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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**A JOINT STRATEGY FOR THE PROTECTION AND PROMOTION OF  
CULTURAL HERITAGE AND THE PROMOTION OF CULTURAL TOURISM IN  
THE MUNICIPALITIES OF ELENA,  
BULGARIA AND MEDGIDIA, ROMANIA UNDER  
“CULTURE IN ETERNITY” PROJECT, CODE: ROBG-423**



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A joint strategy for the preservation and promotion of cultural heritage and the promotion of cultural tourism in the municipalities of Elena, Bulgaria and Medgidia, Romania has been developed based on “Culture in Eternity” project - project code ROBG - 423 under Interreg V - A Romania - Bulgaria 2014-2020, Priority Axis 2 Green Region, Specific Objective 2.1 - "Improving the sustainable use of natural and cultural heritage and resources".

The program Interreg V - A Romania - Bulgaria is a program financed by the European Union /the European Regional Development Fund/. The purpose of the program is to develop the border area between the two countries by financing joint projects.

The main purpose of the project “Culture in Eternity” is to preserve, promote and develop the culture of partner municipalities and to be successfully transmitted to the future generations.

The main purpose of the joint strategy is to establish the basis for the development of cultural tourism and to improve the attractiveness of the territories of the project partners - the municipality of Elena, Bulgaria and the municipality of Medgidia, Romania.

Based on an in-depth analysis of the current situation of cultural heritage in the territory of the two municipalities, it has been concluded that a good basis has been created for long-term sustainable and balanced development of the cultural heritage.

The strategy identifies sites and events that are suitable for joint development, as well as their inclusion in the tourist package and a web-based platform for the



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presentation and promotion of cultural heritage in the cross-border region of Elena - Medgidia.

The relevant program documentation at national, regional and municipal level has been taken into account, as well as the specific resource potential of the two municipalities, and the relevant European documents.

**The main tasks and activities that have been accomplished in order to achieve the project objectives are:**

- Analysis of the historical and geographical development of the two municipalities - peculiarities in spatial development;
- Analysis of the regional characteristics of the two regions/ municipalities;
- Spatial distribution of existing cultural sites in both municipalities and description of their status;
- Identification of sites and events that are appropriate for joint development and definition of action steps;
- SWOT analysis on cultural heritage;

**Expected results:** Development of a joint strategy for the preservation and promotion of cultural heritage and the promotion of cultural tourism in the municipalities of Elena, Bulgaria and Medgidia, Romania under the “Culture in Eternity” project.

**The scope** of the joint strategy focuses on the cultural heritage and the areas of its influence on the territories of the two municipalities - Elena and Medgidia.

**The time horizon** is set by 2027 due to the strategy's commitment to the system of planning and management documents of the municipalities and the programs for the



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implementation of the planned projects in the strategic and planning documents financed by the European Structural and Investment Funds.

The development of the Strategy for the Protection and Promotion of the Cultural Heritage takes into account the trends in the development of the territory of the municipality, as well as the envisaged interventions in the existing and forthcoming strategic documents related to the protection of the cultural heritage and its promotion - Strategic documents at national, regional, regional and local level, strategic documents at European level.

**Geographical position, role and place in the National Area:** Elena Municipality is located in the north-central part of Bulgaria and is included in the administrative and territorial borders of Veliko Turnovo District. The territorial structure of Elena municipality borders with the municipalities of Zlataritsa, Veliko Tarnovo, Antonovo, Sliven, Tvarditsa and Gurkovo.

**Geographical position, role and place in the National Area:** Medgidia is a municipal centre in Kostantsa District, Dobrudja, Romania. It is located in the center of the South Dobrudja Plateau /Plateau Medgidia/. There are three settlements in the municipality - the town of Medgidia and the villages Remus Opreanu and Valea Dachilor. The municipality of Medgidia covers an area of 90.17 km<sup>2</sup> / consists of Medgidia and the lands of Remus Opreanu and Valea Dachilor / and is located in the southwestern part of Romania, in the middle of the Dobrudja Plateau. It is 200 km east of the capital city of Bucharest, 39 km west of the Constanța town and municipality of the same name, 144 km from Tulcea and 39 km north of WamaVeke.



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**Historical development:** The geographical characteristics and the spatial development of the settlement structure in the municipality of Elena are the prerequisite for the settlement of different civilizations in the territory of the ancient times. In this context the cultural heritage of the area is the result.

At the heart of the formation of the spatial structure in the municipality are the cultural corridors and the cultural stratum, which express the sustainability in time of cultural and urban interconnections and permanently distinct directions.

The National Concept for Spatial Development of the Republic of Bulgaria assesses cultural stratification. The municipality of Elena falls into the "central northern cultural space" according to the distribution of the territory of the country with concentration of cultural values.

The **central northern cultural space** is represented by linearly situated cultural values from two or more historical periods with identical stylistic and semantic features combined with natural and ethnographic features. It include generalized cultural stratification on thematic topics - "Bulgarian Middle Ages IX-XIV centuries", "Late Bulgarian Middle Ages" XVII-XIX centuries, "Byzantium", "Christian Art", "Traditional architecture, traditions and customs".

The old northbound lanes are also identified by the Southeast European Cultural Corridors Concept, which represent cultural destinations with the potential for spatial and socio-economic development.

The cultural trends and the identity of the municipality express the resilience in time of urban interconnections and the permanently segregated urban axes. Cultural trends connect important elements of cultural heritage and traditions that reflect events or periods of Bulgarian and European history. They show the processes of dynamics in the spatial development of the urban network.



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**Eastern Trans - Balkan road** - crosses Southeast Europe in a north-south direction. For centuries it has connected the northern parts of Europe with Via Egnatia and the Aegean Sea, passing through Romania, Bulgaria and Greece. To the north, the road connects with the large European ViaRagia Route /the Road of the Kings / to Lviv / Ukraine / and crosses Europe from Kiev to Santiago de Compostela.

The road links the main monastery centers in Southeastern Europe in a north-east direction. The corridor goes south to Sveta Gora, in Tarnovo, and the Rhodope Mountains.

The Eastern Trans-Balkan Road passes through three mountain ranges with a specific appearance - the Carpathians, the Balkan Mountains /the Balkans / and the Rhodopes. These sheltered places have preserved the original islands of time - traditional urban agglomerations with preserved Balkan architecture.

The heritage from different epochs symbolizes the lasting permanence in the time of the settlement structure and is the basis for future development, following historical patterns and having a distinctive identity, which shows the peculiarities of the spatial development of the municipality.

Elena Municipality has a rich cultural heritage that has left a lasting mark. It is the result of a buildup of past civilizations and eras that carry specific memory and place identity (geniusloci).

### **Elena Municipality /Historical flashback**

Elena valley was inhabited as early as the Stone Age - 6000 BC, as evidenced by the stone axes, hammers and flint tips for arrows which were found.

During the Roman rule an important road passed through it from Nikopolis ad Istrum to Constantinople. Its remains are preserved. Archaeological remains from that time were found during the construction of the church in the village of Maryan -



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GOVERNMENT OF BULGARIA



the foundations of an old temple, decorated with mosaics and marble columns, capitals from the 5th-6th centuries, etc. Remains of ancient fortresses are found at strategic sites along the border of the Elena Basin, indicating that it was a well-protected area.

The development of the territory in question over the next few historical eras is relatively scarce. The first written records of Elena's existence date back to the mid-15th century (probably around 1430) / in a Turkish document - an inventory of the timars in Nikopol, where the settlement is registered as Mezralstrum Iliana/ a deserted, dilapidated village with its land /.

According to a written notice from the late 15th century, the village of Elena was recorded in the timar of Ismail, a gulam-ymir /palace / with 61 families. Its population is guarding the passage and is exempt from all extra taxes. Like all woodcutters' settlements, so did the residents of Elena, who had to guard with weapons the merchants and caravans travelling through the mountain passes.

From the register of the Tarnovo kaaza /an administrative unit, district/ from around 1700, it can be seen that 579 people were registered in Elena, which shows that by that time Elena had already become a crowded settlement. The significant number of the population in this sparsely fertile area can be explained only by economic activity, which would give the settlement an urban appearance. Indeed, "until 1860 the village and its surroundings were ruled by a subash /a police chief/, and after this date a midyurin /a deputy chief/ was appointed in Elena. In that way the settlement its urban status was recognized "/ Dichev M.," Material for the history of the town of Elena "/.

By the middle of the 18th century the first craftsman shops in Elena were opened. Tax buying and related usury, which was the first economic basis for the



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GOVERNMENT OF BULGARIA



emergence of Chorbadzhi families, quickly gained popularity. At that time the development of handicraft production began. A strong impetus in this regard was given by the reforms held in the Turkish Empire /in 1826, 1834 and 1839 /, as well as the stopping of the Kurdzhali invasions. In the town of Elena the following were rapidly developed: tertiary, pottery, goldsmith, weaving, manufacturing of homespun, painting, furriery, knife-making, carpentry, masonry and others. The relative stability in the empire predisposed to the development of the emigration; people started seeking employment opportunities in the more remote corners of the empire. Indicators for the improved economic condition of the population are the houses built during this period /1830-1860/ in the town of Elena and the smaller settlements in the municipality, which are considered the best examples of the architecture before the Liberation.

During the fighting in the Liberation War, some of the settlements in the municipality were affected. The most affected were the village of Bebrovo, which was burnt down and the village of Maryan, which was almost completely burnt. About 40 houses were burnt down in Elena.

The historical development defines a significant part of the distinctive features of the municipality of Elena. Various historical images shape the local identity, and thus make the knowledge of the history and the preservation of the cultural heritage a priority for the local development. The characteristics of Elena Municipality can be highlighted through the presentation, promotion and sound management of cultural heritage. As a result of centuries-old historical development, today Elena and the region have a wide variety of sites of cultural and national importance.

### **Medgidia Municipality / Historical Retrospection**



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The first traces of settlements in the region of the Karasu Valley, where Medgidia is located, date back to the Neolithic (approximately 5,000 years ago). In 1957-1958 a manual grain mill was found which had served the local population. This shows that, on the one hand, territory beyond the borders of today's city was already inhabited, and on the other, agriculture was the main occupation of the population in the valley. The two mills found near charred cereals, saddle querns, flint blades, as well as several fishing net weights indicate the production of significant quantities of cereals and the existence of different local activities related to it/ cultivation, production, processing - grinding and fishing.

Also another indisputable proof of the existence of a tribal community in the Karasu Valley dates back to the Neolithic period. That community had developed a unified culture along with their everyday tasks.

There is archaeological and documentary data on a Roman kastrum built in the area of the settlement during Antiquity.

During feudalism the area was a settlement dating from the late IX till the beginning of the X century, traces of it are: glass pieces, pits and ceramic materials, including several tombs of limestone blocks.

The settlement was first mentioned in geographical maps from the 15th century under the name Kara-su /Black water/, after it was conquered by the Ottomans. Muslims began colonising Dobrudja in the 15th century.

The first clearer description of the fair is from 1597 - it consists of "seven neighborhoods, 2,500 people and an annual income of 25,113 shares." The first description of the "city of Karasu" was made by the traveler Evliya Chelebi in 1653. "Since the city is in Dobrudja, it is always without water. Each spring, the Danube flows over and then black lakes are formed, where the name of the city comes from



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. It consists of three neighborhoods, with a thousand houses covered with boards. Water comes from the Danube Canal. There is a small, beautiful mosque, a khan, a bathroom, seven schools, seven water depots, two cafes, two paint shops and 40-50 other shops. "

The fair was formalized by Sultan Mahmud in 1752 and contributed to the development of the village. Karasu experienced a decline in its development after the Russian-Turkish War of 1828-29, as its population dropped dramatically. The revival of the city began after the Crimean War. Before 1850, the town was a well-known grain market.

On September 2, 1856, the settlement formed after the Tatar migrations was named after Sultan Abdul Magid. Then the Sultan signed a decree to create a settlement. Over the next twenty years, many new houses were built, the Abdul Magid Mosque, a Turkish bath, and the Said Pasha stone bridge, and from there Karasu Lake opened the first Romanian school, mosque, school and konak /an administrative building/.

On the Panagirului hill, the ruling Ottomans maintained the site where shops and barracks were built. Merchants from across the empire exhibited their agricultural produce.

During the fairs that took place in spring and autumn, the commercial courts of Constanta and Tulcea came to Medgidia to monitor commercial transactions. After the War of Independence of 1877-1878, Dobrudja became part of Romania and the Medigi Fair was revived.

In December 1878 the City Council was elected and the mayoralty was founded. 300 houses with a population of 1500 were registered. Most of the pre-war population fled to other areas.



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In 1882 the municipal hospital and the first pharmacy in the city were built. The population grew at a moderate pace - in 1884 there were 2449 inhabitants, and in 1903 - 2858. In 1886 a mixed school for poor children was built, which was the third school in the city after the men's and girls' built in 1879. In 1890 the construction of the church "St. St. Peter and Paul" started. The building was erected on the remains of a Roman fortress with the help of the Christian population.

In 1901 the city was among the most developed in the district. Cultural activity was supported by traders, industrialists and farmers. In 1936, the first magazine entitled *Graiul Dobrogei* appeared in Medgidia. In 1940, the country entered World War II, by which time Medgidia was the city with the richest people - half of its residents owned large estates.

During Communist times Soviet-style industrialization took place. The first big factories were established: I.M.U. Medgidia and the cement plant which attracted labour work. Also the Danube-Black Sea Canal, started as a Soviet venture, attracted workers who settled in the city. Investments were made in agriculture, animal husbandry, fruit growing and wine making.

In 1965 a health center was built, consisting of a hospital and a modern clinic, and in 1970, a public bath for 40 people was built, as well as a 52-bed hotel. After 1990 due to privatization some factories closed down and others were successfully privatized. IMUM reduced its output and became SA Carandtrailer company.

In 1994, a great achievement happened for the city - it became a municipal center.



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It was supplied with gasification, modernization of the TPP, expansion and modernization of the water supply and sewerage network, asphalted streets, unloaded road traffic.

Local authorities are interested in the idea of building an industrial park that will provide opportunities for young people and support the development of the municipality. A wind farm is intended to be built.

**Cultural Infrastructure / Elena:** Places and objects of cultural life in the municipality are mainly presented in museums, community centers, the library and their activities and are popularized by the local newspaper - Elenska Tribuna.

#### **Museums / Daskalolivnitsa Architectural and Historical Complex:**

On the territory of the municipality there is a Museum of the Revival "Ilarion Makariopolski", which includes the following objects: the First school "Daskalolivnitsa", Kamburov khan, the church "St. Nikola", Guneva and Zlateva houses. The Assumption church is also on the territory of the museum complex. The Clock Tower and Popnikolov's House are nearby. In the center of the town, also within the structure of the museum, is the birthplace of Ilarion Makariopolski, who fought for the independence of the Church.

**Ilarion Makariopolski Museum House:** Real cultural value of "national importance". Ilarion Makariopolski, who fought for church independence, his brother Nikola Mihailovsky - a prominent figure in literature and education during the Revival and his son - the satirist Stoyan Mihaylovski. In one of the rooms, in 1863, the Elena community center "Napredak" was founded.



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**The Clock Tower:** A remarkable and original cultural asset of "national importance" category is the Clock Tower. The location was successfully chosen so as to be seen and heard from all parts of the town. The clock tower, the dome of the Assumption Church and the bell tower represent a triple vertical dominant that marks the town's religious center.

**Daskalolivnitsa - the first school:** Daskalolivnitsa is the first Bulgarian civilian building in the town of Elena. It was built in 1844 for the needs of the first Bulgarian class school, founded by Ivan Nikolov Momchilov in 1843 and named "Daskalolivnitsa" by Petko Rachev Slaveikov - a graduate of the school.

**Popnikolov's House:** Popnikolov's House is one of the most characteristic in Elena. It was built in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century - around 1830.

**The Five Razsukanov's Houses:** The Five Razsukanov's Houses or the Five Hadzhidimitrov's Houses located in Pop Sava Katrafilov Street are a cultural monument of national importance.

**The Kambur's Khan:** The Kambur's Khan was built around the mid- 19<sup>th</sup> century and named after its owner Stoyan Kambura who participated in Captain Grandfather Nikola's Rebellion (1856), in Hadji Stavri's Uprising (1862) and was a member of the Elena Revolutionary Committee. The khan is a cultural monument of local importance.



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**Saint Nikola's Church:** Near the Daskalolivnitsa is the church of St. Nikola, the oldest in the town. A record on a psalter, donated to the church in 1518 by a person called Pera, proves that the church had already existed at the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

**The Assumption Church:** the Assumption Church is one of the undisputed landmarks of Elena - a unique monument of architecture and art from the Renaissance.

**Elena Public Library:** Elena Public Library was established on the basis of the libraries of the church, the convent and the school, the private libraries of patriotic citizens of Elena, in 1863, and the establishment of "Napredak" Community Center.

### Community Centres

According to the Register of Community Centres, 19 community centres were established in the municipality.

### Centre for Professional and Personal Development in Elena / CPPD /

The centre hosts the schools of ceramics, folk dancing, drawing, accordion, singing, gadulka.

The cultural infrastructure of the municipality of Elena and the diverse cultural calendar encourages the development of the cultural tourism, which complements the tourist image of the municipality and its recreational and resource potential.

### Cultural infrastructure/ Medgidia



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The sites of cultural interest in the municipality are mainly museums, the cultural institute and the children's club and their promotion by the local media - the Alpha Media TV, Media TV and GraiulDobrogei newspapers.

One of the main pillars of local cultural activity is the Yoan N. Roman **Municipal House of Culture**, music bands, theatrical groups and plastic arts are developed.

Yoan N. Roman Municipal House of Culture promotes the creation and work of a children's orchestra and choir, the Usha and Nameless theatre groups, the Pandelashul and Stezherelul folk groups, Dan Sputaru Brass Band, ballet and modern dances for children. It also houses the Eugene Ionescu Theater Studios, a recording studio, a drawing club and a permanent exhibition of plastic art, the editorial office of GraiulDobrogei, Alliancefrançaise, the French-Romanian Friendship Association "Frarom", children's club "View of the world".

**Lucian Grigorescu Culture Centre** has a 500-seat auditorium, a meeting room, a mixed library with 30,000 publications in Romanian and 10,000 in French. It hosts the Dan Sputaru International Festival of Pop Music, an international arts camp. It houses the Doina Dobrogei folk group, as well as the Media TV studio.

**The Military Club** has a hall with 450 seats, and hosts the National Dance Art Festival "Dance and Kostel". There is also a brass band, a drawing club, a photography club, the Rolan Perlogenu Reserve Officers Association, as well as an amateur theatre group established 30 years ago which has won several awards.



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The **Medgidia Children's Club** was founded in 1960 and is attended by more than 500 students annually. A wide variety of workshops are organized: literature, theatre, music, drawing and ship modeling. They help develop specific skills that depend on the talent and preferences, also self-confidence, independent thinking and initiative of the students involved.

**Ceramic Exhibition:** In the early 1970s, Medgidia became famous for organizing symposia on ceramics. The workmanship was located in different parts of the town as an attempt to improve the urban environment/ the central park around the Danube-Black Sea Canal and the Lucian Grigoresku Art Museum /.

**Lucian Grigorescu Art Museum:** The museum exhibits Romanian paintings inspired by Dobrudzha landscapes, works by Dobrudja artists and sculptures, as well as over 100 ceramic works created at Hamangia Creative Camps.

The **Military Club** has a hall with 450 seats and hosts the National Dance Arts Festival "Dance and Church". Here he develops a brass band, a drawing circle, a photography circle, the Roland Perlogen Reserve Officers Association, as well as an amateur theater group with 30 years of activity and several honors.

#### CULTURAL HERITAGE / ELENA MUNICIPALITY

The favourable historical and geographical features, cultural corridors and the identity of the town of Elena, which express the resilience of the urban correlations in time and the permanent urbanistic axes, constitute the essence of the territorial



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development of Elena municipality and the formation of the settlements' spatial structure. This is evidenced by the archeological, historical, artistic, architectural and construction cultural properties, located in the territorial structure of the municipality.

Even today, the municipality of Elena has retained its historical and geographical features, folk traditions and customs, which have been preserved over the centuries - a reason for future development, following historical patterns and having a distinctive identity, which shows the peculiarities of the town's spatial development and the communities in the municipality.

The National Concept for Spatial Development of the Republic of Bulgaria outlines the cultural corridors, assessing the level of importance of the cultural 'overlay' within and outside the settlements.

The cultural overlay's level of significance within the boundaries of the communities is represented to be low - presence of two cultural layers or one strongly expressed.

Cultural layer's level of significance beyond the settlements - cultural values of one or two historical periods with identical stylistic and semantic features, together with natural and ethnographic heritage.

The cultural corridors connect important elements of cultural heritage and traditions that reflect events or periods of the Bulgarian and European history. They show the dynamics of the spatial development of the settlement structure.

Recent EU policies are aimed at managing and connecting the environmental, landscape and cultural values of the regions, and realising the local development potential of municipalities and regions.



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In that sense, the spatial and socio-economic development of the territory will focus on the cultural heritage in the municipality and the natural and cultural landscapes that represent the regional specificity. These are the leading factors for the regional development and land planning.

This spatial development approach is also the starting point for spatial policies related to the tangible and intangible cultural heritage of Bulgaria, which are set forth in the National Strategy for Regional Development (NSRD) and the National Spatial Plan (NSP) and are closely associated with the quality of life. The changed attitude to cultural property and the extension of the spatial scope of cultural heritage have also been taken into account - from a single value to the ensemble with its surroundings and the overall urban and/ or natural environment, where it is situated, from the interior of the building and its construction to the specific landscape, from cultural corridors/ routes to underwater cultural property.

The guidelines for the preservation of the cultural property in all their temporal and wide variety are related to the conservation of their unique characteristics through active preservation, public concern and adjustment in its broadest sense, conserving and developing the spirit of place /geniusloci/and spatial identity, as well as developing their potential to boost economic growth.

Generally speaking, cultural heritage encompasses the intangible and tangible immovable and movable heritage, expressed as a complication of cultural property that carry historical memory and national identity. There are cultural values within the territory of the municipality - tangible and intangible, evidence of human presence and activity that are of high scientific and cultural value to the individual, community and society in the region. The cultural heritage in Elena municipality is



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represented by sites of archaeological, architectural and construction, artistic and historical interest, as well as by folk traditions and cultural habits.

### **Spatial distribution of immovable cultural property within the territorial structure of Elena municipality.**

The spatial distribution of the immovable cultural property on the territory of Elena municipality is directly related to the historical development of the region.

In comparison with the town of Elena, the immovable heritage sites in the villages of the municipality are insufficiently popularized. The efforts of the municipal authorities are predominantly aimed at promoting the exceptional cultural heritage of the town of Elena.

Depopulation and geographic ageing in the villages of Elena municipality are negative processes which further complicate the immovable heritage sites's maintenance and conservation.

The villages in Elena municipality have developed in different ways depending on their location. Some of the settlements, which are located mainly in the southern high mountain areas of the municipality, have retained their authentic look and scale of urban structure and existing buildings. Considering their picturesque location in the middle of the pure, genuine environment and the fact that they are far from the main roads, make them attractive places for recreation.

Those of the villages that are closer to the communication routes and the community centre are subject to greater investment pressure. This is most evident in the territories around the 'Yovkovtsi' reservoir. In these settlements the urbanization is more intensive. Apart from single-family homes and country houses, larger hotels and complexes are also being-built.



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Generally, the private investment initiative does not sufficiently take into account the presence of sites of immovable cultural heritage in the settlements. Instead of using and adapting these sites for tourism purposes, investors prefer the construction of new buildings and sites that are often not in line with the traditional features of the urban structure and the local specificity of the architecture.

According to the register of the National Institute of Immovable Cultural Heritage, there are **603 sites with the status of immovable cultural property on the territory of Elena Municipality** / according to the register of the National Documentary Archive at the National Institute of Immovable Cultural Heritage /

On the territory of Elena Municipality and town obtain architectural, construction and artistic of Immovable Cultural Heritage.

Some of the most valuable Immovable Cultural Heritage from category with National heritage are:

- Daskalolivnitsa, Elena;
- St. Nikola's church - Elena
- the Assumption Church, Elena;
- Elena Hristova's House / Popnikolova House / , Elena;
- Clock Tower, Elena
- Ilarion Makariopolski's Birth House, Elena;
- The ensemble of Five Razsukanov's Houses, Elena
- Ivan Momchilov's house, Elena;
- Ivan Milanov's house, Elena;
- Ivan Milanov Stoyanov's house, Maryan village.



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GOVERNMENT OF BULGARIA



In the town of Elena there are **181 National Cultural Values** SG No. 51/1973; No. 76/1978; Letter No. 1639 / 05.05.1980. - NPCs / grouped and organized in ensembles:

- Ensemble Il. Makariopolski str.
- Ensemble in St. Mihailovski str, Karshovski str and a part of Yeromonah Yosif Bradati str;
- An ensemble of houses along the streets of Hadji Sergei and Yeromonah Yosif Bradati;
- An ensemble of houses in Elovska str, an ensemble of houses on V. Levski sqr.;
- An ensemble of houses in Ivan Kalchev str;
- An ensemble of houses in Hadji Yordan Bradata str;
- An ensemble of houses in Sava Katrafilov str;
- An ensemble of houses in Kostovska Street;

Additionally declared architectural and construction national cultural values - Elena - 75 sites.

The religious sites in the municipality are 30 /20 churches, two monasteries, four chapels and four houses of prayer./

Following the procedures for declaring and announcing the immovable cultural heritage sites mainly performed in the 1970s and early 1980s of 20th century in Elena Municipality other objects of the National Cultural Heritage were also located, which are not included in the list of National Institute for Cultural Heritage. They are part of the List of additionally declared architectural and cultural monuments in Elena /



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information about them is provided by the Regional Museum of History and Elena Municipality. /

According to Letter № 4349 of National Institute for Cultural Monuments from 1992 all commemorative signs raised on Bulgaria's participation in the wars between 1885 and 1945 also have the status of historical immovable cultural property.

Practically, this means that the number of immovable cultural property on the territory of the municipality is significantly higher than officially declared in the NINC lists. For all these sites, the current normative documents in the field of protection of the real cultural heritage are in force.

Furthermore, there are declared and announced real cultural values in another 40 villages in the municipality of Elena. These are mainly houses and religious sites from the Revival period.

### **Movable Cultural Heritage**

Movable cultural values are sought, studied, preserved and presented with a cognitive, educational and aesthetic purpose by cultural and scientific organizations - museums.

The network of museums on the territory of Elena Municipality is represented by the Iliarion Makariopolski Museum of the Revival.



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The Movable Cultural Heritage at the Iliarion Makaropolski Museum of the Revival is divided into five main funds: **Ethnography, Art Department, Weapons, Old Printed Literature, Scientific and Auxiliary Fund.**

### **Daskalolivnitsa Museum Complex**

Daskalolivnitsa architectural and historical complex in the town of Elena was opened on September 11, 1981. The structure of the complex includes the following buildings: First Class School "Daskalolivnitsa"; Kamburov Khan; Guneva House; Zlateva House; Saint Nikola's Church.

Iliarion Makariopolski's birthplace has been transformed into a museum house and is an attractive place for tourists. It has a rich ethnographic exhibition, and its ground floor is used as a venue for organizing exhibitions.

### **Intangible cultural heritage**

A fundamental element of the cultural infrastructure in Elena Municipality is the network of community centres. To a large extent, they also carry the intangible cultural heritage. According to the National Register of Community Centers, 19 community centers operate in Elena Municipality; two of them are in the town.

In the community centres in the municipality of Elena there are different groups and clubs: three folk groups, a modern ballet group; two amateur theatre groups and choirs which keep alive the folklore traditions of the region. There are also libraries in some of the community centers.

There is also a children's summer academy on the territory of the municipality. In the Center for Professional and Personal Development there is a variety of clubs:



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GOVERNMENT OF BULGARIA



ceramics, folk dancing, drawing, accordion, singing, gadulka; summer schools for children during the holidays are organized, as well as activities for children with disabilities.

The municipality of Elena has a rich cultural calendar /2020 / that includes all major national, religious and local holidays. In the first half of 2020, the following are celebrated:

- Trifon Zarezan in Maryan village;
- 147 years from the hanging of Vasil Levski. Worship, funeral feast, placing wreaths and flowers in front of the city's memorial sites;
- Celebration on the day of the Amateur artist;
- Formal celebration on 3<sup>rd</sup> March, Bulgaria's national day;
- Poetic reading dedicated to Mina Todorova;
- The Week of the Children's Book and Arts for children;
- European Days of Fine Arts, 5th Festival of Modern Art, "Colorful Balkan World" Elena - 2020;
- Celebration of Iliarion Makariopolski Primary School
- Children's Arts Festival "Stage for talents"
- Easter festivities: concerts, competitions, exhibitions, recreation of the custom "Lazar";
- 4th National Folklore Festival "Fun in Elena";
- May 1 -Neyuvski gathering, Opening of May Cultural Holidays
- Celebration of 75th anniversary of the end of World War II and Europe Day;



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- Celebration of "Ivan Momchilov" Secondary School;
- Feast of the local pastry - mekitsa in Blaskovtsi village;
- Literary Evening dedicated to Stoyan Mihailovski, Stoyan Mihailovski award-giving ceremony;
- 21st May - Day of the Holy Apostles Konstantin and Elena. Elena town's holiday;
- 24th May - May 24 - Day of Bulgarian Education and Culture and the Slavonic Script;
- Festive procession, wreaths and flowers laying ceremony; Gala concert;
- Celebration of 1st June, International Children's Day;
- Celebration of 2<sup>nd</sup> June - Hristo Botev's Day and those who died for the freedom and independence of Bulgaria;
- Meeting of the descendants of prominent Elena families who participated in the fight for the Liberation of Bulgaria, Celebration of the anniversary of the birth of the distinguished citizens from Elena;
- Participation in the XVII Open Heart Roma Festival, Veliko Tarnovo;
- 'The Balkan sings and tells stories', Feast of the Balkan cities Elena, Kotel, Dryanovo, Tryavna, Tvarditsa and Gurkovo;
- 20th Fair of Community Centres in Elena Municipality;
- Annual concert of the School of Arts.



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GOVERNMENT OF BULGARIA



In the second half of 2020, the following celebrations shall take place:

- 6<sup>th</sup> festival of the colorful rug in the village of Blaskovtsi;
- Traditional worship at Kapinovo Monastery and rituals for the health of Elena citizens;
- 7<sup>th</sup> Festival of Honey and Beekeepers, 3rd Folklore Contest,
- Gala ballet performance featuring stars from the National Ballet in Sofia;
- Opening of the academic year 2020/2021;
- Day of Senior People;
- Opening of the academic year 2020/2021 at the Centre for Professional and Personal Development and the School of Arts;
- 9th Feast of the ham;
- Christian Family Day;
- Commemoration of 143 years of the battles near the town of Elena and the village of Maryan in the Russian-Turkish Liberation War;
- St. Nikola's Feast;
- Christmas and New Year holidays - Christmas tree lights, concerts, exhibitions.



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GOVERNMENT OF BULGARIA



Major cultural events on the territory of the municipality are focused on the national traditions and cultural customs, and in addition to religious and national holidays, others are also celebrated and held such as:

- Feast of the town of Elena - St.St. Konstantin and Elena
- National Folklore Festival "Fun in Elena";
- Neyuvski fair;
- Municipal Fair of Community Centres
- National Folk Festival "The Balkans sing and tell stories"
- Worshipping at Kapinovo Monastery;
- Festival of the honey; Folklore Contest
- Festival of the Elena Balkan;
- National Awakeners Day;
- Running;
- Feast of the ham in Elena

### **Spatial distribution of immovable cultural property in the territorial structure of Medgidia municipality**

The spatial distribution of immovable cultural property on the territory of Medgidia municipality is directly related to the historical development of the territory.



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**The mosque Abdul Medgid “The big mosque”:** The mosque Abdul Medgid, also called The Big Mosque, is a historical monument of the religious architecture built between 1859 and 1865. It was erected in honour of sultan Abdul Medgid, who ruled in the period 1839 - 1861.

**Orthodox church "St. St. Peter and Paul":** The church was built in the period 1890-1899 and was consecrated on March 25, 1899. Outside the church is distinguished by its three towers, two small ones and a big one.

**The mausoleum of Serbian, Croatian and Slovenian heroes:** The pyramid mausoleum was built in 1926 by the Kingdom of Yugoslavia to preserve the remains of two hundred and twenty-four Serbian, Croatian and Slovenian soldiers, killed in World War I on the territory of Dobrudja.

**Monument of the National Heroes:** The monument was donated in 1932 by the Cult to Heroes Association in Bucharest, in honour of the heroes who died in World War I, the soldiers of the 63rd Infantry Regiment, and all soldiers from Dobrudja, who died for the freedom of the country.

**Monument of the Russian heroes:** It was erected in honour of the Russian soldiers who died in Dobrudja in the period 1944 - 45.

**Cultural landscape:** Podgoria Murfatlar



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One of the most famous vineyards in Romania is located in the center of the Dobrudja Plateau and enjoys good climatic conditions that allow you to grow distinctive natural and sweet wines. They are certified by professionals and sommeliers and have won awards from international competitions.

## **Tangible cultural heritage. Movable cultural heritage**

### **Objects found in Medgidia**

In the period 1979 - 1985 several settlements were found in the Kokoasha site and in the Medgidia-Satu Nou locality. There was various archeological material (fine and plastic, ordinary ceramics, stone tools, flint and bone, clay and stone idols), as well as a statuary head strongly resembling that of the Thinker and the Sitting Woman. All these objects are traces of the Yamna culture /Pit grave culture/.

The findings prove the oldest level of development of the pit culture societies in the Karasu Valley. This stage is called "mediadgic".

The first agricultural and cattle breeding societies in Dobrudja and Southeastern Europe appeared in the 6th millennium BC and in this respect it can be concluded that the roots of the Median civilization dated from the 6th to the 4th millennium BC.

The development of civilization did not decline over the years, but continued throughout the Bronze Age and the Iron Age, following the Neolithic. Evidence of this are the bronze bracelets, a sickle and a hairpin, the mold for bronze objects, as well as the Micaite bronze sword (14th century BC, discovered in a quarry, unconnected



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GOVERNMENT OF BULGARIA



with the Roman layer). They demonstrate the existence of rich and original bronze metallurgy, which in turn testifies to the population that created these material and cultural effects.

From the Late Iron Age /550-450 BC/, the old population of the region, together with the Scythians, left one of a kind swords in Southeast Europe - Akinaki. These swords were used by Scythians and Thracians.

They date back to 5<sup>th</sup> century BC and are decorated with special animal motifs - panther head, eagle head. At the base of the handle there is a heart-shaped plate with two lobes, in which there is a wild goat with legs bent below the body. This proves technically and stylistically the existence of southern Thracian art in the Karasu Valley.

The tribal order of society set the following activities of the population in the area - agriculture /sowing, cultivation, production/, milling, fishing, stockbreeding, metallurgy. The population also developed a form of culture and art. The poet Ovid described the land of his captivity as "the land of the wicked ghettos", where "the roads, the waters, the earth and the sea belong to the locals." Roman dry land from Tommy to Axiopolis towards the Danube passed through the surrounding area and connected the fortifications. It was used for communication and facilitated the transportation of grain and goods from the region, and the fortifications were for security. A similar fortification was found in the centre of present-day Medgidia, near the church of St. St. Peter and Paul. It was located here for three reasons -



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guarding the trade route, linking the grain-producing area to the rest of the empire and as a strategic point.

The tombstone of the consul Tiberius Plavcius Sylvanus Elianus, who governed the province of Miziya , represents the quality of the soil. It mentions wheat sent from Moesia to Rome (probably after the city was burned).

A monument was erected in the area by Emperor Adrian as he passed. The monument commemorates the death of 3,800 Romans in the battle of Adamclisi in 102 year.

The layers also indicate that Medgidia was then a larger settlement, not a mere fortification.

### Intangible cultural heritage

The municipality of Medgidia has a rich cultural calendar. Major cultural events on the territory of the municipality are focused on festivals and the holding of historical games and re-enactments.

### Dapyx, Medgidia - Festival of Historic Games and Reenactments

The municipality of Medgidia is located in the heart of Dobrudja, on lands inhabited by the ghetto tribe for about two millennia. The festival is named after King Dapix, an ancient ruler and hero of these places, who was killed in a battle with Roman troops in about 29 - 28 BC. The festival is one of a kind in Romania and Eastern Europe due to the variety of historical periods that are subject of reenactment - from Antiquity to the Middle Ages, all the way to modern and contemporary history. This successful model is equivalent only to the acclaimed Savaria Festival in Hungary,



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near the Austrian border, where tourists outnumber about three times the locals during the event.

The Dapyx Historical Games and Reenactment Festival marks its 4th anniversary. It is held annually in May. Within four days, it offers specific activities to satisfy the curiosity of the casual viewer and history buffs who are interested in crafts, equipment, or reenactments. The audience can also attend concerts performed by renowned performers at the local stadium every night. The variety and quality of the events make the festival the most anticipated event in Medgidia. The traditional event with the tagline "In Medgidia, the heroes never die!" has gradually gained national and international fame. The festivals in 2019 and 2020 were funded by EU grants because of their importance. This festival is a part the Culture for Eternity project (RO-BG 423).

The first evening of the festival is accompanied by the ignition of ceremonial fire and a torchlight procession of 250 reenactors along the main street of Medgidia. The individual groups are presented upon arrival at the main camp located at the city stadium Iftimie Ilisei. On the next morning, the audience participate and learn crafts from different eras - pottery, leather handling, blacksmithing, weaving, cooking and battle. In the afternoons, battles are reenacted. Ancient armaments, glittering armour, costumes and precisely recreated skirmishes convey the spirit of Roman ancestors. In the evenings there is a dance programme and concerts of different artists /ethno folk, rock, traditional music /. Over 100,000 people are given the opportunity to learn about the day-to-day life of their ancestors and learn more about cultural heritage and the importance of honouring and preserving local traditions. They can also try and buy local traditional produce.

The first Romanian Reenactment Festival to cover all eras.



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## SWOT ANALYSYS

| NATURAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE  |   |
|--|---|
| STRENGTHS  | WEAKNESS  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presence of Immovable cultural property from a National Value category;</li> <li>• Presence of community centres, which preserve the identity of the municipality and its folklore traditions and cultural habits;</li> <li>• Abounding cultural calendar folklore traditions and cultural habits;</li> <li>• Presence of protected areas under the Protected Areas Act / PAA / and Natura 2000 Ecological Network Protected Areas under the Biodiversity Act;</li> <li>• Presence of age-old trees declared under the Biodiversity Act;</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of updated list of immovable cultural property;</li> <li>• Lack of adequate conservation, restoration and adaptation of the Immovable cultural property in the settlement network;</li> <li>• Lack of identified and distinct cultural landscapes;</li> <li>• Difficult access to archeological Immovable cultural property s outside the territorial reach of settlements;</li> <li>• Lack of a common marketing strategy;</li> <li>• Lack of sufficient funding.</li> </ul> |
| POSSIBILITIES  | THREATS   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adaptation of the N in the settlement structure and formation of cultural zones;</li> <li>• Restoration, preservation and adaptation of the real cultural values on the territory of the municipality and the areas around them;</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inability to implement large infrastructure projects;</li> <li>• Environmental degradation;</li> <li>• Insufficient financial resources to maintain the infrastructure and build a new one;</li> <li>• Suspension of funds provided</li> </ul>   |



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- Construction of tourist routes and cultural industry;
- Creating an information system for cultural and historical resources;
- Development of a map of the real cultural values on the territory of the municipality;
- Building partnerships between local communities and businesses;
- Use of EU financial instruments for successful implementation of projects in the field of natural and cultural heritage;
- Integration of cultural heritage into the strategies and plans of the municipalities;
- Introducing modern requirements for the search, preservation, promotion and dissemination of cultural values;
- Introducing management and marketing in the field of cultural heritage and developing a strategy for cultural heritage;
- Stimulating contemporary art connections with Cultural Heritage;
- Development of cultural and scientific exchange;
- Preparation of promotional materials for the promotion of the cultural heritage of the municipality;

under the Structural Funds and the EU Operational Programs;



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## CONCEPT FOR THE CONSERVATION AND RECOGNITION OF CULTURAL HERITAGE

The concept of conservation and recognition of the cultural heritage in the Joint strategy follows the historical patterns and the traditional cultural tendencies, as it presents the preserved cultural identity of the both municipalities and their possibility of showing off and encouragement of the cultural tourism in the cross - border region.

The latest EU policies are management-oriented and focus on the connection of the ecological, landscape and cultural values of regions, and realising the local potential for development of municipalities and regions.

Accordingly the spatial and socio-economic development of the territory will be oriented towards the cultural heritage of the municipality and the natural and cultural landscapes that express the regional specificity. These are the factors that play a leading role in territorial development and regional development.

That approach in the spatial development is a starting point and spatial policies related to the tangible and intangible cultural heritage of Bulgaria, National Strategic Reference Framework and National concept for spatial development they are in direct connection with life quality. The changes into the attitude to cultural values are also taken into consideration and the extension of the spatial scope of cultural heritage - from the single value to the ensemble with its surroundings and the overall urban and/or natural environment in which it is situated, from the interior of the building and its construction to the characteristic landscape.

The main guidelines in the conservation of the cultural heritage in their temporal and species diversity are related to the preservation of their unique characteristics, through conservation and active conservation, public concern and



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adaptation in the broadest sense, the preservation and development of the spirit of the place / *genius loci* / and the spatial identity and development of their potential to stimulate economic growth.

The interaction of nature and human beings has formed numerous cultural landscapes in the municipalities. The evolution of understanding of cultural heritage tends to constantly expand its scope and content. Cultural heritage today includes the whole cultural environment with its tangible and intangible values. The focus is on the landscape, the natural features, traditional livelihoods, tillage, folklore, local cuisine and more.

Broadly speaking, cultural heritage encompasses the intangible and tangible real estate and movable heritage as a collection of cultural values that carry historical memory and national identity. On the territory of the municipalities there are cultural values - tangible and intangible evidence of human presence and activity that are of high scientific and cultural value to the individual, community and society in the region. The cultural heritage in the municipality of Elena and the municipality of Medgidia is represented by archeological, architectural, artistic, historical as well as by natural values, folklore traditions and cultural customs.

In the spatial development of the municipality of Elena and the municipality of Medgidia, the historical and geographical development is at the heart of the cultural stratum and it is precisely this that enables the establishment of cooperation with the neighbouring municipalities /regions and the formation of cultural zones /routes for tourism and recreational activities, which in combination with the local traditions and cultural customs of the local community create an attractive cultural environment.



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The cultural heritage priority area introduces the idea of a balance between heritage conservation and tourism development. In this sense, tourism activities are means for promoting the local identity, and vice versa, cultural values and natural resources are a factor for economic development. The sensible use and presentation of local assets is based on the sequence of pre-identification of the full diversity of local assets, providing a framework, prerequisites and actions for their permanent preservation and subsequent presentation, promotion and active involvement in contemporary social and economic activities.

The priority area consistently integrates the themes of cultural heritage, contemporary culture, natural landmarks, as well as the links between them to form a /regional / tourist product. The focus of the theme is the penetration between cultural heritage, contemporary cultural life and open public spaces of settlements. The renovation and socialization of historic buildings need to be linked to the provision of more space for cultural activities, and cultural life to 'go' outside and take place in street and square spaces. This will ensure the specific atmosphere and creativity of entire neighborhoods, parts and areas of the settlement structure.

The vision seeks to give expression to the local specificity, cultural identity and to reflect the ideas of local communities about their future development in the area of cultural heritage.

PRESERVED CULTURAL IDENTITY AND EXPRESSED CROSS-BORDER POPULARITY AND ATTRACTION OF THE MUNICIPALITY OF ELENA AND THE MEDGIDIA MUNICIPALITY AND THEIR CULTURAL HERITAGE



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The vision stated here is the vision and prognosis that the implementation of its program will overcome the problems facing the preservation and promotion of the cultural heritage of the two municipalities and achieve economic growth in the sector based on cultural tourism.

The strategic goals are related to the evaluation and promotion of cultural heritage in the territories of the two municipalities, thus seeking to increase the tourist attractiveness in the cross-border region.

Also there is shown a craving towards bettering the sustainable using of the cultural heritage and promoting the cultural tourism between the partners in the region of Cross border cooperation.

Territorial and socio-cultural cohesion is aimed at cross-border, interregional and transnational cooperation, generating results of mutual interest. It involves the implementation of infrastructures for better connectivity, integrated development of settlements / cities, preservation of natural and cultural wealth and expression of identity.

The Joint Strategy considers the rich natural and cultural heritage resource as an excellent prerequisite for growth within municipalities. The diverse tourism sector has been identified as a potentially sustainable and developing element of the economic complex of the two municipalities.

## STRATEGIC GOAL 1.

SUSTAINABLE USE OF CULTURAL HERITAGE AND ENCOURAGEMENT OF CULTURAL TOURISM BETWEEN THE PARTNERS IN THE REGION OF CROSS - BORDER COOPERATION.



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The objective emphasizes the regional and cross-border popularity and attractiveness of the two municipalities and the expression of their identity.

In order to achieve significant increase and growth of the cultural sector, the basic requirement is to ensure the necessary conditions of accessibility and comfort of the sites without compromising their authenticity. In order to ensure a good return on investment and sector growth, serious efforts should be focused on the marketing of tourist destinations with a focus on the integrity and diversity of the product offered in the area. In this way, it aims at developing the cultural and territorial identity of the two municipalities and improving and protecting the cultural heritage as a resource for development.

## STRATEGIC GOAL 2.

PRESERVATION AND PROMOTION OF THE CULTURAL HERITAGE OF ELENA MUNICIPALITY AND INCREASE OF TOURISM ATTRACTION

## STRATEGIC GOAL 3.

PRESERVATION AND PROMOTION OF THE CULTURAL HERITAGE OF THE MUNICIPALITY AND INCREASE OF TOURIST ATTRACTIVENESS

The second and third strategic goals are related to the manifestation of local identity. The purpose is rather to preserve and upgrade the present state of affairs. Consistent preservation and overall good representation of the heritage should contribute to the formation of a compelling local tourism product that will be the focus of regional tourism supply as part of the Eastern Trans-European Cultural Corridor. In this sense, the goal, in its completion, emphasizes the popularity and



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GOVERNMENT OF BULGARIA



attractiveness of the Municipality of Elena and the Municipality of Medgidia and their identity. Presentation of historical, cultural and natural attractions as a valuable part of the specific geographical area, local heritage and identity.

**The implementation programme** is the final element of the structure of the joint strategy and is a leading prerequisite for the implementation of the strategy and its goals.

The objective of the implementation program is to summarize relevant projects that specify the defined measures by priority areas for development, thus providing an operational basis for the implementation of the joint strategy.

Important for the implementation of the Joint Strategy and its strategic objectives is the development of a **tourism package and a web-based platform for the presentation and promotion of cultural heritage in the cross-border region of Elena - Medgidia.**

The routes should be consistent with both **the joint strategy for both municipalities and their Municipal Development Plans by 2027.**

For the municipality of Elena, the designated areas in the Elena DAC 2014-2020 and the tourist zone therein, which is divided into six small sites, which are directly related to the cultural heritage and development of the territory, should be taken into account.

For the municipality of Medgidia, the local development plan should be taken into account.



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MEASURE 1 Development and promotion of integrated tourism products - tourist packages - with a major focus on cultural and festival tourism;

MEASURE 2 Development of an innovative and interactive mechanism for presenting and promoting the cultural heritage of the municipalities - internet based platform/ integrated tourist service /.

MEASURE 3 Digitising of the cultural heritage of both municipalities.

In order to express the overall cultural environment with its tangible and intangible values, it is envisaged to differentiate cultural landscapes in the municipality of Elena and the municipality of Medgidia. Attention is drawn to the landscape, natural features, traditional livelihoods, tillage, folklore, local cuisine and more.

MEASURE 4 Establishment of cultural landscapes in the municipality of Elena and the municipality of Medgidia.

Another key point in the implementation program is the creation of open space for cultural exchange and the organization of open art sessions and festivals to promote cultural heritage.

MEASURE 5 Setting up open space for cultural exchange in the Municipality of Elena and the Municipality of Medgidia;

MEASURE 6 Organization of open art sessions, seminars and festivals to promote partners' cultural heritage;



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## MEASURE 7 Promotional activities;

The following measures are envisaged for the manifestation of the local identity of the municipality of Elena and for enhancing its tourist attractiveness.

MEASURE 8 Restoration of the real cultural value - the burned-down school as a tourist attraction for an exhibition of the valuable collection of paintings and icons in Elena Municipality.

MEASURE 9 Restoration and conservation activities of immovable cultural property.

MEASURE 10 Study, conservation and interpretation of the archaeological treasure in the territory of Elena Municipality;

The following measures are envisaged for the manifestation of the local identity of the municipality of Medgidia and for enhancing its tourist attraction.

MEASURE 11 Rehabilitation and preservation of immovable cultural heritage and historical sites;

MEASURE 12 Rehabilitation and renewal of the Lucian Grigorescu Museum of Art / its transformation into a mixed museum of art, history and archeology;

MEASURE 13 Construction of a Multiethnic Cultural Centre

MEASURE 14 Establishment of a National Centre for Tourist Information and Promotion of Tourism

MEASURE 15 Development of a historic route through the city centre;

MEASURE 16 Establishment of a public-private partnership wine museum;



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