

DESIGN AND PROMOTION OF CULTURAL TOURISM ROUTES IN MESSENA WITH THE PARTICIPATION OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY, ARCHAEOLOGY AND CULTURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT OF THE UNIVERSITY OF THE PELOPONNESE

Ioanna Spiliopoulou

Assistant Professor, University of the Peloponnese

iaspi@uop.gr

Maria Kouri

Lecturer, University of the Peloponnese

mkouri@uop.gr

Abstract

The paper addresses the development of cultural tourism routes in the area of Messenia and their promotion to the benefit of the local and regional communities. Its competitive advantage lies in the active role of the Department of History, Archaeology and Cultural Resources Management (DHACRM), School of Humanities and Cultural Studies (SHCS), of the University of the Peloponnese situated at Kalamata. Following the presentation of the organisational structures, the mission statement, the strategic aims and the S.W.O.T. analysis of SHCS/DHACRM, we propose the design of Cultural Tourism Routes in Messenia, as well as a marketing strategy for their promotion. These Routes aim at fulfilling the strategic, non-profit educational mandates of the School while supporting the region's sustainable development. By offering valuable know-how on the field of Cultural Tourism and by establishing cooperation with local and regional agents DHACRM may participate actively in the development of Messenia.

Keywords: *University of the Peloponnese, School of Humanities and Cultural Studies (SHCS), Department of History, Archaeology and Cultural Resources Management (DHACRM), Kalamata, Messenia, Region of the Peloponnese, design and marketing of Cultural Tourism Routes (CTR), local and regional development, marketing.*

Introduction: aims and methodology

This paper is based on an original case study by the authors (Spiliopoulou and Kouri, 2011) on the topic "Culture", in the framework of the Programme "Encouragement of entrepreneurship, innovative applications and elective courses for the students of the University of the Peloponnese" of the Operational Programme "Education and Initial Professional Training" (EPEAEK)¹.

Initially, the history, aims, philosophy, vision, organisational and administrative structures and services of SHCS and DHACRM are presented. The theoretical development of a marketing strategy based on the S.W.O.T. analysis of the School follows, focusing on the Cultural Tourism sector in Messenia. Subsequently, Cultural Tourism Routes (CTR) for domestic and international

¹ Project: "Unit of Innovation and Enterprise of the University of the Peloponnese", Operational Programme "Education and Lifelong Learning", NSRF 2007-2013, co-funded by the European Social Fund and national resources.

tourism are designed, proposing their realisation through the cooperation of diverse agents and stakeholders of the Municipality of Kalamata, Messenia and the Region of the Peloponnese. Furthermore, arguments are presented, regarding on the one hand the efficient promotion of the strategic educational and social objectives of SHCS, and on the other hand the support of the area's sustainable development by means of this innovative service. Long-term marketing objectives for the new service, as well as an action plan based on the "4Ps" of the Marketing Mix (Product, Place, Price, Promotion) (Kotler, 1994) are set. Finally, control measures are proposed to assess the application of the action plan and the degree of achievement of the initial objectives.

1. The School of Humanities and Cultural Studies (SHCS)

1.1 History and mission

The University of the Peloponnese (UoP) was founded with the Presidential Decree 13/2000 and began functioning in 2002 (University of the Peloponnese, 2011). Based on Tripoli, it consists of Schools covering different disciplines, which are situated at the 5 capitals of the Prefectures of the Region of the Peloponnese¹. The University's mission is to develop higher education across the region through academic and research work and study programmes that fulfil the requirements of a higher education institution of national and international standing². In the framework of its mission the University aims to support lifelong learning and training of local communities and aspires to act as a link and a reference point of cultural cooperation and creativity for Hellenism worldwide.

The SHCS was founded with the Presidential Decree 118/2003 in Kalamata, the capital of the Regional Unit (R.U.) of Messenia. It consists of the Departments of History, Archaeology and Cultural Resources Management (DHACRM) and of Philology, which began operating in the academic years 2003-04 and 2005-06, respectively. The School is housed in the buildings of the former 9th Infantry Regiment at the Kalamata Old Camp, which were granted by the Municipality of Kalamata and were converted into modern teaching and administration spaces (figure 1) with the support of the Municipality of Kalamata, the A. G. Leventis Foundation and sponsors Vassileios Konstantakopoulos and Konstantinos Arnokouros, as well as with funds from the 3rd Community Support Framework of the Regional Operational Programme of the Peloponnese 2000 – 2006, co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund and the Greek state.

Figure 1: The administration building of the School of Humanities and Cultural Studies at Kalamata



¹ <http://www.uop.gr>

² According to art. 1 of Law 1268/83 one of the missions of the University of the Peloponnese is to contribute to addressing the social, cultural and developmental needs of the area.

According to the founding Decree which specifies the mission of the two Departments of SHCS¹, and in accordance with the objectives set by the Departments regarding their future path, DHACRM aims to:

- (a) cultivate and promote knowledge in the fields of History, Archaeology and Cultural Resources Management (CRM)²,
- (b) provide students with the necessary skills and proper training in view of a scientific and a professional career,
- (c) organise postgraduate studies, leading to the training of scientists with expertise in the Department's disciplines³,
- (d) contribute to the development of Cultural Studies in conjunction with Cultural Resources Management and the use of new technologies.

The study programme of DHACRM is quite wide so as to address the actual educational and professional needs of students, offering them competitive advantages in the job market.

SHCS's modern infrastructure (figure 2) enables DHACRM to provide high quality educational and cultural services to diverse groups and include tech-equipped classrooms, a library, Marine Archaeology, Archaeometry and Computer labs, an amphitheatre to host ceremonies, conferences, seminars, etc. Additionally, it boasts teaching and research staff covering different disciplines of Humanities and Cultural Studies, including CRM.

Figure 2: Teaching facilities of the School of Humanities and Cultural Studies



¹ P.D. 118/2003, Official Gazette A 102/5.5.2003.

² Emphasis is given to History of Culture (ancient, byzantine, recent/contemporary Greek and European), Museology, excavations and in situ studies, as well as in modern disciplines such as Cultural Anthropology, Environment and Preservation of Cultural Heritage, Archaeometry, Marine Archaeology, Numismatics, etc..

³ The Interdepartmental MA programme of DHACRM "Administration and promotion of cultural resources and of the environment" was approved by Official Gazette B 2088, 31.7.2014 and is expected to begin operations in spring semester 2014-15.

1.2 The strategic aims of SHCS

SHCS is a non-profit entity, as determined by the legal operation framework of higher academic institutions in Greece. As the only academic agent of Humanities and Cultural Studies in the Region of the Peloponnese, it aspires to support the cultural, social and economic development of Kalamata, Messenia, the Peloponnesian region and the country in general, and thus contribute to the improvement of the citizens' quality of life. Within this context, the medium-term objectives of the business strategy of the SHCS and, particularly, of DHACRM include:

The application of theoretical knowledge by students and the intensification of their participation in research practice, as well as in the organisation and implementation of innovative business activities focusing on culture, in order to develop their theoretical and practical skills further, to enhance their professional profile and to establish contacts with the business and the non-profit sectors.

The wider dissemination and practical utilisation of research results and scientific knowledge produced at DHACRM, aiming at the development and improvement of living conditions of the communities of Kalamata, Messenia, the Region of the Peloponnese and Greece.

The strengthening of DHACRM's position, initially locally and in extension in the P.U. of Messenia, in the Peloponnesian region and in Greece, through the establishment of sustainable, mutually beneficial partnerships with public and private entities.

2. Proposal of a new strategy for designing and marketing the new service "Cultural Tourism Routes" (CTR) for Messenia

The three aforementioned strategic DHACRM objectives converge in the department's contribution to strengthening the tourism and cultural development prospects of Messenia, in general and of the city of Kalamata, in particular. Despite the abundance and diversification of the cultural resources of the P.U. of Messenia, coordinated actions for the effective promotion of cultural tourism in the area are still developing. As CTR are construed internationally as one of the most widespread tools of Cultural Tourism (Economou and Zikidis, 2013), DHACRM could play a role in addressing this market gap through the following hypothetical proposal: design of innovative Cultural Tourism Routes for domestic and international tourism, in cooperation with the Municipality of Kalamata, Messenia and the Region of the Peloponnese, promoting alternative tourism in the wider area.

1st Strategic Objective of DHACRM: The content of the Study Programme, the preparation of theses and internships across a relevant thematic, as well as elective courses, such as those offered within the framework of the "Unit of Innovation and Entrepreneurship at the University of the Peloponnese", contribute substantially to the theoretical and practical training of students regarding the design and promotion of CTR. By participation in the implementation and marketing of these routes in collaboration with local and regional bodies, the students will have the opportunity: to apply knowledge and further practice their skills with regard to the organisation, communication and realisation of innovative services in the field of Cultural Tourism; to enhance their professional profile; and, to establish contacts with the market.

2nd Strategic Objective of DHACRM: The role of DHACRM in the CTR will be to offer know-how pertaining to the design and marketing of this new service. The application of scientific knowledge and of research findings in planning and implementing CTR shall allow the diffusion of knowledge across society in order to improve the residents' living conditions and support regional development. Indeed, the CTR can substantially enhance the efforts of the P.U. of Messenia regarding the development of alternative tourism. Subsequently, they can be

instrumental in attracting year-round tourism; boosting economic growth; stimulating local entrepreneurship; justifying the protection of and investment in cultural and environmental resources; and, contributing to increasing the Messenian's awareness regarding these benefits (Kostakis, 2003; Kouri, 2010; Dionysopoulou, 2012; Karagiannis, 2013).

3rd Strategic Objective of SHCS/DHACRM: The development and implementation of CTR will bear optimum results, if carried out in the context of a harmonious cooperation between various agents of the P.U. of Messenia. What's more, the establishment of mutually beneficial, sustainable partnerships can strengthen the position of SHCS.

The development and promotion of the new CTR service is discussed, following the process of strategic planning:

Mission statement (discussed above).

Market research – Analysis of internal and of external factors (S.W.O.T. analysis).

Definition of objectives.

Development of action plan.

Controlling.

2.1 Market Research: Tourism

Due to the lack of primary data, secondary research data are used regarding the present conditions and prospects of Messenia in the field of tourism.

Following shipping, tourism is considered the most important sector of the Greek economy, contributing 16.4% to the gross domestic product (GDP) and making up for 20% of total employment (WTTC, 2006). Over the past decade tourism development has been recognised as a strategic objective of Greece (Papadopoulos, 1989; Ikkos, 2003; WTTC, 2006) with the following aspirations:

Countering seasonality and developing year-round tourism.

Attracting more tourists of the middle-upper socioeconomic strata to increase tourism income.

These objectives are pursued through investments in forms of alternative tourism, aiming – although not always seamlessly- at exploiting the country's rich and diversified cultural and natural resources (Kouri, 2012). Due to the international image of Greece as the cradle of European culture, a vital form of alternative tourism is Cultural Tourism; however, as the latter is not efficiently organised as yet, it has not become a primary motive for visiting the country (Papadopoulos, 1989; Kalogeropoulou, 1996; Buhalis, 2001; WTTC, 2006).

Subsequently, despite efforts to develop alternative tourism, which would support the fulfilment of the aforementioned objectives, tourism in Greece continues to be concentrated mainly in the summer, with tourist traffic beginning in April, peaking in August, and then declining. The outweighing majority of tourists visiting Greece come from Europe (National Statistical Service of Greece, 2008a). Regarding other continents, in 2006 tourists from America increased by 12.9%, but arrivals from Asia (-6.1%), Africa (-9.3%) and Oceania (-6.1%) declined (National Statistical Institute, 2008a).

Tourism could support the tertiary sector in the Region of the Peloponnese; however, its slow development in the area makes a rather small contribution to Greece's overall tourism activity (Ministry of Development, Competitiveness, Infrastructure, Transport and Networks, 2010). According to statistical data, the Peloponnese attracts predominantly domestic tourism, occupying the third place among the country's regions, and the seventh position regarding the attraction of international tourists. The slow rate of tourism development in the Peloponnese has been noted repeatedly despite the plethora and diversity of the region's cultural and environmental

resources: arrivals and overnight stays classify the Peloponnese as a destination for day or short excursions rather than as a place of extended tourism of recreational or professional character (Ministry of Development, Competitiveness, Infrastructure, Transport and Networks, 2010).

According to statistical data of the Messenia Chamber of Commerce, Messenia maintains 121 hotels and a total of 7,035 beds, 1,699 of which belong to four-and five-star hotels. In 2006 203,210 foreigners and 290,053 nationals spent the night in Messenia (Messenia Chamber of Commerce, 2008). Similarly to Laconia's, Messenia's GDP is the lowest of the Peloponnesian region (Ministry of Development, Competitiveness, Infrastructure, Transport and Networks, 2010)¹. Thus, it is imperative to support the economic development of the region through the promotion of all sectors, including tourism.

The inauguration of the luxurious and already distinguished Costa Navarino hotel complex in Western Messenia (Messenia Chamber of Commerce, 2014) attracts economically potent tourists. Moreover, the completion of national road construction projects (Athens-Tripoli, Tripoli-Kalamata, Kalamata-Pylos, Kalamata-Gytheio) improves access, contributing to the increase of tourist arrivals. Air access is equally important: Kalamata's airport ranked 18th out of 26 Greek destinations for charter traffic in 2007 (MBATourism.gr, 2008) and already serves direct charter flights from various countries at the initiative of foreign travel agencies that offer package tours in Messenia ("*Tharros*" Newspaper, 22.5.2008).

Regarding Messenia's cultural services, available statistics on the number, profile and behaviour of users are incomplete and limited, underlining the need for a more systematic data collection and analysis. In 2007 Messenia's four archaeological museums attracted 16,462 guests, who were concentrated between April-October, showing small numbers during November-March, classifying Messenia on the 19th place among 39 Greek counties (National Statistical Service of Greece, 2008b)². Data on the audiences of the Kalamata International Dance Festival, which has enjoyed rapid growth in the period 2002-2009, mention 12,086 spectators, about half of whom originate from outside Messenia (mainly Athens), supporting cultural tourism³.

Recently, the regional administrative agencies have undertaken significant efforts to promote the area's unique resources for tourism purposes, participating in international tourism fairs and seeking partnerships. The Messenia Chamber of Commerce has instituted the Kalamata Convention & Visitors Bureau to assist in the more organised development of alternative tourism, emphasising on conventional and religious tourism (Kalamata Convention & Visitors Bureau, 2010). As an inter-regional body, the Peloponnese Tourism Organization has recently set as its aim to promote the tourism identity and development of the Peloponnese, in cooperation with the Regions (Betoulaki, 3.5.2011: "*To Vima*" newspaper, 29.1.2014). The Region of the Peloponnese also contributes to the efforts of promoting the area as a unique and unspoilt tourism destination internationally, through its new website "Mythical Peloponnese" (Region of the Peloponnese, 2013).

Already, tourism offices offer organised tours to popular cultural and environmental destinations within and outside the boundaries of Messenia, including ancient Olympia, the Diros caves, Mystras, Malvasia, ancient Messene and Messenian fortresses (Kalamata Convention Visitors Bureau, 2010). Nonetheless, these tours are concentrated on popular areas that appeal to mass tourism, largely leaving out less known but important cultural and environmental resources. Designing tours around the latter would assist the decongestion of popular destinations and support alternative tourism as well as the protection of cultural diversity. Finally, Kalamata participates in

¹ Source: Eurostat.

² Source: Archaeological Receipts Fund.

³ Performances Review 2002-2009 (Source: International Dance Centre of Kalamata).

the UNESCO/Council of Europe international network "Olive Tree Route", which promotes intercultural dialogue and sustainable development (Olive Tree Route, 1999: Economou and Zikidis, 2013).

2.2 Analysis of the internal and external environment of DHACRM

Internal Factors Analysis

Material resources:

As an integral part of a public university, DHACRM is subsidised by the State and also seeks additional sponsors for specific actions. The School is accessible, situated at the eastern part of Kalamata. It is housed in the buildings of the former 9th Infantry Regiment at Kalamata's Old Camp and has adequate infrastructure (Spiliopoulou, 2012).

The Department can boast skilled staff that addresses different humanities and cultural studies disciplines, including the modern sector of CRM. Still, it is important to present students with motives that will induce them to become involved in the Department's ongoing operations more systematically, so as to foster their professional development further.

Funding cuts in the public sector have led to the reduction of staff, as well as the sharp increase in the workload of the remaining workforce, causing difficulties pertaining to the organisation and application of effective Marketing processes of the Department's services and actions.

Immaterial resources:

The School's and the Department's good reputation and image in Kalamata and the wider region makes them well-accepted by the local community, since they are perceived as a source of high-quality and innovative educational and cultural services to the benefit of students, in particular and of society, in general. The Department also showcases innovative research disciplines and activities, such as the Archaeometry Laboratory¹, which has instituted the first International Archaeometry Award, and the unique Laboratory of Marine Archaeology that will be soon completed and begin operations. Finally, a Summer School is organised since 2006, aiming at the Greek diaspora: it helps strengthen the ties of diasporic young people with the place of their forefathers' origin, while supporting cultural tourism and the local economy.

External Factors Analysis

Macro-external factors.

1. Social environment: demographic factors. Population density data reveal that the Region is sparsely populated and has a rural character, something that has been recognised as a basic structural weakness. Messenia's population growth rate falls short in comparison to the rest of the country, while the rural population outweighs the urban one (Ministry of Development, Competitiveness, Infrastructure, Transport and Networks, 2010). According to the most recent census, the P.U. of Messenia, based in Kalamata, has 159,954 inhabitants, the Municipality of Kalamata has a population of 69,849 inhabitants and the Municipal Section of Kalamata has 58,090 citizens (National Statistical Service of Greece, 2011).

2. Economic environment: The Region of the Peloponnese produces 5.2% of Greece's Gross Added Value (GVA), contributing 14% to the primary sector, 30% and 55.9% to the secondary and tertiary, respectively. At county level, Messenia generates 19% of GVA in the primary sector,

¹ Ministerial Decision, Official Gazette 1781/5.9.2007.

8.5% in the secondary and 72.1% in the tertiary, showing the lowest GDP across the Region of the Peloponnese (Ministry of Development, Competitiveness, Infrastructure, Transport and Networks, 2010)¹.

The economy of the capital of the P.U. of Messenia, Kalamata, relies mainly on agriculture (mainly olives and vegetables) and the tertiary sector (services and tourism). An important industrial unit is the *Karelia* tobacco company and there are also agricultural product industries (Municipality of Kalamata, 2011). The SHCS of the University of the Peloponnese and the Technological Educational Institute of the Peloponnese also operate in Kalamata, boosting the region's economy and creating development potential.

As expected, the country's acute recession and high unemployment rates affect the area. Alternatively, Greece's participation in the co-financed EU programmes creates development opportunities. An important aspect is the entrepreneurship and innovation programmes, which are offered, for example, in Greek higher education institutes aiming at providing students with modern skills to support their professional career and, in extension, the business development of the country. What's more, tourism promotion programmes, such as "Alternative tourism"², subsidise relevant business investment. Finally, European co-financing has supported projects to build or restore cultural infrastructure, support artistic creation and scientific research, as well as safeguard and promote cultural heritage. Particularly in the 2nd CSF, culture was closely linked with tourism through the Operational Programme "Tourism-Culture". In the 3rd CSF a tailored Operational Programme was earmarked for Culture, while in the 4th CSF cultural programmes were integrated in the Regional Operational Programmes.

3. Cultural environment: Inhabited since prehistoric times, Messenia is rich in prominent, but lesser-known cultural resources (see below). Several folk traditions remain vibrant, while numerous arts events of a local, national and international scope are organised.

Ever since the beginning of the 1980s and especially after the devastating earthquakes of 1986, the city of Kalamata began investing substantially in cultural development. It was one of the select Greek cities participating in the "National Cultural Network of Cities" with the International Dance Centre and the high quality Kalamata International Dance Festival (Spiliopoulou and Kouri, 2012)³. In the framework of a 10-year Contract with the State, the Municipality of Kalamata founded the Kalamata Municipal Organisation for Cultural Development (DEPAK, 1985) with the aim to support the artistic and aesthetic cultivation of citizens and support contemporary professional and amateur artistic creation across different artistic genres. To this end, the operations of a Fine Arts Workshop, the Municipal Conservatory, the Municipal Dance School, the Municipal Gallery "Tassos", the International Dance Centre and the Municipal Railway Park (Greece's only theme park focusing on railroad history) were supported. In 2008 DEPAK was incorporated in the new municipal enterprise "Pharis", which now also includes the Municipal Regional Theatre of Kalamata, the Vocational Training Centre and the Municipal Enterprise of Tourism Development of Kalamata. Numerous other bodies of cultural creation of different sizes and scope can be also found in Kalamata, such as the Street Festival, the Kalamata Jazz Festival, theatre troupes, etc.

¹ Source: New Cronos, Eurostat 2005.

² Announced in the framework of the Operational Programme Competitiveness and Entrepreneurship Operational Programme Competitiveness – Entrepreneurship II (NSRF 2007-2013/ 4th CSF).

³ Unpublished case study for the sector "Culture", written during the academic year 2011-12 in the framework of the Programme "Encouragement of entrepreneurship, innovative applications and elective courses for the students of the University of the Peloponnese" of the Operational Programme "Education and Initial Professional Training" (EPEAEK).

Due to the long-term investment in culture, the capital of Messenia boasts several functional cultural facilities, capable of accommodating a variety of cultural events of high calibre, such as the Cultural Centre of Kalamata ("Pantazopouleios" Folk School) and the Dance Hall, the construction of which was funded by the 3rd and 4th CSF and was completed in 2012.

4. Natural Environment: Messenia is distinguished for its natural resources, some of which have been nominated as NATURA areas. Kalamata is centrally situated at the cove of the Messenian Bay, at the foot of Mount Taygetos, providing both the infrastructure and amenities of an urban centre, and a beautiful natural environment, ideal for recreation. As early as 1985, systematic efforts of urban design and landscaping were undertaken applying sustainable development principles. This programme continued after the devastating 1986 earthquake, supported by EEC funds. From 2004 onwards the Municipality of Kalamata proceeded to study and implement redevelopment projects of the city centre and seaside front, which resulted in landscaping projects, pedestrian walks and widening of sidewalks, bicycle lanes and construction of plazas. These works aimed to relieve the centre and the coastal front traffic, and gradually restrict the usage of private vehicles, aspiring to the economic, cultural, social, and environmental development of the city.

Therefore, the sustainable usage of Messenia's rich history, cultural resources and natural beauty through forms of alternative tourism (Kalamata CVB & alternative tourism in Messinia, 2010), as well as the reorganisation of land, air and sea access networks, will support the attraction of year-round tourism, generating sources of income for the local community and the periphery.

Micro-external factors.

Customers/consumers: The main recipients of SHCS services are students and staff, but in the context of lifelong learning SHCS offers certified services to every interested group. Another important perspective pertains to the organised provision of know-how and services in collaboration with other agents, aiming to support the Region's efforts towards sustainable tourism development.

Competitiveness: As a School of a regional University, SHCS offers to the Peloponnese scientific and educational services of high quality focusing on Humanities and Cultural Studies. The competitive advantage of DHACRM is that it offers as early as the undergraduate level the particularly key subject of administration of tangible and intangible cultural resources. The links between CRM, History and Archaeology¹, as well as the indication of CRM at the title of the BA degree, increases the graduates' competitiveness in the professional field, increasing their employment prospects in many and new directions.

Funders: A key financier of the University of the Peloponnese is the State. Some of the SHCS actions are supported by donors and sponsors, including the Holy Metropolis of Messenia, the Municipality of Kalamata, the Messenia Chamber of Commerce, the Bouga Schools, A. Konstantakopoulos, K. Arnokouros, V. Karelia, E. Kokkevi, etc.

¹ Reaching the 5th semester of their studies DHACRM students are expected to choose one of the two majors: "History and CRM" or "Archaeology and CRM".

DHACRM S.W.O.T. ANALYSIS

INTERNAL ENVIRONMENT	
STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<p>Good structural, organisational and technological infrastructure. Highly qualified scientific and teaching staff, innovative disciplines. Theoretical training, research projects and practical experience in CRM and organisation of events focusing on culture and Cultural Tourism routes. Excellent reputation, broad acceptance. Strong network of public relations with local community and stakeholders. Active cooperation with the Municipality of Kalamata and other institutions of the city and the region. Existence of financial supporters.</p>	<p>Incomplete design of marketing and PR strategies. Limited use of student dynamic. Partial exploitation of the potential of concluding partnerships with local and regional actors. Difficulty in middle- and long-term programming, due to extrinsic constraints. Decrease of administrative, technical and teaching staff, due to the economic crisis – difficulty in supporting additional projects.</p>
EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT	
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<p>Keen orientation of the P.U. of Messenia in developing forms of alternative tourism. Rich cultural and environmental resources of the P.U. of Messenia. Lack of organised specialised Cultural Tourism services: market gap. Kalamata’s identity as a culturally active city. Cultural and tourism infrastructure. Shared objectives towards sustainable development create opportunities for cooperation with local administrations, business and cultural agents. European and national programmes to promote alternative tourism. Development of tourism infrastructure; ongoing efforts to improve access. Wider promotion of the P.U. of Messenia as an attractive tourism destination by modern methods.</p>	<p>Economic crisis: State subsidy cuts. Decline in sponsorships. Decline of financial capacity of local and regional administrations. Reduction of consumer purchasing power. Decline of citizens’ cultural interest; reduction of tourism due to alternative, more pressing needs (Maslow pyramid). Climate of frustration and disappointment among citizens. Lacking tourism infrastructures. Difficulty of access to many areas of Messenia. Threat to environmental, cultural, economic and social resources from non-sustainable tourism development. Possible difficulties in cooperation towards common goals. Uncertainty in international markets because of unrest and armed conflict in Russia, the Middle East and North Africa.</p>

2.3 Objectives for CTR

For the new CTR service, the following medium-term strategic objectives are set across a three-year horizon:

Since Year 1 the service requires the initiation of a partnership between the DHACRM and local and regional administrative bodies, the Messenia Chamber of Commerce, prominent agents of Kalamata, the Ephorates of Messenia under the Directorate General of Antiquities and Cultural Heritage of the Ministry of Culture¹, tourism businesses and cultural institutions. These partnerships need to be strengthened and developed further each year, reinforcing networks that are considered invaluable in promoting cultural tourism (Kostakis, 2003).

As CTR will be a new service introduced to the tourism market of the P.U. of Messenia, a moderate scenario is proposed: according to the 2007 data presented above, a corresponding initial target for Year One is to attract 0.5%-1% of domestic and international tourism (regardless of age, family status, education, financial status etc.). Years 2 and 3 will aim at a 0.5%-1% increase.

Support brand awareness of the new service through intense outreach and communication in cooperation with agents of the P.U. of Messenia, tourism enterprises, the business sector, cultural organisations, the media etc., with the aim to increase the share of cultural tourism in Messenia. Nonetheless, in order to assess the degree of achievement of this objective, new and extensive research of the tourism market is indispensable (see below).

Securing communication sponsors in collaboration with partner organisations and the media from Year One, and increase by 10% per subsequent year.

2.4 Marketing Plan

To achieve these aims a marketing strategy of the new service in collaboration with the local and regional administrations, cultural and business bodies and the media is necessary. Through its staff and students DHACRM can offer know-how to support the design of both CTR and of the service's marketing plan in collaboration with the aforementioned agents of the P.U. of Messenia.

MARKET RESEARCH: Given the lack of recent research data, detailed information is needed regarding the size of the domestic and international tourism markets, as well as their profile, behaviour, visit motives, satisfaction rates and interest in cultural tourism in the Region. Such data can be produced in cooperation with the Chamber of Commerce, tourism and cultural institutions of the P.U. of Messenia, etc. These elements are essential, on the one hand to develop the tourism strategy and on the other hand to configure and evaluate the CTR service and its communication plans (Karavasili and Michelakis, 1999).

PRODUCT/SERVICE: The new service is named "CULTURAL TOURISM ROUTES" (CTR) and is proposed to be offered throughout the year. The aim of CTR is the scientific and reliable presentation of the wealth and range of the cultural heritage and of contemporary artistic creation of the P.U. of Messenia, working towards the fullest possible coverage of all areas, in order to ensure the equal distribution of benefits across the Region. The service's target groups are Greek and international travellers, as well as region inhabitants (including school and student groups) regardless of age, marital, educational, economic and social status. The service will include guided tours by DHACRM students (undergraduate, graduate, doctoral). Fluency in one or more of the following languages is important, since, according to data, the majority of tourists come from

¹ 38th Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities, 26th Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities and 2nd Ephorate of Recent Monuments.

Europe: Greek, English, French, German, Italian, Spanish, Russian. Chinese should be also considered in view of developing relations with China.

New trends in tourism involve the supply of customised experiences and knowledge depending on the profile, the needs and the schedule of the individual tourist or group (Liu, 2005). Accordingly, CTR will be designed so as to respond as well as possible to the specific circumstances and time of year at which they will be offered. Additionally, specific thematic routes will be created, based on texts with thematic, poetic and rhetorical dimensions (Karavasili and Michelakis, 1999: Zounis, 2012: Economou and Zikidis, 2013). The CTR can range from day to longer tours, depending on the programme of tourists, and will be carried out on foot, by bikes or other transportation means. Messenia's cultural resources (Traiou, ed., 2007) that will be initially used to create the CTR (with potential for future enrichment) are the following:

Castle of Kalamata: Built in 1208 on the ruins of the Mycenaean Citadel of Pharai and of the Byzantine castle, the castle of Kalamata is a characteristic sample of a Frankish Fort (Kontogiannis, 2012). It is connected with the Villehardouins, who founded the Principality of Achaea, and the famous Isabella of Villehardouin, known as Princess Isabeau. The castle's interior is now open to visitors, while tourists can admire the panoramic view of the city (figure 3) and rest in the small theatre at the castle's courtyard, where performances of the Kalamata International Dance Festival take place in July. Beverage supply, safety conditions. Inaccessible to people with disabilities.

Figure 3: The Kalamata Castle



Church of Ypapanti and of the Redeemer: The Metropolis of Messenia was built in 1860. It contains the miraculous icon of Ypapanti (Themelis, 2003: Sarantakis, ed., 2010). The temple celebrates annually on 2nd February. Restrooms, accessible to people with disabilities.

Archaeological Museum of Messenia: It presents the most important archaeological finds of Messenia through a modern museological approach. It offers interactive educational resources and varied educational programmes for schools, children and families¹. Open all week, accessible to people with disabilities, restrooms, gift shop.

¹ <http://www.archmusmes.gr>

Historical and Folklore Museum of Kalamata: It presents through modern museological methods Kalamata's pre-industrial life (Doulaveras and Reppas, 2012). Restrooms, inaccessible to people with disabilities, limited opening hours.

Cultural Centre of Kalamata ("Pantazopouleios" Folk School): On the 5th floor it houses the Folk Library of Kalamata, one of largest ones of the region and on the 4th floor it houses the Public Library, as well as the Gallery of Contemporary Greek Art. The latter's collection comprises 430 paintings, drawings, prints, constructions and sculptures and was created thanks to the donations of artists and collectors. Today more than 100 works dating to the 1950s and 1960s are presented, reflecting the artistic explorations of Greek artists of the post-war period. It offers an audiovisual DVD tour and a photographic archive with the collection's paintings¹. Restrooms, accessible to people with disabilities.

Apostles' Church: Dating to the 11th-12th centuries, it also contains murals of the 14th century (Sarantakis, ed., 2010: Kakouros, 2012). According to tradition, at the square of Saint Apostles ("23rd March") the 1821 Revolution was declared and the formation of the Messenian Senate was decreed. In commemoration of this historic moment, every year 23rd March is celebrated in Kalamata with representations, parades, theatrical performances and other events.

Holy Monastery of Nuns: Visitors may see and purchase silk weaves as well as the famous silk Kalamata kerchiefs, which are still manufactured at the monastery by traditional methods.

OSE Park – Kalamata's Municipal Railway Park: A thematic open-air museum, which includes unique railway artifacts from railroad history. The Park also includes sports and refreshment facilities as well as playgrounds. Accessible to people with disabilities, canteen.

Kalamata Beach: A beautiful path along the coast, in the shadow of Mount Taygetos. Swimming, local gastronomy, day-long entertainment.

Architectural heritage: The role of Kalamata as a large shopping centre and its urban development in the late 19th and early 20th centuries have bequeathed the city a rich architectural heritage (Spiliopoulou, 2012), which one can enjoy walking through town (Nika, 5.6.2009: Nika, 7.6.2009). In 1996 Kalamata was awarded the *Europa Nostra* award for rescuing its historic centre and reconstructing its listed buildings following the 1986 devastating earthquake. The continuity of Kalamata's urban development since prehistoric times is visible in the city's gradual expansion from the Castle towards the Harbour. In the city's historic centre settlements were developed during the Ancient, the Byzantine, the Frankish and the Ottoman eras. At the same time the era of Kalamata's financial growth at the end of the 19th century is reflected. In the city, buildings of various architectural styles dating mainly to the period 1850-1930 have been saved, many of which now house municipal and public services.

Kardamyli: In Kardamyli worth visiting are the preserved residential complex of the Upper Town (Kontogiannis, 2012), as well as the three-story Tower of Mourtzinou-Troupakis (1807), which houses the Museum of Kardamyli (figure 4), where temporary exhibitions are presented. The area boasts other attractions, such as the ancient Citadel, the twin tomb, old churches and monuments.

¹ <http://www.laikivivliothiki.gr>

Figure 4: The Mourtzinos-Troupakis fort at Upper Kardamyli



Ancient Messene: This is the most important archaeological site of Messenia, with regard to size, shape and conservation (Themelis, 1999). It includes sanctuaries, sets of buildings, houses, fortifications and tombs and presents a clear picture of the past, as it has not been destroyed or covered by newer settlements (Themelis, 2010). Among others, important monuments of the site are the Ancient Theatre (figure 5), the Arsinoe Fountain, the Asklepieion, the Ekklesiasterion (Assembly Hall) and the Doric Temple (Zymi, 2012). In the neighbouring village of Mavromati a small archaeological museum exhibits findings from Ancient Messene. Restrooms, gift shop, accessible to people with disabilities, parking.

Figure 5: Aspect of the Ancient Messene Theatre



Alleged Palace of Nestor in Upper Eglianos: Reaching its peak in the period 1300-1200 B.C., it is today the best preserved Mycenaean Palace of Greece, which presents to visitors a relatively clear image of the Mycenaean civilization through its building complexes, royal apartments, throne hall (figure 6), warehouses and famous frescoes (Papathanasopoulos and Papathanasopoulos, 2000: Banou, 2012). The site remains closed lately, due to restoration works that will last the subsequent years.

Figure 6: Illustrated representation of the Throne Hall in the Palace of Upper Eglianos



Niokastro: Following the aftermath of the battle of Lepanto, Niokastro was built in Pylos by the Ottomans in 1573 to control the Bay of Navarino (Kontogiannis, 2012). Maintenance and restoration works offer visitors a clear picture of the castle, while a Marine Archaeological Research Centre also functions there (Papathanasopoulos and Papathanasopoulos, 2000).

Castle of Methoni: Its peak is set at the period of the First Venetian occupation (13th-15th centuries). It represents a brilliant sample of Venetian fortress architecture (figure 7). Built at a strategic and beautiful location, it contains ruins of houses, temples, Turkish baths, cisterns, etc. (Papathanasopoulos and Papathanasopoulos, 2000; Kontogiannis, 2012). Restrooms, accessible to people with disabilities, parking.

Figure 7: The Methoni Castle



Archaeological Museum of Pylos: It contains important findings from Pylia dating from the Middle Helladic period to Roman times.

Temple of Apollo Epicurius at Bassae: At the boundaries of Arcadia, Triphylia and Messenia, on the bare rocky landscape of Bassae (Figaleia), lies one of the most imposing ancient temples. Its construction is placed at 420-400 B.C. and is considered the work of Ictinus. This temple is the only one combining elements of the three architectural styles of antiquity (Arapogianni, 2000). In 1975 the Maintenance Committee of the Temple of Apollo Epicurius was founded and until today has carried out operations of maintenance, consolidation, restoration and promotion of the monument. The canopy covering the temple since 1999 has been a contested topic (figure 8), but was deemed necessary to ensure the monument's ongoing preservation (Mantis, 2008). Since 1986 the Temple of Apollo Epicurius is a part of UNESCO's World Heritage List. Gift shop, restrooms, parking.

Figure 8: The Temple of Apollo Epicurius at Bassae, Figaleia



Other accessible archaeological sites of Messenia include Akovitika, the archaeological sites of Malthi, Nichoria-Karpofora, Peristeria, the Hellenica of Antheia - Ancient Thouria, Palaiokastro, the Castle of Kyparissia. Other important monuments are the temples of Ithomi, the Mycenaean tholos tombs near Pylia-Triphylia, the cave of Nestor, the Tower of the Kapetanakis family, the Tower of Koumoundouros, the Castle of Zarnata, etc.

Religious monuments: Messenia contains many religious monuments of the Byzantine and Post-Byzantine period (Themelis, 2003: Sarantakis, ed., 2010: Kakouros 2012), including the Holy Monastery of Voulkano, which hosts the miraculous icon of the Holy Virgin and a small museum, the Monastery of Dimiova, the Church of the Saviour's Transfiguration (Municipality of Filiatra), which is one of the most important Byzantine Monuments of Messenia, and the Holy Temple of Samarina (Municipality of Androussa), which is built on the ancient temple of goddess Rhea.

Traditional watermill: In Desylla village (Municipality of Oichalia) travellers may visit the traditional watermill and experience the traditional washing of carpets by the river.

Kalamata International Dance Festival: An institution of international renown, in July it offers performances, events and contemporary dance workshops by distinguished Greek and international artists at the newly built Dance Hall, on Kalamata beach and at the Castle Theatre (Petrogiannis, 10.6.2011: Kalamata International Dance Festival, 2012).

More cultural resources of Messenia are the Military Museum of Kalamata (Nikoltsios, 2006)¹, the Folklore Museum of the Upper Town of Kyparissia "Kostis Palamas" (Doulaveras and Reppas, 2012) and the Archaeological Museum of Chora Triphylia. Regarding contemporary cultural creation, visitors can enjoy temporary art exhibitions at the Art Workshop or in the Municipal Gallery "A. Tassos" of Kalamata², which is one of the most important ones among the Greek regions; musical events of the Municipal Conservatory of Kalamata; and, theatrical performances by the city's theatrical groups and by the Municipal Regional Theatre of Kalamata. Messenia offers possibilities for gourmet tourism and for experiencing folk traditions and customs, such as Koutrouli's marriage, the Nedoussa Carnival, the Hanging of Old Sykou, etc.

In its second phase, the CTR service could be extended to include the environmental resources of Messenia, e.g. Polylimnio, Voidokilia Beach (which is also an archaeological site) and the Evergreen forest of arbutus on the island of Sapienza.

PLACE: For the purpose of carrying out administrative functions, the creation and staffing of a CTR Office in a relevant local or regional institution is suggested. Initially, students could staff the Office in the framework of internships (stage), in order to achieve the first objective of DHACRM's strategy. The design of CTR and of their marketing strategy will be carried out by DHACRM's faculty in collaboration with students, local business, municipal agents and cultural bodies. CTR will be realised by DHACRM students, who will undertake the customised tours as well as customer management.

The meeting/starting point of CTR will vary depending on the offered routes. All CTR stations will have a significant historical and cultural interest. However, the infrastructure of these stations is not always excellent; accessibility to people with disabilities, restrooms or cantinas are not always available. Furthermore, the opening hours of stations vary according to the time of year. These factors will be taken into consideration during the composition of CTR.

Purchasing the service will be possible through the CTR website, by telephone or via e-mail, personally in the CTR Office, as well as through collaborating institutions (e.g. hotels).

¹ http://www.culture.kalamata.gr/v1/museum/view_museum/3

² <http://www.kalamata.gr/.../282-dimotiki-pinakothiki-kalamatas-a-tassos.html>

PRICE: In addition to overheads, and depending on the rate of customer increase, a computer reservation system may be needed. These costs could be covered by an initial capital, grants or sponsorships, and subsequently from the proceeds of CTR.

The travel, accommodation, dining and ticket costs will be covered by the service users. Organisers, tourism businesses (hotels, restaurants, etc.) and cultural institutions (e.g. museums, archaeological sites, festivals, etc.) could collaborate to establish a total price package for all CTR services. This price will be determined according to the extent and content of each specialised CTR. There will be discounts for users who wish to purchase more than one CTR packages. In addition, pricing will take into account less potent economic groups, in order to uphold people's right of access to cultural resources (Kouri, 2007).

If the original aim of attracting 0.5%-1% of foreign and domestic tourists of the P.U. of Messenia is achieved, it is estimated that about 1,000-2,000 foreigners and 1,500-3,000 nationals will be serviced in Year One. Suggesting 40€/customer for a day tour, the service will accrue at least between 100,000€ and 200,000€ annually, 50% of which will cover CTR operating costs. To cover marketing and communication expenses, the collaboration of stakeholders with the media is essential.

PROMOTION: In order to achieve marketing objectives, a strong communication strategy for the new service is indispensable; this can be coordinated with the participation of all involved stakeholders, in order to render the service widely known quickly, within and outside national borders. Communication costs will need to be divided among the sectors and the agencies that are invested in developing tourism in Messenia, such as the regional and local administrations, the Messenia Chamber of Commerce, tourism and other local businesses, cultural institutions, etc. The following communication methods for reaching target groups are suggested:

A. Advertising:

TV and radio sports, initially in the Greek media.

Printed and online advertisements in tourism and entertainment magazines, as well as periodicals of Greek and foreign air-, land- and sea lines.

Cooperation with the Greek Tourism Organisation (GTO).

Cooperation with national and international tour agencies and bureaus.

Internet:

Creation of a multi-lingual CTR portal with information and online booking potential.

Social media.

Links of CTR portal with webpages of collaborative agencies, GTO, tourism bureaus, local and regional websites.

Creation of printed brochures/marketing material for CTR and their placement in selected central points of the P.U. of Messenia, local agents, tourism enterprises of Messenia, Athens and other urban centres, in airports, at the port of Kalamata, in train and bus stations, as well as CTR stations. The possibility to extend the marketing network also to the heritage and contemporary cultural agents of nearby areas, Athens and other urban centres can be explored.

Word of mouth advertising: exploitation of the collaborators' networks.

B. Personal sales:

Utilisation of the networks of collaborating agents for personal sales, primarily aiming at educational institutions in Greece and abroad, associations, clubs and organisations for culture and recreation (e.g. elderly and church associations), as well as associations of the Greek Diaspora.

Creation of contact lists of customers and targeted communication.

C. Sales promotion:

Participation in the tourism marketing strategies of the Region of the Peloponnese (e.g. tourism exhibitions, etc.).

Cooperation with loyalty programmes of airlines, ferry lines, banks, etc.

Discounts for purchases of more than one CTR packages.

Rewards for loyal customers.

Online selected photographic and video material from concluded CTR in the form of online competitions to boost sales.

D. Publicity, Public Relations:

Press releases to the local, national and international media.

Organisation of Informative Day Sessions in the Districts of the P.U. of Messenia regarding the new service, the conditions for its success and the expected benefits for the local communities.

Invitations to public services, business, cultural actors and citizens.

Presence in broadcasting media.

Ongoing updating of information as regards the results of CTR aiming at the inhabitants of the P.U. of Messenia, in order to increase citizen awareness and ensure their continued support.

Preservation, enhancement and nurturing of public relations networks with local communities and its diverse agents.

Creation of mailing lists. Posting of monthly electronic newsletters.

Mailing e-cards with highlights from the CTR as “thank you” to customers and collaborators.

2.5 Controlling

To measure the performance of the new service, control measures will be regularly applied during the preparation, promotion and implementation of CTR. This way, controlling may have a preventive rather than a repressive character and support the rational use of resources, avoiding the pitfalls of mass tourism (Kanellopoulos, 1990: Karagiannis, 2013).

Initially, the following measures will be applied:

Questionnaire to explore the profile of CTR users, to evaluate the degree of success of the new service and to make appropriate adjustments towards its improvement. Among others, factors which will be explored are demographic profiles, opinions, wishes, comments, marketing strategy efficiency, perception of price-quality relationship.

Performance monitoring of the effectiveness of the communication strategy every two months, based on sales, publicity, brand awareness, etc.

Strategic audit: audit standards to assess whether the marketing objectives, as well as the strategic operational objectives of the service are reached. The long-term and qualitative character of these objectives dictates the need to adopt relevant assessment measures.

Profit control: the economic efficiency of the service will be controlled by the cooperating agencies.

In case of deviation from the desired results, appropriate corrective actions will be applied in a timely manner.

Conclusions

The implementation of the proposal for Cultural Tourism Routes for Messenia may represent a model of cooperation between local, regional, national and international bodies, which is a prerequisite for the development of Cultural Tourism (Konsola, 1990: Kostakis, 2003: Bitsani, 2004: Dionysopoulou, 2012: Karagiannis, 2013). Apart from supporting the different objectives of these stakeholders, this proposal aims at the region's sustainable development, which concerns and benefits each and every one of these agents. Particularly, the strategic planning and marketing of CTR will strengthen the tourism potential of Messenia, enhancing the prospects of its economic and social development.

Nonetheless, sustainability must be the core of developmental efforts and of the promotion of this proposed service or of other similar ones. An absolutely indispensable condition is to calculate and respect the carrying capacity of every resource that will be included in the efforts to develop the Region's cultural tourism market, and to avoid their boundless commercialisation, in order to protect them in the long-run (Karavasili and Michelakis, 1999: Kouri, 2010: Karagiannis, 2013). Especially in times of economic crisis, there is a strong conflict between economic, social, cultural and environmental values. As economic parameters are increasingly prioritised, the need for intensive and effective protection measures of socio-cultural and environmental resources becomes ever more compelling.

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