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## Agency for regional development and business center-Vidin

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Project "Dragon boats", Application No ROBG-399  
Interreg V-A Romania-Bulgaria Programme

### MANAGEMENT PLAN

#### For valorisation of water tourism

This management plan aims to transform the Romanian-Bulgarian cross-border area into a quality tourist destination based on its natural and cultural heritage, which should correspond to the standards of the European Union regarding the provision of products and services.

The current management plan for valorisation of water tourism is based on the implementation of project "Dragon boats", project code ROBG-399, financed within Interreg V-A Romania-Bulgaria Programme.

The project duration is 27 months, implemented in the period 01.08.2018-31.10.2020 by 3 project partners:

- ARDBC-Vidin - Lead beneficiary;
- LEASME-Calafat - Beneficiary 2;
- Association Consult Group - Beneficiary 3;

Within the project is created a new cross-border touristic product based on the purchased equipment and generated experience by project beneficiaries - dragon boats!

The creation and promotion of the new dragon boats touristic product was possible through the implementation of the following activities within the project:

- Creation of technical capacity for the new joint tourism product - Purchase of 4 dragon boats, 2 safety boats, rowing simulator, life vests, mobile dock, dragon boats trailer, cargo van and various equipment
- Organization of 10 alternative tourism seminars in order to promote the upcoming events and coordinate the created by the project team management plan for valorization of water tourism
- Holding of 10 Dragon boat festivals in Danube towns
- Organizing of cross-border dragon triathlon
- Organizing of 2 cross-border Dragon boat mini marathons in Bulgaria and Romania;
- Organizing of 6 1-day rowing simulation events in bigger cities in the cbc area;



- Promotion of developed tourism products and project events with brochures, leaflets, website, film, press-conferences, promotion in radio and TV.

Within the project ARDBC-Vidin acquired the following equipment, necessary for the delivery of the new touristic product:

- 2 dragon boats for 20 passengers, equipped with paddles, life vests, dragon boat decoration, drums, big rows, etc.;
- Safety motor boat with trailer,
- Mobile dock of 30sq.m.;
- Cargo van for transportation of the equipment;
- Trailer for dragon boats;
- 1 go pro camera and sound system

On the other hand the Romanian partner LEASME-Calafat acquired:

- 2 dragon boats for 20 passengers, equipped with paddles, life vests, dragon boat decoration, drums, big rows, etc.;
- Safety motor boat with trailer,
- Trailer for dragon boats;
- 1 drone and sound system

Beneficiary 3 Association Consult Group acquired a dragon boat simulator, necessary for organisation of dragon boat simulation events.

All partners worked together during the planning and organisation of project events, acquiring practical experience in the organisation of big events with 80 and more participants on the waters of the Danube and different water dams and canals in the cross-border area.

Following the discussions held at the 10 seminars organized in Bulgaria and Romania, attended by representatives of local authorities, tourism operators, NGOs and also as a result of studying the specialized documentation, it emerged that in both states new tourist products are needed, especially along the Danube, products that make this area an attractive one for tourists.

A partner network was established in the main Danube towns during the organisation of the 10 alternative tourism seminars with water and canoe-kayak clubs, NGOs, local authorities and other stakeholders. The partnering organisations supported the organisation of project events and were presented the potential of the dragon boats for development of water tourism.



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Promotion materials for the new dragon boats touristic products such as film, T-shirts, caps, diplomas, posters, roll-ups, brochures, leaflets, website and TV and radio promotion were used to promote the project and the product.

Within the project the joint dragon boats touristic product was established as very attractive touristic product, generating great interest among the local population of Danube towns and tourists from both sides of the river.

However, within project implementation period all dragon boat events were held without costs for the users. The organisation of events, technical organisation of events, transportation, etc, all costs were planned and spent within the project. At project exit it is necessary to establish a sustainability strategy, related with the future offer of the new product.

When the project ends there still will be costs for the organisation of dragon boat events and these costs must be covered by revenues from the end users or the organisations requesting the organisation of the events. At the same time the non revenue generation principle of the funding program requires that all net revenues should be returned to the program.

Organisation of dragon boat events could vary in the cost depending on where the events will be organised, respectively the different per diems of staff engaged, different transportation costs, etc. On the other hand the price of the tourist product could also vary, depending on the number of participants, time of the rowing, etc.

Based on that the project partners have 2 main ways to assure the sustainability of the project and continue providing the new cross-border touristic product:

- Provide the new touristic product themselves;
- Sign partnership agreements with another organisation to be engaged with the delivery of the new product.

In the first case the Beneficiary should make annual accounting balance on the costs and revenues associated with the provision of the touristic product.

In the second case the beneficiary should request from the organisation engaged with the operation of the equipment to provide such annual accounting balance on the costs and revenues associated with the provision of the touristic product.

In both cases any revenues overpassing the incomes from this activity should be returned to the program, because this activity must remain not net revenue generating one.

The operator of the dragon boat touristic product should provide this service in 2 main ways:





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- upon request by partnering organisations from the dragon boats network or any other organisations, touristic companies, municipalities, etc;

By creating events on the Danube or nearby water canals or dams, which to be promoted and to attract individual visitors.

Among the common strengths of Bulgaria and Romania, as tourist destinations, are the Danube river, good natural conditions for water sports, great diversity of flora, fauna and cultural heritage.

On the other hand, there are common weaknesses of the two states in the field of tourism, such as: unequal distribution of accommodation units, lack of state investments, lack of support for local traditions and folklore, which can be improved with the help of a new tourist product.

The dragon boat operators must also keep track on the number of users of the dragon boats on annual base.

The dragon boat operators must also organise publicity activities in order to promote the dragon boat product.

A minimum annual number of cross-border dragon boat events that is required to be organised on annual base is 6, where cross-border event means either an event organised with participants from both Romania and Bulgaria or an event organised with the dragon boats of all partners.

The tourism development strategies of the two states include measures regarding the modernization and development of tourism products in order to meet the market requirements.

„Dragon boats” represent an opportunity to diversify the tourism market, to highlight geographical areas with tourist potential in one way or another.

We consider that „Dragon boats” are a modern tourist product that can be integrated in several sectors of tourism such as: active tourism and tourism for young people, cultural tourism, business tourism, rural tourism and ecotourism.

In active tourism and tourism for young people, lately, there is an increasing trend of visitors mobility. Thus, the tour operators design tourist circuits offering tourists a list of options, aiming for them to increase their stay and expenses.

Along with cycling and / or hiking, rowing in dragon boats can be an alternative for spending time in nature.

Business tourists add a relaxing component to their visits. Similarly, the visitors of the cultural objectives or those who practice rural tourism or ecotourism act.



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An important role in the long-term development of tourism is played by regional and local administrations, which, in addition to investments in infrastructure, must carry out an intense activity of promoting tourism and informing visitors.

Both Bulgaria and Romania, in the cross-border area, have a multitude of natural and cultural resources that can meet the needs and expectations of a large and diverse tourists number.

These resources can contribute to the development of an integrated tourist package, which should also include rowing in dragon boats.

Lately there is a growing interest in adventure and sports, a segment that can be exploited and that can contribute to the tourist development of the cross-border area.

Starting from the equipment purchased through the "Dragon Boats" project and from the experience acquired by the project implementation teams after the discussions held during the ten seminars and organizing events with more than 80 people, we designed this management plan which, through its application, will contribute to the increase of the demand for tourist products and services, thus contributing to the tourist development of the Romanian-Bulgarian cross-border area.

Evtim Stefanov  
Executive director  
ARDBC-Vidin

