

GENERAL INFORMATION

PETUS description of tool in use						
Name of the case	Ski centre Comprehensive Development Plan					
Name of the tool	Public Planning Forum					
Country	Bulgaria					
City / region	Chepelare municipality					
Total area (km ²)	376 sq. km					
Population	9101 inhabitants (2002)					
Density (inhabitants/km ²)	24.20 inhabitants/sq. km					
Tool user's profile	a. Municipality of Chepelare b. Holistic c. 4850 Chepelare, Belomorska 44 Str. tel: +359 30512004; fax: +359 30513475. email: chepelare@unacs.bg					
Tool user's profile a. Organization name (municipality, NGO, national or regional department, company, etc.) b. Field of activity c. Detailed contact/feedback (project website, e-mail, address, tel., fax)						
Reviewer, date	Vesselina Troeva, Aneta Markova, last update October 2004					
Short description of the case <i>abstract up to 300 words</i>						
<p>The case focuses on the development of winter sports infrastructure on the urban fringe of the town of Chepelare. The elaboration of the Ski Center Comprehensive Development Plan had to be consistent with natural, human and financial resources. It was based on multilevel analysis and required knowledge and expertise in spatial planning, ecology, economics and tourism management. The implementation of the project was expected to provoke substantial changes in the town, so the participation of a broad range of actors had to be guaranteed. Public discussions in different stages of the project elaboration were considered important. Public Planning Forum (PPF) as a tool supporting decision-making process was implemented at the earliest possible stage of project development (midterm stage).</p>						
This case study is related to ' green spaces qualitative aspects: improvement of the existing green/blue spaces quality ' (PETUS key-problem in green/blue sector)						
Sector	Waste	Energy	Water	Transport	Green/blue	Building & Land Use
					X	
Scale of project	Component	Building	Neighbourhood	City	Region	
				X	X	
Status of project	Starting up	Ongoing	Finished	Start date	End date (exp.)	
		X		2003		
Key words <i>tourism, new development and renovation, public forum, GIS</i>						
Project						
a. Object (building, city park, wind farm, etc.)	a. ski center					
b. Type of activity (regeneration, renovation, new development, etc.)	b. new development and renovation					
c. Type of product (plan, scheme, design project, etc.)	c. plan					
Tool						
a. Character (according to WP3final0704.doc)	a. case-specific tool					
b. Benchmarks (qualitative or quantitative)	b. qualitative					

c. Availability (paid/ free)	c. free
Decision-making process	
a. Stage of the tool implementation (preliminary, midterm, etc.)	a. midterm and final stage
b. Level (political, technical, etc.)	b. political and technical
c. Public participation	c. yes

DETAILED INFORMATION

A. Detailed description of project and tool	
1. Description of context (existing strategies, laws, policy, action plans, etc.): EU, national, regional, municipal	<p>The National Tourism Development Strategy of Bulgaria envisages the development of sustainable tourism as one of the national priorities. Countryside territories with suitable natural and human resources are specially focused upon. Both national and local authorities co-operate with the local and regional tourism organizations in the preparation of tourism development programs, marketing activities and control on implementation. Branch associations together with municipal administrations play an important role in tourism development and the public/private sector co-operation in this field.</p> <p>Sustainable tourism development in Bulgaria is based on a balance between the conservation, economic and social policies of the Government. This is in line with European policies and is a guarantee for the effective implementation of the sustainable development principles in Bulgaria. Three Ministries – Environment and Waters, Economy, and Agriculture and Forests – took the initiative in 2002 to create National Ecotourism Strategy and Action Plan (policy document). This document was created through a nationwide review and planning process with the participation citizens, local government, businesses, national park administrations, and non-governmental organizations interested in ecotourism development in Bulgaria.</p> <p><i>The Tourism Development Concepts</i> for the territory of Chepelare and for its southern zone for tourism and recreation have been proposed (according to the National Plan for Regional Development) on the basis of the following research and design activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic Development Plan, endorsed on behalf of the Supreme Expert Council of the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works and the District Administration. This Plan highlights the main trends in the future development of the tourist agglomeration including Chepelare as one of the five zones for tourism development. • Local development plan (draft) of the town of Chepelare and its tourist and recreation zone, endorsed on behalf of the Municipal Commission on Planning and Architecture. It contains a close analysis of the basic natural and manmade resources of the area. • Ideas and perspectives for tourism development in the Municipality of Chepelare coordinated with the local authorities. They have been discussed during the Business Forum, held in Chepelare in June 2001, and were supported by the local population and business representatives and entrepreneurs. • Theoretical research on contemporary trends in tourism development, proposals and projects about tourist centres and resorts. • Meetings and discussions with the local authorities on the strategic plans for town and municipal development (in 2000).



Picture 1
Town view

Development Priorities (as stated in the concept) comprise (Fig. 1):

- Development of the transport infrastructure, and especially, improvement of the main access roads;
- Completion of the works on the elements of the technical and tourism infrastructure;
- Development of conditions for various forms of tourism during all seasons;
- Establishment of a centre for winter sports and training of national and international teams;
- Protection and exhibition of the natural and cultural values of the municipality and its centre;
- Promotion of the ideas and projects for the development of the municipality and the town;
- Establishment of a modern form of partnership between the local population, the public and private sector.

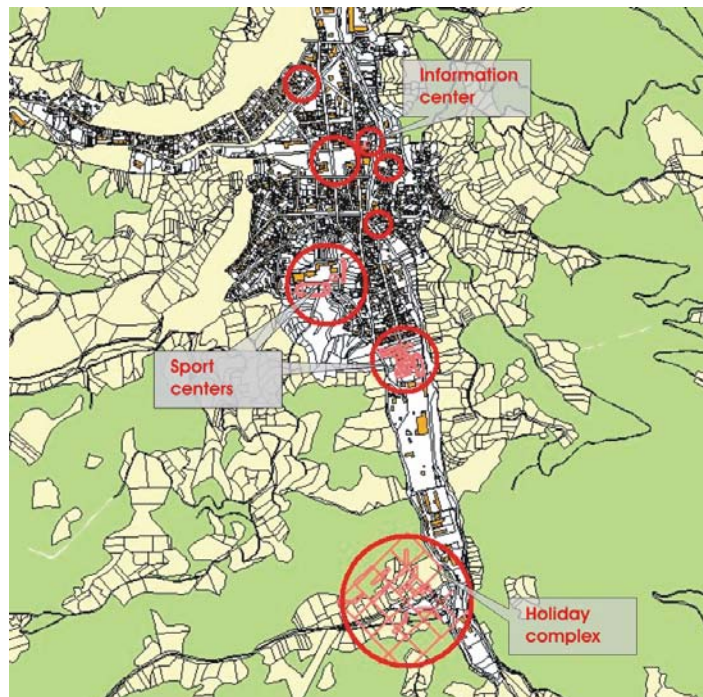



Fig. 1
Town development concept

2. Description of project

a. Background (What caused the initiation of the project?; What was the problem?;

a. The town is recognised as a skiing centre, offering excellent facilities for skiing and snowboard from mid-December to mid-April. The *Mechi Chal* ski complex is close to the town and offers about 8500m of ski runs. There is a potential for 2000 beds in different class hotels planned on the urban fringe.

<p>Who initiated the project?);</p> <p>b. Objectives/aims (sustainability statement – what issues of sustainability were attacked);</p> <p>c. Time interval and stages of project realization;</p> <p>d. Financing – amount, sources, institutions involved, partnerships, levels.</p> <p>e. Other sectors involved in the particular project/problem (conflicts and/or links)</p>	<p>The project was initiated in March 2003 by the Mayor of Chepelare. It has several aims: to anticipate the chaotic building in rural and forest plots with restored ownership after 1990, to promote the municipality and to attract outside investment (in order to effectively use the existing abundant tourism resources and achieve sustainable development).</p> <p>b. Issues addressed by the project – development of the tourist infrastructure; licensing of the municipal ski facilities for international sports events; relevantly meeting high investment pressure and avoiding overdevelopment of the area. Alternatives for tourism development have been discussed before the starting of the plan preparation. GIS was used for the classification of the information, for making analysis, for assessment of the alternatives and visualization of the results. GIS implementation facilitated the decision making process by reducing the time for useless discussions.</p>  <p>Fig. 2 Project – proposition of new sport facilities (GIS supported visualisation)</p> <p>c. The realisation of all project proposals needs two years according to the project team suggestion.</p> <p>d. The basic form of financing is planned to be public-private investments. The municipality meets major difficulties in finding financial sources for the project realisation.</p> <p>e. Other sectors involved in the particular project/problem are: transport, energy, waste, building – development of new infrastructural elements and improving the existing; No significant conflicts between sectors were reported up to 2004.</p>
<p>3. Description of tool</p> <p>a. Character (according to WP3final0704.doc) - calculation tools, process tools, assessment methods, generic tools, simulation tools, guidelines, framework tools, schemes, indicators and monitoring, checklists, case-specific tools;</p> <p>b. Availability of the tool (web-based / paper, paid / free, etc.)</p> <p>c. Based on existing tool or newly elaborated;</p> <p>d. Adaptation of the tool to the local context (are there local experts involved in tool's development?)</p> <p>e. Other tools implemented to</p>	<p>The PPF tool was needed for preventing potential conflicts of interests between land/forest owners and the community; for raising public awareness on the issues discussed and for guaranteeing public participation at an earliest possible stage of the project.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>participants</i> - local authority representatives, municipal experts, local and regional business, sports organizations, NGOs, land- and forest owners, local citizens, project team; ▪ <i>structure</i> - divided into three thematic groups – environment, sports facilities, tourism development; an additional group could be proposed by participants if considered to be needed; ▪ <i>proceedings</i> – presentation by the project team; questions disseminated in advance (aimed at getting an estimation on the town's present state, the project proposal and its contribution to future urban development); ▪ <i>tasks to participants</i> - to grade proposals and estimations by importance; ▪ <i>final product</i> – schemes, written materials, comments, put together into a general written text on a white board. <p>a. Case-specific tool</p>

<p>support the project development</p>	<p>b. The tool is available as a free on-line paper.</p> <p>c. Based on existing tool - “Public Consultation in the Environmental Assessment Process: A Strategic Approach” (The World Bank Environmental Assessment Sourcebook), which describes good practice in the planning, implementation and monitoring of public consultation in the EA approach. (http://lnweb18.worldbank.org/ESSD/envext.nsf/47ParentDoc/ToolsEnvironmentalAssessmentSourcebookandUpdates?Opendocument)</p> <p>d. About 30 people took part in the Forum. They represented all invited groups of actors. The problems discussed mainly concerned the particular location and the dimensions of needed facilities; issues of economic benefits were also discussed; questions on possibilities and sites for future investment were put forth by business representatives.</p> <p>The presentation methods used by the project team were attractive to the participants. 3D visualizations were clearer to participants than other graphic materials (maps and plans).</p> <p>The attempt to involve participants in a real design process contributed to promoting a proactive attitude to the issues discussed and increasing the awareness on the complexity of problems.</p> <p>Representatives of local NGOs, SMEs and local sports experts actively participated in the discussions. Owners of restituted forests were least ready for cooperation.</p> <p>e. The scheme clarifying the general idea of the Comprehensive Development Plan incorporated basic GIS information about ownership and land use, types of vegetation cover, evaluation, slope and aspect, area and routes for summer tourism and elements of the technical, tourism and social infrastructure. GIS software was implemented for elaborating all the schemes and 3D views for the public forum presentations</p> <p>The next phase of the project development is the elaboration of an EIA report according to the national legislation and regulations.</p>
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B. Tool implementation

<p>1. Argumentation for choosing the tool</p> <p>a. What were the reasons for the implementation of the tool? (voluntary or requested by what local, national, etc regulation)</p> <p>b. Who took the initiative for choosing /elaboration the tool?</p> <p>c. What were the criteria for choosing the tool?</p> <p>d. Was there knowledge of other tools and were they considered?</p>	<p>a. Public discussions at different stages of spatial plans elaboration are required by national legislation (Planning Law, 2003). The Public Planning Forum is a tool applied in this case relevant to the project aim and scope. It was considered an appropriate means to present all actors’ opinions that have to be respected in the further plan development.</p> <p>b. Choosing the tool and organising the planning forum was a joint initiative of the Municipality and the project team. The local authorities sent invitations to all target groups.</p> <p>The project team adapted the tool to the specific case and chose the methods, techniques, materials for presentations, defined the three thematic groups.</p> <p>c. The criteria comprised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to support the elaboration of the Comprehensive Development Plan for the ski center of Chepelare; • to create public awareness on the issues treated by the scheme; • to put together the development ideas of various groups of the local community, the regional issues and professional expertise – aimed at achieving public consensus. <p>d. The tools considered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experimental implementation of existing British experience (<i>Planning for Real Initiative</i>) within a joint research project on the rehabilitation on large prefab housing estates in Sofia, funded by British Council, 2000/01;
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Previous practical experience in Bulgaria – EIA of the Comprehensive Plan of Sofia;
<p>2. Barriers for the tool implementation</p> <p>What were the main problems in the tool implementation? (Regulation, information available, public awareness, lack of clear SD definitions and benchmarks, communication etc.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • underrepresented groups (young generation and land owners); • difficulties in achieving consensus on certain problems (tourist accommodation, ski facilities, transport infrastructure, etc.), some contradictory proposals on the location of facilities were made; • environmental aspects left behind on behalf of social and economic ones. <p>The barriers for using other tools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • need for more detailed preliminary information on the problems faced and consequences of the plan implementation among all the groups involved; • lack of practical experience by local population in public discussions on urban development.
C. Influence of the tool on the decision-making process	
<p>1. Description of the decision-making process/ procedures</p> <p>a. Stages</p> <p>b. Levels (political, technical, etc.)</p> <p>c. Sources of information used during the dmp;</p> <p>d. Who are the decision-makers?</p> <p>e. Who made the final decision for the project implementation? Was it political or technical decision?</p>	<p>a. The following steps are included in the procedure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elaboration of project brief, Ski center Comprehensive Development Plan, 2001; • Presentation of ideas and perspectives for tourism development in the Municipality of Chepelare at the Business Forum, held in Chepelare in June 2001; • Preliminary project elaboration, 2003; • Public Planning Forum, September 2003; • Final project based on the results of the discussions; • EIA Brief – 2004; • EIA Report elaboration by RIEW (Regional Inspectorate for Environment and Waters) to MoEW (Ministry of Environment and Water), 2004; • one-month period of public proposals, remarks and suggestions to the project submitted, 2004; • Project implementation, end 2004. <p>b. The political and the technical levels are concerned at different stages in decision making process.</p> <p>c. The basic information used for the project elaboration was: Strategic Development Plan, Local Development Plan of the town of Chepelare, ideas and perspectives for tourism development (during the Business Forum), meetings and discussions with the local authorities (see A.1.)</p> <p>d. The actors involved in decision-making process were: local and regional business, sports organisations, NGOs, land- and forest owners, local citizens, project team, experts and local authorities.</p> <p>e. The final decision for the project implementation was made by the Municipal Council.</p>
<p>2. Tool in decision-making process</p> <p>a. At what stage was the tool implemented? By whom? (experts, politicians, etc.)</p> <p>b. How did the tool output influence the process (added or skipped levels/stages in the existing decision-making process, etc.)?</p> <p>c. Quantitative goals or</p>	<p>a. The tool was jointly implemented in the preliminary stage of the project development by the Municipality and the project team.</p> <p>b. The discussion results were used to facilitate the decision-making process and to guarantee that all actors' opinions were taken into account:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • conflict of interests between land owners and other groups involved became visible; • the consequences and interrelatedness of alternative actions and location of services and facilities (tourist accommodation, ski facilities, transport infrastructure, etc.) became clearer to the public.

<p>benchmarks defined? (If YES, which – and what were they compared to?)</p> <p>d. Was the tool used to support argumentations?</p>	<p><i>Effect on different actors</i> – the Municipality was assisted in making a policy decision relevant to the expressed interests of different actors; local and regional private business got relevant information to base their investigation plans on (including on opportunities to invest in planned large infrastructure projects); the local community got involved in and felt responsible for developing a shared vision on the future of their town and the surrounding area; the project team got arguments for choosing between the two alternatives.</p> <p>At the end of the Forum the project team discussed the suggestions made and afterwards evaluated the possibility to reflect them in the plan.</p> <p>c. The project proposal for new sports facilities aimed at achieving a balance between build-up and natural areas according to the quantitative ratio defined by national standards and laws.</p> <p>Supporting infrastructure (transport, buildings, sewage and water supply, waste, etc.) was to conform to national standards, available local resources and future tourism development.</p> <p>d. The outcomes of the tool implementations were used to support the elaboration of final Comprehensive Development Plan.</p>
<p>3. Transparency of decision-making process</p> <p>a. How was the information of the dmp disseminated? - directly (decision makers – public) or indirectly (decision makers - NGO, PR company, etc. - public); sources of dissemination used (mass media, internet, brochure, etc.)</p> <p>b. How was the public involved?</p> <p>c. Was there a public discussion over the project and at what stage of the project development?</p>	<p>a. The information about the project development was disseminated by the Municipality to the public and to the actors directly involved.</p> <p>The dissemination sources comprised mass media and presentations of the different stages of the project development in the municipality.</p> <p>b. The municipal authorities sent invitations to all actors. The definition and the choice of the target group representatives were made by the project team according to the project content and scope.</p> <p>c. The public involvement took different form during the project development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Forum – during the preliminary stage of project development • public proposals, remarks and suggestions to the project submitted after the EIA Report
<p>D. Expert assessment/analysis/comment of the tool effectiveness</p>	
<p>1. Assessment by tool users</p> <p>a. Were there measurable improvements as a result of the tool implementation? If YES, what? If no: why not?</p> <p>b. Were there any spun-off's or unintended consequences?</p> <p>c. General view on the tool? Lessons learned?</p> <p>d. Potentials for further use of the tool?</p> <p>e. Will the actors recommend it or use it in other cases - why / why not?</p>	<p>a. The measurable environmental improvements concern the potential of different alternatives for the reduction of: (i) cutting woodland areas needed for new ski facilities; (ii) number of beds and parking lots high up in the mountain.</p> <p>b. The importance of locally established values and estimated priorities became clearer to all the participants; the group least cooperative (forest landowners) became obvious; and the need for finding new arguments to motivate them for cooperation appeared to be a next challenge to the Municipality and the project team.</p> <p>c. Experience in the process described confirms and broadens the lessons learned by similar activities in Bulgaria (the Development Plan of Pamporovo winter resort). The establishment of a consultancy group with representatives from all interested groups (local population, local industry, forestry commission, ski trainers and schools, hotels and restaurants, green parties etc.) and the implementation of PPF at an earliest stage of the plan elaboration is particularly useful in the attempt to defend public interests and to avoid conflicts among different stakeholders and owners.</p> <p>d. Using the tool makes the decision-making process more democratic and helps the municipal authorities to develop a project sensitive to local needs and traditions.</p> <p>The discussions are helpful to all the different actors to listen to others</p>

	<p>argumentations. The tool improves the dialogue between all actors involved and promotes a solution that meets a larger opinion range. The character of the tool makes transferability in deferent cases easier.</p> <p>e. The actors view on the tool</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Municipality – very successful, well-balanced representation of participants , good quality of discussion; • private business – useful; • local community – interesting; • project team – helpful; • land owners - need to expand the number of participants from their group. <p>The actors involved in the public discussion recognised that using the tool in the preliminary project elaboration was efficient and helpful in dimensioning the project implementation time.</p> <p>As the elaboration of the Ski center Comprehensive Development Plan was to affect different actors, using the tool is evaluated to be an approach able to represent all points of view and to foresee and prevent probable conflicts.</p>
<p>2. Reviewer's assessment of the tool (usefulness, sustainability relevance, who are the actors excluded? etc.) Suggestions and needs for further development of the tool</p>	<p>The tool could efficiently support the decision-making process especially when a project has addressed all sectors and many aspects of urban development. The important part of using the Public Planning Forum as a tool is to define and involve all actors affected by the project. The classification of the suggestions formulated during the discussions was made by the project team. Classification criteria could be defined in advance according to the project aims and the possibility to avoid potential conflicts.</p> <p>The tool is used by local authorities to attract different actors, to increase public awareness, to involve people in decision-making process, etc. It makes the process more democratic, transparent and guarantees the elaboration of urban development plans relevant to local needs and potential.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the tool could be applied in different stages of project development but not too often in order to keep the interest of the local community; • different forms to be developed (exhibitions, 3D models, etc.) – to keep the attractiveness of the tool; • feedback to be provided for all the participants with clear report on results obtained from the discussion; • to incorporate the aspects of continuity of the town's development, a clearer focus needed on the long-term consequences of the addition of new elements to the existing urban environment; • clarification of expected results – who the winners and losers are in each stage and initiative of the project; • discussion on expected results, their cost and impact on each partner.
E. Additional information on the case study available	
Websites	<p>Chepelare Municipality http://bulgaria.domino.bg/chepelare/eng/</p> <p>Bulgaria and Ecotourism http://www.ecotourism.bulgariatravel.org/</p>
References concerning the case but also the key words or problem (papers, articles, reports, laws, etc.)	<p><i>SUSTAINABLE TOURISM</i>, Pre-WSSD National Report, UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2000; <i>Comprehensive Development Plan of Ski center Chepelare</i>, Final report; <i>NATIONAL ECOTOURISM STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN</i>, national report with support of USAID, 2004; <i>Public Consultation in the EA Process: A Strategic Approach</i>, The World Bank, Environmental Department , May 1999 Number 26; <i>General Principles for Public Participation</i>, Urban Design Quarterly, Report 67 July 1998</p>
Other sources (Interviews, conferences, discussions, etc.)	<p>Participation Three members of PETUS team personally attended the Public Planning Forum (September 2003)</p>

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