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# STRATEGY

## OF TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

IN THE DESHATI MOUNTAIN RANGE REGION **DIBER**  
**2014 - 2019**

EMPLOYMENT  
WELLBEING  
SUSTAINABLE SOCIAL  
ECONOMIC  
AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT



## **STRATEGY OF TOURISM DEVELOPMENT**

**IN THE DESHATI MOUNTAIN RANGE REGION, DIBER  
(2014-2019)**

This document has been developed by the Deshati Local Action Group with the financial assistance of the “Sustainable rural development in Deshati mountain range region: Deshati LAGs” project funded by the European Commission in the framework of the IPA Cross-Border Programme the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia-Republic of Albania, 2007-2013.

*The content reflects the views of the Deshati Local Action Group and does not represent the official views of the European Union.*



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The Strategy of Tourism Development determines main priorities of the development of tourism in the Deshati mountain range region that is one of the regions with a great potential for the development of mountain and summer tourism. The strategy is developed by the Deshati Local Action Group (LAG) in the framework of the "Sustainable rural development in Deshati mountain range region: Deshati LAGs" project funded by the European Commission in the framework of the IPA Cross-Border Programme the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia-Republic of Albania, 2007-2013. Deshati LAG, also established and developed in the framework of this project, is the main contributor during the whole process of strategic planning. Inclusion of main local actors in the Deshati LAG: Regional Council of Diber, Municipality of Peshkopi and communes of the Deshati mountain range region, –Fushe Çidhën, Kala e Dodës, Kastriot, Maqellare, Melan, Sillove and Tomin--business, NPOs, farmers, experts from the region, etc. enabled collection of the information for the development of strategy. The strategic planning process was managed by the non-profit organization Regional and Economic Development Center "Alpin" and facilitated by a consultant with experience and expertise in strategic planning and tourism development.

# 1.

## INTRODUCTION

The strategy aims at identifying the priorities for the sustainable development of tourism in the Deshati mountain range region as well as the relevant strategies and the main directions where LAG can give its contribution. The strategy will be useful to the local government during the development of main documents and identification and realization of major actions for the sustainable development of tourism in the region. The strategy has been developed in order to help identify potential and opportunities for tourism development, to provide a framework for the planning of future investments by the public and private sector, and to promote the sustainable development of the region through partnerships among local authorities, business, and community.

The Deshati LAG's vision for the development of tourism in the Deshati mountain range region is "employment, well-being, and sustainable social, economic, and cultural development." Members of the Local Action Group will

be led by this vision in their efforts to implement the strategy of tourism development.

Touristic values and the problems related to these values that people from Deshati mountain range region are facing were discussed based on four main components including: touristic markets and promotion; touristic product; touristic services and infrastructure; and good local governance. The discussion also focused on the environment—internal environment relating to the Local Action Group as well as external environment—and articulation of existing strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. Main strengths include: natural resources and touristic attractions; existence of the strategic plan for the regional development (of Dibra Qark) 2012-2016; cross-border projects; etc. Main problems and obstacles to the tourism development include: low level of touristic services; limited promotion of touristic potential; insufficient focus of local government on development of tourism; slow and limited implementation of the strategy for regional development; and limited funds for tourism development. These problems and obstacles will be addresses by the strategy based on the strengths/assets and opportunities for the development of tourism.

General goals of the strategy for tourism development developed by the strategic planning team include:

- 1. Increasing the importance of tourism for the local economy; and**
- 2. Improving social and cultural conditions and quality of life for inhabitants of the region.**

The transformation of tourism into an important sector would be realized through the following strategies:

- 1. Maintaining and increasing the number of domestic visitors and attracting foreign visitors;**
- 2. Increasing expenses of visitors during each visit; and**
- 3. Diversifying the touristic market and product.**

Objectives of the strategy include:

- 1. Better focus on potential markets and improving touristic promotion**
- 2. Expanding and improving touristic product**
- 3. Improving touristic infrastructure and services**
- 4. Contributing in the good local governance**



The methodology of strategy implementation is described through specific measures and relating activities that are planned to be realized during the 2014-2019 period. The strategy will orient the local government, business, and other interested organizations and institutions to analyze the tourism market, the potential for tourism development, and its problems and adopt necessary steps to overcome problems and take the opportunities and, therefore, achieve specific objectives and goals of tourism development in the Deshati mountain range region.

The strategy is an important document also relating to continuous monitoring and periodical evaluation of concrete activities for tourism development and disseminations of best practices and lessons learned at national and regional level.

### **The guiding principles for the development of strategy and management of the tourism development include:**

**Sustainable tourism:** The aim is to develop the type of tourism that offers active entertainment/recreation, enriched life, and a better working and living environment for the local community. Main aspects for a sustainable development of tourism include:

- Effective policies relating to land use;
- Effective management of the natural environment;
- Preservation of the natural and cultural heritage; and
- Continuous investment in human resources.

**Economic benefit:** Business organizations focusing on the tourism sector should generate income that is sufficient to ensure expansion through investment. Benefit from tourism should increase through: better use of assets, especially those with a high investment capital such as accommodation facilities; Development of small and medium service enterprises; Ensuring income through a better ratio between quality and price.

## **2.** **GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF THE STRATEGY**

**Selective investment:**

Taking into consideration specific conditions and challenges the region is facing, especially relating to accommodation of visitors, it would be important to encourage development of guest houses in villages as well as investments in accommodation facilities through financial assistance and/or fiscal facilities.

**Access to targeted markets:**

Strategy of tourism development should focus on the unique characteristics of the region by offering diverse experiences that attract the targeted potential markets. Selection of markets should be conducted based on compatibility of typical products of the region with type of tourism that is intended.

**Public-private partnership:**

Effective partnership includes communication and use of effective consultative mechanisms to ensure the coherence and sustainability during the implementation of tourism strategy. Changes in roles and conditions create better opportunities for joint initiatives and effective cooperation.

# 3.

## STRATEGY OF REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR DIBRA REGION 2012-2016

The Strategy of Regional Development for Dibra Region 2012-2016 as well as other national strategic documents have guided the Local Action Group during the process of elaboration of the Strategy of Tourism Development for the Deshati mountain range region.

The vision of the Strategy of Regional Development for Dibra Region is that “Dibra region becomes a region where individuals and businesses will be capable and successful, will benefit from the development power of their economy and natural resources in order to have a quality life for themselves and their families.” One of the strategic objectives of the strategy focuses on the development of tourism in the region. Strategic Objective 2 emphasizes the need “to extend the productive part of the regional economy, especially in the areas capable to generate income such as agro-processing, tourism, electric power, etc. including proper provision of basic services for businesses thus establishing a friendly climate for them.” Specific measures identified in the framework of this objective regarding development of tourism include:

- Establishing a chain/network of businesses for provision of touristic services (or a kind of cluster through labeling and promotion of categories and facilities that contribute to expansion of areas, services, and aims);
- Development of at least one new product together with the inclusion of potential of regional tourism (thermal waters, alpinism, cultural tourism, etc.)
- Increasing the capacity of individual owners regarding touristic services for visitors (accommodation, food, entertainment);
- Developing promotional materials regarding potential of regional tourism;
- Developing the touristic product based on the cultural heritage (churches, monasteries, tradition, etc.);
- Encouraging production of original traditional souvenirs;
- Developing and implementing joint regional projects regarding sign posts of touristic track and mountain biking or hiking paths.

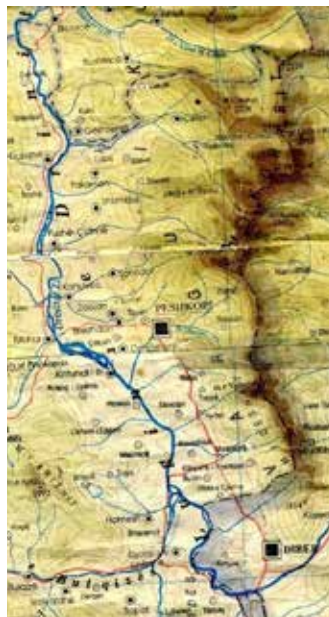
#### **Geographical position and local administration:**

Deshati mountain range region is located in north-eastern part of the Diber region. It extends alongside the border with Macedonia and borders Kukes region (west) and Drini River (south). The Deshati mountain range region is almost equally extended in two countries—Albania and Macedonia. The region includes urban and rural areas. It has been populated since ancient times and has important economic, social, historical, and cultural values.

There are eight local government units in the Deshati-Korab mountain range region including one municipality (Municipality of Peshkopi) and seven communes (Communes of Maqellarë, Melan, Tomin, Kastriot, Fushë-Cidhen, Slllovë, and Kala e Dodës). The population of the region lives in one city (Peshkopi) and 70 villages. Villages are mainly located in the mountainous areas such as Rabdisht, Zagrad, Cerjan, Zimur, Vrenjt, Venisht, Vleshë and villages of the Kala e Dodës commune. Houses are built with stones and covered by stone tiles. Livestock is their main source of economic income. Many villages are located in the lower and flat areas. These villages are characterized by narrow cobble-stone paved roads, alongside which you can find old turrets and water moulins, new high houses surrounded by yards planted with fruit trees, as well as tunnels and bunkers built during the communist times.

## **4.**

### **OVERVIEW OF THE DESHATI MOUNTAIN RANGE REGION**



**Natural conditions:** The landscape of the Deshati mountain range region is various and includes high mountains, pastures, and water resources. It is part of the “Korab-Koritnik” natural park and includes several mountains such as Kërçini, Velivari, Grevë, Skërteci, Zimuri, Grame, Sorokoli, and Korabi that is at the same time the highest mountain in Albania. These are rocky mountains but also rich in vegetation. From the geological point of view, they are calcareous formations



*Mountain of Kërçini*



*Gips*

rich in gips and alabaster. The gips massives in Veleshicë, Gramë, Vrenjt, Bahutë, and Bellova valley are well-known.

Also the mountain range offer a beautiful landscape with peaks and canyons, caves and scales formed over time due to atmospheric and geological agents. Mountain pastures are one of beauties of the Deshati mountain range region. They are rich in water resources, pastures, and diverse vegetation. Mountain pastures of Kerçin, Poces, Pupinare and Erabare, Hinuskë, Skërtec and Cerjan, Zimur, Zonjave, Dyqakë, Shehit, and Korabi are the most important natural resources of this region. They offer favorable conditions for dairy farms during the summer and skiing during the winter.

Mountain of Korabi



Pastures of Ladies



Tulip of Korab



Pasture of Hinoskë



Pastures of Zimur

Employment, health, and economic and cultural development

**Water resources are another important resource of the region.** There are several water-collecting basins that are well-known for their huge size such as the basin of the Gjelagjoshi torrent and the basin of Llixha (Thermal Water Place) torrent. There are other smaller basins such as the basin of Kërçini torrent, the basins of Maqellarë Pesjakë, Grezhdan, Dovolan, Melan, Tomin, etc. All these torrents flow into the Black Drini River, at the same time the longest river in Albania. These torrents have created panoramic landscapes including valleys--many of them deep and sharp--that are rich in vegetation as well as pleasant and easy to walk along. Waterfalls, especially during the spring and autumn, are another important water resource. Most beautiful waterfalls include those of Pocest, Korabi, and Bahutë. In mountains, there are several small glacier lakes, located in groups, similar to each other. These are alpine/charstic lakes that reach their highest water level during the spring. Water of these lakes is clear and dark blue. Lakes together with the vegetation surrounding them and relating effects they create constitute most beautiful places of the Korabi and Grame area.

Lake of Grama



Waterfall of Pocest



*Lixha Valley, Peshkopi*



*Vlesha Cold Water*



*Field of Maqellare*



*Apple plantation, Melan*



*Typical products of the region*

**Thermal waters:** There are several thermal water sources in the Deshati mountain range region. We can single out the thermal waters of Peshkopi Llixha that are warm and curative. Also, another curative water source is the Cold Water of Vleshë.

**Agriculture:** One of the main characteristics of the Deshati mountain range region is that the terrain extends from mountain pastures into hills and small agricultural parcels up to the banks of Black Drini River. Agriculture parcels are fertile and suitable for grain and vegetables. Hills are rich in forests and horticulture. Due to favorable climate and water quality, the agricultural products of the region are of excellent quality and healthy. Corn, potatoes, apples, and cherries from this region are the best in Albania. Moreover, the landscape of both hilly and plain areas adds to the beauty and diversity of the region.

**Historical and cultural heritage:** The Deshati mountain range region has a rich historical and cultural heritage. The Illyrian-Roman period has left its traces at the Grazhdan castle that is among the biggest in the Balkans. Also, from this period there are settlements of Cetush, Kullakë Castle in Brezhdan, churches in Bulkë hill in Peshkopi, etc. There are ideas that the church in Bulke Hill has been the



Castle of Grazhdan



Skanderbeg's monument and Palace of Culture, Peshkopi

center of Diber Episcopate and the origin of the name of the city of Peshkopi. Peshkopi is also the birth land of Kastriots. Religious buildings and centers are another heritage of the region. They include many churches, mosques, and tekkes. Most significant religious constructions include the churches in Kerçisht and Herbel as well as remaining of many other churches, the mosques of Pes-

hkopi and Allabegisë, and tekkes of "Bilbili" in Vleshë, Boravjan, Brezhdan, Tomin, Peshkopi, and Illicë.



Activities of Dibra Folk Festival (Oda Dibrane)

**Cultural activities:** Most of cultural activities are organized in the city of Peshkopi. However, participants are from all communes of the region. Some of most important annual cultural activities include: Dibra Oda (Oda Dibrane), Harvest Feast (Festa e të Vjelave), Cherry Feast (Festa e Qershisë), Skenderbeg Birthday (Ditlindja e Skenderbeut), Saint Cole Day (dita e Shën Kollit), Pasture Feast (Festa e Bjeshkës), and Drini Feast (Festa e Drinit).

### **Type of tourism:**

Different business enterprises are established in the Deshati mountain range region also including curative, cultural, ethnographic, historic, mountainous, river, adventure, religious, and entertainment aspects. All villages have coffee bars. Guest houses are already established in some villages that, however, are facing difficulties in their functioning. The area is covered by the signal of cellular telephone companies and main television stations as well as distribution of major newspapers. There are no organized activities targeting tourists in communes. Infrastructure is poor and road signs to orient potential tourists are limited. IN rural areas, though there are water resources, water supply according to standards is limited.

### **Education and health:**

In the Deshati mountain range region, there are established some important educational institutions such as the “Aleksandër Mojsiu” Dibër university and several high and nine-year schools. In rural areas, in general there are primary and nine-year schools. There is one regional hospital in the city of Peshkopi. There are health centers in each commune and ambulances in each village. However, not all ambulances are equipped with necessary means.



# 5.

## DEVELOPMENT OF TOURISM IN THE DESHATI MOUNTAIN RANGE REGION

### 5.1. Development of tourism in the region

Tourism is underdeveloped but has development potential by providing a specific touristic product. There are important opportunities for the development of tourism in this region based on rich natural and cultural resources. The region can be developed based on the clean and virgin nature, cultural heritage, and traditional hospitality of people thus projecting an image of protection of environment, promotion of local culture, exploration of adventure, and traditional hospitality and traditional cuisine based on bio-products. Visitors of the region can be categorized as follows:

- Most of visitors are Albanians from other regions who come for curative purposes (Peshkopi thermal waters are well-known);
- Many of these visitors are repetitive;
- Average stay varies from 1-2 weeks;
- There are foreign visitors, mainly from Western and Central Europe, who stay several days and are interested in the mountain tourism. Though natural and cultural traditions are strengths of the region, still they do not constitute a motif that is strong enough to attract many foreign visitors.
  - *Since these attractions represent an important factor for the attraction of small market segments, it is necessary to conduct proper marketing and develop a relevant and adequate touristic product.*

All visitors stay in hotels of Peshkopi. There are 7 hotels with round 350 beds. Hotels are small and owned by local businesses. The average accommodation capacity of hotels in the region is round 20 rooms per hotel. They have a moderate level of 2 stars. Price for a room varies from 2000-3000 ALL/night.

### 5.2. Touristic product in the region

Like any touristic destination, our destination consists of five main components:

- Attractions: elements of destination that offer attraction and motivation for visitors;
- Services: accommodation and food;
- Transport: to and within the destination;
- Other services: shops, health, touristic information, etc; and
- Public infrastructure: touristic paths, touristic signs, etc.

***Attractions of the region can be categorized in:***

- Natural attractions;
- Cultural attractions; and
- Man made attractions.

***Their assessment is presented in the table below (5=excellent, 1=very poor)***

<b><i>Attraction</i></b>	<b><i>Evaluation</i></b>	<b><i>Comments</i></b>
Natural attractions	Landscape/natural beauty	5 Primary attraction, charming, unique
	Mountains and hills	4 Visual pleasure, limited accommodation
	Fauna and flora	4 Potential for special interest tourism
Cultural attractions	Archeology	2 Unused potential
	History	3 Unused potential
	Music/ handmade, handicrafts	3 Unused potential
	handmade, handicrafts	2 Unused potential
Man made attractions	Urban areas	2 Need for further development
	Entertainment/recreation	2 Insufficient for the foreign and domestic market
	Agro-tourism	3 Limited and under development

### 5.3. Segments of touristic market and challenges

The present touristic market for the region is mainly the domestic market—people using Peshkopi thermal waters and participating in traditional cultural and other activities—and the foreign market—a limited number of visitors who have special interests such as nature lovers and hikers/alpinists and are increasingly interested in exploring the region. These market segments have an increasing tendency. Increased number of visitors have resulted in an increased number of accommodation facilities—hotels and guest houses. However, it is identified as a need the development of guest houses in villages. With a tendency for more than one day visits, the competition among hotels/guest houses to attract visitors is increasing. Main market segments are presented in the table below:

<b><i>Market segmentation</i></b>	<b><i>Present situation</i></b>	<b><i>Potential</i></b>
Curative vocations/traditional (long)	Important	Increasing
Mountain recreation/nature (long)	Limited	Increasing
Traditional activities (short)	Average	Increasing
Special interest activities	Limited	Increasing

After the traditional curative vocations, there is a good perspective regarding mountain and special interest tourism including exploration of nature, cultural heritage, and special traditional events.

### 5.4. Analysis of touristic values and problems

Below, there is summary of touristic values and problems according to:

1. Touristic product (touristic attraction)
2. Touristic services (and traditional Dibra hospitality)
3. Touristic infrastructure
4. Touristic promotion and
5. Local government

	<b>VALUES</b>	<b>PROBLEMS</b>
<b>1. TOURISTIC PRODUCT</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Natural resources</li> <li>• Thermal waters of Peshkopi that are very curative and attract round 5000 visitors every year (Llixha of Peshkopisë)</li> <li>• Cold Water of Vleshës</li> <li>• Natural monuments</li> <li>• Pocesti Waterfall</li> <li>• Burovika of Bugjinec</li> <li>• Bellovë township</li> <li>• Lake of Gramë</li> <li>• Black Lake</li> <li>• Proper landscape</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improper secondary roads</li> <li>• Unclear land property from the legal point of view</li> <li>• Insufficient funding by local government</li> <li>• Limited experience regarding tourism development</li> <li>• Insufficient lobbying at relevant institutions/organizations</li> <li>• He Committee for Mountain Tourism is not active</li> <li>• Improper urban waste management</li> <li>• No management of touristic values (guidelines, maintenance, etc.).</li> <li>• Limited protection and promotion of regional resources</li> </ul>
<b>2. TOURISTIC SERVICES AND DIBRA HOSPITALITY</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Curative/thermal water services</li> <li>• Dibra hospitality—tradition regarding treating visitors</li> <li>• Traditional evens/celebrations (Spring Day, 6 May, Drini River Feast, Diber Oda, Summer Mountain Pasture Celebrations, Flowers Feast, Saint George Feast, Nevrus, Bairam, Skanderbeg Birthday.)</li> <li>• Traditional fairs of local products (Cherry--summer, harvest—autumn)</li> <li>• Traditional cuisine and cooking based on bio-products</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Standards regarding services in hotels</li> <li>• Human resources capacity</li> <li>• Infrastructure that do not support development of touristic potential</li> <li>• Touristic tracks without proper infrastructure/sign posts</li> <li>• Limited touristic information</li> <li>• Limited financial resources</li> <li>• Limited promotion of natural food products</li> <li>• Moving away from the cultural tradition</li> <li>• Moving away from the traditional cuisine</li> <li>• Moving away from the traditional artisanal products</li> </ul>

<p><b>3. TOURISTIC INFRASTRUCTURE</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Existence of traditional houses that can be guest houses for tourists</li> <li>• Functional Museum in Peshkopi</li> <li>• Office of Touristic Information</li> <li>• Web pages of Regional Council and Municipality of Peshkopi</li> <li>• Touristic operators offering first packages for tourists</li> <li>• Total coverage by cellular telephone companies</li> <li>• Underway investments (Arberi Road)</li> <li>• Here are books and other documents about the history and traditions of the region</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No business culture about touristic services</li> <li>• Museum is not properly systemized and staffed (for example, there is no guide/cicerone)</li> <li>• Touristic guides are amateurs</li> <li>• Low effectiveness and efficiency of Office of Touristic Information</li> <li>• Information about touristic and historical resources is not consistent in different touristic packages</li> <li>• Updating web pages with current information</li> </ul>
<p><b>4. TOURISTIC PROMOTION</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Touristic Information Office</li> <li>• Leaflets</li> <li>• Touristic maps (web site)</li> <li>• Tourism fairs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Insufficient touristic information</li> <li>• Limited touristic packages</li> <li>• Limited cooperation among Local Government Units relating to tourism development</li> <li>• Touristic operators almost inexistent</li> </ul>
<p><b>5. LOCAL GOVERNANCE</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attention of local and central government</li> <li>• Local willingness for cooperation and partnerships</li> <li>• Funding availability (cooperation agreements)</li> <li>• Cross-border twinning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Out-dated development plans</li> <li>• Lack of annual action plans</li> <li>• Insufficient funds for tourism development</li> <li>• policies that are not clear and implementable become obstacle for the development of local tourism</li> <li>• Insufficient structures and human resources that do not have the required capacity</li> <li>• Reciprocal lack of trust between local and central government</li> </ul>

### 5.5. Analysis of the environment regarding tourism development

The table below presents the analysis of environment—internal and external—regarding the development of tourism:

	<b>STRENGTHS</b>	<b>WEAKNESSES</b>
<b>INTERNAL ENVIRONMENT</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Favorable geographical position (mountainous and hilly landscape, rivers and torrents)</li> <li>• Natural resources (water resources also including thermal waters, forests, pastures, etc.)</li> <li>• Increased interest of people to live in the region</li> <li>• Favorable climate</li> <li>• Existence of touristic operators (hotels, touristic agencies)</li> <li>• Rich history (castles, churches, mosques, national hero—Skanderbeg, etc.)</li> <li>• Cultural activities (Dibra Oda –“Oda dibrane”, Spring Day, etc.)</li> <li>• Ethnography (traditional customs)</li> <li>• Young population (labor force, people with initiative, entrepreneurs, educated youth)</li> <li>• Bio-products (fruits and vegetables, etc.)</li> <li>• Hospitality</li> <li>• Traditional dishes</li> <li>• Hard working people</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public services: health services—ambulances’ readiness to serve; public safety—there were some negative cases; environment—improper waste disposal and collection.</li> <li>• Touristic services: limited knowledge and skills regarding touristic/consumer services; limited human capacity relating to tourism development; decreased importance of traditional cuisine; traditional cultural activities are not properly identified and documented and their importance is decreasing.</li> <li>• Ownership/responsibility on tourism development: local government is not sufficiently oriented to look at natural and cultural resources as very important for the development of tourism; lack of cooperation among local actors and lack of shared responsibility about regional activities/development; low awareness level of community regarding importance and potential for the development of tourism.</li> <li>• Promotion: insufficient identification of natural, cultural, and historical values, traditional cuisine, etc.; human resources are not assessed and promoted.</li> <li>• Geographical location: distance from Tirana.</li> <li>• Distance from communes/villages to the city of Peshkopi.</li> </ul>
	<b>OPPORTUNITIES</b>	<b>THREATS</b>
<b>EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lobbying at state institutions for public services</li> <li>• Existence of regional strategy including tourism as a main component</li> <li>• Opportunities for cross-border projects</li> <li>• Some LGUs work in the field of tourism development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improper implementation of national, regional, and local strategies.</li> <li>• Insufficient funds for tourism development</li> <li>• Partial decentralization of competencies at local level</li> <li>• Indirect functions relating to health and education</li> <li>• National and local elections</li> <li>• Legislation of land ownership</li> </ul>

# 6.

## VISION, GOALS AND STRATEGIES FOR THEIR ACHIEVEMENT

The Deshati LAG's vision for the Deshati mountain range region is "Employment, wellbeing, sustainable social, economic, and cultural development." Sustainable development of tourism is considered essential for the materialization of this vision. LAG has developed main goals of the strategy including:

1. ***Increasing the importance of tourism for the local economy; and***
2. ***Improving social and cultural conditions and quality of life for inhabitants of the region.***

Based on the analysis of the region, it has been concluded that tourism, though still in its first steps, can be transformed into an important sector that contributes in the economic and social development of the region. Such transformation would be realized through the following strategies:

1. ***Maintaining and increasing the number of domestic visitors and attracting foreign visitors;***
2. ***Increasing expenses of visitors during each visit; and***
3. ***Diversifying the touristic market and product.***

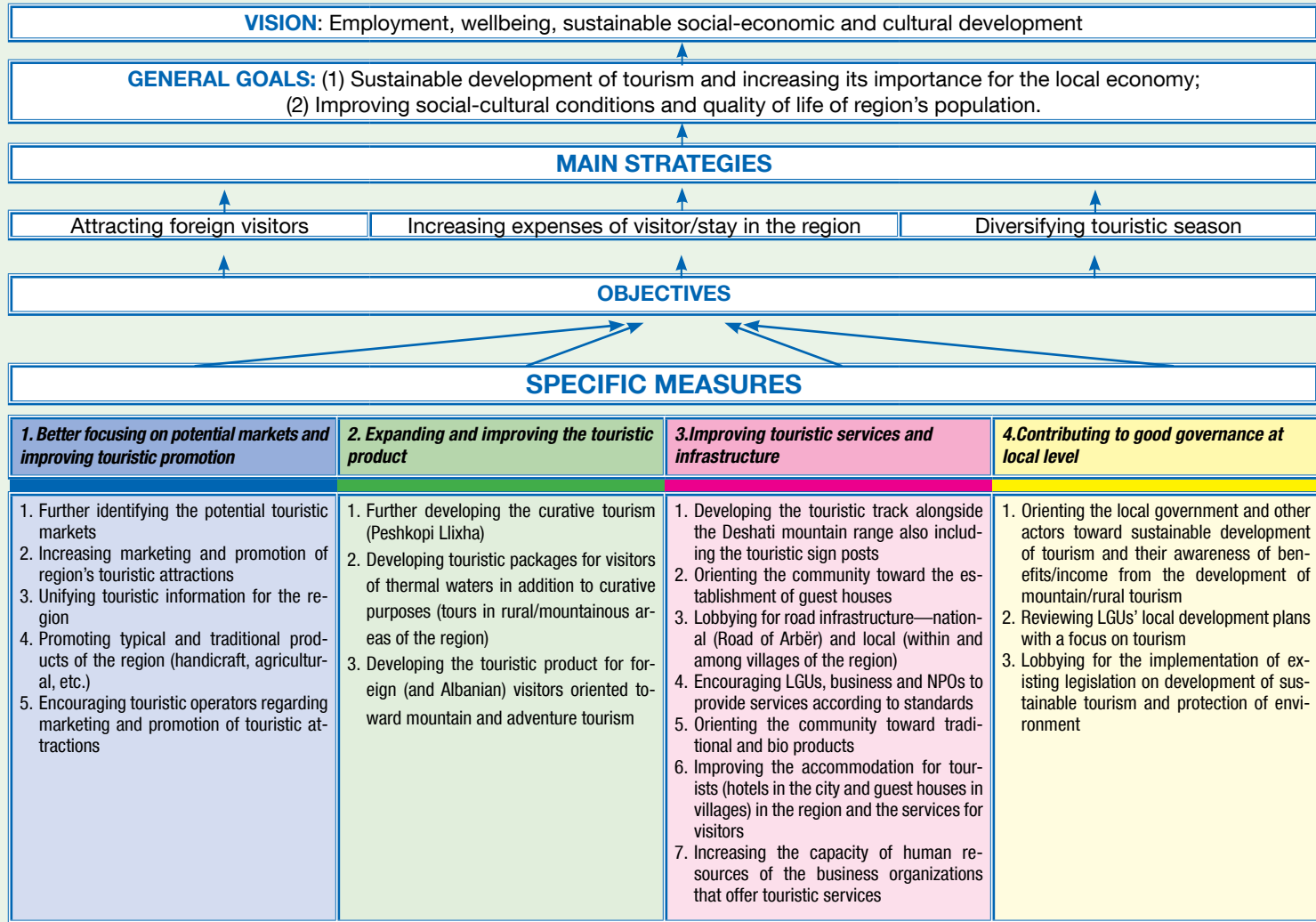
While the curative tourism and cultural heritage will continue to be the main attractions, the touristic market for the region can include foreign and domestic tourists attracted by the nature and mountains. The region has a potential to become a destination for individuals and groups that love mountains, exploration, adventure, mountain/rural life and culture, and new experiences. In this context, new touristic products and experiences should be developed and promoted thus enriching region's attractiveness and adding reasons for people to visit. Moreover, it is necessary to invest in touristic infrastructure and services thus establishing improved standards with an attractive quality/price ratio. Also, curative tourists should be enabled to explore mountainous/rural areas of the region through short organized tours.

**Specific objectives and main measures to achieve them are presented below:**

<p><b>1. Better focus on potential markets and improving touristic promotion</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Identifying further potential touristic markets</li> <li>2. Promoting region's touristic attractions</li> <li>3. Unifying touristic information</li> <li>4. Encouraging touristic operators regarding marketing and promotion</li> <li>5. Promoting region's traditional products (agricultural, handicraft, etc.)</li> </ol>
<p><b>2. Expanding and improving touristic product</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Further development of curative tourism (Peshkopi thermal waters)</li> <li>2. Development of touristic tours for curative tourists (tours in mountainous/rural areas of the region)</li> <li>3. Development of the touristic product for foreign visitors who are interested in mountain and adventure tourism</li> </ol>
<p><b>3. Improving touristic infrastructure and services</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Improvement of the touristic track alongside Deshati mountain range also including the touristic information signs</li> <li>2. Orienting the community of the region toward establishing guest houses</li> <li>3. Lobbying for improvement of the road infrastructure—national (Arberi Road) and local (within and among villages)</li> <li>4. Encouraging LGUs, NPOs, and businesses to deliver services according to standards</li> <li>5. Orienting the community of the region toward traditional and bio products</li> <li>6. Improving accommodation for tourists (hotels in the city and guest houses in villages) in the region</li> <li>7. Developing the capacity of people and businesses that are involved in the provision of touristic services</li> </ol>
<p><b>4. Contributing in the good local governance</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Increasing the awareness of local government and business about the benefits/income from the development of mountain/rural tourism</li> <li>2. Lobbying for the sustainable development of tourism and implementation of current legislation relating to sustainable local and tourism development and protection of environment.</li> <li>3. Reviewing local development plans focusing on development of tourism and orienting local government and other local actors toward tourism development</li> </ol>

The diagram in the next page present the vision, general goals, strategies, objectives, and specific measures articulated by the Deshati Local Action Group for the sustainable development of tourism in the Deshati mountain range region.





# 7.

## SPECIFIC MEASURES FOR THE ACHIEVEMENT OF OBJECTIVES

<b>1. Better focus on potential markets and improving touristic promotion</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.1. Identifying further potential touristic markets</li> <li>1.2. Promoting region's touristic attractions</li> <li>1.3. Unifying touristic information</li> <li>1.4. Encouraging touristic operators regarding marketing and promotion</li> <li>1.5. Promoting region's traditional products (agricultural, handicraft, etc.)</li> </ol>
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### Measure 1.1. Further identifying the potential touristic markets

The market strategy will aim at increasing income from tourism through increased average spending for visit by an increased number of visitors and attracting an optimal number of visitors from main touristic markets. The market strategy should address the increasing competition by other regions in Albania that have similar characteristics for development of mountain tourism. Location of the Deshati mountain range region on both countries—Macedonia and Albania—and cross-border cooperation constitutes a competitive advantage for the region together with its immense natural, cultural, and historical heritage. Main segments with which the region can compete based on its potential and improvement of touristic product includes:

<b>Domestic market</b>	<b>Foreign market</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Traditional curative vocations</li> <li>• Cultural activities</li> <li>• Events and meetings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alpinism</li> <li>• Hiking;</li> <li>• Short exploration visits;</li> <li>• History and culture relating activities;</li> </ul>

Since competition for these segments is increasing, it is important that the region competes based on its competitive advantages relating to natural and cultural/historical heritage. Local public institutions that deal with the development of tourism should prioritize these segments to achieve the objectives of diversified touristic market and product and better use of the product.

### ***Measure 1.2. Increasing marketing and promotion of region's touristic attractions***

Achievement of the objectives of tourism development in the region will be largely conditioned by the image that will be projected in the country and beyond. Promotion of the region's image will require for a sustainable and creative marketing, followed by necessary strategy and promotional techniques. Region's marketing will include a series of interventions that will help achieve sector's objectives and address issues and tendencies of development within the challenging touristic market. The recommended strategy is to create a demand that can be guaranteed through clear focus on improvement of competitive capacity, region's positioning, and better segmentation of the touristic product vis a vis specific markets.

The region Korab-Deshat represent one of best areas in Albania for mountain tourism and it is positioned within the segment of the domestic market competing with other regions such as Thethi, Valbona, etc. Region's positioning requires for the projection of a number of attractions that will be motivating regarding attraction of new segments of the market. Projection of these attractions that will give the destination its identity is one of main challenges.

#### ***Attractions include:***

- Nature, mountains, pastures, forests, lakes, landscape;
- Attractions for visitors of thermal waters;
- Touristic tours including historical attractions and manmade attractions.

#### ***Improvement of the image relates to:***

- Cultural attractions inherited from the past;
- A wide range of "things to see and things to do";
- Rich mountainous/rural landscape; and
- Proper accommodation for foreign visitors.

Awareness campaigns relating to destination in the domestic and foreign market will gradually scale up promoting a wide range of motivations and entertaining products. TV is an important tool for the creation and promotion of the image but expensive. Other channels for promotion such as Internet will be used to communicate the touristic diversity offered by the region to potential markets. In this context, an interactive web site, also linked with other web sites, will be developed as a priority.

Communication forms will be addresses by describing the experience relating to the product and the destination.

### ***Measure 1.3. Unifying touristic information for the region***

Improvements in touristic marketing and promotion will be based on unification of the touristic information. Different promotional materials are developed by different local and other actors that are active in the area of tourism development. The analysis has also identified the need for unification, especially regarding: Unifying the information on the region in order to avoid any inaccuracy and conflicting information; and Unifying the information included in promotional materials developed at regional and/or national level and beyond.

### ***Measure 1.4. Promoting typical and traditional products of the region (handicraft, agricultural, etc.***

The Deshati mountain range region is well-known for its typical and traditional agricultural, livestock, artisanal product and traditional cuisine. Their better inclusion in the touristic packages would significantly increase region's touristic attraction. Their promotion in the framework of touristic promotion is very important.

### ***Measure 1.5. Encouraging touristic operators regarding marketing and promotion of touristic attractions***

Participation of touristic operators in marketing and promotion of touristic attractions of the region is another important element for the promotion of touristic attractions. Marketing and promotion initiatives should include providers of the product, accommodation facilities, and touristic operators. They should also participate in national events.

**2. Expanding and improving touristic product**

- 2.1. Further development of curative tourism (Peshkopi thermal waters)
- 2.2. Development of touristic tours for curative tourists (tours in mountainous/rural areas of the region)
- 2.3. Development of the touristic product for foreign visitors who are interested in mountain and adventure tourism

**Measure 2.1. Further developing the curative tourism (Peshkopi Lixha)**

In this context, it is important to pay attention to measures to increase the number of visitors through:

- Improving the infrastructure relating to thermal waters facilities; and
- Improving the conditions relating to accommodation and food for visitors of thermal waters (hotels and guest houses).



*Guest House for curative tourists (Hotel "Alpin")*



*Open Thermal Water, Peshkopi*



*Lixha Complex, Peshkopi*

**Measure 2.2. Developing touristic packages for visitors of thermal waters in addition to curative purposes (tours in rural/mountainous areas of the region)**

In order to increase visitors' satisfaction and therefore their spending per visit and replication of their visits, it is important that their stay at thermal waters facilities be complemented with other attractions. In this framework, touristic operators can organize different tours to enable visitors of thermal waters to know natural and cultural resources of the region.

***Measure 2.3. Developing the touristic product for foreign (and Albanian) visitors oriented toward mountain and adventure tourism***

Implementation of several specific concepts is essential for the success of product strategy. These concepts include:

- Touristic experiences (“things to see and do by tourists”);
- Motives for visiting the region that should be tempting, especially for the foreign markets;
- Interpretation and presentation of region’s natural and cultural heritage; and
- Existence of accommodation facilities acceptable by the market.

The most important aspect of a destination for the foreign visitor is determined by attractions that encourage him to visit. The challenge the region is facing relates to ensuring a series of attractions that are suitable to solicit future tourists from main targeted markets. The region needs to show strong reasons why others should visit. These reasons should be clearly transmitted to foreign as well as Albanian tourists. It is important to effectively transmit the message that the region offers a sufficient number of evident attractions that can draw the attention of visitors and make them visit during their stay in Albania. Consequently, local authorities and business will improve the competitive position in the framework of a market that is potentially increasing but also selective. Another gap in the context of attractions is that the region poorly presents its immense natural and cultural heritage to a market that highly appreciates these elements as important motif to visit.

*Mountain of Korab*



**"Strong" attractions:**

Mountain tourism and guest houses in villages.



*Guest houses and characteristic roads in Peshkopi*



*Rabdisht village, Melan*



*(Kulla e Zunës), Sohodoll*



*Typical guest room*



***Regarding "soft attractions" that use existing resources and do not need significant investments, we can mention:  
Historical objects; thematic events—cultural, traditional, etc.;  
Fairs of typical products; and Traditional cuisine served  
in a traditional way.***



*Shën Dimitri Church*



*Mosque of Allabegisë*





*Traditional chicken dish*



*Traditional cooking in Diber*



It is important that the region continues to organize traditional cultural and social events. Future positioning on already existing events should be supported by necessary investments in infrastructure and management. Moreover, it is important to organize events in villages of the region because they can provide a better focus on region's culture and traditions that might be very interesting to visitors and enrich the destination. The calendar of activities should:

- Offer cultural, social, sportive themes that enrich the positive image of the destination/region;
- Develop in a way that the event is unique and presents national importance;
- Be attractive for potential sponsors;
- Generate more overnight stay by the foreign and Albanian visitors.

<b>3. Improving touristic infrastructure and services</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>3.1. Improvement of the touristic track alongside Deshati mountain range also including the touristic information signs</li><li>3.2. Orienting the community of the region toward establishing guest houses</li><li>3.3. Lobbying for improvement of the road infrastructure—national (Arberi Road) and local (within and among villages)</li><li>3.4. Encouraging LGUs, NPOs, and businesses to deliver services according to standards</li><li>3.5. Orienting the community of the region toward traditional and bio products</li><li>3.6. Improving accommodation for tourists (hotels in the city and guest houses in villages) in the region</li><li>3.7. Developing the capacity of people and businesses that are involved in the provision of touristic services</li></ol>
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Engagement of the public and private sector and partnership between them is essential for the development of the touristic infrastructure and services and development of the Deshati mountain range region as touristic destination.

***Measure 3.1. Improvement of the touristic track alongside the Deshati mountain range region as well as the respective touristic signs***

Infrastructure affects the touristic product especially when its problems are obvious. The Strategy that encourages increased movement of visitors and foresees development of mountain and rural tourism requires for investments in the touristic infrastructure and signs.

- Signs – should be developed in a holistic and integrated manner based on international touristic standards. At present, touristic signs are underdeveloped and do not encourage development of tourism in the region.
- Paths/tracks for pedestrians – tracks, approaching most important attractions should be regulated and integrated in order to enable visitors have best impressions and experiences.

Confirming and improving the touristic track alongside the mountain range that extends in Albania and Macedonia by installing necessary orienting and describing signs would be important for the development of tourism in this region. The information stands should be placed alongside the touristic track of the Deshati mountain range region also including the cross border point between Albania and Macedonia (Bllate). The touristic signs system should be developed in cooperation with responsible public institutions.

***Measure 3.2. Orienting the community toward establishment of guest houses***

In order to meet the needs of tourists interested in mountain tourism, it is necessary to establish guest houses in villages of the Deshati mountain range region. These guest houses would be attractive if they are conceptualized based on the Dibra tradition regarding design and accommodation as well as cuisine. These characteristics complemented by the Dibra hospitality would increase region's attractiveness and tourists' motivation to visit the region. Therefore, diversity and attraction would be added to their visit in the region. In this context, Deshati LAG will identify potential guest houses in the region and will develop projects to transform them into functional guest houses. Also, it will organize activities for the training of households of these guest houses. It will facilitate households' application for funding to potential donors.

***Measure 3.3. Lobbying for better national (Arberi Road) and local (within and among villages) road infrastructure.***

Construction of the Arberi Road would significantly increase the touristic potential of the region through enabling better access of visitors and, therefore, increased number of visitors. Improving the roads that connect Peshkopi with communes and villages of the region would also encourage development of the tourism in the region. Deshati LAG will advocate and lobby for road infrastructure at central and local institutions and will contribute to other initiatives and coalitions established to advocate and lobby for an improved infrastructure in the region.

### ***Measure 3.4. Encouraging LGUs, business, and NPOs regarding provision of services according to standards***

LGUs as well as business organizations and NPOs that are active in the area of tourism development will be encouraged to establish and implement standards relating to touristic infrastructure and services. In this context, standards will be identified and presented to the local institutions that are responsible for their establishing and implementation as well as to other organizations that are active in the tourism development.

### ***Measure 3.5. Orienting the community toward traditional and bio products***

Dibra in general and the Deshati mountain range region in particular are well-known for their traditional and bio products. Their extensive and consistent use in touristic packages would be one of the main attractions of the region that should be maintained and developed further. In this context, Deshati LAG will work with producers and accommodation and food facilities for extensive use of these products. The traditional cooking of healthy bio products of the area avoiding the industrialized and standardized food would constitute another competitive advantage of the area also based on the very favorable soil, climate, and water conditions.

Maintaining and developing further the traditional artisanal products of the area is another important direction that would increase the region's attractiveness. In this context, LAG will intensively work with producer groups (women and other) that focus on handicraft and artisanal products.

### ***Measure 3.6. Improving accommodation conditions and services for tourists (hotels in the city and guest houses in villages) in the mountain range region***

The region faces specific challenges relating to the quality of accommodation for tourists. The main challenge is lack of compatibility between existing accommodation facilities and future market needs, especially needs of foreign visitors. In this context, there are two main considerations:

- Improving accommodation in city hotels with a focus on tradition relating to design of rooms and restaurants as well as quality of stay and service.
- Creating appropriate conditions for the accommodation of foreign tourists in guest houses based on tradition as well as ensuring basic conditions relating to running water and hygiene.

**Measure 3.7. Increasing human resources capacity of business that offer tourism services**

The quality of touristic experience considerably depends on behavior of employees that interact with visitors. The challenge that touristic destinations face is to ensure consistency regarding standards and services offered for visitors. Trained staff is an important resource for the development of tourism. Future development of tourism faces several challenges including improving the service, increasing the number of trained staff, dealing with immigration of youth toward big cities, etc. In this context, there are proposed some specific measures such as:

- Need to organize training workshops for region’s business people and management staff of hotels and restaurants focusing on market needs and best practices from competing destinations;
- Need for training of touristic guides and other individuals interested to become touristic guides. Research shows that accurate and interesting information transmitted in a professional way positively influences tourists’ behavior regarding length of stay and amount of money spent during the stay.

<b>4. Contributing in the good governance at local level</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4.1. Increasing the awareness of local government and business about the benefits/income from the development of mountain/rural tourism</li> <li>4.2. Lobbying for the sustainable development of tourism and implementation of current legislation relating to sustainable local and tourism development and protection of environment.</li> <li>4.3. Reviewing local development plans focusing on development of tourism and orienting local government and other local actors toward tourism development</li> </ol>
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**Measure 4.1. Increasing awareness of local government and business regarding income/benefits from development of mountain/rural tourism in the region**

Awareness work with local government and business will focus on:

- Importance of mountain tourism for the local economy and improving income generation and quality of life of region’s population;
- Importance of creating the necessary conditions for the development of mountain/rural tourism (local infrastructure, touristic signs and heir maintenance, touristic information and its updating, protection and preservation of environment, etc.)
- Importance of a proactive attitude of LGUs regarding encouraging and supporting local and central initiatives for the development of mountain/rural tourism.

***Measure 4.2. Lobbying for the sustainable development of tourism and implementation of existing legislation regarding sustainable local and tourism development and protection of environment***

Quality of services is conditioned by the way how they are offered as well as quality and maintenance of environment. Quality and maintenance of environment are closely linked to the development of tourism. From the tourism development perspective, the physical environment is an important factor because it is the environment that is observed and experienced by the visitor. Physical aspects of the environment include:

- Natural landscape (mountains, hills, urban environment);
- Public space, roads, and other assets;
- Historical places and buildings;
- Recreation places;
- Accommodation units; and
- Retail sale network.

Importance of an improved environment for the foreign visitor is increasing. Therefore, it is necessary to find proper planning mechanisms and financial means to realize maintenance, changes and improvement in environment in the areas that are visible to tourists 'eyes. At the same time, it is important to work for an increased environmental awareness of the community, especially students and youth.

Tourism affects land use and development. Sometimes, this impact is negative. It might result in problems with the quality of environment, especially linked to erosion, over exploitation, water pollution, etc. Local authorities should keep these issues in mind to ensure a sustainable tourism development especially during the development of local development and urban plans by municipalities and communes.

Tourism is under continuous transformation. Control over territorial planning will be effective if it is oriented toward environmental protection by establishing proper management of environment and development of touristic prod-

uct. Regarding land use and planning, it is important to take into consideration the following:

- Need for a detailed plan and institutional support to ensure the relevant framework and development of instruments for the generation of employment, development of infrastructure, and offering of services necessary for tourism development;
- Development model for tourism projects would allow for the optimization of the surrounding environment. It can be done by taking into consideration the quality and characteristics of environment as well as distribution of proposed development. The importance of scale, profile, and measure of construction should be taken into consideration in order to avoid damages in the environment;
- Regarding identity, it is important to preserve the authenticity of rural/mountain houses and use of authentic construction materials (stones, stone tiles, surrounding walls, local architecture, etc.).

Regarding needs for the improvement of environment/infrastructure, it is important to develop and implement an effective waste management program. Developing and implementing programs for the improvement of environment in the municipality of Peshkopi and communes of the Deshati mountain range region based on local architecture and aesthetic values should be a priority. The more improved are public assets, more attractive would be for visitors the businesses focusing on tourism.

#### ***Measure 4.3. Review of local development plans by LGUs with a focus on tourism development***

LGUs from the Deshati mountain range region should revise their local development plans with a focus on development of sustainable mountain/rural tourism as an important activity that would generate income for the local economy and, therefore, improve the economic and social situation of local population. These plans should include:

- Promoting natural and cultural resources as well as the traditional hospitality of the region;
- Promoting local/regional identity;
- Stimulating development initiatives regarding the local products in partnership with the private sector;
- Offering services for visitors;
- Protecting environment and promoting initiatives that aim at its protection; and
- Education of local population through relevant awareness programs.



# 8.

## OBJECTIVES AND SPECIFIC MEASURES FOR THE DESHATI LAG MANAGEMENT

1. ***Objective: LAG becomes a successful organization in the realization of its vision and mission in the tourism field. Specific measures include:***
  - 1.1. Increasing the capacity of LAG management and members in specific areas such as project development and management, advocacy and lobbying, etc.
  - 1.2. Establishing an effective internal operating system
  - 1.3. Exploring and carrying out opportunities for the motivation of LAG's management and membership.
  - 1.4. Establishing cooperation agreements with main local actors in the area of tourism development
  
2. ***Objective: Ensuring the LAG's financial sustainability. Specific measures include:***
  - 2.1. Developing a fundraising strategy for Deshati LAG
  - 2.2. Developing project proposals and applying to potential donors
  - 2.3. Generating income from project activities
  - 2.4. Diversifying donor base
  
3. ***Objective: Increasing the public image of Deshati LAG in the region and Albania. Specific measures include:***
  - 3.1. Promoting the Strategy of Tourism Development to different local and central actors (local and central institutions, donors, NPOs, business, etc.)
  - 3.2. Developing and disseminating promotional materials (leaflets, brochures, etc.)
  - 3.3. Promoting Deshati LAG activities in the region, Albania, and beyond

# 9 ACTION PLAN

## A. PROGRAM

Objective 1: Better focusing on potential markets and improving the touristic promotion			
Measure 1.1: Further identification of potential markets			
	Activities	Responsible	Timelines
1.1.1	Conducting studies of similar touristic markets in Albania and the Region (Balkans)	LAG & area experts	2014-2015
1.1.2	Conducting analysis of opportunities existing in the Deshati mountain range region to establish a touristic market that is competitive in Albania and the Region (Balkans).	LAG & area experts	2014-2015
1.1.3	Identifying competitive advantages of the touristic product and potential markets in Albania and the Region (Balkans)	LAG & area experts	2014-2015
1.1.4	Developing recommendations for LGUs, business, and community regarding the touristic orientation	LAG	2014-2015
Measure 1.2: Marketing and promotion of region's touristic attractions			
1.2.1	Workshop with LGU representatives, business, and community representatives focusing on unique forms of marketing of touristic product.	LAG+NPOs	2014- on
1.2.2	Providing technical assistance to business organizations and individuals regarding marketing of touristic products	LAG+ experts	2015
1.2.3	Identifying and promoting best practices in marketing (using TV, web site, etc.)	LAG	October 2014
Measure 1.3: Unifying touristic information			
1.3.1	Collecting materials regarding touristic information about the region	LAG + LGUs + NPOs	April - September 2014
1.3.2	Meetings with interest groups to discuss about accuracy of information and identify recommendations about its unification	LAG	October 2014 - on
1.3.3	Establishing an unified touristic information package	LAG + local actors	March 2015
1.3.4	Maintenance/updating touristic information	LAG	March 2015 - on

	<b>Activities</b>	<b>Responsible</b>	<b>Timelines</b>
	<b>Measure 1.4:</b> Encouraging touristic operators regarding marketing and promotion		
1.4.1	Identifying touristic operators and their needs	LAG	October 2014
1.4.2	Information sessions focusing on marketing and promotion	LAG	October – November 2014
1.4.3	Promoting best practices regarding marketing and promotion	LAG	May 2014 - on
	<b>Measure 1.5:</b> Promoting traditional and bio products of the region		
1.5.1	Developing and publishing promotional materials (leaflets, brochures, etc.)	LAG + Agriculture Department + Local NPOs	September 2014 - on
1.5.2	Dissemination of promotional materials	LAG	October 2014
1.5.3	Enabling participation of local producers in fairs and other events	LAG + Donors	Summer & Autumn
	<b>Specific objective 2:</b> Expanding and improving the touristic product		
	<b>Measure 2.1:</b> Further development of curative tourism (Peshkopi Llixha/Thermal Waters)		
2.1.1	Awareness activities for operators of curative tourism regarding provision of services according to standards	LAG & experts	2014 - on
2.1.2	Encouraging public-private partnerships for the development of curative tourism	LAG & business	2014 - on
2.1.3	Organizing exchange visits among touristic operators in the field of curative tourism in the region.	LAG	2014 - on
2.1.4	Promoting successful practices through LAG activities	LAG	2014 - on
	<b>Measure 2.2:</b> Developing touristic packages for visitors of thermal waters beyond the curative vocations (tours in mountainous/rural areas)		
2.2.1	Technical assistance activities for thermal water related business regarding opportunities for the entertainment of visitors beyond their curative vocations	LAG+business	2014- 2015
2.2.2	Information and support regarding third party services focusing on touristic visits and entertainment	LAG	2014-2015
2.2.3	Assistance for the development of attractive touristic offers	LAG + experts	2014-2015

	Activities	Responsible	Timelines
<b>Measure 2.3:</b> Development of touristic product for foreign visitors interested in mountain and adventure tourism			
2.3.1	Workshops with touristic operators focusing on acknowledgement of natural and cultural resources and how to present them to foreign and domestic tourists	LAG+experts	2014-2015
2.3.2	Encouraging inhabitants of villages alongside the Deshati mountain range region for the development of mountain tourism and establishment of guest houses for visitors	LAG+local government	2014-2015
2.3.3	Lobbying at local government regarding functioning of cultural and historical monuments	LAG	2014-on
2.3.4	Organizing different local and regional events to promote traditional cuisine and specific services of the area	LAG+business+local government	2014-on
<b>Specific objective 3:</b> Improving the touristic infrastructure and services			
<b>Measure 3.1:</b> Development of touristic track alongside the Deshati mountain range region as well as respective touristic signs			
3.1.1	Conducting and assessment of the present situation in the Deshati mountain range region; Assessing needs for the additional touristic sign posts	LAG management & experts	October - December 2014
3.1.2	Conducting meetings with LGUs and interest groups to present findings and discuss about recommendations of assessment studies	LAG management	January February 2015
3.1.3	Developing an action plan regarding improvements in the touristic signs and infrastructure in general	LAG management	February 2015
3.1.4	Developing projects focusing on improvement of infrastructure and touristic signs (sign posts, maps, information plaques, etc.) in cooperation with LGUs and for the implementation of the Action Plan	LAG management, LGUs, External expert	March 2015 on
3.1.5	Projects' implementation; Maintenance of implemented projects (by the community and LGUs)	LAG management & LGUs	May 2015 - on
3.1.6	Meetings/focus groups with community representatives, historians, other local actors regarding unification of touristic information about the region (natural resources, culture, history, traditions).	LAG & local actors	March - September 2014
3.1.7	Presenting information on touristic tracks and touristic potential included in a brochure.	LAG	October - December 2014
3.1.8	Promoting touristic tracks (web page, television, newspaper)	LAG	October 2014 - on

	<b>Activities</b>	<b>Responsible</b>	<b>Timelines</b>
	<b>Measure 3.2: Orienting the community toward establishing guest houses</b>		
3.2.1	Identifying villages and households that can establish guest houses	LAG + LGUs	April - August 2014
3.2.2	Information and orientation meetings with potential households regarding benefits from this business	LAG	April - August 2014
3.2.3	Promoting best practices in Albania, the Balkans, and beyond	LAG + local NPOs + potential donors	June 2014 - on
3.2.4	Establishing a Deshati model regarding touristic product	LAG	October 2014
	<b>Measure 3.3: Lobbying about road infrastructure (Arbëri Road)</b>		
3.3.1	Establishing the Lobbying Group and establishing contacts with stakeholders	LAG	April 2014
3.3.2	Meetings with MPs from the region to involve them in the lobbying process	LAG + Lobbying Group	May 2014
3.3.3	Meetings with line ministries	LAG + Lobbying Group	June - July 2014 - on
3.3.4	Using the media to promote the importance of Arberri Road for the development of tourism and economic development of the region	LAG	April – October 2014 - on
3.3.5	Meetings with LGUs—mayors and heads of councils	LAG	July 2014 - on
3.3.6	Presenting information that affect decisions, priority determination, etc. regarding the development of tourism	LAG + LGUs	September 2014 - on
	<b>Measure 3.4: Encouraging LGUs, business, and NPOs to provide services according to standards</b>		
3.4.1	Establishing the working group and presenting types of services, standards, and experts	LAG, LGUs	September 2014
3.4.2	Information sessions about standards according to types of services	LAG + experts	October 2014 - May 2015
3.4.3	Promoting successful models regarding implementation of standards	LAG + experts	October 2014 - on
3.4.4	Establishing new models regarding standards of services	LAG + experts	April 2014-on
3.4.5	Community awareness of standards of tourism services	LAG	April 2014-on

	Activities	Responsible	Timelines
<b>Measure 3.5: Orienting community toward traditional and bio products</b>			
3.5.1	Identifying people and production groups that produce artisanal products and their needs	LAG and local NPOs	May 2014
3.5.2	Organizing training activities for youth on artisanal products	LAG & experts	January 2015 - on
3.5.3	Enabling participation of artisans in fairs	LAG and local NPOs	Summer/ Autumn (annual fairs)
3.5.4	Promoting best experiences from the country and region	LAG	May – October 2014
<b>Measure 3.6: Improving accommodation for tourists (hotels in the city and guest houses in villages) in the Deshati mountain range region</b>			
3.6.1	Presenting service standards to hotel and guest house operators and their encouraging to implement these standards when serving domestic and foreign tourists	LAG + LGUs + experts	2014 - on
3.6.2	Lobbying at local government regarding running water and clean environment	LAG + LGUs + experts	2014-2016
3.6.3	Technical assistance in establishing the guest house model	LAG & experts	2014-2016
3.6.4	Exchange of experience regarding successful models in the region	LAG	2014-on
<b>Measure 3.7: Increasing the capacity of human resources</b>			
3.7.1	Identifying individuals interested in tourism activity and assessing of their needs	LAG + LGUs	March - July 2014
3.7.2	Training activities for people from the service industry (culinary, hostelry, touristic ethics, management, traditions, etc.)	LAG and area experts	September 2014 – July 2014
3.7.3	Developing a project for the training of people involved in service provision	LAG and LGUs	July - August 2014
3.7.4	Training for touristic guides and training on safety measures	LAG, Police Directorate, NPOs	September 2014 - on

<b>Specific objective 4: Contributing to good governance at local level</b>			
<b>Measure 4.1: Awareness of local government and business regarding income/benefits from the development of mountain/rural tourism</b>			
	<b>Activities</b>	<b>Responsible</b>	<b>Timelines</b>
4.1.1	Meetings with local institutions regarding the importance of tourism development in the region (8 meetings)	LAG	April 2014 - on
4.1.2	Awareness meetings with interest groups in the region	LAG	April 2014 - on
4.1.3	Exchange visits/twinning with Debar (Macedonia)—LGUs, business, and NPOs.	LAG + LGUs + NPOs	At least once per year (in spring)
4.1.4	Lobbying at local government to appoint a contact person for tourism	LAG	April 2014
4.1.5	Lobbying at local government for the establishing of tourist information offices (where they do not exist)	LAG	April - July 2014
<b>Measure 4.2: Lobbying for the sustainable development of tourism and implementation of the existing legislation on sustainable tourism development and environmental protection</b>			
4.2.1	Training workshops for local government units and community regarding existing legislation	LAG + experts	April 2015
4.2.2	Awareness activities targeting responsible institutions regarding implementation of laws	LAG	September 2015
4.2.3	Community awareness and facilitation community participation in monitoring of implementation of laws	LAG	April 2015 - on
4.2.4	Developing leaflets on specific issues of legislation on tourism development and environmental protection	LAG	April 2015
4.2.5	Initiatives to propose changes to improve existing legislation	LAG	September 2015
<b>Measure 4.3: Reviewing LGUs' local development plans focusing on tourism and orientation of local government and other actors toward sustainable tourism development</b>			
4.3.1	Assessment of the action plan (realization, problems faced, etc.)	LAG + LGUs	September - December 2015
4.3.2	Establishing a working group with representatives from local actors (LGUs, community, business, touristic operators, etc.)	LAG	November 2015
4.3.3	Preparatory work for the review of local development plans (meetings, data collection, training)	LAG + LGUs + experts	December 2015 - June 2016
4.3.4	Identifying priorities/intervention plan	LAG + LGUs + experts	July - October 2016

	Activities	Responsible	Timelines
4.3.5	Identifying opportunities for the implementation of plans/realization (grants, projects, business)	LAG + LGUs + experts	September 2016-on
4.3.6	436. Lobbying at LGUs for the allocation of budget for tourism development projects	LAG	September 2016 – on (prior to development of LGU budget)

## B. MANAGEMENT

Objective 1: LAG, a successful organization in the realization of its vision and mission in the tourism field			
Measure 1.1: Increasing the capacity of LAG management and members in specific areas such as project development and management, advocacy and lobbying, etc.			
	Activities	Responsible	Timelines
1.1.1	Identifying the training needs for the LAG members relating to project development and advocacy	LAG	April 2014
1.1.2	Identifying trainers according to training needs and their selection	LAG	2014 – 2015
1.1.3	Training of LAG members in specific areas according to needs	LAG	2014-2015
Measure 1.2: Establishing an effective internal operating system			
1.2.1	Developing a manual of policies and procedures and internal regulation for LAG	LAG	September 2014
1.2.2	Monitoring of the implementation of policies and procedures and their revision/improvement	LAG management	Every two years
Measure 1.3: Exploring and carrying out opportunities for the motivation of LAG's management and membership			
1.3.1	131. Establishing working groups based on skills and experience of LAG members	LAG management	2014 - on
1.3.2	132. Participation of LAG members in activities of other organizations	LAG	2014 - on
1.3.3	133. Organizing promotional activities for LAG staff members with exceptional performance	LAG	2014 - on



	Activities	Responsible	Timelines
	<b>Measure 1.4:</b> Establishing cooperation agreements with main actors in tourism field		
1.4.1	Discussion and identification of cooperation issues with LGUs of the Deshati mountain range region	LAG	2014-on
1.4.2	Drafting cooperation agreements and their approval/signing by parties	LAG	Every year
1.4.3	Monitoring of implementation of cooperation agreements and their revision	LAG	Periodically
	<b>Objective 2:</b> Ensuring financial sustainability of LAG		
	<b>Measure 2.1:</b> Developing a fundraising strategy		
2.1.1	Identifying positive experiences from Albania and Balkans regarding fundraising	LAG + area experts	May 2014
2.1.2	Assessing LAG's opportunities and problems regarding fundraising	LAG	2014 – 2015
2.2.3	Developing a mid-term plan for projects and feasibility of their funding	LAG + area experts	2014-2015
	<b>Measure 2.2:</b> Developing potential projects and prepare for application to different donors		
2.2.1	Establishing the project development team and their updating with calls for proposals	LAG	September 2014
2.2.2	Establishing a data base regarding problems and needs in the tourism development area	LAG	2015 - on
2.2.3	Developing projects according to donor requirements and application to potential donors for their funding	LAG	2015 - on
	<b>Measure 2.3:</b> Generating income from project activities		
2.3.1	Identifying ways for the income generation for LAG	LAG	2015 - on
2.3.2	Exchange of experience with similar organizations regarding fundraising	LAG	2014 – on
2.3.3	Promoting best practices regarding income generation in community	LAG	2014 - on
	<b>Objective 3:</b> Increasing public image of LAG in Albania and the region		
	<b>Measure 3.1:</b> Promoting the strategy of tourism development to different actors such as local government, donors, NPOs, etc		
3.1.1	Dissemination of strategy for tourism development to different local actors	LAG	2014 - on
3.1.2	Organizing meetings with local organizations to introduce them to LAG and its activity	LAG	2014 - on
3.1.3	Organizing cross-border visits to present LAG activities and its future plans	LAG	2014 - on

<b>Measure 3.2.</b> Using different PR materials (leaflets, brochure, publications, touristic guides, etc.) to promote LAG and Tourism development in the region			
3.2.1	Development of the internet page of GLV Deshati and transforming it into an important tool for the promotion of LAG and tourism development in the region	LAG Executive Director	March 2014
3.2.2	Development and printing of leaflet on Deshati LAG	LAG Executive Director	April 2014
3.2.3	Dissemination of promotional materials (Strategy, brochure, leaflet, etc.)	LAG Executive Director	May – September 2014 - on
3.2.4	Updating of the internet page (periodically).	LAG Executive Director	Periodically/ every month
<b>Measure 3.3.</b> Promoting LAG activities in the region and beyond			
3.3.1	Participating in different activities at local and national level	LAG Executive Director	Periodically
3.3.2	Maintaining continuous contacts with LAG established in Debar (Macedonia) and exchanging experience	LAG Executive Director	On-going
3.3.3	Promoting on continuous basis LAG Deshati and its contribution for the development of tourism in the area in the local media	LAG Executive Director	On-going