wild plant and animal species and their habitats;
- Nature Park (IUCN category IV or V) – areas hosting various ecosystems with diverse plant and animal species and the habitats thereof, with typical and remarkable landscapes and non-living natural features, shall be designated natural parks.
- Protected Site (IUCN category IV and/or V) – includes areas with typical or remarkable landscapes and habitats of endangered, rare or vulnerable plant and animal species and communities.

### III. GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF HASKOVO DISTRICT



Haskovo is located in the southeastern part of Bulgaria's South Central region. It comprises 261 towns and villages organized in 11 municipalities: **Haskovo, Dimitrovgrad, Harmanli, Simeonovgrad, Svilengrad, Madzharovo, Ivaylovgrad, Lyubimets, Mineralnibani, Stambolovo and Topolovgrad**, covering a total area of 5543 km<sup>2</sup>.

The region has a varied relief, its northern

<sup>3</sup> <http://e-ecodb.bas.bg/rdb/bg/vol1/6protected.html>

and central part being occupied by the Upper Thracian Plain. One of the things distinguishing it from other regions is the presence of vast, low-lying lands close to river banks and high groundwater that favour the intensive use of farmland.

The combination of flat relief and fertile soils has a beneficial impact on all sectors and sub-sectors of agriculture, the construction of irrigation systems and transport arteries. A large part of the territory of the region's southern part is occupied by the lower slopes of the Eastern Rhodopes and the slopes of the Sakar Mountain. The territory of the Eastern Rhodopes is characterized by rich flora and fauna. The proximity of the Mediterranean, the geological past of the mountain and the peculiarities of local lifestyle and culture have helped form and preserve diverse habitats, which has resulted in extremely high biodiversity.

Haskovo District has favorable physico-geographic features - mild climate, beautiful pristine nature, rich flora and fauna with exceptionally high biodiversity, numerous natural landmarks. Researchers have found 1,950 plant species of 122 families, 350 butterfly species, 21 fish species, 10 amphibian species, 26 reptile species, 273 bird species and 59 mammal species. The region boasts a rich and interesting cultural and historical heritage, including architectural and historical monuments from antiquity and the Middle Ages, valuable archeological finds, monuments from the National Revival Period (monasteries, old houses and churches), historical places and others. Many megalithic structures have been registered in the area of Straja-Sakar Mountains and the Eastern Rhodopes and a big number of monumental stone Thracian tombs have been discovered in the area.

#### IV. METHODOLOGY OF THE SURVEY

In connection with the study of the natural and cultural heritage in Haskovo district in implementation of a contract with subject "Development of Methodology and Surveys" under the project "Promotion and development of natural and cultural heritage of Bulgarian-Greek cross-border region through smart and digital tools" (eTOURIST) under the INTERREG V-A Cooperation Programme "Greece - Bulgaria 2014-2020", ref. No 1714, Subsidy Contract No B2.6c.07/09.10.2017, the following methods and instruments were used:

- ❖ Review and analysis of sources of information and related documents;
- ❖ Analysis of already accumulated experience and identified problems;

- ❖ Expert assessment;
- ❖ Questionnaire survey - incl. formulating questions and developing tables for entering and processing the information.

Numerous sources of information have been studied and evaluated, including: strategic documents (National Strategy for Sustainable Development of Tourism in Bulgaria, 2014-2030, Regional Development Plan for the South Central Region 2014-2020, District Development Strategy of Haskovo District 2014-2020, Municipal Development Plan of Haskovo Municipality 2014-2020, Strategy for the Municipal Property Management in Haskovo Municipality 2016-2019, Municipal Development Plan of Dimitrovgrad Municipality 2014-2020, Strategy for the Municipal Property Management of Ivaylovgrad Municipality until 2019, Municipal Development Plan of Lyubimets Municipality 2014-2020, Municipality Development Plan of Madzharovo Municipality 2014-2020, Municipal Development Plan of MineralniBani Municipality 2014-2020, Strategy for Tourism Development in MineralniBani Municipality 2014-2020, Municipal Development Plan of Svilengrad Municipality 2014 -2020, Municipal Development Plan of Simeonovgrad Municipality 2014-2020, Municipal Program for Management and Utilization of Municipal Property of Simeonovgrad Municipality for 2018, Municipal Development Plan of Stambolovo Municipality 2014-2020, Strategy for Sustainable Development of Tourism in Stambolovo Municipality 2014-2020, Strategy for Municipal Property Management of Topolovgrad Municipality 2015-2019, Tourism Development Program of Topolovgrad Municipality 2015-2020, Municipal Plan for Development of Harmanli Municipality 2014-2020, Strategy for Municipal Property Management of Harmanli Municipality 2014 -2020 and others), multiple websites with statistics, incl. those of Bulgaria's Official Tourist Portal, the Tourist Information Centre of Haskovo Municipality, the Tourist Information Centre of Stambolovo Municipality, the Tourist Information Centre of Svilengrad Municipality, the Tourist Information Centre of Ivaylovgrad Municipality, etc.

In addition, a representative survey was conducted among the adult population of the Haskovodistrict, whose aim was to study the attitudes, opinions and perceptions of local people regarding their familiarity with natural and cultural heritage sites in the region. **As a result**, according to selected methods and tools, nearly 200 cultural and over 80 natural heritage sites in Haskovo district have been identified. **Annex 1.1. Systematized database of all existing natural and cultural sites along with the information gathered about them).**

A survey was conducted in the period July-August 2018 among the population in the territory of Haskovo district. A questionnaire (Annex 1.3.1) was developed as opinions were received by 402 respondents on site selected by a representative quota. In view of the topics, the questionnaire included a number of open-ended questions in order to avoid suggesting specific answers to respondents and to measure as accurately as possible people's free associations/knowledge on the given topics. The information was

collected by semi-standardized face-to-face interviews. The survey was conducted also electronically, as the questionnaire (Annex 1.3.2) was sent by electronic mail to nearly 200 officials from different stakeholders, including the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Tourism, community centres, museums, district and municipal administrations, Haskovo’s Regional Agriculture Directorate, the Executive Environment Agency (EEA), etc., yet only ten people responded.

**V. ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION OF CULTURAL AND NATURAL SITES IN TERMS OF ACCESSIBILITY AND DEGREE OF PRESERVATION FOR VISITS**

Once the natural and cultural heritage sites were identified, they were analyzed and evaluated in terms of their accessibility and how well-preserved they are for tourist visits. Qualitative methods, techniques and tools for data collection and analysis were used to perform the analysis and evaluation. When getting acquainted with the available documentation and information, the classical (qualitative) method of study was applied, based on the mechanism of insight into the content and meaning of the various sources of information and related documents. Each source was transformed from its original form into a research form, thus allowing a logical construction to interpret the contents of each source based on the following characteristics: type and form of the source; context; author; reliability of a source of information; factual content, trustworthiness of the information; evaluative content.

A thorough and comprehensive review of the collected information was carried out, which allowed us to summarize and analyze the conclusions used to assess the accessibility and the degree of preservation for visits of the natural and cultural sites on the territory of Haskovo District. Visits were also conducted to some of the sites for which the available information was either scarce or non-existent.

The following indicators and criteria have been taken into account in the analysis and assessment of accessibility and preservation degree of cultural and natural sites:

Accessibility		
PARAMETER	CRITERIA	DESCRIPTION
Road infrastructure	the site is accessible at least via an asphalt road with a motor vehicle (including all-terrain vehicles)	In case three out of the four criteria for the individual parameters are met, we assume that the site is

		accessible, as the criterion "the site is accessible at least via an asphalt road with a motor vehicle" is mandatory. Without it, even if the other three criteria are present, the site will be considered inaccessible.
Tourist Infrastructure	availability of tourist accommodation facilities from which access to the site is possible;	
	availability of catering units in the towns and villages from which access to the site is possible;	
Information Infrastructure	availability of signboards and information boards around the site	
DEGREE OF PRESERVATION FOR VISITS		
PARAMETER	CRITERIA	DESCRIPTION
Physical condition	the physical condition of the site allows for visits	Excellent degree of preservation
	the physical condition of the site allows for visits up to a certain extent, but it is necessary to undertake restoration/ conservation activities	Satisfactory degree of preservation
	the physical condition of the site does not allow for visits and it is necessary to undertake restoration / conservation activities	Very poor degree of preservation

On the basis of the parameters and criteria identified above, the analysis and evaluation regarding the accessibility of the sites and how well-preserved they are for tourist visits

are made in **Annex 1.2. Analysis and assessment of the accessibility and degree of preservation for tourist visits.**

## VI. ANALYSIS AND ASSESSMENT OF THE RECOGNIZABILITY OF THE SITES AMONG THE POPULATION OF THE TARGET REGION (HASKOVO DISTRICT)

As a result of the analysis and the assessment of the recognizability of the sites /See **Annex 1.3 Analysis and assessment of the recognizability of the sites among the population of the target region (Haskovo district)**, the following conclusions can be drawn:

- the local population has a relatively high level of knowledge of the cultural and natural heritage sites in Haskovo district;
- the sites of natural heritage are much less known than cultural heritage sites.
- the listed cultural sites suggest quite good objective recognition, as far as the list of spontaneous responses contains sites with a real status of monuments, most of them of national significance, as well as others that bear a rather symbolic significance for the local people (for example the Monument to the Holy Mother of God built in recent years).
- cultural heritage sites are significantly more prominent in the minds of the local people as emblematic for the area compared to natural sites.

The analysis also includes questions about the extent to which the potential for development of the area in terms of natural and cultural heritage is being exploited as according to respondents, the potential for development of natural and cultural heritage sites to date is used almost to the same degree and it is relatively good - an average estimate of 5,16 for natural sites and 5,11 - for cultural sites, with a maximum of 7 (average scores of 1 to 7, where 1 is "to a very low degree", 4 - "to a neutral degree", 7 - "to a very high degree"). The higher scores for natural heritage are no surprise given that 1) it is generally considered to be of a smaller volume than that of the cultural heritage and 2) in the popular opinion regarding natural heritage there are fewer actions that need to be undertaken, in addition to preventing damage and popularizing it, whereas when it comes to cultural heritage, people pinpoint the need for restoration/preservation and interpretation.

So quite logically, when asked the question of what needs to be done to promote and preserve the region's natural heritage, respondents emphasize on three actions:

- advertising (45%);
- improved access (22.8%);
- ways to actively attract more visitors (15.9%).

Chart 1.

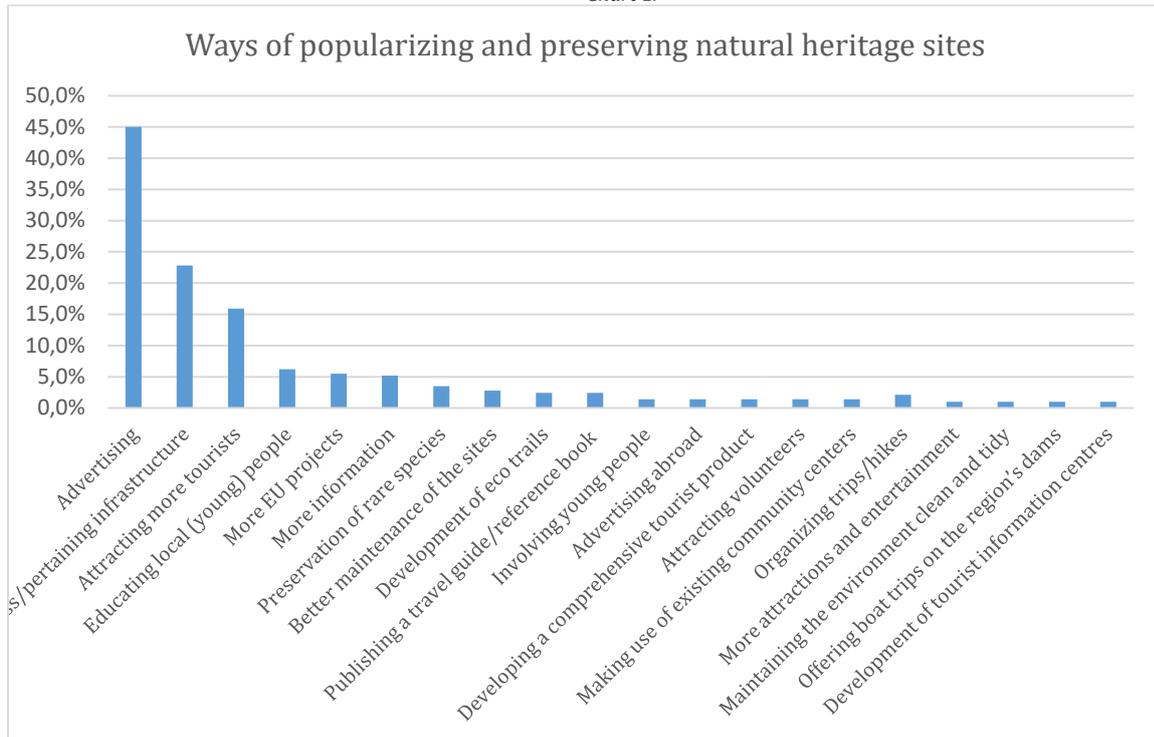
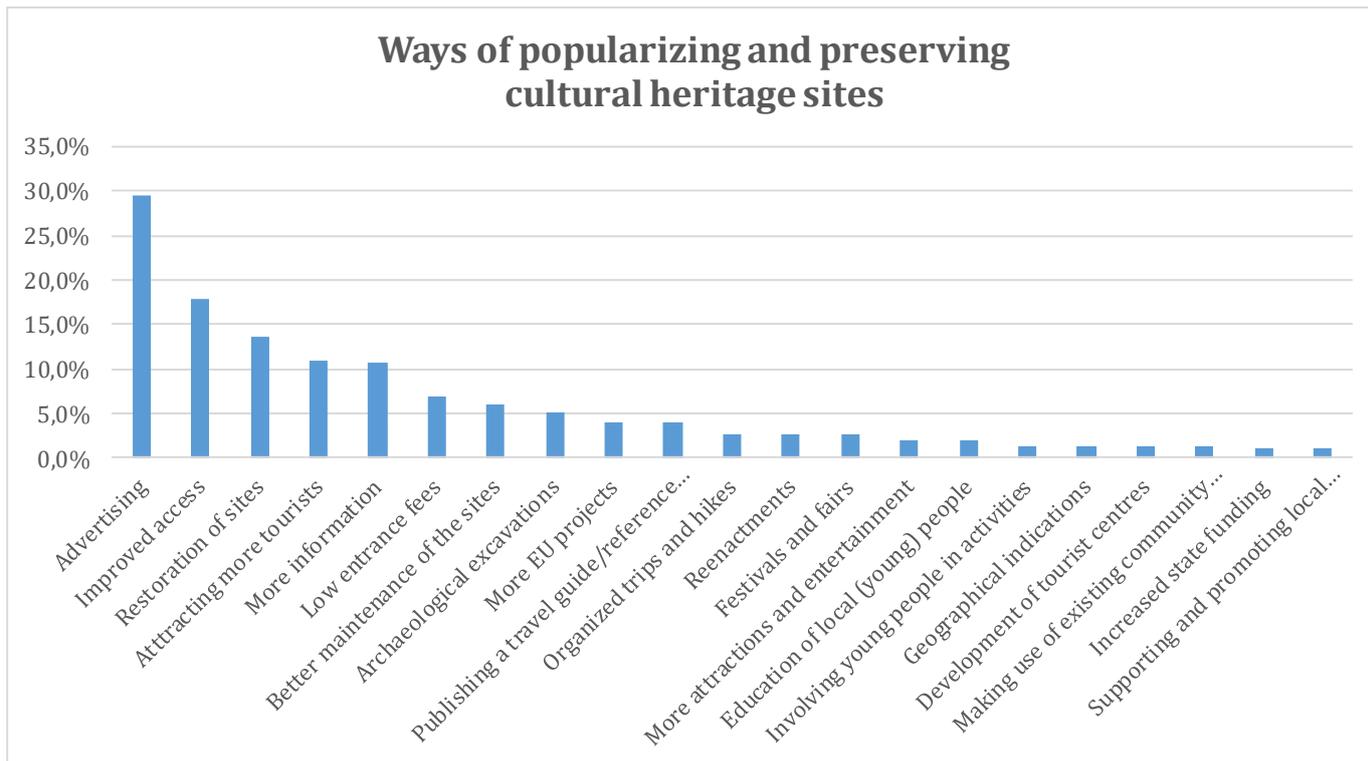


Chart 2.



However, the less common proposals of the respondents are quite revealing and can be summarized in the following main directions:

- involvement, incl. training in the process of preservation and popularization of larger/diverse groups - local young people, groups and formations dealing with local culture, volunteers - not only from the region, more active use of the potential of the local community centres;
- organizing and promoting of a higher number of exciting and attractive activities for mass visitors –re-enactments, festivals, boat trips on the dams, organized hikes and sightseeing tours;
- systematizing the promotional activities and attracting visitors through the development of more tourist centres and the creation of a comprehensive/integrated tourist product.

Regarding all proposed organizations in charge (public administrations, businesses, non-profit sector, local community), they are expected to play an important role in promoting and preserving the local natural and cultural heritage - estimates over 5 for the importance of their role based on the above-mentioned scale of 1 to 7.

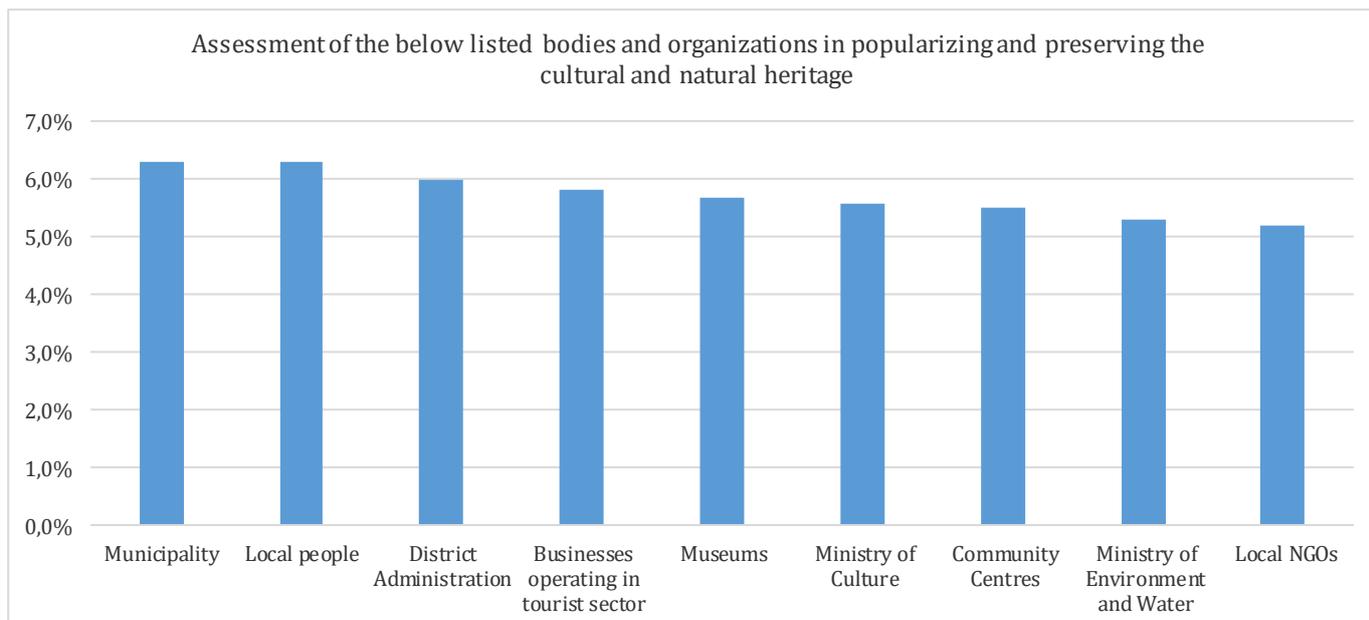
However, the crucial role of local factors - municipalities and local people (estimates

above 6), as well as the district government as being responsible for the implementation of state policies at the regional level (score 6), is very clear. This, on the one hand, shows:

- the important role of the municipality as a local initiator and leader in engaging the local community;
- the willingness of the local community to follow the municipality.

At the same time, the lower estimates given to the role of local NGOs (5,18) and community centres (5,51) indicate the need to increase the capacity of non-public organizations at the local level.

Chart 3.



## VII. IDENTIFYING THE SITES IN TERMS OF THEIR HISTORICAL PERIODIZATION

All sites identified at the start of the survey have been dated in terms of their historical period.

**Historical periodization** is a methodology in historiography whereby the study of universal history is divided chronologically into several generalized time periods, based on distinctive differences, peculiarities, and pivotal points in the development of mankind and culture.

**Classical periodization** in history distinguishes the following historical ages:

This document has been created within the framework of the Project „Promotion and development of natural and cultural heritage of Bulgarian – Greek cross-border region through smart and digital tools“ (eTOURIST), financed under the INTERREG V-A Cooperation Programme “Greece-Bulgaria 2014-2020”, Subsidy Contract No B2.6c.07/09.10.2017. The Project is co funded by the European Regional Development Fund and by national funds of the countries participating in the Interreg V-A “Greece - Bulgaria 2014-2020” Cooperation Programme. This document has been created within the framework of the Project „Promotion and development of natural and cultural heritage of Bulgarian – Greek cross-border region through smart and digital tools“ (eTOURIST), financed under the INTERREG V-A Cooperation Program “Greece-Bulgaria 2014-2020”, Subsidy Contract No B2.6c.07/09.10.2017. The Project is co funded by the European Regional Development Fund and by national funds of the countries participating in the Interreg V-A “Greece - Bulgaria 2014-2020” Cooperation Programme.”

1. Prehistory in the Stone Age with a transitional Chalcolith - 2.5 million years ago - 3300/3000 BC.;
2. Ancient History with the emergence of the first scripts in the Bronze Age - 3300/3000 BC until 800 BC.
3. Classical Antiquity, preceded by a bronze collapse, followed by the so-called Axial Age and a new era - from the 8<sup>th</sup> century BC until the beginning of the 6<sup>th</sup> century AD.
4. Middle Ages - from early 6<sup>th</sup> to late 15<sup>th</sup> century
5. Modernity - end-15<sup>th</sup> century –mid-20<sup>th</sup> century
6. Contemporary period - from the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century to the present day

In view of the above, according to their affiliation to a certain historical period, the Contractor has categorized the identified cultural heritage sites into the following periods /**Annex 1.4. Sites in terms of their historical periodization**/:

1. Prehistoric - 2.5 million years ago - 3300/3000 BC;
2. Ancient - 3300/3000 BC until 800BC;
3. Dating to Classical Antiquity - from 8<sup>th</sup> century BC until the beginning of the 6<sup>th</sup> century AD;
4. Medieval - from early 6<sup>th</sup> to late 15<sup>th</sup> century
5. Modern –from end-15<sup>th</sup> to mid-20<sup>th</sup> century
6. Contemporary - from the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century to the present day.

Nowadays, science employs several methods for categorizing historical periods of natural sites, some of which are:

- geological
- hydrochemical;
- biological;
- soil geochemistry;
- geographic information analysis;
- remote methods and more.

Geological methods can be further subdivided into mineralogical, petrological, geomorphological, stratigraphic, sedimentological and others methods. Each of the methods may result in a false dating, as all of the above-mentioned methods involve the construction of a database including layers of detailed topographic maps, geological maps, soil maps, satellite images, aviation and satellite images of the Earth's surface,

three-dimensional relief patterns, analyzes of the macro- and micro-components of the soil composition, etc. Thus, specific geochemical, hydrological or geological features of the sites are reflected, which, when combined, allow for the explanation of some natural phenomena, but the study does not end with the application of the above-mentioned methods. As a result of the analyses carried out, it is possible to reach unknown facts. These facts may or may not fit into the previously established scientific hypothesis. Newly-established facts lead to new questions which, in turn, can be solved by additional samples, building more detailed maps, carrying out analyses of a new type, increasing the accuracy of the laboratory tests, proposing partially or completely new hypotheses, etc. The chance of coming up with new unknown facts once again is enormous and this, in turn, can turn the accumulation of facts about the dating of natural sites into a continuous and endless process.

In determining the belonging of the identified natural sites to a certain historical period, account is taken of the fact that natural sites have evolved over billions of years, at different stages of the earth's development, dependent on climatic conditions, geological processes, physico-geographic and geomorphological features and more.

In conclusion, we can say that Haskovo district has a huge potential for development in terms of its cultural and natural heritage. The intention for development of this potential is found in Specific Objective 1.2.2. Encouraging the development of sustainable tourism based on the natural and cultural heritage laid out in the Haskovo District Development Strategy 2014-2020 but the fact that much of the identified natural and cultural sites at the beginning of the survey were not recognized at all by the local population suggests that the measures related to the promotion of cultural and natural heritage are extremely insufficient. The poor maintenance status and the limited access to the sites further reduce the potential of developing a tourism industry based on natural and cultural heritage.

## VIII. ANNEXES

### ANNEX 1.1 SYSTEMATIZED DATABASE FOR ALL EXISTING CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE SITES IN HASKOVO DISTRICT

### ANNEX 1.2 ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION OF CULTURAL AND HERITAGE SITES IN TERMS OF ACCESSIBILITY AND DEGREE OF PRESERVATION FOR TOURIST VISITS

### ANNEX 1.3 ANALYSIS AND ASSESSMENT OF THE RECOGNIZABILITY OF CULTURAL AND NATURAL SITES AMONG THE POPULATION OF THE TARGET REGION (HASKOVO DISTRICT)

**Interreg**  
**Greece-Bulgaria**  
European Regional Development Fund



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eTOURIST

ANNEX 1.3.1. QUESTIONNAIRE - ON SITE

ANNEX 1.3.2. QUESTIONNAIRE - ELECTRONIC

ANNEX 1.4. IDENTIFIED SITES IN TERMS OF THEIR THE HISTORICAL  
PERIODODIZATION