



MedMPAnet project

SOCIO-ECONOMIC SURVEY AND TOURISM DEVELOPMENT STUDY

Support the planning, zoning and development of a
Marine Protected Area in the Porto Palermo Bay
(Albania), based on sound scientific and
socio-economic knowledge



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The MedMPAnet Project is implemented in the framework of the UNEP/MAP-GEF MedPartnership, with the financial support of EC, AECID and FFEM.



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Support the planning, zoning and development
of a Marine Protected Area in the Porto Palermo
Bay (Albania), based on sound scientific and
socio-economic knowledge”

Study required and financed by:

MedMPAnet^{project}

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FOREWORD

Many valuable natural habitats on the coastal zone in the Mediterranean are not ecologically evaluated to be designated as Coastal or Marine Protected Areas. Enlarging percentage/size of protected areas is required in numerous documents adopted at national and international scale. Within that framework, the “Regional Project for the Development of a Mediterranean Marine and Coastal Protected Areas (MPAs) Network through the boosting of MPAs Creation and Management” (the “MedMPAnet Project”) was developed in order to promote the creation of new protected areas.

The MedMPAnet Project is an integral part of the UNEP/MAP-GEF MedPartnership Project “Strategic Partnership for the Mediterranean Sea Large Ecosystem” led by UNEP/MAP (Athens) and is implemented by the RAC/SPA (Tunis), with financial support from the European Union (EU), the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation to Development (AECID) and the French Global Environment Facility (FFEM).

More particularly in the framework of the “MedMPAnet Pilot Project in Albania”, the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Water Administration and RAC/SPA have organized in Tirana, on May 3rd, 2012, an Inception Meeting for the Project. During this meeting, the Albanian Ministry of Environment representatives have been informed about the Project activities planned in Albania, and the RAC/SPA representatives get informed about the development made by Albania in terms of marine and coastal protected areas creation. This discussion led also to the choice of the pilot site to be developed as an MPA in Albania, which is the Porto Palermo Bay.

In this regard and in order to help a close coordination and smooth implementation of the MedMPAnet Pilot Project at Albanian national level, it was agreed, based on a joint selection process between RAC/SPA and the Ministry of Environment, to entrust this task to Institute for Nature Conservation in Albania (INCA), an Albanian national organization that will coordinate the Pilot Project implementation on behalf of and in close consultation with the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Water Administration and RAC/SPA.

National context

The situation analysis in the Strategic Plan for Marine and Coastal Protected Areas in Albania (SPMCPA), developed lately with the support of UNDP, concludes that despite the coastal area of Albania being one of the biodiversity hotspots in the Mediterranean Sea, there is a

lack of information on the conservation status of key habitats and species, with which to develop an SPMCPA. Gap filling (providing this information) is, therefore, proposed to form a key outcome of the implementation of SPMCPA. The situation analysis indicates that Albanian marine and coastal ecosystems contribute to sustaining human health, lifestyle, and the food production needed for the economic development and well-being of the coastal population. However, Albanian marine and coastal ecosystems are under increasing pressure. The pressure primarily comes from a rapid increase in coastal urban development and the resulting increase in human use of coastal and marine ecosystems.

Despite the significance of marine and coastal ecosystems to the social and economic development of Albania and the increasing pressures that these marine and coastal ecosystems face there is a lack of administrative capacity and availability of financial and in kind resources with which to manage these pressures. Capacity building and financial resourcing are, therefore, proposed to form key outcomes of the implementation of SPMCPA.

The current MCPA system is not representative of the marine and coastal habitats and ecosystems diversity. Indeed, most MCPAs are currently coastal (only one marine PA) and a number of coastal zones are still unprotected despite their essential ecological and socio-economical role on a national or Mediterranean level. 85 % of the currently protected coastal sites are along the Adriatic coast which emphasises the low number of MCPAs on the Ionian coastlines. Existing MCPA in Albania cannot be defined as being part of an ecological network, but are initial systems from which a consistent and coherent network must be established, particularly integrating some MPAs in the open sea.

The SPMCPA reviewed the criteria for selecting habitats and species to be included within the national network of MCPA. These criteria reflect Albanian national and also international criteria for sustaining marine and coastal biodiversity. The SPMCPA based on these criteria proposed the following areas for gazetting to form the Albanian network of Marine and Coastal Protected areas.

- The Bay of Porto-Palermo
- The area from Vjosa river mouth to Sazan and Karaburun (the entire Vlora Bay)
- The area from Cape Rodoni to Patoku lagoon
- The coastal area from Buna river mouth to Viluni lagoon

The objectives of each MCPA should be to sustain the biodiversity and ecosystem health of the specified area, to contribute to the biodiversity and ecosystem health of the network and to contribute to biodiversity and ecosystem health nationally and internationally.

Project context

The pilot project is supporting the planning, zoning and development of a Marine Protected Area in the Porto Palermo Bay (Albania), based on sound scientific and socio-economic knowledge. It intends also to identify stakeholders' participation mechanisms to the Porto Palermo Bay MPA management and planning, and support its financial sustainability.

In order to support RAC/SPA in planning, zoning and developing a Marine Protected Area in the Porto Palermo Bay marine area, INCA is required to:

- Carry out an ecological study on the Porto Palermo Bay marine area (mapping of marine habitats, census and inventories of fish and invertebrates, identification of priority areas for conservation, etc.);
- Produce GIS-based maps for the Porto Palermo Bay marine area;
- Undertake a socio-economic study, with a particular attention on fisheries and fleet operating locally and in the surrounding areas, touristic activities and any other relevant aspect;
- Identify stakeholders (individuals and organized groups) to participate in the MPA-creation process,

survey their needs and demands and propose participatory mechanisms tailored to the new MPA demonstration area;

- Elaborate a management plan including a zoning for the Porto Palermo Bay marine area;
- Contribute to the establishment of a sustainable financial mechanism of the Porto Palermo Bay MPA;
- Provide support to the on-job training activities that could be assured by international experts associated to the Pilot Project execution.

The good running of the above-mentioned activities will be ensured through a close partnership between INCA and RAC/SPA, in close consultation with the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Water Administration of Albania.

This publication specifically includes the results of the socio-economic study that will support planning, zoning and development of the Porto Palermo MPA. The study analyses the actual socio-economic situation of the area identifying main stakeholder groups and their role in the development of the area. The socio-economic study placed particular attention on fisheries study on fleet locally operating in the surrounding areas, touristic activities and any other relevant aspect. It provides useful recommendations for the development of the area, particularly regarding tourism activities that can be developed in the area to diversify the tourist offer and increase incomes for local businesses and communities.

CONTENT

Foreword

1. Site Location.....	7
2. Socio-economic Characteristics.....	9
2.1. Socio-demographic profile of Vlora region.....	10
2.2. Socio-demographic profile of Himara region.....	11
2.3. Cultural heritage	12
2.4. Living Conditions.....	13
2.5. Demographic Trends and Population Distribution.....	16
2.6. Household Structure.....	17
2.7. Local Economy.....	17
2.8. Education.....	18
2.9. Sport and Cultural Activities.....	18
3. Stakeholder Analysis Recommendations.....	19
4. Main potentials and problems.....	21
4.1. S.W.O.T. Analysis.....	22
5. Tourism Development.....	23
5.1. Analysis of existing strategies and development plans.....	24
5.1.1. Government programme for tourism.....	24
5.1.2. Tourism strategies and legislation.....	24
5.1.3. Strategic Plan of Vlora Region.....	26
5.1.4. Territorial/spatial Plan of Himara Municipality.....	27
5.2. Tourism dimensions and trends.....	28
5.2.1. National.....	28
5.2.2. Tourism industry.....	30
5.3. Potentials for future development of tourism in the area.....	30
5.3.1. Visitors and services.....	32
5.3.2. Accessibility.....	32
5.4. Sources of threats and impacts from tourism activities.....	32
5.5. Sustainable development model.....	34
5.5.1. Tourist Tools, Actors and Marketing Offer.....	37
5.5.2. Basic elements for the creation of a tourist package for the gastronomy segment.....	38
5.5.3. Cultural tourism.....	38
5.5.4. Main tools for promotion.....	39
Bibliography.....	41

A Summary of Answers to the Open-ended Questions of the Survey



1. SITE LOCATION

The study's target area, Porto Palermo Bay, known also as Panorma Bay in ancient history, is located within the Region of Vlora, a mainly mountainous and hilly territory, which contains valleys and meadows enabling the local population to make their living through the agricultural and livestock production. The region has a coastline of 144 km, plenty of beautiful beaches that alongside with its natural and historic assets provide real prospects for the development of a multidimensional tourism. Furthermore, the area is a distinctive geomorphological coastal region characterized by steep mountains growing over the narrow shore.

The Porto Palermo Bay area's boundaries start southeast of Himara town (approximately 10 km south of Himara), between the peninsula of Panorma, and stretches over toward the south bordering with the peninsula of Kavadon in the Ionian Sea, covering a 600 ha area. This small tectonic bay encloses also a small and attractive rocky peninsula, entering about 300 meters to the sea, which is home to a fortress, The Castle of Ali Pasha at Porto Palermo (Albanian: Kalaja e Ali Pashë Tepelenës në Porto Palermo), commonly asserted by guide books and local tourist guides to have been constructed in early 19th century by Ali Pasha of Tepelena, - the famous late 18th and early 19th century ruler over the eastern part of the Ottoman Empire, - to honor his much-beloved wife, Vasiliqi.

As many researchers would note, most probably the castle was built by the Venetians as it could be relieved by sea and it has the same triangular plan with round towers found in the Venetian fort at Butrint. In 1921 the castle was called Venetian.¹ At that time the identity of its builders ought to have been clear, from a plaque above the entrance gate. This

plaque is now missing but the weathering of the stones clearly shows that it has not been missing for many decades. Almost certainly this plaque had a carving of the lion of St. Mark. The most plausible explanation of the error found in the guidebooks is a rewriting of history in the communist period. Re-ascribing a colonial legacy to construction by an Albanian fits a nationalist isolationist agenda, argues Scriven (1921).

The castle would have been vulnerable to cannon fire from the hill above and this also suggests an early date for its construction when cannon had not developed the range they had later. In 1662 the Venetians feared the Turks would recondition it.² In 1803 Ali Pasha offered the castle and port to the Royal Navy. At which time the fort only had 4 or 5 cannon implying that Ali Pasha did not see the fort as important for him.³

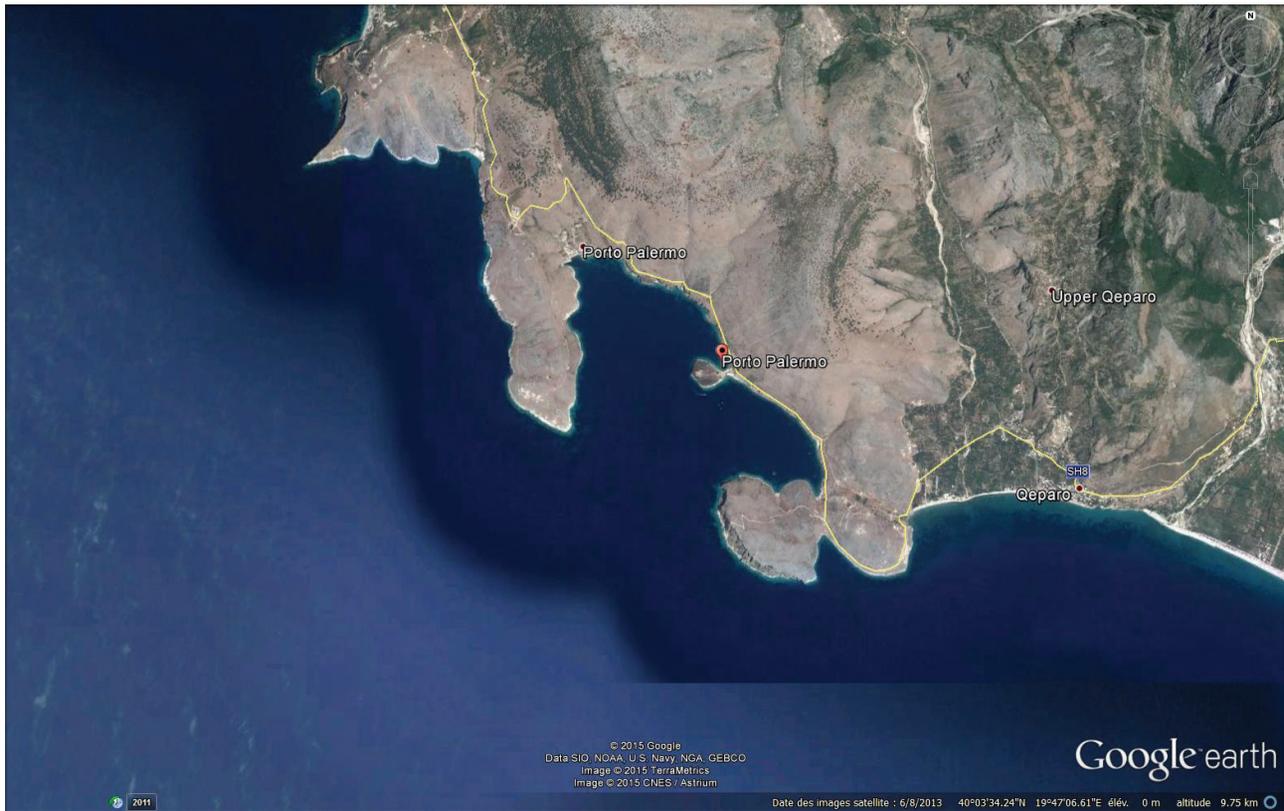
The triangular-shaped castle runs 150 x 400 meters with the walls reaching as high as 20 meters. The peninsula on which the castle is located has evergreen Mediterranean bushes while from its walls one can enjoy a great view of the bay. Porto Palermo Bay is also home to great diving opportunities, as this natural bay has been used as a safe harbor for ships since ancient times.

Porto Palermo is a protected bay and had a very limited access in the former time (until 1991), as it was a military area. Nevertheless, due to the traffic of military vessels, this area might have been impacted. In the recent years a small fish farm has been established within the bay. The surrounding area is barren, but the peninsula is covered by evergreen Mediterranean vegetation (*Source*: One day trip: Castles of Albania's Ionian coast, 2011).

¹ Geographical Review vol. 11 n°.2 p.205, 1921 *Some Highways of Albania and a forgotten Riviera*, by Brig. Gen. George P. Scriven, pp 198-206 pub. American Geographical Society;

² p 191 "Eternal Butrint" by R. Hodges 2006 London;

³ p 86 J. W. Baggally 1938 *Ali Pasha and Great Britain* Basil Blackwell: Oxford.



Geomorphological Setting

The coast from Vlorë to Dhërmi consists of rocky wave-cut cliffs. The coast from Himara consists of narrow plains with gravel beaches that present one third of the Himara's coastline. Several of its beaches, such as Livadhi and Potami of Himara, Gjipe, Jaliskari and the central beach of Drimades, and Jala of Vuno have become lately tourist centres.

Towards inland the gravel beaches change into the landscape of evergreen vegetation, filled with olive terraces and citrus orchards. The terrain quickly elevates from the sea for about 50 to 80 metres inland, towards hilly plains where the villages of Himara area reside.

The area relief is typical karst. The quality of the soil is relatively poor due to the presence of the limestone rocks (see Kabo, 2004: 21). This condition has resulted in fragmented landholdings and limited agricultural productivity of the region. Therefore the area is more

suitable for sheep and goat breeding, cultivation of olives, oranges, vines and corn in addition to the fishing by the coast.

The climate is Mediterranean. The average winter temperatures range from 10 to 12 degrees with the coldest month in January. The average summer temperatures vary from about 25 to 37 degrees with the hottest month in August (from Pano *et al.*, 2006: 108).

Furthermore, recent development and feasibility studies report that the Region of Vlorë has great chances for developing a vigorous tourism integrated with a good management of resources which generate profits, create jobs, offer choices and opportunities for people to live and invest in Vlorë, Saranda and Delvina while relishing and preserving the nature's and environment's inheritance for the present and future generations. The Vlorë Region will be a fair accessible market to all local producers whose living is based on agriculture, livestock, fishing and forestry (*Source*: Strategic plan of Vlorë region: The zero emissions territory, June 2011).

2. SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS

The study's wider target (*Prefecture of Vlora*) area comprises 26 settlements (3 districts, 7 municipalities, 19 communes and 199 villages), which vary in population size, commercial activities, lifestyles and national and religious

affiliation. The study's target area – Porto Palermo Bay and Himara municipality with its surrounding villages – is home to approximately 9,938⁴ residents.

Table 1. Key Demographic Data for Region of Vlora and Study Target Area

District	Residents	Municipality	Residents	Commune	Residents
Delvine	11'717	Finiq	1'333	Mesopotam	2'786
		Delvine	5'754	Vergo	1'844
Sarande	37'798	Sarande	17'233	Lukovë	2'916
			2'123	Dhivër	1'396
		Konispol	Livadhja	1'165	
			Xarrë	4'263	
			Markat	1'859	
			Ksamil	2'994	
			Aliko	3'849	
Vlore	126'125	Vlore	79'513	Qendër	7'621
		Orikum	5'503	Novoselë	8'209
		Selenice	2'235	Brataj	2'849
		Himare	2'822	Horë-Vranisht	2'080
			Shushicë	3'981	
			Vllahinë	3'111	
			Kotë	3'516	
			Sevaster	1'720	
			Armen	2'965	
Total	175'640		116'516		59'124

Source: INSTAT, 2011.

⁴Population figures for the Municipality of Himara and its surrounding villages were obtained from the Civil Registry Offices of the Municipality of Himara, October 2013.

2.1. Socio-demographic profile of Vlorë region

The estimated number of inhabitants in the Prefecture of Vlorë as of January 1st, 2013 was 173,130 inhabitants (*Source*: INSTAT's official population data based on 2011 Housing and Population Census), which represents 6.21 % of Albania's total population, 2,787,615, while the region covers a total area of 2,706 km², or 9.5 % of the country's total. Population density is low, about 64 inhabitants/km². The majority of the population of the region lives in Vlorë, while the share of urban population in the Region is 54 %, whereas for Vlorë district this share is 58 % (INSTAT, 2013).

Vlorë prefecture's population has decreased with 8.5 percent between 2001 and 2013, a figure almost equal to the national average of 8.2 %. In 2013 lived in this county 173 thousand from 193 thousand inhabitants that was in 2001. Vlorë urban population has increased from

104 thousand to 117 thousand inhabitants, with a total increase of 12.1 percent.

The rural population of Vlorë has followed the national trend being reduced by 33 percent during this period and decreased by 89 thousand that was in 2001 to 56 thousand in 2013. Vlorë district area is 2,706 square kilometers and the population density is 64 inhabitants per square kilometer.

The most common household model in Vlorë is a family with four members. The average life expectancy is 71.4 years, 68.5 for men and 74.3 for women. According to data from local records, the average age in the Region is 28.6. In some communes like Mesopotam, Dhivër and Himara the percentage of population above 65 (about 30 %) is a lot higher than the Region's average. One reason for this unusual share is the large scale of emigration in these areas. Since younger people tend to be keen to emigrate, the share of the middle age group has shrunk, leading to a higher proportion of people above 65 in the remaining population.



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Figure 1. View of the Vlorë city

Another important phenomenon is that the communes of Vloora district have a higher share of the 0-14 age group, especially the mountainous communes. One plausible explanation of this trend could be that these communes have lower rates of emigration. Relating these

trends to the issue of poverty, it is worthy pointing out that the mountainous communes of Vloora district, presently the poorest in the Region, have sufficient human potential to support development.

Table 2. Key Demographic Indicators for the Prefecture of Vloora

Prefecture of Vloora	Year 2001	Year 2013
Total Population	193,074	173,130
Urban Population	103,866	116,999
Rural Population	89,208	56,131
Urbanization Index	54	68
Area (km ²)	2,706	2,706
Population Density	71	64

Source: INSTAT's Housing and Population Census 2011; 2013; Opendata.al

2.2. Socio-demographic profile of Himara region

The province of Himara is composed of the city of Himara, along with the villages of Palasa, Gjilek, Dhërmi, Iliaz, Vuno, Qeparo, Kudhës and Pilur.

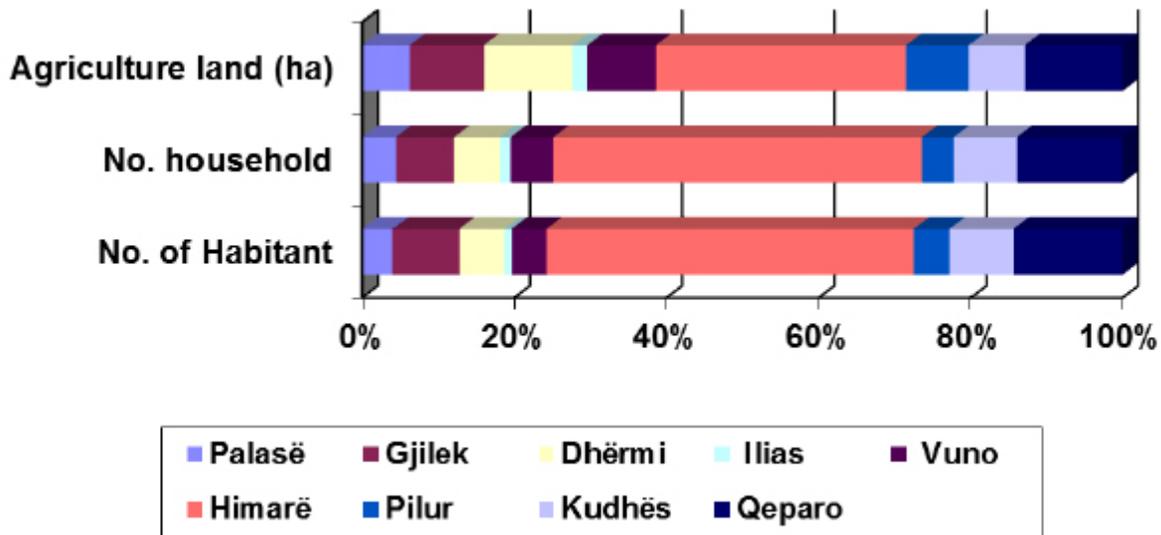
- The region of Himara lies along the coast of the Ionian Sea, bordering on the north with the Peak of Llogara, and on the south with the Borsh River;
- On the northeast, east and southeast it is surrounded by the mountain ridge of Akroceraun, with Çika, its highest peak 2,045m above sea level;

- The streams of Ksarrollakos, Polopotamo, Gjipe, Visha and Qeparo flow across the region of Himara, which during very hot seasons may also dry up;
- The main bays in the sea are those of Spile and Panorma (Porto Palermo);
- The main sea beaches are located in Dhraleo (Palasë), Perivol (Gjilek) Jaliskar, Shkambo, Gjipe (Dhërmi), Jal (Vuno), Meadow or Livadh (Village of Himara), Spile, Potam, Llaman (town of Himara) and Beach of Qeparo (Qeparo).

Table 3. Key Demographic Data for Himara Municipality

Nr.	Item	Size
1.	Agriculture Land	715 ha
2.	Arable Land	26 ha
3.	Orchards	121 ha
4.	Vineyards	34 ha
5.	Olive Grove	532 ha
6.	Area per head	1,500 m ²
7.	Inhabitants	4,800
8.	Households (HHs)	1,396

Source: Municipality of Himara, 2013



Himara is the main settlement considering number of people and families as well as agriculture land. Most of the villages of Himara area, such as Palasë, Dhërmi, Ilias, Vuno, Qeparo, are scattered along the national coastal road while the other two villages, Pilur, which is located on the foothills of Çipit Mountain and Kudhës situated on the foothill of Gjinvlashi Mountain. Coming from Vlorë, after the mountain pass of Llogara (1,025 metres) the national road opens to a great view on the first two villages of the area, situated on the hills that stretch behind the Çika Mountain. The first village of Himara area is Palasa, while Dhërmi, is situated one kilometre south of Palasa. Similarly to Palasa the village lies on the hills that extend about 150 and 200 metres above the sea level.

On its south-western side it opens up into gravel beaches that together with the beaches of Himara and Vuno represent the main tourist attraction in the summer months. Nowadays tourism provides the main income for the village beside remittances. Narrow coastal road leads further south to the village of Ilias, which lies behind the mountain of Mjegulloshi, a kilometre away from Dhërmi. Vuno is the next village extending on the hills next to the national coastal road.

From Vuno the road curls further south, through the municipal town of Himara, and leads to Qeparo. It is the last village situated near this road. Nowadays Qeparo is divided in two parts. The old part is located on the hill and ranges from about 300 to 400 metres above the sea level. The new part extends along the coastal road and slowly descends to the coastal sandy beaches. The latter are less attractive for the tourists, than other coastal places of Himara, Dhërmi and Vuno mainly because of the bad infrastructure and its distance from Vlorë.

The last two villages Kudhës and Pilur are situated a couple of kilometres away from the coastal road. Because of their geographical position they are socially and economically quite isolated. Kudhës lies on the mountain

hills of Gjinvlashi, through which a small creek winds, bearing the same name as the village.

Pilur is situated on the hills behind the municipal town of Himara. Its name is said to derive from the word pile, meaning the top and referring to the village's uphill location. Like Kudhës, Pilur is also believed to be founded during the Ottoman period.

2.3. Cultural heritage

Vlora Region is a repository of interesting cultural traditions, which are the expression of a remarkable ethno-cultural area, called "Labëri". These traditions can be found in many fields: architecture, folklore, music, handicraft, gastronomy, etc.

The Region maintains the tradition of Iso-Polyphony, classified by UNESCO in 2005 as a masterpiece of the oral and intangible heritage of humanity. Iso-polyphony is a sophisticated form of group singing, derived from Byzantine church music, and performed mostly by men. Nowadays, this tradition is adversely affected by poverty, absence of legal protection, lack of financial support for practitioners, and emigration of young people from rural areas. The Region is also well known for its crafts, including traditional costumes of the different communes, handmade carpets and tapestries, woollen covers, knitting, embroidery, felt processing, work tools, and musical instruments.

Traditionally, brides prepared their own handmade dowry and in some villages this tradition is still practiced. For this reason in most village houses original and handmade traditional costumes, carpets, and embroidery can be found. Presently, there are very few places where tourists can view or purchase such handicrafts. There is great potential for reviving a few ethnographic museums and developing commercial activities where tourists can both observe the process of producing handicraft and purchase the products.



Figure 2. The monument in the Flag Square (Sheshi Flamurit), Vlorë

In the city of Vlorë, there are three functioning museums, the Museum of National Independence, the Museum of Historic Relics (or History Museum) and the Ethnographic Museum. Each of the latter presents different aspects of the regional history. The fourth museum in the Region is the Archaeological Museum of Butrint, which contains the archaeological material discovered in the site.

The town of Himara has an important role to play as «capital» of the Porto Palermo-Palasa sub-region. Only other coastal city, Himara and its region offer a different experience than the southern half of the coast, this identity being marked by traditional way of life, mix of sea and country activities and an exceptional architectural heritage. Dhërmi, Old Himara, Qeparo, Borsh, Lukova are five traditional villages in this region. They are architectural

treasures and are considered as such by the relevant national and local authorities: they are used as anchors for tourism development.

The Castle of Porto Palermo and the Church of Vasiliqi (Ali Pasha's wife)

The Castle of Porto Palermo, Himara enjoys the status of the Monument of Culture since 1948's decision of the Institute of Sciences on announcing the first official list of monuments under state protection (as stipulated in the Official Gazette, Nr. 95-1948, dated 10/16/1948).

This castle, which is also known as the Castle of Ali Pasha from Tepelenë, is located near the city of Himara, in the bay of the same name. It was designed by a French engineer reflecting the shape of a pentagon. The entrance gate is located on the east side. The walls are 1.6m thick. It is located amid evergreen Mediterranean bushes and from its walls one can enjoy the view of the bay. Along the connection to the mainland lies the church of Agios Nikolaos (St. Nicola). Back in 1806, the French consul Pouqueville (François Charles Hugues Laurent Pouqueville)⁵ writes in his notes that Ali Pashë Tepelena granted him a reception in the Kastri Castle in Himara. According to findings from coastal research studies conducted by Janko Pali, the forehead of this castle's gate is engraved with Greek letters of the Byzantine style.

2.4. Living Conditions

According to the indicators of the building numbers per family and the living space per person, Albania continues to be far from average rates in the region or in Europe. Compare to other European places, Albania has had on the lowest levels in the housing buildings. Based on indicators, such as number of the buildings per 1000 people, persons per room and square meters, Albania results with the lowest indicators. Even that the building numbers per 1000 people have grown again, the indicators show that compare to the United European Nations are still the lowest. Awareness increase for better living conditions and business development has affected the construction market positively.

The average life expectancy is 71.4 years, 68.5 for men and 74.3 for women, with the percentage of population above 65 (about 30 %) being a lot higher than the Region's average. According to data from local records, the average age in the Region is 28.6.

One reason for this unusual share is the large scale of emigration in these areas. Since younger people tend to be keen to emigrate, the share of the middle age group has shrunk, leading to a higher proportion of people above 65 in the remaining population.

⁵ François Charles Hugues Laurent Pouqueville (4 November 1770 – 20 December 1838) was a French diplomat, writer, explorer, physician and historian, member of the Institut de France. First as the Turkish Sultan's hostage, then as Napoleon Bonaparte's general consul at the court of Ali Pasha, he travelled extensively throughout Ottoman occupied Greece from 1798 to 1820.

Table 4. Key Tourism Data of the Study Target Area

Albanian Tourists			Foreign Tourists		
Year	In	Out	Year	In	Out
2004	82,492	94,560	2004	33,663	34,107
2005	23,664	30,494	2005	3,739	3,549
2006	76,731	97,398	2006	28,743	7,664
2007	58,485	52,901	2007	24,540	23,884
2008	73,417	77,558	2008	11,351	10,320
2009	143,523	140,995	2009	50,974	50,413
2010	189,918	190,918	2010	72,856	72,099
2011	74,590	85,265	2011	10,770	10,045

Source: Vlora Regional Council, 2013

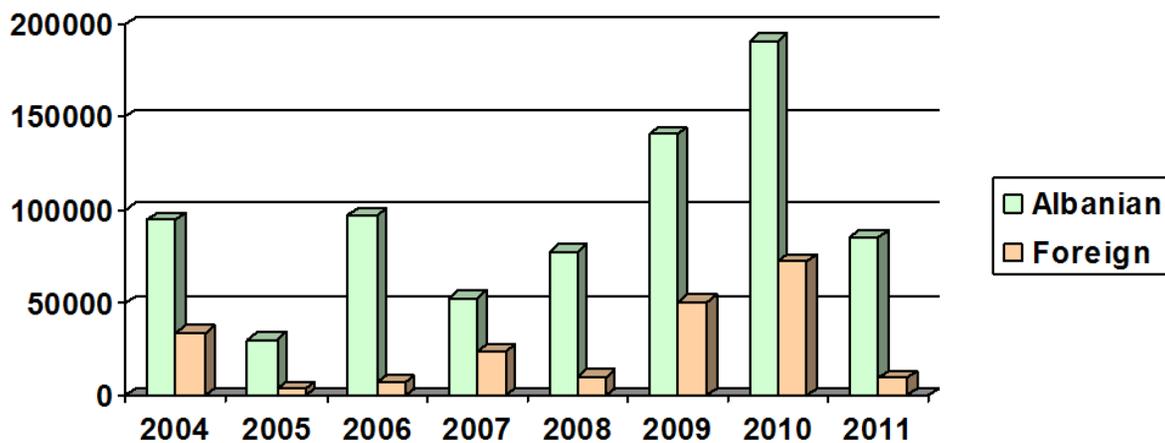


Figure 3. Number of Albanian and foreign tourists visiting the area

According to data obtained from the region, tourism generates 23 percent of its total incomes. It is considered as the main sector for the economic development of the region with opportunities for further growth.

However, recent feasibility and management studies of the region suggest that to Vlora Region is as important and necessary also the preparation of human resources on tourism through:

- establishing new schools that prepare specialized personnel for the tourism industry;
- providing capacity building for the existing professional schools to attract more young people;

c) creating opportunities for fast professional training as well as vocational training;

d) promoting the preservation and enrichment of cultural and environmental assets of the Region which must part of the school programmes and youth education at large.

Migration within Albania continues to be very high. According to INSTAT (2013) the data showed in the table above, Vlora region has witnessed certain growth in the urban population compared to the rural one. This indication is also supported by the evidence of the high growth rate of new buildings constructed in the area over the past few years.

According to the data from the regional authorities, 27 % of the families have at least one emigrant member. It is apparent that emigration is an important issue for the study area, where the proportion of emigrants against total population, stands at a ratio of 38 % (Strategic Plan for Vlora, 2011).

The majority of residents of the study area live in the town of Himara. The area is well known for its natural beauty and diversity, old civilization and economic, natural

and historic significance. The main income generation activities include:

- Agricultural activities and farming (crops, vegetation, fruits);
- Livestock raising (cattle, sheep, goats);
- Fishing;
- Tourism.

Table 5. Urban and Rural Population Data in Vlora Prefecture 2001-2013

Year	Urban	Rural	Total	Urban %	Rural %
2001	103,866	89,208	193,074	53.8	46.2
2002	105,895	87,32	193,215	54.8	45.2
2003	107,476	85,707	193,183	55.6	44.4
2004	108,98	83,651	192,631	56.6	43.4
2005	110,403	81,521	191,924	57.5	42.5
2006	111,625	79,346	190,971	58.5	41.5
2007	112,439	77,111	189,55	59.3	40.7
2008	113,579	74,473	188,053	60.4	39.6
2009	114,38	71,987	186,367	61.4	38.6
2010	115,153	68,356	183,509	62.8	37.2
2011	115,845	64,216	180,061	64.3	35.7
2012	116,474	60,145	176,619	65.9	34.1
2013	116,999	56,131	173,13	67.6	32.4

Source: INSTAT's Housing and Population Census 2011; 2013.

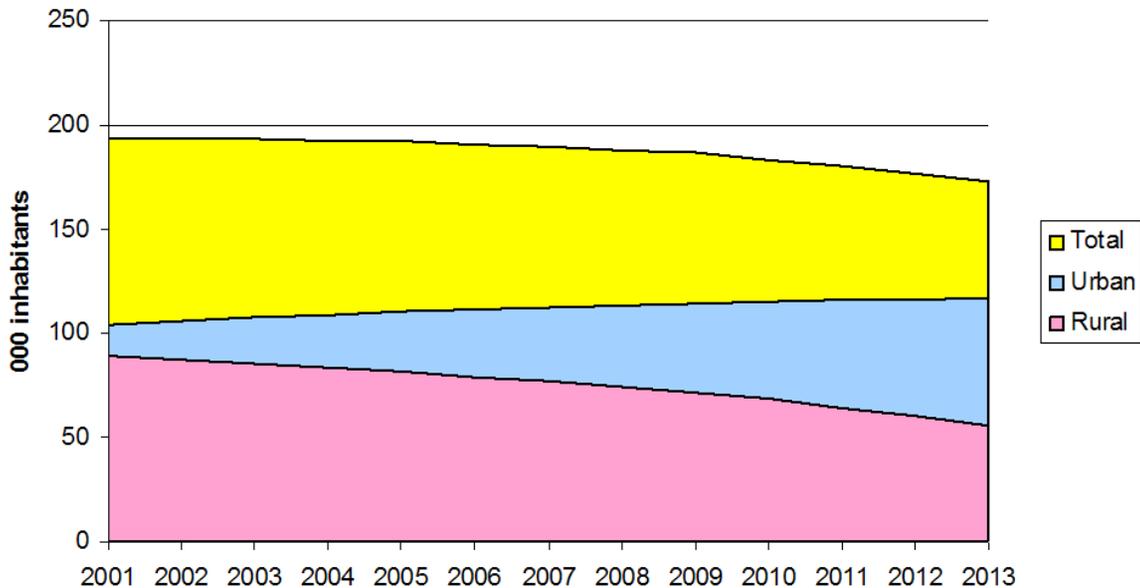


Figure 4. Population trends

2.5. Demographic Trends and Population Distribution

Population and Demographics - There is evidence of rural-urban migration over the last decade and in particular, among the youth who seek both educational

and employment opportunities in towns and cities. There is decreasing migration towards rural settlements due to a lack of basic infrastructure (water, electricity, road communications) and lack of employment opportunities outside of fishing, agriculture and tourism and very little support for commercial projects and business start-ups.

Table 6. Key Demographic Data for Himara Municipality and Surrounding Villages

Villages / Municipalities	No. of Inhabitants	No. of Households	Agriculture Land (ha)	Land Area/Person (m ²)
Palasë	397	126	135	3,700
Gjilek	870	222	212	3,000
Dhërmi	587	173	253	3,000
Ilias	100	42	42	3,400
Vuno	457	162	196	3,600
Himarë Municipality	4,800	1,396	715	1,500
Pilur	467	120	178	2,900
Kudhës	830	238	160	2,000
Qeparo	1,430	401	280	2,200
Total	9,938	2,880	2,171	Avg. 2,811

Sources: Municipality of Himara, Department of Statistics, 2013;

The average age of residents is 31.2 years (INSTAT, 2012) old in the area settlements, which reflects the fact that there is potential of young people in the area who are engaged in physical agricultural activities. There are slightly

more females than males in area and there are slightly higher number of males than females in the rural areas, with an average of 3.9 members in each household (INSTAT, 2012).

Table 7. Key Healthcare Indicators for the Study Target Area

Communes / Villages	Healthcare Centres	Ambulatory Healthcare Centres	Women Health Counseling Centres	Children Healthcare Counseling Services	Number of medical doctors	Number of nurses
Vlora Prefecture	30	151	180	196	129	478
Vlora District	17	86	102	118	98	357
Municipality of Vlora	5	0	4	20	55	145
Municipality of Himara	1	8	9	9	3	15

2.6. Household Structure

The age structure of the study area is dominated by a young population. This is influencing the average age of the population, which is 31.2 years. This is a very good potential for the development of the project area. The medium size family, with an average of 3.9 members, dominates in terms of household structure composition. It is expected that the growth of the population in area will be normal.

The project area has had and still has a live dynamics according to the population. According to the latest public data available, the average yearly growth rate of population in the past 10 years results 6.3% per year.

Great demographic changes have taken place in Albania after the 90's with all the regions having been affected, albeit to different degrees. The main demographic characteristics of this period have been large-scale migration, increased internal migration, and a decline of the fertility rate.

Regarding migration in the region, according to the data provided by the Regional Council, (RDS of Vlora), 27 per cent of the families have at least one migrant living and/or working abroad.

Fast changes after the 90s created a new employment system with the majority of people being self-employed or working in small-scale family activities in agriculture, services and tourism. Whereas the majority of the region's enterprises (95 percent of the overall number) are small ones with just 1-5 employees and only the remaining 5 percent employ more than 6 employees. Although there are only a few large companies with over 80 employees, they actually

employ 26,5 percent of the overall number of employees working in the region's active enterprises. More people are employed in production, trade and service enterprises.

2.7. Local Economy

The economy of the study area may be described as "twofold". There is urban economy with a large construction and service sector in Himara and the northern part of the area, and predominantly rural economy in the mountainous villages. As per the above, the dynamic sectors are mainly five:

- a) construction and services;
- b) livestock;
- c) agriculture;
- d) fishing sector;
- e) tourism.

a) Construction and services: The majority of construction and services (for the most part, they are considered medium enterprises) are concentrated in the town of Himara. The total numbers of registered tourism facilities and accommodation structures is 64 in total.

b) Livestock: Due to its alpine and subalpine pastures and meadows, the study area used to have and is developing now the livestock as an important economic activity, especially goats and sheep. The livestock sector is the most important in the Pilur and Kudhës areas, for its greatest number of sheep and goats heads. This sector employs a considerable number of persons. Geographical position, the terrain and local tradition has made the productive animal numbers be increasing.



Figure 5. View of the Porto Palermo bay



Figure 6. Inside the Porto Palermo bay

This growing development of livestock has come as a result the increased demand for livestock products and greater consumption of meat. In this area grow cattle, cows, goats, chickens, turkeys, horses, pigs and bees.

- c) **Agriculture:** The land is classified as of good quality and productive, suitable for various agricultural crops, such as the cultivation of grape, citrus and olives. According to the statistics of the Municipality, the surfaces planted with the above varieties are given as below:

- Viticulture (vitis viniferasp, San giovese, merlot, etc.);
- Olive (Kalinjot, Frantoio);
- Citrus (tangerine, orange, lemon).

As well, the climate conditions are favorable for the cultivation of fruits and vegetables, such as: figs,

plums, peaches, persimmon, almonds, pomegranates, and vegetables, especially watermelon, potato, melon, tomato, leek, onion, of high quality production.

The production of the local economy in the study area is largely consumed by the local market. The producers in fact are facing difficulties with the food processing possibilities and an organized market place. However, the tourism is the obvious sector, which should be relied upon to create market demand for agriculture and livestock.

- d) **Fishing sector:** Himara port serves as a secondary port, used mainly for tourism in Himara and the surrounding areas, and does not play any role in goods transfer.

Sea fishing activities are mainly carried out by the important fishing fleets of Vlora and Saranda, however smaller fishing fleets can be found in coastal villages. Fish vessels and drift nets are also used. Sea fish breeding activities are carried out mainly in the area of Qeparo and Porto Palermo.

Sea fish in this area can be considered of excellent quality and, due to the geographic position of the Region and of the streams of Ionian Sea, fishing can be done in large quantities. The variety of fished species is also relevant. Sardines, anchovies, and mackerels can be easily processed, and preserved naturally or in vegetable oil. Through artisanal processes, very valuable food preserves can be obtained.

At the moment, sea fish is rarely locally processed. Until now, only some small plants for the production of oil preserved fish have been identified, and packaged and/or branded products have not been identified. The market of fresh sea fish produced in Vlora Region is, until now, exclusively domestic, but it is extended in the whole southern Albania.

2.8. Education

There is a largely well-educated workforce, with large proportions of the local populations having access to primary, secondary and further education facilities. Education is given high priority in the area.

2.9. Sport and Cultural Activities

The local NGOs sector in general, and in particular the local environmental groups, have not experienced any expansion over the past years in the study area. Due to that, both in terms of the very small number of existing local organizations and the scope of their projects, international and Tirana-based NGOs have become an important factor in the management of the area, and their significance and influence is bound to increase.

3. STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS RECOMMENDATIONS

Key stakeholders were identified as:

- (a) those affected by conditions or activities taking place in the Porto Palermo Bay area; and,
- (b) those who have an influence or responsibility or interest in the area and its development.

The stakeholders include individuals, households, community associations and special interest groups, business and specific issue networks, agricultural producers, fishermen, business groups, tourism providers, central/local government representatives, and most importantly, domestic and international tourists.

Tourism Operators

- There is little capacity for accommodating tourists, in particular in sites of interest (such as, the Porto Palermo Bay and the surrounding panoramic villages);
- There is a need to develop a tourism association which would be able to present the tourist offer and provide for a more attractive tourist destination;
- Proposal to improve the tourism offer including local cultural/hiking trips and offer vineyard tours and wine-tasting.

Local Public Authorities

- Enable and facilitate coordination with relevant bodies;
- Increase human resources and improve existing capacities;
- Encourage other employment opportunities to reduce dependencies on tourism;
- Raise awareness about the need to support the tourism industry;
- Develop information campaigns with the media to facilitate broad awareness raising on tourism issues.

Local Businesses

- Local business representatives recognized the value of tourism in bringing income to the area. However, they were also aware of the limitations of the area to attract tourists without substantial infrastructure investments;
- There are a small number of credit schemes available to local businesses (largely from commercial banks, but also small- and mid-size financing institutions), however, there are some issues relating to property ownership or licensing for some businesses which may affect their ability to access credit.



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Figure 7. Meeting with local community

- There is a lack of diversification of the local economies and currently the economic situation is seasonally-affected.

Agricultural and Fishermen Groups

- There is a need to reflect the dynamic nature of the local ecosystem in the legal framework, in order to adapt to changing needs of the fish stock;
- There is a distinction between fishing for personal use and for commercial purposes and these differences should be recognized in the licensing process;
- The inputs from fishing related organizations also suggest that these bodies recognize the value of adopting a strategic tourism and fishing plan;
- The migration of youth to urban centres has affected the workforce that the farms can access;
- Many farmers are not aware of agricultural associations or support in their area;
- Local produce cannot be competitive with imported mass-produced agriculture and therefore, it was proposed that a “Buy Local” campaign should be developed, and supported by appropriate tax incentives.

Challenges:

- Lack of opportunities to receive feedback from local authorities on developments, programmes of improvements to infrastructure and other opportunities;

- Lack of opportunity to connect with tourism service providers to create an attractive tourism destination package;
- There is little awareness of the Porto Palermo Bay as a tourist destination outside the region and Albania.

Suggestions:

- Tourism promotion activities including the creating of marketing promotional items/literature, wine-tasting, hiking, boating tours, etc.;
- Develop agro-tourism activities and connect to handicraft producers;
- Promote Porto Palermo Bay as a tourism destination to both local and international audiences.

Local Stakeholders and Specific Interest Groups

- Local stakeholders and specific interest groups/activists should be empowered to take forward a strategic awareness raising campaign as they currently undertake sporadic and uncoordinated activities which do not contribute to an overarching strategic plan;
- Local stakeholders and specific interest groups/activists should be provided with unrestricted funding which would enable them to pursue research activities in response to need (environmental management, tourism opportunities, etc.);
- Awareness raising activities should be part of a coordinated and coherent strategy.

4. MAIN POTENTIALS AND PROBLEMS

Surveys of the main natural and cultural heritage sites reveal some major problems, which negatively affect their tourist fruition. Except Butrint, archaeological, historical and cultural sites are difficult to access, due to the lack of signage and the poor road network. Even local communities are sometimes unaware of the sites value and exact location.

- In the case of the Porto Palermo Bay, accessibility is more difficult due to the presence of a military base: in order to enter the site (the peninsula of Panormi), a special authorization is required.
- Additionally, the presence of abandoned military buildings and equipment spoils the landscape value of the site and the beautifully preserved Ali Pasha Castle. The castle itself is not furnished for tourist fruition and, being not guarded constantly, is exposed to acts of vandalism and decay.
- Cultural heritage sites in the mountainous part of the region are the most neglected, due to the concentration

of tourism activity on the coast. If persisting, this neglect could lead to the complete destruction of the monuments and to the irreversible loss of cultural tourism attractors in internal areas.

- Natural areas, on the other hand, are constantly threatened by illegal dumps and informal construction activities. An effective control on these sites, aimed to preserve their environmental values and tourist attractiveness, is a priority issue.
- In general, the whole environmental and cultural heritage of the Vlora Region lacks coordinated tourist marketing policies, integrated with effective preservation and sustainable management actions.
- Tourist services and infrastructure such as tourist guides, signage, transports, etc. are either non-existent or inadequate.
- Available information, especially on the Internet, is often fragmented and inconsistent.



Figure 8. After the meeting with local community

4.1. S.W.O.T. Analysis

A SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunity and Threats) analysis was carried out to assess development

potentials and critical aspects of the regional territory. The main findings are synthesized as follows:

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unspoilt landscapes, natural site and coastal area; • Potentially attractive cultural heritage site; (Ali Pasha Castle and the Church of Vassilikes in Porto Palermo); • Regional cultural and natural heritage already mapped within earlier projects and management studies; • Presence of abandoned and dilapidated buildings in the countryside (traditional houses, military buildings, etc.), which could represent a resource for tourism; • Strong sense of belonging and identity; • Tourism development initiatives; • Presence of tourist information signage in the archaeological areas of Orikum and Butrint. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uncontrolled construction activity; • Neglected or undiscovered cultural and archaeological heritage, poor tourist information available, lack of coordinate promotion; • Lack and scarce quality of tourist services, lack of professional training in the tourism sector, disproportionate quality/price ratio in tourist accommodation structures; • Low awareness on the importance of cultural heritage and traditional architecture for development; • General lack of urban quality, both in villages and in larger towns; • Incomplete value chains, lack of processing activities; • Uncertain land property rights.
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development projects already implemented in the area; • Existence of the Albanian Development Fund, programming interventions for infrastructure enhancement in the region; • Opportunities offered by decentralized cooperation and by EU funds addressed to local development, enhancement of cultural heritage, environmental protection, etc.; • Albania as a potential candidate country to enter European Union - IPA Programmes; • EU funds for cross-border programmes and projects among Vloa Region and Greek regions; • Growing interest in Albania as a tourist destination; • Growing global interest in quality agro-food products - development and enhancement of organic farming, quality and food security certifications; • Women empowerment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor capacities to design projects complying to EU standards could prevent access to international funds; • Scarce capacity to manage international funds; • Tendency for uncontrolled construction, if persistent, will irreversibly deteriorate natural landscapes and destroy traditional buildings and local identity; • Lack of job opportunities can cause depopulation of rural villages, deterioration of environment and landscape, loss of cultural heritage and identity; • Military bases on the coast, limiting the access to several sites of cultural and environmental value, can discourage tourism development; • Competition of tourist destinations that can better balance development and environmental protection.

5. TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

Tourism has seen some improvements over the past few years in Himara town, its surroundings and Porto Palermo Bay. Recently, tourism has expanded, as the natural and cultural potential of the area offers a high variety of tourism opportunities: bathing and water sports, rural, mountainous, cultural, hiking, etc.

However, the region is currently suffering from the lack of integrated management and lack of self-sustainable tourism activities, with only beach tourism during the summer time being promoted.

The region has not really developed its tourism sector. The neighbouring countries, namely Croatia, Greece and Italy, are very much advanced in terms of the quantity of international tourists it brings in and the quality of tourism offered. The current tourism market relies heavily on Albanian visitors. Saranda's proximity to the World Heritage Sites of Butrinti and Corfu makes it the main attraction point for foreign tourists to the site, the majority of who are daily trippers. Therefore, Saranda has the highest percentage of foreign visitor entries compared to the rest of the Southern Coast (30 %), with Vlora estimated to be around 2 % and Himara 1 %.

The tourism industry varies significantly across the region – in and around Saranda tourism (mainly foreign

day tourists) is mainly heritage - cultural and beach tourism related (mainly local overnight), while in and around Vlora it is eco-tourism (Llogara National Park) and beach tourism. In all other settlements between Vlora and Saranda it is mainly beach tourism. The forecasts up to the year 2020 are, however, more dramatic. Steady growth is envisaged, with more than 250,000 tourist arrivals expected in 2020. The share of foreign tourists will grow in the total, but Albanians will still make almost 70 % of incoming tourists.

The major goal is to build a new tourism destination. To do that, the following tourism assets are needed:

- an image to attract the tourists (marketing positioning has to be chosen by the decision makers);
- accommodation facilities to attract the operators (good quality accommodation to cater for various types of tourists as well as enough quantity to achieve the critical mass);
- long season to get a good return for the investors (keep the season reasonably long);
- choice of activities to make the visitors spend their money in the Albanian Riviera;
- good accessibility at a low price.



Figure 9. Discussing with local expert

Tourism development should be concentrated close to the regional entry points and attractions, as well as pools of potential labor (such as Saranda and Butrinti). This “opportunistic” strategy will be in line with the major tourist market expectations including big tour operators and international investors, which are to be the major driving forces behind the Albanian tourist development in the near future. However, other criteria, such as more equitable distribution of future development benefits, rising expectations of the population throughout the entire region, and natural advantages for development of complementary types of tourism along the southern coast, point towards the recommendation that, in addition to a concentrated type of tourism, this development should also be spread to other locations along the coast.

Eco-tourism as the solution is definitely a legitimate and qualitative trend of tourism. This is a goal to be achieved, but the elementary building rules are already so difficult to enforce in Albania that it is not realistic to speak only of eco-tourism. Eco-tourism in the Albanian case could only be a complement to more traditional types of tourism development. Therefore, part of the tourism strategy should support several pilot projects that could become the “window” for private developers.

Seven key aspects must be given specific attention, and decisive actions should be taken for each of them:

- i) security of land property;
- ii) easy accessibility;
- iii) competitive financing opportunities;
- iv) clear product policy including positioning, price, promotion;
- v) friendly legal and tax environment;
- vi) upgrading professional training;
- vii) good phasing.

5.1. Analysis of existing strategies and development plans

Almost all of the development programs and strategies at the national and regional level consider tourism as an outstanding potential for local development. There are a large number of planning and programming instruments regarding the local and regional territory and it is worth noticing the general consistency among them.

The strategic plan of Vlora region, is harmonized, with the national policy framework for tourism development, transferring in the local level the goals and objectives, in order to guaranty the integration of deferent levels of policies and programmes.

The central and local government has developed good strategic documents for the development of tourism, culture, environment, and agriculture, but quite all of them are not implemented, and still the area lacks the land use plans and regulations for the development of the sector.

5.1.1. Government programme for tourism

The Government Programme 2013-2017, puts very significant emphasis on tourism development. It sees tourism as a priority sector for the economy development, production growth and poverty alleviation.

The section on tourism fully embraces the principles of sustainability. The primary objective of the government is the development of sustainable tourism which also preserves and develops the natural and cultural heritage of Albania. It recognizes clearly the importance of an attractive environment as a pre-condition of successful tourism and rails against recent abuses in tourist areas.

The programme calls for a diversified form of tourism, developed through three sub programmes: cultural-historical tourism, eco-tourism and mountain-coastal tourism.

5.1.2. Tourism strategies and legislation

Albanian Government has developed a policy framework for tourism that reflects sustainability principles and within which the local authorities and private sector enterprises can function. In this regard national “Strategy for tourism development 2002-2013” and the “Strategy and Action Plan for Development of Natural and Cultural Tourism”, are the main documents directing the policy in tourism sector. Given that the first strategy period ends, the ministry responsible for tourism during the last year undertook the initiative to develop a new strategy for the development of the sector. Continuity of the process of drafting and approval of the strategy, constitutes part of the programme of the new government, for the period 2013-2017.

STRATEGY FOR TOURISM DEVELOPMENT
2002-2013. - Approved by DCM No. 517, dated 3 July 2003

As the title suggest, this is a strategy for development, seeking a significant growth in Albanian tourism for economic reasons. One of three components of the vision for 2013, is that the sustainability and awareness of environmental issues are major parts of the tourism development strategy and one of a three part mission statement is “Protect and even develop actively the environment”.

Strategy recognizes a poor quality environment and weak infrastructure as threats to the successful development of tourism. The preconditions for tourism development cover a range of very important issues with a strong bearing on environmental policy and legislation: accepting principles of sustainable tourism at all levels of planning; addressing limited infrastructure; clarification of ownership of land and buildings; addressing national and regional tourism law and regulation; law enforcement; clear responsibility for tourism at all levels; improved statistical information; and public/private commitment.

The shape of tourism development is also very relevant to environmental concerns in the planning of tourism. Essentially the strategy proposes the development of three types of tourism:

- sun & beach tourism
- Special interest tourism
- Business and congress tourism

The special interest tourism includes: ecotourism, rural tourism, adventure tourism, cultural tourism, etc. The Development Potential for Vlora Region (where are included districts of Vlora, Delvina, Saranda) according to the strategy is:

- Vlora region presents an attractive coastline, and other inland areas with culture and nature interest. The local governments have to compile actions for planning the attractive coastal areas to fit the tourism demand of the coming years and resolve the environmental problems (garbage, waste water, unattractive surrounding, etc.).

STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN FOR
THE DEVELOPMENT OF CULTURE AND
ENVIRONMENTAL TOURISM - Approved by DCM
No. 395, dated 21 June 2006

In December 2005, the Ministry of Tourism, Culture, Youth and Sports, launched the “Strategy and Action Plan for the development of Culture and environmental tourism”, having in consideration that Albania is a beautiful and fascinating country. It has a wide range of historic, cultural and natural attractions that are of great interest to

international tourists. The country is safe and the people are welcoming and friendly. Most importantly, the country is still “authentic”.

According to the strategy, Albania must establish an accelerated process for establishing tourism plans in a number of identified priority nature and cultural areas with tourism relevance. Emphasizing natural and cultural tourism, the strategy keeps in focus the benefits for local communities, which are currently faced with limited economic opportunities.

Strategy objectives also include:

- perception of Albania as a rich natural and cultural destination,
- assessment and protection of natural and cultural heritage and understanding of its value by the tourism industry and community. Enhancement of opportunities to increase the knowledge on common benefits of culture and art providers, but also of the tourism industry and community, through education, information, and training,
- encouraging product development by using strengths and identifying the suitable and competitive possibilities of the market,
- establishing a cooperation and integration partnership network.



Figure 10. Attractive bay in the region

TOURISM LAW

The Tourism Law, provides the legal basis for government intervention in tourism development, with significant environmental consequences. It was passed in May 2007 and the scope of this Law is to determine the principles and rules governing tourism sector and to develop standards for tourism services and products.

This Law regulates the relations between public institutions and private companies and individuals, local or foreign ones engaged in tourism. It determines the rights and obligations of participants in tourism activities, in compliances with standards set through this law. The Article 5 of the law put on the main principles of sustainable tourism development. According to this article tourism and other related activities should progress based on the principle of sustainable development, in conformity with cultural heritage, traditions and customs of the Albanian people and on the principle of protection and uniform use of tourism resources.

According to the law is established the Inter-ministerial Committee for Tourism (not functional) as a consultative body of the Council of Ministers, who looks over future strategies for tourism development, action plans at national level, and guides policies for a sustainable tourism development in the Republic of Albania in respect of standards implementation.

For the participation of the private sector in the discussions and examination of deferent issues related with tourism activity and ensure the co-operation between the private sector and the responsible Ministry for Tourism (Ministry of Tourism, Culture, Youth and Sport) on matters arising in tourism development, on implementation of the Tourism National Strategy and its action plan, is established the Private Sector Advisory Committee on Tourism (PSCAT) as an advisory body. The PSACT is directed by the minister responsible for tourism and is composed of representatives from all national professional associations of tour operators and travel agents, of hotels and other accommodation units, tourist guides and other tourist enterprises operating in tourism, as well as international donors/technical assistance agencies.

Even if the purpose of the law is to create standards in tourism sector, there are no regulations regarding the licensing, certifications, control and monitoring of tourism business activities and development of tourism products. Directly and indirectly the tourism sector is object of other laws governing the territorial (spatial) planning, environment, nature conservation etc.

After a long process of consultations, the Parliament of Albania adopted the law nr. 10119 "On Territorial Planning", on 23 April 2009, as part of the

institutional reforms occurred in Albania after the '90. The law was partially effective up to 30 September 2011, for the legal framework completion, with other regulations and sub-laws. The main goal of the law is to provide a sustainable development of the territory through the rational use of the land and natural resources, and to insure a more efficient functioning of the system through the inclusion of the public in the process of decision making and development control of the territorial plans. The new Law also provides a strong obligation to prepare Strategic Environmental Impact Assessment (SEIA), which has a great importance for the integration of environmental sustainability and protection in planning documents.

According to this law, the ministry of tourism is responsible for development of tourism plans, in collaboration with local governments.

5.1.3. Strategic Plan of Vlora Region

The strategic plan was developed during the period 2010-2011 and approved in 15 March 2012. The aim of the Strategic Plan prepared for Vlora Region by UNDP ART GOLD 2 Albania, is closely linked with the engagement of the local community in creation and implementation of the vision for the future, connecting the cultural, environmental, social and economic aspects of the territory that makes it unique.

According to the national and local policies, and the natural and cultural values of the Vlora region, the SP gives 3 important scenarios for the diversified economic development of the territory, where sustainable tourism development takes the first place (followed by rural and light industry development), as the generator of the income and benefits for the community, developing all forms of tourism, evaluating the existing cultural and natural attractions. The integrated and complimentary development of these three sectors, will create the sustainable economic development of the region.

The first scenario of the Strategic Plan, involves the following objectives:

- Control building activity, effective soil management and land use planning;
- Effective waste management;
- Network quality tourism resources;
- Integration between coast and hinterland;
- Integration between tourism and other sectors;
- Environmental Protection;
- Vlora Region as a competitive tourism product;
- Increase in tourist numbers.

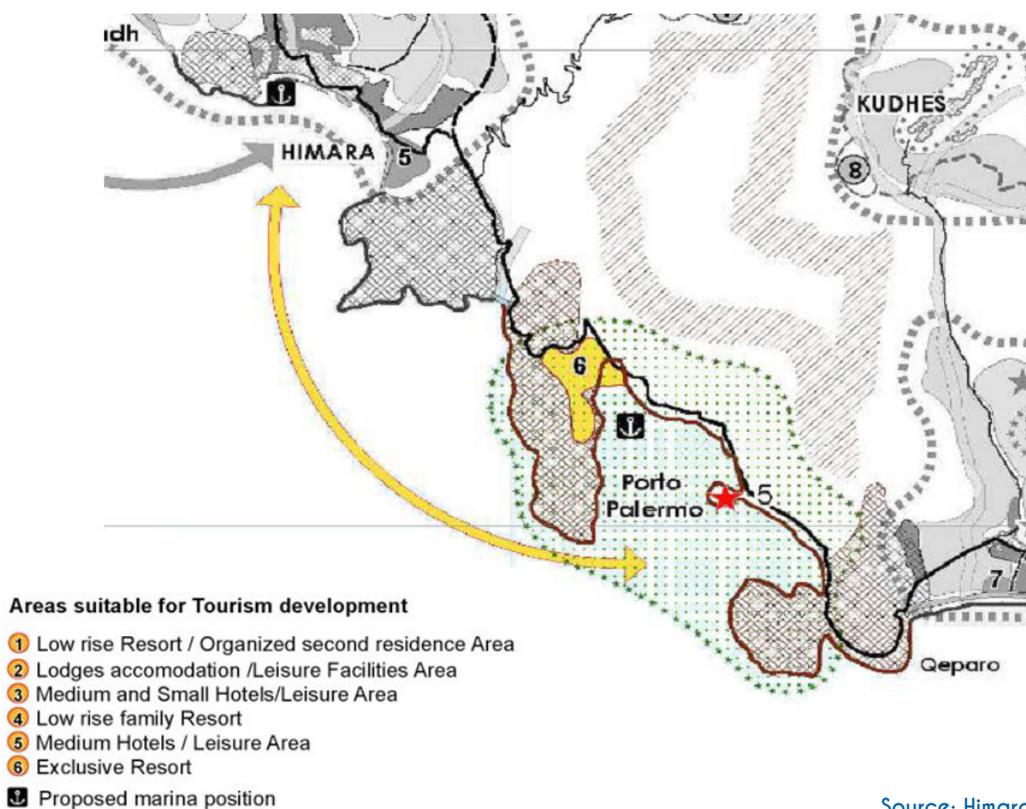
5.1.4. Territorial/spatial Plan of Himara Municipality

Porto Palermo area is part of Himara Municipality, one of the seven municipalities of Vlora District. Like all over Albania, the phenomenon of migration movements of the population within the country (from the mountains to coastal areas), as well as the needs for housing, were accompanied by informal developments all over the territory of the region. Informal settlements and buildings are actually using nearly 70 % of the region's territory. To solve the situation and accommodate the future needs, Himara municipality approved the Policy for Territorial Development (PTD) and the Local General Plan (LGP), during the year 2012.

The vision for the territorial development qualifies tourism as the basis of local development, and natural and cultural resources as the basis for the development of sustainable tourism with quality and high standards.

This plan is based on the Integrated Coastal Zone Management Plan & Clean Up, prepared by the World Bank and the Albanian Government, approved by the National Council of Territorial Adjustment on July 17, 2008. The purpose of the project is to promote the development of tourism in the southern coast of Albania, in line with the principles of sustainable tourism development.

According to the LGP, the area of Himara Municipality, should develop mild forms of mass tourism and sustainable forms of tourism related to natural and cultural resources. The Porto Palermo area is planned to develop a marine and an exclusive resort in the existing military area (fig. 11). Landscape values of the area are treated as special ones, and protected by buildings /developments.



Source: Himara Municipality

Figure 11. Local General Plan of Himara Municipality

5.2. Tourism dimensions and trends

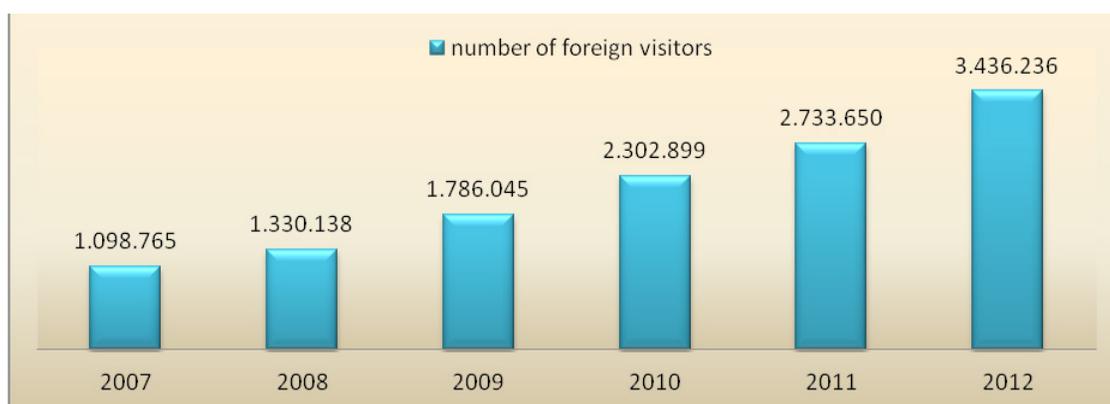
5.2.1. National

In Albania, the number of visitors, during the last ten years has been steadily growing. In 2012 quite 65 % of foreign visitors, were from neighboring countries (Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro), and 5 % of them from Montenegro. A high percentage of the visitors from Europe are ethnic Albanians, emigrated abroad. Based on the MTTP (Ministry of Tourism and Territorial Planning) data, the number of international arrivals increased 92 %, from 1,786,045 in 2009 to 3,436,236 in 2012. The average of overnight stays in hotels, was 2,6.

For the first half of 2013, is recorded an increase of 15,1 % in number of visitors, compared with the same period of the last year. The existing statistical tourism data at national level are very limited and gathered from the border points, further elaborated by INSTAT-Albania's central statistical agency, and the MTTP. The data are unreliable, and there is the need to establish a system for gathering and elaborating the touristic data according to the international standards.

The following data, are collected from different sources as MTTP, Compendium of Tourism Statistics of UNWTO 2007-2011, and the Economic Impact of Travel & Tourism in Albania from the report of World Travel & Tourism Council.

Visitors in Albania 2007-2012



Source: MTTP

Figure 12. Number of foreign visitors

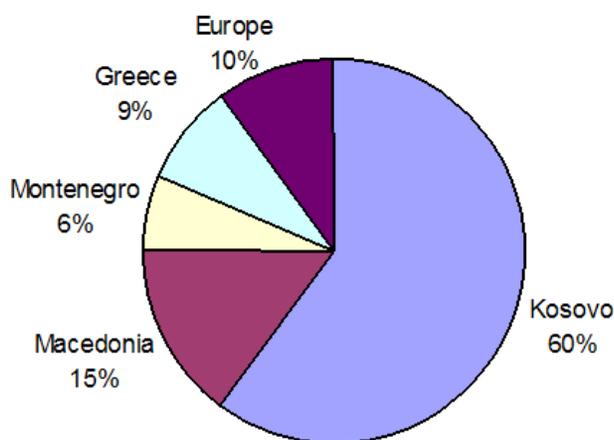
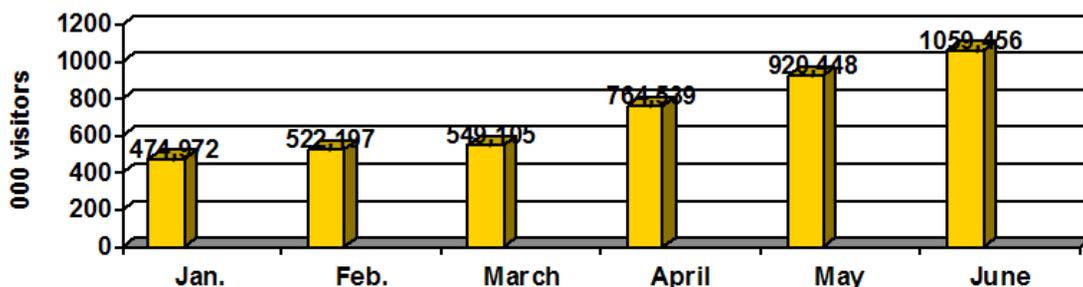


Figure 13. Origin of visitors



Source: MTTP

Figure 14. Visitors for period January-June 2013

According to the WTTC report on “Travel & Tourism Economic Impact 2013, Albania”:

- The direct contribution of Travel & Tourism to GDP was ALL 83.2 bn (6.1 % of total GDP) in 2012, and is forecast to rise by 7.9 % in 2013, and to rise by 5.5 % pa, from 2013-2023, to ALL 153.7 bn in 2023 (in constant 2012 prices). This primarily reflects the economic activity generated by industries such as hotels, travel agents, airlines and other passenger transportation services (excluding commuter services). But it also includes, for example, the activities of the restaurant and leisure industries directly supported by tourists.
- The total contribution of Travel & Tourism to GDP was ALL 292.9 bn (21.4 % of GDP) in 2012, and is forecast to rise by 6.7 % in 2013, and to rise by 5.3 % pa to ALL 526.1 bn in 2023.

Table 8. Contribution of travel & tourism to the economy

	2011	2012
DIRECT CONTRIBUTION TO GDP	6,2 %	6,1 %
INDIRECT CONTRIBUTION TO GDP	21,8 %	21,4 %
DIRECT EMPLOYMENT	51,000 (5.5 % total employ.)	51,500
DIRECT + INDIRECT EMPLOYMENT	183,500	184,000
CAPITAL INVESTMENT IN TRAVEL & TOURISM	4,5 %	4,6 %

Source: WTTC

Table 9. Data on tourism

FOREIGNERS OVERNIGHTS	185,369
AVERAGE OVERNIGHTS	2,6
CARRYING CAPACITY (arrivals/population)	0,57

Source: UNWTO 2011

5.2.2. Tourism industry

The Albanian hospitality industry includes about 300 hotels operating officially in the market for a total capacity of approximately 12,000 beds⁶. However, the number of structures actually present in the area is estimated to be at least double of the official data. Facilities located in the capital and mainly on the coast are certainly ready to offer a wider range of services. For 2010, the Albanian hotels have registered about 255,000 tourists, of which 74,000 foreigners and 181,000 Albanian. Over the past five years have been created several internet sites through which you can get information on a number of selected hotels in the whole of Albania, altering its search by geographic area or price range and, simultaneously, make a reservation for the overnight. The accommodation units are often managed at household level, and their capacity ranges from 20-40 rooms. The breakdown by number of rooms in the Albanian hotel sector is as follows:

- 80 % with 7-20 rooms;
- 13 % has a number of rooms 20 up to 40;
- 7 % have more than 40 rooms.

Among the objectives identified in the national strategy, for tourism has been given much prominence to the need to increase the number of large structures, especially on the coast. This is because the current configuration which is dominated by small structures does not allow the organization of package tours for large tourist groups. Actually, the accommodation units, are not classified or standardized by the government. Even if the purpose of the law of tourism, is to create standards in tourism sector, there are no regulations regarding the standards, control and monitoring of tourism business activities.

5.3. Potentials for future development of tourism in the area

Potentials of tourism development in the area of Porto Palermo, should be seen interrelated with the valuable and diversified tourism resources of the region of Vlora in general and in particular that of Himara municipality. The variety of the tourism resources can allow the integrated development of tourism throughout the territory, diversification of the tourism product and attraction of tourist flows throughout the year, hence spreading socio-economic growth on the whole regional territory.

The region of Vlora has a natural predisposition to tourist activity, which has significantly and steadily expanded in recent years. The region is composed of the districts of Vlora, Saranda and Delvina that, in addition to offering a wonderful scenic landscape, home a wide variety of natural habitats and species of plants and animals. In the area runs an extensive hydrographic network made of streams, lakes, springs, freshwater lakes and rivers that finds its only land border in the steep slopes and the gorgeous beaches of the coast.

The Region of Vlora, with its 145 km of coastline and a long summer season, is an unbeatable location and very competitive as a Mediterranean destination for beach tourism. The second type of tourism suitable for Vlora Region falls into the category of so-called special interest tourism, to which refers natural tourism, rural tourism, adventure, cultural, historical, military and religious tourism. Due to environmental and cultural peculiarities that characterize the region, there is the potential to plan the tourism development on different models and also to diversify the tourist offer. The presence of extensive rural areas, protected areas with rich biodiversity especially marine, lake and lagoons, as well as the extensive mountainous area makes Vlora ideal destination for ecotourism and rural tourism, not to mention the possibility of promoting diverse activities such as hiking, biking, climbing, paragliding, bird-watching, fishing, etc.

The development of a transport network that can guarantee the accessibility of cultural monuments and sites, would instead promote tourism of historical and cultural interest. The archaeological sites of Butrint and Phoenice (Finiq) and the old villages of Qeparo and Himara, Vlore museums (Museum of Independence, History Museum, and Ethnographic Museum), the castles of Porto Palermo and Lekuresi and, finally, religious monuments such as the Mosque of Muradie, the church of Santa Maria a Zvernek and the only synagogue in the Balkans in Saranda are only some of the places of cultural, historical and archaeological heritage of the region.

Porto Palermo is located about 10 km from Himara, which constitutes a relatively important urban centre with its historical, geographical and cultural specificity that have had a direct impact on the formation of local identity, and its role in the regional context. It is an enclosed bay, poorly developed with a military naval base in the north part. In Porto Palermo, on a small peninsula that divides the Bay into two parts, is the castle of Ali Pasha, which took its present form in the late 18th century. Porto Palermo constitutes one of the most important cultural monuments in southern Albania and is an important tourist destination. In the north part of the bay, is located the military base, which is one of the reasons of the inviolability of the area from the illegal constructions. According to the approved plans, in this part of the bay will be development a marine and an exclusive resort.

The bay of Porto Palermo, mostly devoid of vegetation, constitutes the unique landscape of the south coast area, with softened contrast of coast - mountain. Street here comes close to the coast giving nice view of the beach and coastline curves. The area of Himara has a variety of potential tourist attractors (cultural heritage, natural resources and landscapes, traditions and food), which gives the possibility to develop different forms of tourism, integrated with other parts of the region (figure 15,16). Special interest tourism is based on natural heritage and cultural identity which are the basis of the area as a tourist destination.

⁶ Source: INSTAT Hotels and their capacity 1995-2010; Sectorial Strategy for Tourism Development 2007-2013.

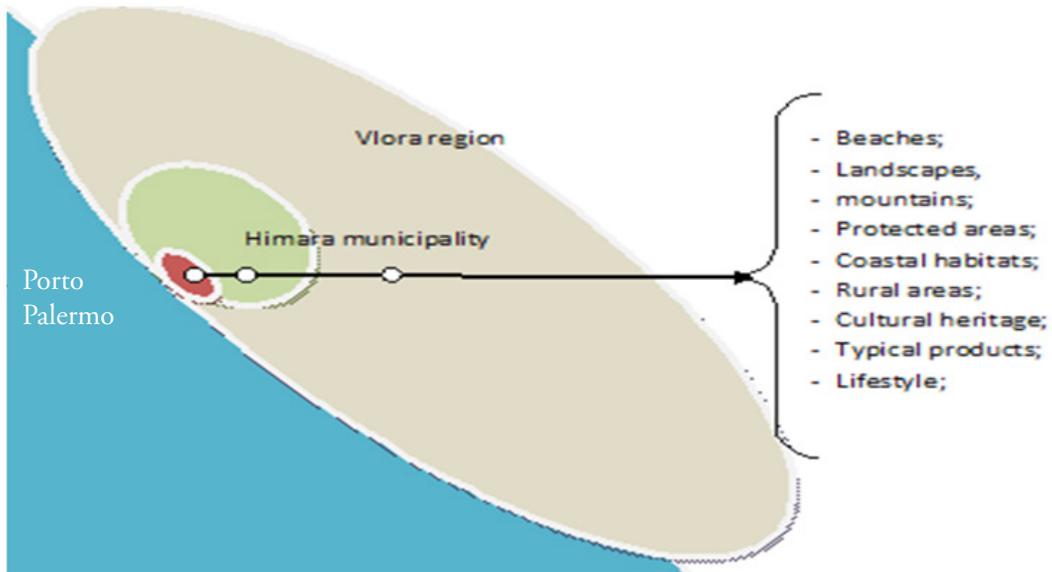


Figure 15. Tourism resources

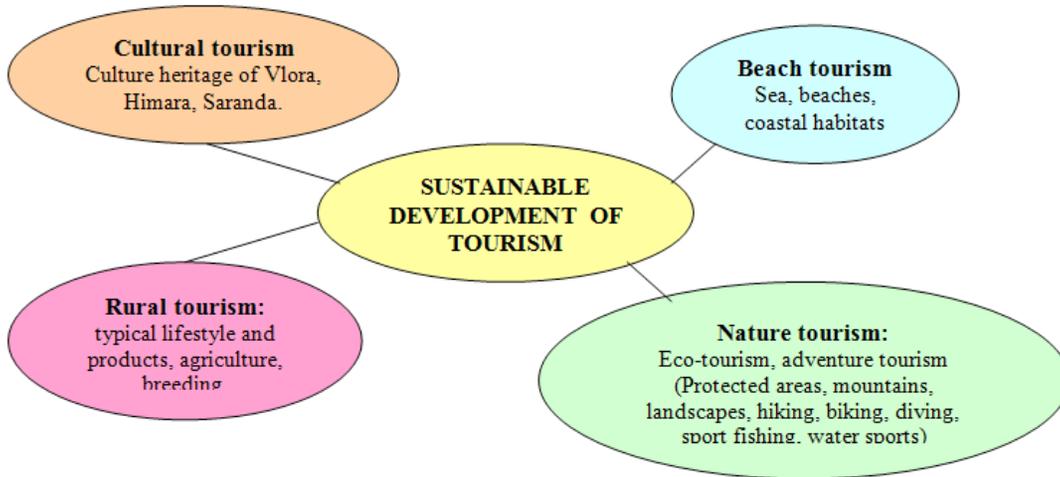


Figure 16. Types of tourism

5.3.1. Visitors and services

According to the General Territorial Plan of Himara municipality, in 2007 the region was visited from about 60,000 tourists who have slept in at least one of the hotels or renting premises in the area. This number in 2010 is estimated to be close to 100,000 visitors, with an increase of more than 15% every year. Demand is mainly concentrated in the summer season and begins in the second week of July and continues until the end of August. As a result of increasing demand for vacation during the last five years the number of hotels in this region has increased rapidly from about 11 in 2005 in about 80 hotels in 2010, with an average of 10-20 beds for a hotel. In total, today Himara calculates to have about 1,200 beds and about 3,000 rooms rented during the season from local residents. Likewise in the region of Himara are places that enable the creation of camps as Dhermi and Potam that makes it possible to accommodate a portion of flow of visitors arriving by car-caravan type. There are about 39 restaurants in the area, of which 2 are located in Porto Palermo bay.

In Porto Palermo area, are built 10 bungalows, which are used by tourists coming mainly from Italy, France, Germany, Czech Republic, Israel, Japan, etc, staying 2 up to 3 days. In the field before Ali Pasha's castle, during summer season campers park (up to 30), and are supplied with food and water from two restaurants that are located in the area. Naval activity is less developed. Mostly foreign yachts anchor and can stay several hours circulating in the area. The castle of Ali Pasha, according to the guide, is visited throughout the year by about 8000 visitors, of whom 80% are foreigners.

In the absence of data on the visitors (domestic and foreigners), in the area was conducted a survey during the period 1 August to 20 September 2013, the findings of which are summarized as follows; according to the findings of the survey conducted in the area during the period, the visitors in the area:

- Come in groups (1-4 people) mainly individually organized (about 75 % of them) and travel to the area by car (about 70 %);
- About 70 % of foreign visitors, are come from Kosovo (35 %), Italy (25 %), Poland (8 %), France and Germany (8%), who stay for a period of 5-15 days;
- 60 % of domestic visitors, who come from Tirana and 20 % from Vlora, Durrës, Fier and Korça, stay for a period of 10-15 days;
- About 16 % of domestic visitors are daily visitors;
- Visitors visit the area mainly for the purposes of rest and recreation and are accommodated in hotels (43 %) situated in the area of Vlora, Himara, Saranda, Qeparo and Durres;
- About 70 % of the respondents have visited the destination one time.

5.3.2. Accessibility

Porto Palermo area can be reached with difficulties. It is located 230 km (4 hours by car) from the main airport of Albania "Mather Tereza". The nearest airport is located in Saranda, but actually is not used. Other airports near the area are in Corfu and Ioannina. From Corfu to Saranda the trip by ferry can last about 45 minutes, but the frequency of the sea lines are inadequate. Travelling by car from Saranda to Himara lasts about 1.5 hours. The ferry from Corfu to Saranda is often used by tourists for a day trip to visit the World Heritage site of Butrint, located in south of Saranda. From the airport of Ioannina traveling by car to Himara requires about 2.5 hours, but there is no connection fly. Besides port of Saranda, which is related only to Corfu, the port of Vlora is used to be connected with Brindisi in southern Italy. The port of Durrës is better connected with shipping and ferry lines to Bari, Ancona and Trieste, Italy. However, Durres is far from Himara and needs about 3.5 hours to be reached.

Among Himara and Corfu, is a maritime transport, which operates only during the summer season. Shipping lines, connecting the port of Himara with Saranda and Vlora ports, are possible but seem to be economically unsustainable. The road access in the southern Albania, is improved significantly recently, due to the infrastructure improvement programme implemented across the country. After completing the main corridor Tirana-Durres-Lushnje-Fier-Vlore which is currently partly improved and partly in the process of modernization is expected Himara to have a higher accessibility to central and northern Albania, Kosovo, Montenegro and the Dalmatian coast.

5.4. Sources of threats and impacts from tourism activities

The area of Himara municipality is facing acute socio - economic problems. The existing population (permanent residents) is neither sufficient nor able to support the development of tourism, as part of a healthy local economy. Himara is one of the most sparsely populated areas in Vlora region and compared to national average levels. About 45 % of housing in Himara are vacant and are in a difficult condition⁷. The data shows that 70 % of the population, about 7,500 people, mostly 15-65 years, has left settlements at the beginning of the '90. After 2000 the population began to grow again. Many small companies started activities in the tourism sector, but they operate less than 3 months per year. This is reflected also in the abandonment of domestic agriculture which has been the basis of the local economy. Local residents are the prime source of employees and entrepreneurs for new tourism businesses and have to live with tourism. The locals are also the ones who give the area its distinctive character and sense of identity and who will at some stage come into contact with tourists, even if they are not involved directly in the industry.

⁷ General Local Plan of Himara Municipality.

On the other hand, some general problems of the region should be highlighted, most of which are strongly connected with the tourist exploitation of the territory:

- Lack of waste management systems;
- Lack of water and wastewater management systems;
- Inadequacy of transport network, especially in mountain areas;
- Out-of-control construction activity, especially along the coast;
- Unclear title of the property;
- Concentration of tourist investments on the coast, priority given to sun, sea and sand tourism, mostly domestic;
- Poor or denied access to cultural and natural resources;
- Lack of plans for the natural and cultural attractions;
- Inadequate quality level of tourist facilities;
- Lack of official categorization of accommodation units;
- Lack of trained personnel (public and private sector), and management systems;

- Missing attention to details in buildings, equipments and decors;
- Insufficient marketing efforts by all parties involved in tourism on national, regional and local level.
- Shortage of basic tourism products (handicrafts, souvenirs) and few tourism events and activities.

If these problems persist, there will be serious consequences on the air, water and soil pollution, involving high health risks for people and animals and low quality of life levels. The concentration of investments on the coast, if persisting, will increase the marginalization of rural communities of the hinterland, already affected by the inadequate road and transportation network. More marginalization means a persisting lack of job opportunities, emigration, depopulation of rural villages, loss of cultural heritage and identity, deterioration of rural landscape. In the long run, all these problems are likely to have a negative impact on tourist resources, causing irreversible deterioration of natural attractors and loss of tourist attractiveness. In this way, the territory as a destination, will never gain the competitiveness, and the tourist most probably will choose other destinations inside and outside the country.



Figure 17. View of the restaurant in Himara

5.5. Sustainable development model

Alternatively, the region has the opportunity to choose a better development model, moving towards sustainable tourism that is both ecologically and culturally sensitive, having a low impact on the environment and local culture, while helping to generate income, employment, and preserve local ecosystems and cultural integrity.

The sustainable development of tourism in the area is related mainly with the integration of different typologies of tourism (beach tourism, cultural tourism, eco-tourism, rural tourism, adventure tourism, etc) preservation of their authenticity and uniqueness. Tourism is a key sector for the development of Himara municipality and for the entire region. So far, priority was given to the interest and earnings in the short term with direct consequences that have had a strong environmental pressure on natural resources and the landscape of the region. Awareness and sensitivity to issues related to the development of plans for the sustainable development of tourism are unfortunately low, especially in the public administration and among small and medium enterprises.

Making tourism more sustainable is not just about controlling and managing the negative impacts of the industry. Tourism is in a very special position to benefit local communities, economically and socially, and to raise awareness and support for conservation of the environment. Within the tourism sector, economic development and environmental protection should not be seen as opposing forces - they should be mutually reinforcing.

The coast of the region of Vlora is, from the point of view of tourism, a major asset for economic development due to its natural beauty, cultural heritage and biodiversity. It is vital that the integrated management of the coastal area prevents the destroying pressures from tourism and demographic movements. The sense of an integrated management of the coastline and coastal waters lies in the fact that the quality of the waters on the coast relies heavily on the way in which coastal activities are managed, the same, in turn, were positively affected by the proximity of the sea, especially in the case of hotels, restaurants or residences⁸.

Already in 2005 the World Bank believed that without corrective actions, the value of the Albanian coastal area and the prospects for sustainable development would have been severely reduced due to the uncontrolled development. The failure to create an integrated management of the coastal area and the lack of political will to stop the illegal constructions on the coast, according to the World Bank, would have caused the decline of income from tourism due to pollution, the poor quality of roads and basic infrastructure as well as unplanned developments and illegal buildings. It is important to plan and retain control over local resources to achieve a tourism product of high quality.

However, its implementation may be difficult. It requires considerable initial efforts and investments, as well as a certain level of maturity and professional capacity, which are lacking at the moment and should be built over time.

The management of resources in a sustainable manner requires a long process of institutional, infrastructure, education and economic development. A good part need to be planned and treated to become attractive, in the form of a sustainable tourism product.

Tourism structures in the area provide a small part of the direct and indirect jobs comparing with the total percentage of the employment in the region. A part of these jobs are linked to the natural and cultural attractions that the area has for tourists. To gain economic benefits, two conditions must be met: there must be products and services for tourists to spend money on during all the year (reduction of the seasonality of tourism in the region) and minimize the amount that leaks out of the local area being self-sufficient as possible, reducing dependence on out-of-region goods and services.

The income and local employment generated by biodiversity-based tourism, rural tourism, culture tourism, etc, can create a strong incentive for communities, local authorities and governments to protect and invest in the area. Tourism linked with conservation is economically beneficial and provides a source of employment. It is also a major source of export earnings when the dominant tourism activities are based on biodiversity and high-quality ecosystem services, and attract international visitors. It can generate the funds through entrance and service fees, local taxes and in many other ways that can be used directly to help meet the costs of conservation, maintaining cultural traditions and providing education.

It is important to distribute the benefits among the local people, because if they only go to a few people locally, tourism is likely to generate tensions and resentment locally and undermine support for conservation. It is equally important to ensure that tourism and conservation do not place additional burdens on local people, for example by reducing or preventing their access to livelihood resources.

Achievement of positive impacts of tourism in the area will require immediate actions from central and local government for careful planning through regular dialogue with local stakeholders for tourism product development. Planning and development control are critically important for implementation of the strategic vision and objectives for tourism development in the region. In addition, the existing impacts of tourism on the environment need to be assessed, and where appropriate, it may be necessary to set limits on tourism development, and level and frequency of use in some areas, in order to balance tourism with other uses in the area

⁸ Integrated Coastal Management & Clean-Up Programme, World Bank.

so as to avoid damage through overuse or overdevelopment. For identifying the negative impacts of tourism, take measures and formulate strategies for monitoring the impacts, central and local government should develop a tourism management plan. The aim of this plan is to enhance the positive impacts of tourism and use them for further development. Protection of environment in relation to tourism requires planning and development of tourism in ways that takes in consideration defined regulations and standards.

Relevant standards and regulations include such aspects as the density of buildings, location of buildings (set-back distances from the sea-shore line), building heights, linkage to services and sewage disposal systems, materials used and aspects of design (with respect to the local traditions). Social sustainability issues, such as protection of access to resources of importance for local livelihoods are also relevant to this.

Tourism businesses can contribute to the implementation of the strategic goals by working with governments to ensure that their tourism activities and developments comply with national and local tourism plans

and sustainability standards. In addition, tourism businesses can adopt best practices for sustainability in the management of their operations.

The negative impacts, caused by insufficient infrastructure development can be reduced by development and implementation of plans and programmes for waste treatment and disposal, sewage systems, water supply, etc. For increasing the awareness among the young generations, the curricular activities have to include visits and information about the area. Establishment of visitor centres, creates the possibility for basic understanding of the site's significance (including the neighbor areas), its size and what experiences option it offers to the visitors.

Separated plan for the Ali Pasha castle, and the preparation of the interpretative plan (written materials, visual and graphic displays, exhibits, particular themes, concepts, etc, including tangible and intangible heritage) and design tours according to the type of visitor and their interest (general, scholar, student, professionals, cursory visit, detailed interpretation, comprehensive tour) will play an important role for tourist and public education and information.



Figure 18. Bay of Gjipea



Figure 19. Open Summer Season Advertisement in Himara, 2013

For an effective implementation of the overall strategic vision, goals and objectives, is essential to consider:

- The reviewing and adjustment of the Local Territorial Plan, in accordance with the National Territorial Plan, as well as the environmental considerations of the Porto Palermo management plan.
- The development of control regulations, should include the effective enforcement of the laws, approval and licensing processes for tourism activities, planning, design and construction of tourism facilities and infrastructure;
- The preparation of the tourism development plan, ensuring the collaboration and cooperation between institutions at national, regional and local level, participation of local communities and other stakeholders. The plan should include considerations on environmental issues, and be coherent with the existing documents (strategies and plans); The plan should consider the limits of acceptable change, for the areas designated for the new tourism developments. Other issues the plan needs to treat are:
 - Development of private services and accommodations, will depend on the improvement of existing structures in Himara municipality;
 - Ensuring coordination and interrelation with the

existing and planned tourism products for the entire region, for providing an integrated tourist offer;

- Measures for revival of local architectural traditions;
- Measures for the revival of handicrafts, arts and traditional cultural activities;
- Determine the action plan and the plan of investments by central and local authorities.

Governments have to coordinate these processes at the national and local level. It is important to involve and consult all relevant stakeholders, and especially local communities that are or may be affected by tourism development. The government should formulate for the area, plans and strategies that develop forms of green tourism, which is the model that can reduce the negative impacts to the environment, while contributing to enhance the economic development.

Although it is difficult to quantify the effects and damage of tourism on the environment, it is necessary that the government applies the principle of the “polluter pays”, in the case of tourism. The financing of the environment protection through tourist taxes, is not only insufficient but may constitute a brake for the development. Other funds must therefore be sought, from which the most important are the public ones.

5.5.1. Tourist Tools, Actors and Marketing Offer

In this section of the study, some suggestions (*Tools*) are given in order to create a tourist package for the sector chosen after the surveys fielded in study area and the collection of questionnaires distributed to domestic and international tourists, as well as residents. In order to create a good touristic offer, it is necessary to identify the different stakeholders (*Actors*) of the product lines, starting from the primary raw material of a specific touristic product:

- Natural parks and reserves, trails, cultural heritage, culture theme parks, producers of typical agriculture and food products, restaurants, producers of typical handicraft and art, folklore groups, organizers of cultural events.
- To these, we have to add service providers and accommodation facilities (supporting accessibility), tour operators and travel agencies.

Actors	Target	Strategies
MUSEUMS, CULTURAL HERITAGE, NATURAL PARKS	Students, tourists, scientists	Implement packages covering the different demands of each segment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - museums - artistic buildings - natural parks
CULTURAL THEME PARKS	Students, tourists, scientists	Implement an offer taking into account: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - cultural learning - turning fun into a show
HANDICRAFT & ART PRODUCERS	Tourists	Implement a production which is bound to the culture of the territory, with several price ranges, but always of high quality.
FOOD AND AGRICULTURAL CRAFTSMEN	Tourists	Implement a production which is bound to the culture of the territory, with several price ranges, but always of high quality, retail selling to the public and – if possible – creation of a museum-learning area.
RESTAURANTS	Tourists	Implement a gastronomic offer, which is bound to the culture of the territory, favouring local products and traditional recipes, with several price ranges, but always of high quality.
TOURISM OPERATORS	Tourists: single, groups	Promote a territorial product offer, also linked to other territorial product lines
ACCOMODATION	Tourism Operators, tourists	Implement target-oriented packages, covering the needs of each segment and enabling operators to propose an integrated offer with other services.

*Table drawn from: Alberico di Meo "il Marketing dell'Ambiente e della Cultura per lo sviluppo turistico del territorio"

Facing a growing market niche, promotional and commercial strategies can be strengthened in order to increase the amount of tourism by this segment. Following this trend, some packages could be established, including:

Food & wine tourism

In order to avoid the humdrum of the tourist offer and the restaurants, the emphasis on typical products, a more and more specialized offer, the requalification of restaurants and shops, as well as the development of coordinated and consistent promotion activities (e.g. events) are all essential elements that need to be taken into account.

5.5.2. Basic elements for the creation of a tourist package for the gastronomy segment

As regards gastronomy-oriented tourism the creation of a network among restaurants and among restaurants and businesses, shops, tourist guides, cultural and sport associations, local authorities, etc. is almost necessary. In fact, even though a restaurant can have its regular customers and offer a package of its own, it will surely benefit in terms of visibility if it takes part in a pre-established package in case of an event or if it belongs to a product route (wine route, mushroom route, etc.).

The basic elements for the creation of a tourist package for the gastronomy segment both in restaurants and in case of a related event are:

- Emphasizing the local cuisine and rediscovering traditional recipes;

- Emphasizing local products by writing on the menus where they come from;
- Agreements with guides to visit farms or to plan excursions related to the local gastronomy;
- Organization of cooking courses, involving customers in dish preparation.

Some suggestions for gastronomy related events:

- Match the event with a product (wine, cheese, etc.), train the restaurant owner on the product features and provide the possibility to visit the area of production and to purchase at reduced prices.
- Organize a fair on local cuisine but with aspects dedicated to other cooking traditions
- Organize gastronomy fairs linked to music shows, cabaret etc., also respecting local customs
- Plan gastronomy related events as part of other non-gastronomy related events.

The role played by restaurants in these cases will be to adapt themselves to the main theme of the event.

5.5.3. Cultural tourism

Culture is seldom the main reason for a touristic experience. Indeed, the world of cultural tourists is very much varied and it consists of:



© RAC/SPA, Zamir DEDEJ

Figure 20. Hidden beach in Lukova

- “Highly motivated” tourists, who travel just to visit that particular museum or monument. In this case, the package can be reduced to just an offer for accommodation and food;
- “Partially motivated by culture” tourists. To them, visiting a town or an artistic area also means making a trip, go shopping etc. In this case, the package can be integrated with other offers: gastronomy-related offers, reductions in shops, guided visits etc;
- Tourists that see culture as a “further motive”, not the main objective of their travel, but a further opportunity. In this case guided visits, reductions in the price of entrance tickets to monuments, museums, transportation tickets etc. can be offered.

In order to create a cultural tourist package, we need to know first the type of tourist by the means of analysis and surveys.

As for the organized cultural tourism (groups) the package will mainly focus on the accommodation offer (room and meals), on promotional reductions to visit the museum/castle etc. and on the availability of tourist guides.

5.5.4. Main tools for promotion

Catalogues: they can be published by a tourist association or a consortium of tour operators. As regards the promotion of single events with an attached tourist package, brochures are better. The distribution can take place in fairs, tourist offices, by snatch mail or a mailing list.

Website: each operator can have a personal link in the websites of associations, consortia, tourism authorities and the area dedicated to tourism in local authorities websites. Online promotion and booking are increasing and they represent the second promotion tool coming immediately after the word of mouth by friends.

Travel agencies: the promotion of an offer can be provided also by specialized tour operators. This is an interesting formula, above all as regards packages for groups, a big source of income during off-season.

Together with these tools we can add the word of mouth in the form of tips given by friends or family members. And the web blog, a modern form of word of mouth and an immediate tool to search for interesting destinations (e.g. a blog of bird watching fans can be the best means to be chosen as the next destination).



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Vlora Regional Strategy for Achievement of Millennium Development Goals, 2006 - prepared and funded by UNDP and Oxfam GB Albania.



A Summary of Answers to the Open-ended Questions of the Survey

1. Porto Palermo Bay shall be granted a National Park site status;
2. Army barracks to be removed from the site;
3. A lighting system should be established in the site of the Castle;
4. A more comprehensive tourist guide for the peninsula and Porto Palermo Bay is needed;
5. Need to improve infrastructure, especially the road network;
6. The Castle and its surroundings should be taken special care and maintained very clean;
7. The Castle should become a museum;
8. A ferry-boat line Durrës-Himara would benefit tourists;
9. Special measures should be taken to protect the territory from fires;
10. Power blackouts and shortages are problematic;
11. Lack of signage is a problem for tourists;
12. The site should be turned into an international-sized museum;
13. Surrounding buildings (former army barracks) should be demolished and cleaned-up;
14. Proper maintenance of the castle should be priority number one;
15. A lighting system, along with signage in the peninsula and inside the castle, is needed;
16. Proper maintenance of the site is a priority;
17. Enrichment of the site and the Castle with additional archaeological artifacts;
18. The pathway to the Castle need to be repaired and properly maintained;
19. The Castle should be equipped with public restrooms and hygiene facilities for the visitors;
20. Strict preservation measures should be imposed to save Porto Palermo Bay;
21. A pathway for pedestrians should be paved, or instead build a cobble-stone route to the Castle;
22. Additional services for visitors should be offered in the Castle;
23. A footway trail should be built in the peninsula around the Castle;
24. Surrounding trees and forests should be revitalized and protected;
25. Further opportunities for sport activities should be offered and provided;
26. All construction work should be halted;
27. The local government and authorities should provide for more recreational activities, sports, etc.;
28. The service of the Castle tourist guide is pretty important;
29. Special care should be paid in preserving the walls of the Castle from graffiti and other misuse;
30. The castle is to be administered by the state authorities;
31. A professional service shall be provided to visitors;
32. There should be a service available for expeditions;
33. The Porto Palermo Bay should be granted the status of a protected area;
34. Further work is needed to complement the information provided for the Castle with additional historic documents;
35. Additional measures should be taken to preserve vegetation;
36. Service prices should be cheaper;
37. Further investments for maintenance work around the Castle are needed;
38. The entire peninsula shall be granted a tourist area status;
39. Promote and facilitate communication between businesses;
40. Service workers and local guides need to improve their communication skills with visitors;
41. A footway route along the seashore should be built;
42. There is a need for further information and/or history books about the Castle and its surroundings;
43. A dedicated website and online advertising should be used to promote this site of historical value;
44. The number of service personnel for the visitors should be increased during the season;
45. A well-targeted and comprehensive marketing and promotion campaign should be designed;
46. No cows or cattle grazing should be allowed along the peninsula and its surroundings;
47. The possibility of building an submarine museum should be explored;
48. The old army barracks and bunkers should be demolished and wiped out.

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