



## INTEGRATED PLAN FOR COMMUNICATION THROUGH DIGITAL INSTRUMENTS AND USER GENERATED CONTENT

### Online promotion of Varna as a tourist and business destination

#### Abstract

Varna is a popular tourist city with economic potential and ambition to become a year-round destination, attractive not only to the tourists, but also to the investors and visitors, who come here for business. The city management aims at creating favourable environment for development of Hi-tech industries and innovations availing of the scientific potential, provided by the 6 universities and 4 research institutes in Varna. In spite of the opportunities and advantages, connected with the available assets and sustainable development of the city, the city faces some challenges.

The involvement of Varna in the Interactive Cities network, within URBACT III programme, provides huge opportunities to exchange international innovation practices for governance and citizens' participation.

The IAP of Varna, elaborated according to the Programme Guidelines is based on the existing strategic documents at local, national and European level. On the grounds of SWOT analysis of the city context, SEO of institutional websites and survey about the visibility of Varna, the key stakeholders, members of the Local URBACT Group, defined 4 main challenges:

- **Weak online visibility of Varna as a year-round destination;**
- **Lack of an integrated approach in the promotion of Varna as a business destination;**
- **Ineffective internal communication and technical capacity;**
- **Poor engagement of citizens in the process of city promotion and branding;**

Collaborating actively for two years, making use of the instruments of URBACT III and the transnational experience of InteractiveCities network, LUG, city administration and local business elaborated an IAP with the main strategic goal to **improve the online visibility of Varna as a year-round tourist and business destination**, achieved through:

- **Promoting resources, products and services to attract visitors during the low season;**
- **Improving interactive communication with the business;**
- **Improving the internal communication and technical capacity of the municipality;**
- **Encouraging active citizenship;**

The IAP also incorporates concrete activities, funding opportunities, Effective communication index and useful information, illustrated through infographics and pictures.

*Този документ е създаден с финансовата подкрепа на ЕС чрез програма URBACT III. Цялата отговорност за съдържанието на този документ се носи от Община Варна и при никакви обстоятелства не може да се приема, че този документ отразява официалното становище на Европейския Съюз и правителството на Република България, представявано от Министерството на регионалното развитие и благоустройството.*



Some of the indicated activities to address the local challenges and meet the ultimate goal are as follow:

- Development of a defined marketing strategy for the destination Varna;
- Targeting international organizations for organizing events and conferences in Varna;
- Improvement of the digital literacy in the tourism sector and city administration;
- Optimization of existing digital channels for communication with citizens and guests of Varna;
- Expansion of the services and activities provided by the local Tourist Information Centre;
- Establishment of a strategic business development unit and development of packages for investors;
- Creation of a business portal and event platform;
- Creating a culture of sharing and using open data;
- Implementation of modern models for coordination, exchange and channelling of external and internal information;
- Promotion of civic participation through participatory budgeting modela.

Along with the indicators to measure the expected results, the plan includes a specially designed **Index for effective internal and external communication**, based on 10 criteria for evaluating the progress in communication efficiency, an important prerequisite for increased visibility and promotion of the city of Varna.

The time frame for the implementation of IAP activities is generally 3 years, however, some of them will have their effect long after.



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