



**Ministry of Economy of the Republic of N. Macedonia
Faculty of Tourism and Hospitality - Ohrid**



**SUB-STRATEGY FOR DEVELOPMENT OF RURAL TOURISM IN THE REPUBLIC OF N.
MACEDONIA**



Ordered by:

Ministry of Economy of Republic of N. Macedonia

Str. Yuri Gagarin, No. 15, 1000 Skopje

Minister of Economy

Contact person: Bekim Hadziu

Sector for Tourism and Hospitality

E-mail: bekim.hadziu@economy.gov.mk



The Sub-Strategy was prepared by the consulting team:

General researcher: Prof. Naume Marinovski, PhD

Researchers:

Prof. Sasho Korunovski, PhD

Prof. Cvetko Andreeski, PhD

Prof. Ivanka Nestoroska, PhD

Ass. Prof. Michael Risteski, PhD



The Sub-Strategy for rural tourism in the RN Macedonia has been prepared as part of the public offer for services No. 3-3/2019 by the Ministry of Economy of RN Macedonia, Sector for Tourism and Hospitality: “PREPARING THREE SUB-STRATEGIES FOR TOURISM – RURAL / CULTURAL / ACTIVE”

SUB-STRATEGY FOR DEVELOPMENT OF RURAL TOURISM IN THE REPUBLIC OF N. MACEDONIA

CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	4
INTRODUCTION	5
1. Basis for adopting the Sub-Strategy	6
2. Reasons for adopting the Sub-Strategy	7
3. Methodology for preparation of the Sub-Strategy for Rural Tourism Development	7
4. Legal and strategic framework for preparing the Sub-Strategy	9
5. Situational analysis.....	9
5.1 Analysis of tourism turnover.....	10
5.1.1 Analysis of tourist visits	10
5.1.2 Analysis of tourist stay	14
5.2 Analysis of the situation and opportunities for development of rural tourism in the East Planning Region.....	19
5.3 Analysis of the situation and opportunities for development of rural tourism in the Polog Planning Region.....	23
5.4 Analysis of the situation and opportunities for development of rural tourism in the South-east Planning Region	29
5.5 Analysis of the situation and opportunities for development of rural tourism in the North-east Planning Region	35
5.6 Analysis of the situation and opportunities for development of rural tourism in the Skopje Planning Region ..	40
5.7 Analysis of the situation and opportunities for development of rural tourism in the Vardar Planning Region...	46
5.8 Analysis of the situation and opportunities for development of rural tourism in the Pelagonija Planning Region	50
5.9 Analysis of the situation and opportunities for development of rural tourism in the South-west Planning Region	54
5.10 Analysis of the demand for rural tourism.....	59
6. Mapping of zones and centers for rural tourism	62
6.1 Existing locations in the Vardar Planning Region and narrative description with features	62
6.2 Existing locations in the East Planning Region and narrative description with features	63
6.3 Existing locations in the South-west Planning Region and narrative description with features	64
6.4 Existing locations in the South-east Planning Region and narrative description with features	65
6.5 Existing locations in the Pelagonija Planning Region and narrative description with features	66
6.6 Existing locations in the Polog Planning Region and narrative description with features	67
6.7 Existing locations in the North-east Planning Region and narrative description with features	68
6.8 Existing locations in the Skopje Planning Region and narrative description with features.....	69
6.9 List of new centers that have the potential for expanding and reequipping	70
6.10 List of existing centers that have the potential for expanding and reequipping	71

6.11 Determining places and locations for marking the centers and placing signposts and info tables	72
7. Determining the mission and vision for rural tourism development.....	72
8. SWOT analysis of rural tourism in the RN Macedonia	74
9. Action plan for implementation of the Sub-Strategy for the development of rural tourism.....	75
REFERENCES AND SOURCES	76
ANEX.....	78
Mapping of zones for the development of rural tourism by region	78
GIS marking of the zones for the development of rural tourism in VAPR.....	78
GIS marking of the zones for the development of rural tourism in EAPR	85
GIS marking of the zones for the development of rural tourism in SWPR	99
GIS marking of the zones for the development of rural tourism in SEPR	111
GIS marking of the zones for the development of rural tourism in PEPR	114
GIS marking of the zones for the development of rural tourism in POPR.....	121
GIS marking of the zones for the development of rural tourism in NEPR.....	126
GIS marking of the zones for the development of rural tourism in SKPR	132
Photos for rural tourism.....	135

ABSTRACT

Contemporary trends in tourism development around the world show that rural tourism is one of the most prevalent types of development as a selective offer. It is a form that constantly receives new values. This is reflected both by the increase in the number of tourists engaged in this activity, by the volume of generated revenues, as well as by the emergence of new service providers and the development of economic and non-economic active actors in rural areas. Rural tourism attracts the attention of the wider demand of tourism services for new contents. The contemporary circumstances of rural tourism involves tourism the demanders of specific service and have traditional, environmental and challenging affinities. In the structure of the tourist demand, the rural preoccupation is focused on the expressive selectivity that RN Macedonia can provide in this sense. New activities and rational use of resources represent the developmental basis of this type of tourism. The interconnectedness of the stakeholders in this activity requires that the affirmed and sophisticated tourist demand in modern conditions can represent a factor for rural tourism to establish itself as a selectivity that can have a positive impact on the tourist market performances.

RN Macedonia needs to follow the positive examples of the countries and regional units that, through the development of rural tourism, encourage the development of the overall economic and social relations. Therefore it should have a priority character in the planning documents. In this context, the Sub-Strategy implies undertaking measures and activities that established this status of rural tourism as a selectivity within the overall development of tourism which encompasses different branches and activities.

The Republic of N. Macedonia has great potentials that are underutilized. It can be concluded that in this regards there is a real need to accelerate this process. In this sense, the strategic approach to rural development involves improving the situation and identifying the potentials at its disposal.

The criteria for valorization should allow determining the directions in which rural tourism should be developed. This includes valuing the elements and contents of space in order to improve the quality of these types of tourism products. Therefore best practices from the Macedonian surroundings and the world should be taken into account. The basic paradigm is its self-sustainability, which implies the mutual activities by the local community and the state institutions, the management of tourism destinations and the management of sectors that are directly related to rural tourism. That includes determining the optimal use of the available potentials which will allow the integral management of this selectivity as a crucial benefit

Keywords: strategy, rural areas, tourism, agriculture, RN Macedonia.

INTRODUCTION

The development of rural tourism is one of the selective types of tourism that has a priority place in the adopted planning and strategic documents. The specifics of this selective development formulation are in the function of creating distinct tourism products that need to activate the potentials in a sustainable manner by pervading the natural and cultural (i.e. created) values. It is capable of enabling the environmental conditions to be linked to the traditional ones by creating preconditions for accelerating the overall development, as well as to affirm and activate rural areas in an economic way. The development of rural tourism enables the emigration to be stopped and the quality of life to be improved. It also enables rural areas to be included in the general development directions. RN Macedonia is such a region in which pronounced development contradictions exist. Unlike urban areas that offer high levels of employment possibilities, rural areas remain on the margins of basic existential conditions. Therefore through the activation of resources in rural areas and the induction of other activities, rural tourism should be the primary interest not only globally but also in specific circumstances.

The adoption of this document implies a scientific and expert approach that will enable the determination of potentials per volume, structure and dynamics, the favorable use of space, natural and cultural resources, accommodation facilities, human resources and the optimal sustainable use of rural spaces. It is especially important to perceive the mutual relations that arise as interconnections. The Sub-Strategy relies on such global contemporary trends. For RNM, this tendency is in line with the social conditions that constitute the framework within which this activity can take place. After all, the adopted documents for agriculture and rural development place this type of tourism as one of the basic priorities. The basics relate not only to development opportunities as a circumstance, the basics of forecasts, their classification and the adoption of an action plan in the rural tourism sector. It clearly and unambiguously defines the mission of rural tourism in the field of treatment as a functional category of the state, the planning regions and the local self-government. It also determines the developmental vision of rural tourism through the prism of the set basic and specific goals that need to be achieved. The outlined activities are based on the developmental and functional parameters that determine the situation and the perspectives of this selective type through the specific possibilities it contains. They relate to the use of resources, social conditions, financial implications, characteristics of opportunities for promoting tourist demand for such products, content opportunities and staffing for the creation of specific selective tourism products and promotional activities. The goal is to make predictions about the future development opportunities as a developmental perspective. The determining of strategic goals and the opportunities for their realization is based on the movements and situation of development indicators related to the volume and quality of infrastructure and superstructure, tourism performances and trends. The Sub-Strategy encompasses prioritization, content characteristics and time frame. It is based on the components necessary for its realization. This includes identifying the carriers of the implementation activities, the required budgetary resources as well as identifying the beneficiaries of the set and implemented goals of the Sub-Strategy.

It identifies the beneficiaries; it contains the performance indicators and it involves the monitoring process for achieving the strategic forecasts.

Development opportunities are the basis for making forecasts, their classification, prioritization and adoption of an action plan that has to be implemented over the next ten years. The action plan is based on the mission and vision for development, on the determined general and specific goals and on the expected results. The action plan allows for the implementation of specific measures and activities.

1. Basis for adopting the Sub-Strategy

The professional, scientific and the general public have concluded that in RN Macedonia used are different terms such as *rural, green, eco, alternative, ethno*, while not defining rural tourism as a specificity in itself. It is therefore necessary at a national level to provide an official definition of what rural tourism is and what its characteristics are. Starting in an etymology sense, that the rural areas are underdeveloped spatial unities in which traditional culture is being practiced. Therefore, rural tourism should be defined as a type of tourism associated with such areas. Accordingly: "Rural tourism is a set of relations and phenomena arising from the travel and stay of tourists outside their place of residence that satisfy their recreational and cultural needs using the natural and traditional values of the local environment." This means that rural tourism is not limited to the rural environment, that the eco-tag is recognizable, that it is alternative to the massive types of tourism and that ethno-activities are just one of the attributes that through which it imposes itself on the tourist market. Rural tourism should therefore be considered as a specificity that deserves a more strategic approach. The starting point for adopting the Sub-Strategy for the Development of Rural Tourism in RN Macedonia should be sought in the contemporary efforts of tourism policy-making outlined by the Ministry of Economy. This commitment coincides with the treatment of tourism as a priority activity in the development on the state level, the regional units and local governments.

The treatment of rural tourism as a priority originates from the commitment of the Government of the Republic of N. Macedonia to vitalize rural development through this activity. The general strategic benefit is creating a more balanced economic development. Hence, rural tourism is not only the strategic interest of the Ministry of Economy, but also of the governmental policy in general. The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy expresses a special strategic interest in the development of rural tourism. This is due to the fact that this ministry in particular covers rural development and is closely related to rural tourism. This interest originates also from the close ties that rural tourism has with agriculture, forestry and the water economy because the areas in which these activities are most prevalent in the RN Macedonia are largely considered to be rural areas. Balanced regional development implies that the strategic approach needs to be leveled down at regional and local development, so that the local governments will have a crucial role in meeting the goals of this document. They should recognize the benefits of developing rural tourism and be actively involved in its implementation. Therefore, the Ministry of Local Self-Government will have the role of conducting development activities through the prism of supporting rural development and promoting this type of tourism in the local communities.

The development of rural tourism is also supported by the commitments for tourism development in general, which are outlined by the Agency for Promotion and Support of Tourism of the Republic of N. Macedonia. It represents a stakeholder that enables the implementation of the set goals by allowing the immediate service providers and intermediaries to perform on the tourist market. The Agency's interest is situated in the determined possibilities of this type of tourism to be also supported through the overall tourist offer, its subsidization and performance on the tourist market. Promotional activities play a crucial role in the development of rural tourism.

This intertwining of interests suggests that the basis should be sought in the integration of this type of tourism into the economic and social system of relations in the RN Macedonia. Thus, rural tourism becomes a factor of development in the interconnected domains.

2. Reasons for adopting the Sub-Strategy

The Sub-Strategy for Development of Rural Tourism in the RN Macedonia represents a document which is in line with the Law on Tourism Activity and the legal acts that regulate this matter in the state, the region and local communities. It is one of the basic frameworks for planning forecasts. Without realizing the potentials, a developmental projection that encompasses sustainable use of social and economic development opportunities cannot be set.

Compared to lake tourism, city tourism, mountain tourism and spa tourism as most recognizable selective types, rural tourism is still in its infancy. That is a valid reason to include it in the affirmed selective tourist offer. As it is a complex and heterogeneous development opportunity, the reasons for its adoption should be sought in the commitments to use the given potentials. This should be determined by the fact that it should allow identifying the values of the existing and new factors and contents of development, affirming and creating a positive image and reputation, optimal approach in the conducting of promotional activities, valid performance on the tourist market with recognizable tourism products and their acceptability by the tourist demand.

One of the most important reasons is realizing the possibilities for optimal use of resources - spatial, economic, social and human potentials. The need to adopt the Sub-Strategy arises also from the international donors and funds that will be able to support the regions and local governments in their aspirations for using such assets, which is not possible without the adoption and implementation of this document.

The reason for the adoption of the Sub-Strategy is also the fact that the timeframe for undertaking measures and activities for tourism development has already been surpassed and that the last Strategy was created for the period of 2012 to 2017.

The increase in the number of tourists in this sector is due to the fact that no serious steps have been taken in this sense in the past period. A characteristic is that the data on the facilities in the RN Macedonia have not been updated. The most important sources in this regard are the Registers for Rural Development in the eight planning regions of the country.

The connectivity of space and the internal communications do not allow for an optimal use of resources.

3. Methodology for preparation of the Sub-Strategy for Rural Tourism Development

The preparation of the Sub-Strategy for Rural Tourism Development includes the use of a research methodology. Scientific research covers the necessary approaches. This involves:

- analysis of the contemporary trends in this domain and situational analysis. These are then compared with the plan of linking the rural areas with the tourism development;
- review and critical analysis of literature, planning documents, strategies and other documents related to the development of rural tourism in RN Macedonia;

- as one of the primary activities of the research team is collecting this type of documentation and its successive analysis. These sources should allow the understanding the level of implementation of the set development goals. The scope of these documents allows determining the place of rural tourism in the overall socio-economic development;

- the development of the Sub-Strategy for Rural Tourism Development relies on relevant indicators published by the State Statistical Office of the RN Macedonia related to this sector, as well as the parameters contained in newsletters, reports and other publications at national, regional and local levels;

- In order to determine the views and opinions of stakeholders, consulted are the relevant experts, who are in fact prominent representatives of the ministries and services covering the rural, local and tourism sector. Data collection through this research approach is conducted at organized consultative meetings;

- analytical approaches include the crossing of data. Statistical analysis is performed on the collected statistical data by using appropriate techniques;

- identifying problems in their set form is conducted by applying SWOT analyses for specific development components and future undertaking;

- by identifying the phenomena and links in the field of rural tourism development and based on the analyses, the main mission and vision of the Sub-Strategy can be defined;

- the identified mission and vision of the Sub-Strategy are the framework for determining the general and specific objectives for the development of rural tourism;

- the axiological methodology enables systematization and classification of available resource values in order to prioritize the rural tourism development plan;

- mapping is a methodological tool that enables the understanding of links in this regard;

- determining the policies on the tourism market performances means applying marketing methodology;

- the action plan includes planning the measures and activities that will achieve the set goals within a particular timeframe;

- the strategic methodology predicts stakeholders who will be responsible for the implementation of the activities as well as the partners and supporters of the whole process;

- the modeled methodology implies identifying forms and contents that will be used for promoting rural tourism, the region in general and the intra-regional links and relations;

- the timeframe coincides with the budget as the basis for the implementation of the activities;

- the indicators for success and the monitoring process allows for the monitoring of the implementation of the set activities;

- The Sub-Strategy involves summarizing the results and predicting the prospective processes in the development of rural tourism and

- presenting this document to the expert and scientific public, i.e. stakeholders and commissioners, as well as its promotion which is successfully linked to the strategic directions of the general tourism and rural development.

4. Legal and strategic framework for preparing the Sub-Strategy

The preparation of the Sub-Strategy for development of rural tourism in the RN Macedonia arises from the legal obligations and strategic directions. The basic legal framework that should be taken into account is the Law on Tourism, in which rural tourism is defined as a specific selective type through positions for regulating the relations. It is the basis for adopting rulebooks on how to use the conditions in this type of tourism activity.

The Law on Catering represents a legal framework that encompasses the domain of service utilization and the standards for operating the rural tourism offer.

In addition to this legal framework, the Sub-Strategy should correlate with the laws governing tourism activities such as the following:

Law on Tourism, Law on Catering and the Law on Establishing an Agency for Promotion and Support of Tourism in the Republic of N. Macedonia.

Besides the direct laws related to tourism, all laws related to the economy, property relations and state regulation also have an impact. It is also very important to emphasize the adopted measure by the Government of the Republic of N. Macedonia for subsidizing foreign tourist visits (i.e. subsidizing incoming tourism which means that every legal entity that attracts and brings foreign tourists with a minimum stay of 3 overnights gets a stimulation package per tourist). Incentives in this domain also include the "reduction of the VAT".

5. Situational analysis

Situational analysis covers the parameters that are constant and dynamic in nature. In order to determine the extent of rural areas coverage, the analysis covered rural regions with specific socio-economic characteristics and a relatively small population. The Law on Agriculture and Rural Development was taken into account (Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia, no. 137/207, i.e. Article 24, paragraph 3). Rural areas are classified by the municipalities in which they are located. This means that they belong not only to rural municipalities but also to some of the urban centers. The analysis shows that the most dominant rural areas are village settlements and in a way, these two categories are equated. However, it should also be noted that according to this classification, in the total of 1758 rural settlements, there are also cities which are defined as rural. These are the cities: Berovo, Bogdanci, Valandovo, Vinica, Gevgelija, Debar, Delchevo, Demir Kapija, Demir Hisar, Kavadarci, Kichevo, Kochani, Kratovo, Kriva Palanka, Krushevo, Makedonska Kamenica, Makedonski Brod, Negotino, Negotino, Pehchevo, Probishtip, Radovish, Resen, Sveti Nikole and Struga.

Rural areas are designated as territories in which the population is less than 30,000 (Art.63 paragraph 5 of the Law on Agriculture and Rural Development/Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia, No. 49/10 and No. 53/11). Most of the rural areas are located in spaces with a population of less than or equal to 150 inhabitants per km². Furthermore, also the inaccessible rural communities that are at least 5 km away from the local roads of the nearest urban settlement within the same municipality are also included in this group of such areas. Although relatively small in number, there are rural communities within which 80 % or more are engaged in agricultural activities (of the total working-age population).

Classification of rural areas and rural communities is also being done according to the criterion of underdeveloped rural communities where the number of inactive companies in relation to the total number of registered trading entities regardless of their registered priority activity or their basic revenue code in the register is equal or more than 75%. The criterion of underdeveloped rural communities where the total number of unemployed people in relation to the number of residents exceeds the national average indicates that it is relatively modest.

The development of rural tourism is related to the prevalence of depopulated rural communities where the population is less than 150 people. Such depopulation units are widely present in RN Macedonia and can be placed in the context of a needed prevention of depopulation through the development of rural tourism. The parameters for such classification of rural areas and rural communities are given by the municipalities and settlements (reference to such classification is according to the above cited source of the Law on Agriculture and Rural Development).

According to the need for determining development parameters of rural tourism in RN Macedonia and identifying new locations in the planning regions (i.e. establishing a list of minimum 5 existing centers for rural tourism development) the analysis is carried out for all of the eight planning regions in the country.

5.1 Analysis of tourism turnover

In order to determine the development directions of tourism, an analysis of tourism turnover should be undertaken. This is possible by identifying in a structural and dynamic sense the tourist visits and tourist stay. What follows is an overview of these concepts by planning regions.

5.1.1 Analysis of tourist visits

Tourist visits is an indicator that derives from the number of registered tourists who have visited a particular area in a given time interval. In continuation presented is a tabular and graphical analysis of the number of tourists in terms of structure, percentage share and distribution by regions in the last 5 years, as the latest relevant data obtained from the State Statistical Office.

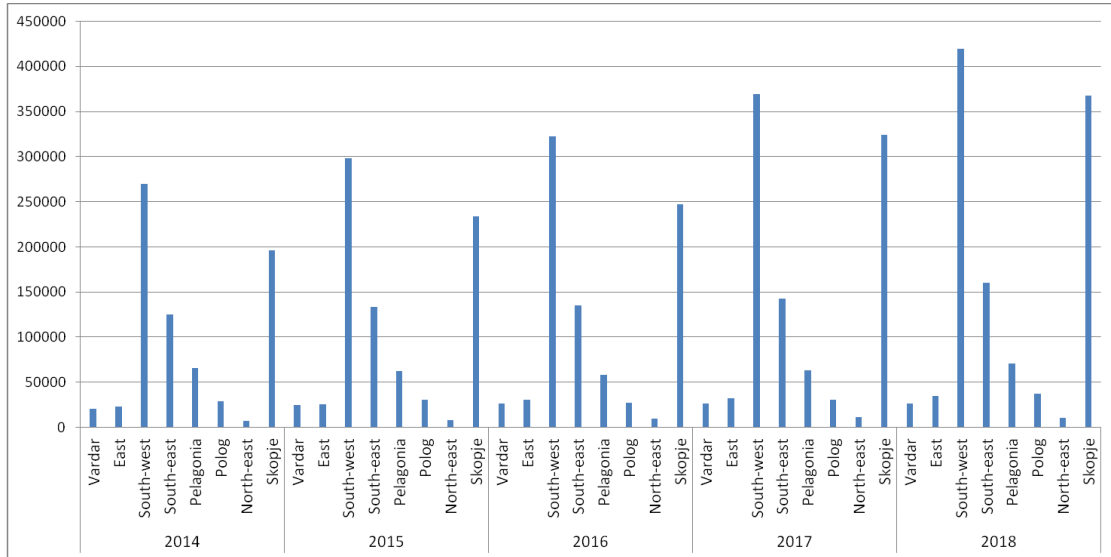
Chart no. 1 – Overview of the number of tourists (domestic and foreign) by planning region and percentage share 2014-2018

Year	Planning region	Number of tourists	%	Domestic tourists	%	Foreign tourists	%
2014	Vardar	20667	2,8	5467	1,8	15200	3,6
	East	23035	3,1	14306	4,6	8729	2,1
	South-west	269547	36,6	125320	40,4	144227	33,9
	South-east	124707	17,0	74071	23,9	50636	11,9
	Pelagonija	65527	8,9	44533	14,3	20994	4,9
	Polog	29143	4,0	15886	5,1	13257	3,1
	North-east	6937	0,9	2703	0,9	4234	1,0
	Skopje	196087	26,7	28050	9,0	168037	39,5
	TOTAL	735650	100,0	310336	100,0	425314	100,0
2015	Vardar	24308	3,0	7981	2,4	16327	3,4
	East	25907	3,2	16751	5,1	9156	1,9
	South-west	298057	36,5	136637	41,3	161420	33,2
	South-east	133328	16,3	82143	24,9	51185	10,5
	Pelagonija	62019	7,6	40447	12,2	21572	4,4
	Polog	30200	3,7	14565	4,4	15635	3,2
	North-east	8125	1,0	2059	0,6	6066	1,2
	Skopje	234123	28,7	29954	9,1	204169	42,1
	TOTAL	816067	100,0	330537	100,0	485530	100,0
2016	Vardar	26064	3,0	8375	2,4	17689	3,5
	East	30568	3,6	20643	6,0	9925	1,9
	South-west	322334	37,6	151347	43,7	170987	33,5
	South-east	135092	15,8	82907	23,9	52185	10,2
	Pelagonija	58355	6,8	37012	10,7	21343	4,2
	Polog	27318	3,2	13805	4,0	13513	2,6
	North-east	9774	1,1	2730	0,8	7044	1,4
	Skopje	247338	28,9	29540	8,5	217798	42,7
	TOTAL	856843	100	346359	100,0	510484	100,0
2017	Vardar	26145	2,6	8033	2,2	18112	2,9
	East	31775	3,2	19947	5,4	11828	1,9
	South-west	368924	36,9	164459	44,7	204465	32,4
	South-east	142888	14,3	84260	22,9	58628	9,3
	Pelagonija	63549	6,4	38074	10,3	25475	4,0
	Polog	30124	3,0	14150	3,8	15974	2,5
	North-east	11290	1,1	2387	0,6	8903	1,4
	Skopje	324146	32,5	36937	10,0	287209	45,5
	TOTAL	998841	100,0	368247	100,0	630594	100,0
2018	Vardar	26385	2,3	8969	2,1	17416	2,5
	East	34354	3,0	20490	4,9	13864	2,0
	South-west	419717	37,2	181102	43,2	238615	33,7
	South-east	160173	14,2	104971	25,0	55202	7,8
	Pelagonija	70798	6,3	38789	9,2	32009	4,5
	Polog	37091	3,3	16802	4,0	20289	2,9
	North-east	10820	1,0	2312	0,6	8508	1,2
	Skopje	367597	32,6	46155	11,0	321442	45,4
	TOTAL	1126935	100,0	419590	100,0	707345	100,0

Source: State Statistical Office of RN Macedonia – Mak-Stat database and own calculations

The chart gives an overview of the total number of tourists, domestic and foreign tourists by regions in the last 5 years (2014-2018), as well as their percentage share. Such an overview also applies to the planning regions which represent the territorial distribution of this category. In order to obtain more clarity, it is also presented graphically.

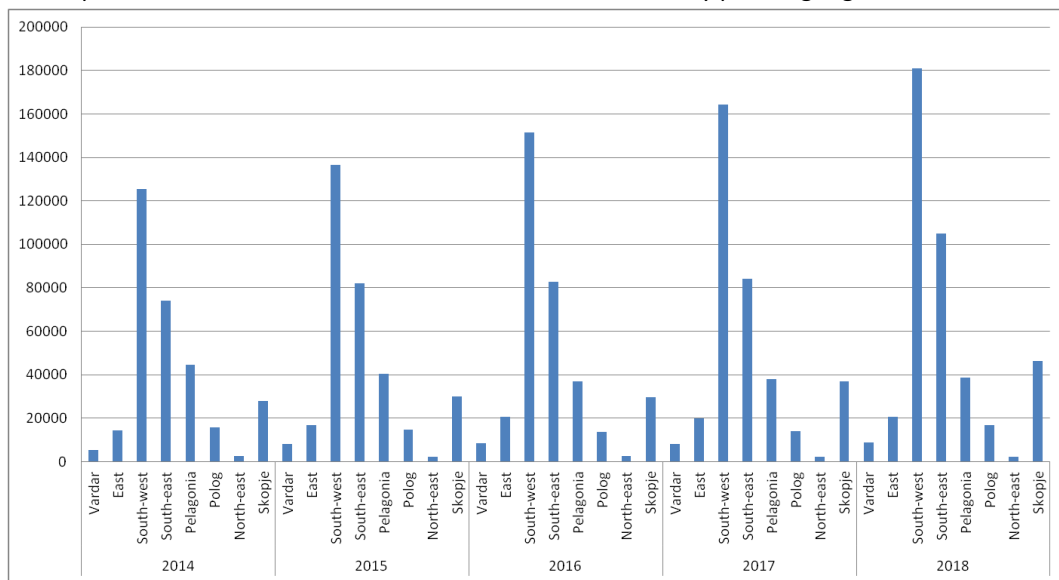
Graph no. 1 – Overview of the total number of tourists by planning region – 2014-2018



Source: State Statistical Office of the RN Macedonia – Mak-Stat database

Firstly, a graphical overview of the dynamics of the total number of tourists per region in the 5-year period is provided. The immediate conclusion is that the total number of tourists in RN Macedonia in the past 5 years has steadily been increasing. In 2014 the total number of tourists was 735650, while in 2018 it amounted to 1126935 tourists (an increase of 53.2% compared to 2014). If we analyze the total number of tourists in the sense of their distribution by regions, it can be concluded that in all analyzed years, the first three places are occupied by the South-west, Skopje and South-east Planning Region. The logical conclusion is that most tourists come to those planning regions where there is the largest number of available accommodation and food and beverage facilities (SWPR and SKPR). However, despite the fact that SEPR is behind PEPR in terms of the number of available hospitality facilities, in SEPR a higher number of tourists compared to PEPR were registered. In the last 3 analyzed years (2016-2018), a more pronounced increase in the number of tourists can be observed compared to the first two analyzed years (2014 and 2015). In the last analyzed year, the share of SWPR was 37.2 % of the total number of registered tourists in RN Macedonia. The Skopje Planning Region participates with 32.6 %, while the South-east with 14.2 %. These three planning regions have a share of over 70 % which is a significant figure. The remaining 30 % are between the rest 5 planning regions.

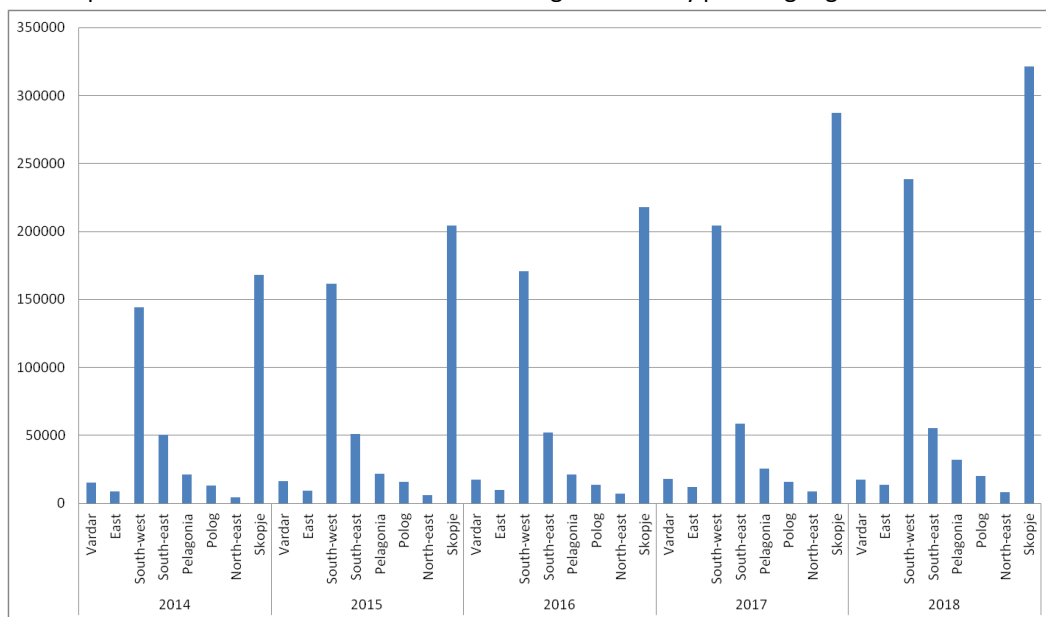
Graph no. 2 – Overview of the number of domestic tourists by planning region – 2014-2018



Source: State Statistical Office of the RN Macedonia – Mak-Stat database

The graph above provides an overview of the dynamics and distribution of the number of domestic tourists in the past 5 years (2014-2018). It can be noticed that the increase in the number of domestic tourists has also been continuous in the past 5 years. However, that growth is not so pronounced. In this sense, in 2014 in RN Macedonia a total of 310336 domestic tourists were registered, while in 2018 that number was 419590. This represents an increase of 35.2 % compared to 2014. By analyzing the distribution over the 5-year period, it can be seen that the first three places belong to the South-west, South-east and Pelagonija Planning Region. The Skopje Planning Region is in fourth place. The only exception is the last analyzed year, when the Skopje Planning Region recorded a higher number of domestic tourists compared to Pelagonija and climbed to the third place. Accordingly, the percentage share of the planning regions in 2018 was the following: SWPR - 43.2%, SEPR - 25.0%, SKPR - 11%. The three most visited regions by domestic tourists account for almost 80 % of the total number of visits in the country, which is noticeable.

Graph no. 3 – Overview of the number of foreign tourists by planning region – 2014-2018



Source: State Statistical Office of the RN Macedonia – Mak-Stat database

The graph above provides an overview of the dynamics and distribution of the number of foreign tourists in the last five analyzed years. Similarly as with the domestic tourists, the analysis of the foreign tourists shows a continuous increase in the total number of tourists who visited RN Macedonia during the analyzed period. Unlike the domestic tourists, this increase is noticeably more pronounced among foreign tourists. In that sense, in 2014 the country was visited by 425314 foreign tourists, while in 2018 by 707345. This is an increase of 66.3 % (compared to 2014), which is almost twice as much as the percentage growth of the domestic tourists. It can also be seen from the graphical overview, that the highest increase was recorded in the last two analyzed years (2017 and 2018). Furthermore, if we look at the structure of tourists in 2018, it can be noticed that foreign tourists participate with 62.8 % of the total number, as compared to 37.2 % for domestic tourists. This ratio in 2014 was 57.8 % foreign tourists versus 42.2 % domestic tourists. It can be concluded that the number and participation of foreign tourists in RN Macedonia is growing rapidly. In that sense tourism should be developed in these directions also in the future. Also from the analysis of the distribution of foreign tourists (as similar to the analysis of the total number of tourists) it can be concluded that the first three places are held by the South-west, Skopje and South-east Planning Region. However, on the first place here is the Skopje Planning Region. That means that SKPR was visited by more foreign tourists as compared to SWPR. This situation remains unchanged in all analyzed years, and all regions register a continuous growth in the number of foreign tourists. In 2018, the percentage share of the SKPR was 45.4 % of the total number of tourists, while the SWPR accounted for 33.7 %. On the far third place behind them was SEPR with 7.8 % share. In this sense, the total share of the first two regions (SWPR and SKPR) was almost 80 %.

From this overview, it can be concluded that the percentage share of several regions in the total number of tourists (especially foreign) who have visited RN Macedonia in the last 5 years is too high. The other regions in this respect do not have a satisfactory level of tourist arrivals. Strategic takeovers in tourism should be aimed at favoring different tourism potentials precisely in those spatial units. This may be achieved by developing selective types of tourism in those regions (such as rural, active and cultural tourism) and creating attractive tourism products.

5.1.2 Analysis of tourist stay

An important indicator for determining the degree of tourism development in the planning regions is the analysis of tourist stay. The stay is determined by the number of registered overnights. A tabular and graphical overview of the number of overnights of the total number of tourists and their structure into domestic and foreign in the last 5 years (2014-2018) is provided. The percentage share of each of the planning regions in RN Macedonia in relation to these data is also covered. The data are obtained by the State Statistical Office and by own calculations.

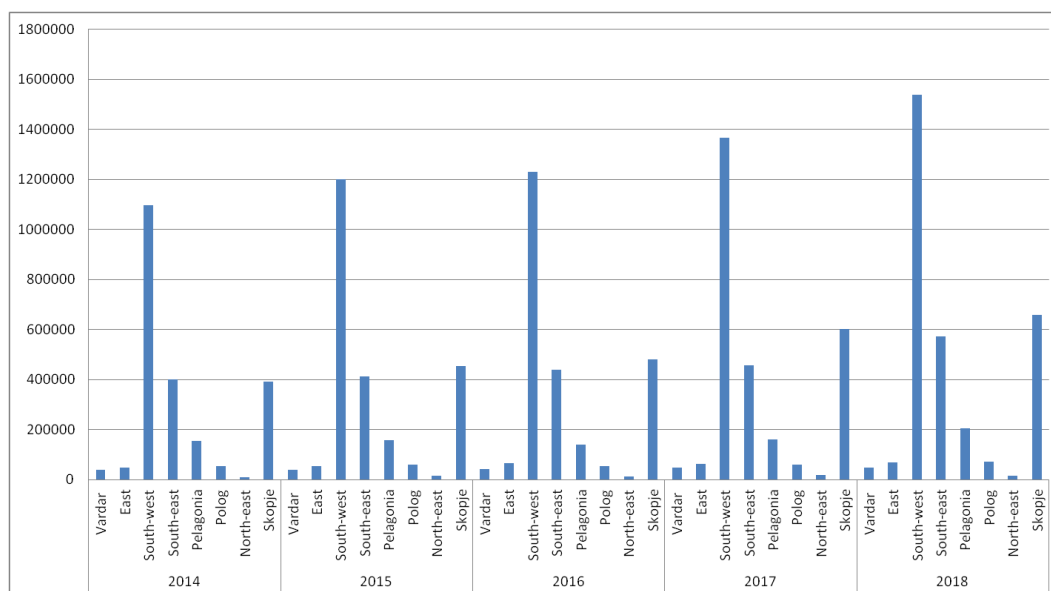
Chart no. 2 – Overview of the number of overnights (domestic and foreign) by planning region and percentage share 2014-2018

Year	Planning region	Number of overnights	%	Overnights by domestic tourists	%	Overnights by foreign tourists	%
2014	Vardar	39662	1,8	12001	0,9	27661	3,0
	East	49221	2,2	27277	2,1	21944	2,4
	South-west	1095452	49,9	694229	54,5	401223	43,5
	South-east	401065	18,3	304148	23,9	96917	10,5
	Pelagonija	154595	7,0	98784	7,8	55811	6,0
	Polog	54419	2,5	29675	2,3	24744	2,7
	North-east	10671	0,5	4465	0,4	6206	0,7
	Skopje	390798	17,8	102791	8,1	288007	31,2
	TOTAL	2195883	100,0	1273370	100,0	922513	100,0
2015	Vardar	39636	1,7	13806	1,0	25830	2,5
	East	53357	2,2	31612	2,3	21745	2,1
	South-west	1201927	50,2	745473	54,9	456454	44,0
	South-east	412804	17,2	326515	24,0	86289	8,3
	Pelagonija	157766	6,6	104922	7,7	52844	5,1
	Polog	60574	2,5	29041	2,1	31533	3,0
	North-east	15229	0,6	2863	0,2	12366	1,2
	Skopje	452912	18,9	103590	7,6	349322	33,7
	TOTAL	2394205	100,0	1357822	100,0	1036383	100,0
2016	Vardar	41643	1,7	16557	1,2	25086	2,4
	East	66515	2,7	44645	3,2	21870	2,1
	South-west	1228617	49,9	778189	55,3	450428	42,7
	South-east	437607	17,8	342646	24,4	94961	9,0
	Pelagonija	141153	5,7	90028	6,4	51125	4,9
	Polog	52590	2,1	24887	1,8	27703	2,6
	North-east	13751	0,6	3465	0,2	10286	1,0
	Skopje	479284	19,5	106726	7,6	372558	35,3
	TOTAL	2461160	100	1407143	100,0	1054017	100,0
2017	Vardar	47189	1,7	17473	1,2	29716	2,3
	East	62957	2,3	38320	2,6	24637	1,9
	South-west	1365684	49,2	826774	55,8	538910	41,6
	South-east	457162	16,5	351244	23,7	105918	8,2
	Pelagonija	161751	5,8	93314	6,3	68437	5,3
	Polog	60249	2,2	27457	1,9	32792	2,5
	North-east	17207	0,6	3283	0,2	13924	1,1
	Skopje	602953	21,7	122595	8,3	480358	37,1
	TOTAL	2775152	100,0	1480460	100,0	1294692	100,0
2018	Vardar	48649	1,5	21272	1,3	27377	1,8
	East	69419	2,2	39591	2,3	29828	2,0
	South-west	1539219	48,5	908457	53,9	630762	42,3
	South-east	571670	18,0	463329	27,5	108341	7,3
	Pelagonija	203620	6,4	98618	5,9	105002	7,0
	Polog	71929	2,3	32464	1,9	39465	2,6
	North-east	14185	0,4	3280	0,2	10905	0,7
	Skopje	658117	20,7	118262	7,0	539855	36,2
	TOTAL	3176808	100,0	1685273	100,0	1491535	100,0

Source: State Statistical Office of RN Macedonia – Mak-Stat database and own calculations

Similarly as to the tabular overview previously for the number of visitors, i.e. tourists who have visited the planning regions in the past five years, this chart provides the number of overnights they have spent. Graphic overviews are given below for a more plastic and easier overview of the structure and dynamics of overnight stays by domestic and foreign tourists.

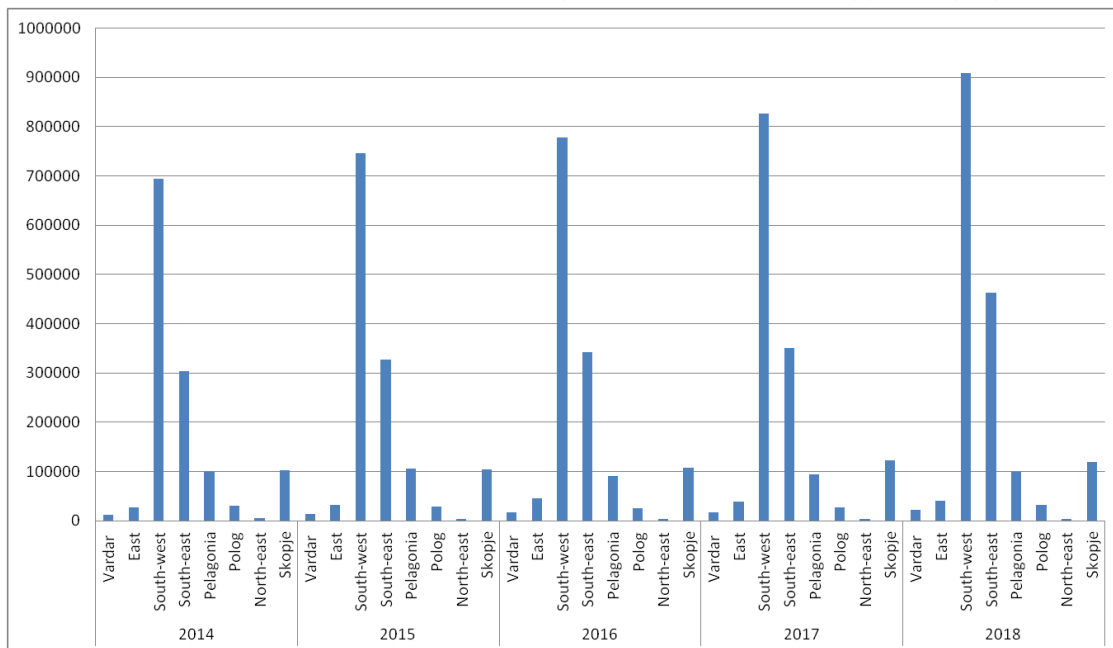
Graph no. 4 – Overview of the total number of overnights spent by tourists (domestic and foreign) by planning region – 2014-2018



Source: State Statistical Office of the RN Macedonia – Mak-Stat database

The graph provides the dynamics of the total number of nights spent by tourists (domestic and foreign tourists in total) in the planning regions. The timeframe for this analysis is the past five years (2014-2018). The first conclusion is that the total number of nights spent by tourists in all planning regions has been steadily increasing in the analyzed 5 years. In 2014 the total number of nights spent was 2195883, while in 2018 there were 3176808 nights spent. This is an increase of 44.7 % compared to the first analyzed year (2014). That's a slight increase compared to the realized number of arrivals. From the analysis of the overnights in this time period, it can be concluded that the first three planning regions with the highest number of overnights remain almost the same. The South-west Planning Region is in first place, followed by the Skopje and South-east Planning Region. The South-east Planning Region in terms of number of nights spent was ahead of the Skopje region only in 2014. It is noticeable that, according to this parameter, the South-west Planning Region is far in front of all other regions, including the SKPR and SEPR. The proportional share of SWPR even declines in the analyzed period. In that sense, in 2014 it was 49.9 %, afterwards it slightly increased, while in the last two years it slightly decreased (48.5% in 2018). However, the difference between the overnight stays in the SWPR and the other planning regions is particularly pronounced. For illustration purposes, if we analyze the last year (2018), in the SWPR a total of 1539219 overnights were realized, which means more than double overnights compared to the Skopje Planning Region which is in second place (SKPR has a percentage share of 20.7 %) and the South-east which is in third place (with a total share of 18.0 %). Their combined percentage share (of SWPR, SKPR and SEPR together) is just over 85%. This is more pronounced than the number of realized arrivals (around 70 %), analyzed in the previous table. The rest of the total nights spent in RN Macedonia are allocated in the other five planning regions with a combined participation of just under 15 %. Hence, we can conclude that there is a need to take urgent action to promote such disadvantages in those planning regions.

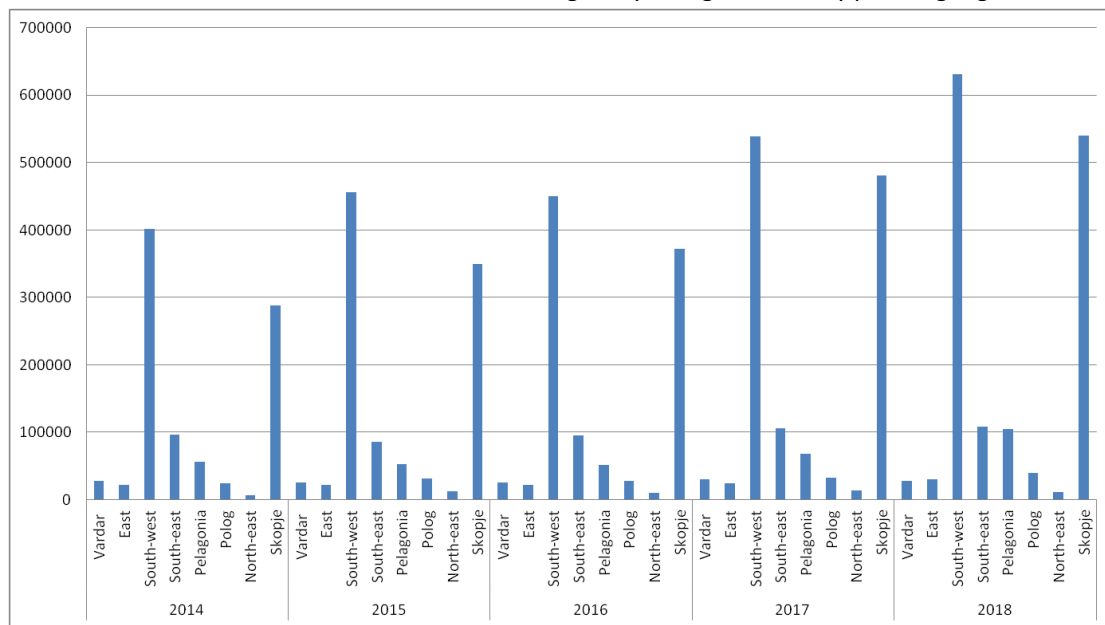
Graph no. 5 – Overview of the number of realized overnights by domestic tourists by planning region – 2014-2018



Source: State Statistical Office of the RN Macedonia – Mak-Stat database

The graph provides an overview of the number of nights spent by domestic tourists in the past 5 years (2014-2018) in the 8 planning regions. It can be noticed that the increase in the number of domestic tourists has also been continuous in the past 5 years. In 2014, there were 1273370 overnights spent by domestic tourists in RN Macedonia, while in 2018 that number was 1685273, an increase of 32.3 %, which is almost at the same level as the increase in the number of tourists (arrivals). When analyzing the percentage share of the planning regions in this regard, greater share of the South-west Planning Region in relation to the total number of nights spent can be noticed. In this sense, in 2018 the share of SWPR was 53.9 %. This amounts to an even greater share than when analyzing the number of arrivals by domestic tourists. The second highest number of nights spent is registered in the South-east Planning Region (with 27.5 % share in 2018), while Skopje Region is in third place, but with a much lower share (only 7.0 %). This means that in 2018 in SWPR more than half of the total overnight stays in the country were realized. The combined participation of the first three planning regions was over 88%. This is even more than the analysis of realized arrivals (visits) by domestic tourists.

Graph no. 6 – Overview of the number of realized overnights by foreign tourists by planning region – 2014-2018



Source: State Statistical Office of the RN Macedonia – Mak-Stat database

The graph shows the distribution of overnight stays by foreign tourists from 2014 to 2018. In this analysis too, a continuous increase in these figures over the five-year period can be seen. However, this increase is more pronounced than the number of nights spent by domestic tourists. Namely, in 2014, at the state level a total of 922513 foreign overnights were spent, while in 2018 there was an increase that amounted to 1491535 overnights. That is an increase of 61.7 %. This increase is similar to the number of foreign arrivals in the previously analyzed chart. Compared to the overnight stays by domestic tourists, the increase of nights spent by foreign tourists (from 2014 to 2018) is almost double. If we analyze the structure of tourists' overnight stays (domestic and foreign in the total number), it can be noticed that the number of overnight stays by domestic tourists has a higher percentage share than foreign tourists' spent overnights. Hence, in 2018 the percentage share of nights spent by domestic tourists in the total number was 53.0 %, compared to nights spent by foreign tourists of 47.0 %. This is an interesting fact since in the previous chart (regarding the number of arrivals) a higher percentage share by foreign tourists could be seen compared to the domestic tourists (57.8 % foreign tourists versus 42.2 % domestic tourists). This means that domestic tourists have a longer stay than foreign. Such a percentage of overnight stays has a tendency to balance out between domestic and foreign tourists over the past 5 years. Namely, in 2014, the percentage share of nights spent by domestic tourists was 57.9 % compared to nights spent by foreign tourists with 42.1 %. This concludes to the need for creating such tourist content that would not only attract more foreign and domestic tourists, but also create conditions for longer stays, especially for foreign tourists. If we analyze the distribution of overnight stays of the foreign tourists by region, we can see that the first three places are again held by the same three planning regions, as in the analysis of overnight stays by domestic tourists. In this sense, the first place in 2018 was held by SWPR with a share of 42.3 %, while close behind was the SKPR with a percentage share of 36.2 %. Far behind them, in third place, was the South-east Planning Region with a share of only 7.3 %. In contrast to the analysis of the number of tourists in the planning regions, it can be noticed that although more foreign tourists came to visit the SKPR as compared to the SWPR (percentage share of 45.4 % vs. 33.7 %, respectively), in SWPR more nights were spent by foreign tourists than in SKPR. This means that foreign tourists had a very short average stay in the SKPR, unlike in the SWPR. The combined percentage share of the three first-ranked

planning regions in this regard amount to more than 85 %. This means that the rest of the overnight stays are allocated to the other 5 planning regions which is a too low percentage share.

The common conclusion from the analysis of tourists' overnight stays in the planning regions (in the analyzed five-year period) is that domestic tourists spent more nights than the foreign. This is in direct correlation with tourist expenditure. Namely, longer stay implies higher expenditure. In this regard, actions should be undertaken in order to improve the length of stay of foreign tourists. This can be achieved by enriching the content of foreign tourists' stay. Attractive selective types of tourism, such as active, rural and cultural tourism, would play an important role in this regard. The analysis also shows that two planning regions have a too high percentage share in the total number of nights spent in RN Macedonia (these are the South-west Region and the Skopje Region). This is especially more emphasized for foreign tourists who are concentrated in these two regions. The individual realized arrivals and stays in the other planning regions is at a very low level. Therefore, tourism development structures need to find ways to balance out such discrepancies. This can be achieved by creating attractive contents in the under-visited planning regions. Cultural, recreational-adrenaline and rural contents would play an important role in this regard, given that almost all planning regions have numerous significant values of these types that are underutilized. The Action Plan in this Sub-Strategy has taken into account such findings.

5.2 Analysis of the situation and opportunities for development of rural tourism in the East Planning Region

The East Planning Region (EAPR) covers an area of 3537 km². It covers 13.7 % of the territory of N. Macedonia and is mainly a region with pronounced rural characteristics. Its compatibility with Bulgaria enables it to be identified as a region with good accessibility and the opportunity to use the resources in rural tourism. The existence of developed rural areas in a tourism sense in Bulgaria allows for good practices from Bulgaria to be utilized in this region. With the existence of these regional units in Bulgaria, combined tourism products can be created because of the immediate proximity of Bulgaria's tourism values is also in function of the selective types of tourism of this regional entity. The region has contact features with the North-east, South-east and the Vardar regions, which allows using the tourist values found in these regional units. The presence of heterogeneous contents in the neighboring planning regions is the basis for developing enriching functions in rural tourism development. The favorable connectivity with these regions also allows for creating joint tourism products that will have a positive impact on accelerating tourism development. The region has transit features related to the opportunities for attracting tourists in rural areas. Based on the Register for Rural Tourism Development in the East Planning Region (2017), the following points for development of transit tourism on the A3 motorway should be taken into consideration: Church "St. Ilija ", village Tri Cheshmi, Church "St. Nicholas ", v. Krupishte, Petrol Station Euro - Control, Cheshinovo, Church "St. Nedela ", Obleshevo, Restaurant "Ambassador", Obleshevo, Motel Sina Ptica, v. Trkanje, Monument of Nikola Karev, v. Trkanje, City of Kochani, Hotel Shagal, Vinica, Church of "St. Stefan", Istibanja, Fish pond Savaro, Istibanja, City of Makedonska Kamenica, Motel - Restaurant Park - Panorama, v. Dramche, Kopachka Memorial Room, village Dramche, City of Delchevo, Ilin Kamen, v. Zvegor, Fish Restaurant Vodenica, v. Zvegor.

These points are in close proximity to the centers for rural tourism development, thus providing appropriate accessibility to the region.

Mountain tourism offers the opportunity for a solid tourist offer. The Osogovo Mountains are in this function. The most favorable conditions are at Carev Vrv, or at Kalin Kamen. Furthermore, good base for development of rural tourism are Delchevo-Berovo, Kochani, Probishtip-Zletovo valley, as well as part of Ovche Pole. The gorges and canyons of the EAPR are extremely vibrant, suitable for picnics, education, outdoor stays, camping, rock climbing, bird-watching. Being mainly located in rural areas and very attractive, they can significantly develop rural tourism (Register for Rural Tourism Development in the East Planning Region, 2017).

The presence of the Turtel Caves, as well as the caves in the Delchevo region and the surroundings of Lesново are the basis for the development of cave tourism with educational features that can be a complementary part of the development of rural tourism. The paleo-volcanic landscape has similar educational values.

Hydrography in the region has the potential to be in service of rural tourism. This refers to the possibilities for picnics and walks near the springs of the rivers, the rivers themselves, such as the rivers in the Bregalnica catchment area, and the waterfalls. Kochani Spa and Kezhovica Spa are complementary tourist values for the development of rural tourism in the region. The existing lakes in this region have similar characteristics that have the potential for development of active tourism.

Taking into account that the development of rural tourism relies on environmental conditions, the Register for Rural Tourism Development in the East Planning Region (2017) includes protected areas such as nature reserves and monuments of nature. They are the following:

Nature Reserves: Goten (Delchevo), Linak (Berovo), Malesh (Berovo); Berovo Lake (Berovo); Zrnovska River (Zrnovci); Judovi Livadi (Pehchevo); Lomija River (Zrnovci); Temniot Andak (Berovo); Kukuljeto (Delchevo); Lower Zletovica; Osogovo Mountains, Maleshevo Mountains.

Monuments of Nature: Zvegor (Delchevo); Cave Konjska Dupka (Delchevo); Morodvis (Zrnovci); Machevo (Berovo); Dab (Kochani); Murite (Berovo); Crna Dudinka (Probishtip); Mocharnik (Shtip); Crna Topola (Berovo).

The basis for the development of rural tourism in this region, however, is the agricultural land. In this region, this is especially emphasized. The development of this type of tourism depends on both the total area and the structure of agricultural areas.

The total area of agricultural land is 177171 ha. The arable land is 76490 ha or 43.20 %. This means that most of the agricultural land is not arable. However, for the purposes of development of rural tourism these areas may also have this function, as these territories are pastures that are a good basis for livestock breeding. The areas of pastures amount to a total of 100649 ha.

The structure of arable land shows positive characteristics. Plough fields and gardens prevail with 62501 ha, which is 82 %, orchards with 3642 ha (5 %), vineyards with 1486 ha (1 %) and pastures with 8861 ha (12 %).

This means that there is a positive structure of including agro-tourism activities in rural tourism. Their function is dual. On the one hand, it is the basis for supplying the hospitality industry while on the other hand; it provides an active function towards tourists regarding their stay in the region within this type of tourism.

Rice plantations have a distinctive character, which is the brand of the region. This points to the possibility not only for the active participation of tourists in the production process, but also for the creation of educational programs as content of stay that arise from the development of agritourism. It is also the basis for cultural events and gastronomic presentations and meetings.

Regarding the possibilities for development of rural tourism, the production of plums, their processing, preparation and storage have a special role. This means that plums are a brand associated with recognizability and opportunity to be included in the region's tourist offer. The inclusion should be in the cultivating and gastronomic processes, as well as in their presentation through events.

For the purposes of rural tourism development, there exists also a noticeable livestock capital, which can be used as an agro-tourism component. According to the Program for development of the EAPR a total of 19964 cattle, 43233 pigs, 114666 sheep, 16725 goats, 130737 poultry, 1411 horses, and 24562 beehives are registered in the region. This amount is the basis for farm production. Such opportunities are based on the development of farm-related agritourism.

The development of rural tourism is closely related to hunting-tourism activities. In this sense, hunting areas, hunting grounds and the activity itself can stimulate the development of rural areas. Hunting relates to the agro-sector and tourism. In the EAPR the fenced hunting grounds Polaki and Konche are the bearers of this activity. In addition, the hunting grounds Golak, Osogovo, Maleshevo and Mangovica have great potential. Most of them, following the example of Polaki and Konche, have to be equipped by following European standards in order to attract foreign tourists.

Fishing areas are closely linked to the development of rural tourism. They are located in the basin of the Bregalnica River. There are five fishing areas in the region from the source ("Bregalnica 1") to the mouth of the Sveti Nikole River, ("Bregalnica 5"). The fishing fund is characterized by its diversity. River trout, scrub, dace, smelt, carp, mackerel and catfish are present. This means that there is a basis for different fishing activities. This is an important potential for fishing tourism and preparing gastronomic specialties. The analysis of the situation shows that it is necessary to equip the fishing areas, marking and arranging of sites that should be in the function of fishing activities, creation of rural and fishing tourism products, promotional activity and tourist market performing, normative regulation of the activity and providing conditions for organizing competitions.

The region is characterized by its distinctive woodland. It consists of deciduous, evergreen trees and mixed forests. Their arranging is in line with the characteristics of sustainable environment and rural tourism. This tourist value is due to the climatic and pedological conditions. Based on these forest features determined are different opportunities for pleasant walks through the forest areas, camping and outdoor stays. In this sense, rural tourism has a value which is promoted by its educational and research possibilities.

The development of rural tourism is closely linked to cultural attractions. In the Register for Rural Tourism Development in the East Planning Region, architectural complexes of compact and spread type are located in the villages.

The following are villages of compact type: v. Lesново (Municipality of Probishtip); v. Zrnovci (Municipality of Zrnovci); v. Razlovci (Municipality of Delchevo); v. Zvegor (Municipality of Delchevo); v. Grad (Municipality of Delchevo); v. Rusinovo (Municipality of Berovo); v. Radanje (Municipality of Karbinci); v. Chiflik (Municipality of Cheshinovo-Obleshevo) and v. Istibanja (Municipality of Vinica).

The following village settlements are classified as complexes of spread type: v. Polaki (Municipality of Kochani); v. Jastrebnik (Municipality of Kochani, v. Sasa (Municipality of Makedonska Kamenica); v. Cera (Municipality of Makedonska Kamenica) and v. Dramche (Municipality of Delchevo).

Such complexes are an opportunity for tourists to get in contact with ethnographic values and experience the culture. Furthermore, these complexes are in function of accommodation and excursion activities. In this context are also the sacral buildings and profane architecture in the type of monuments, archaeological sites and institutions such as museums and galleries that are located outside the identified complexes.

Rural tourism relies on events. The events in the region allow the creation of combined tourism products. Religious events such as the following are important because they have built a recognizable reputation: Custom "Chetrse", Shtip (UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage), Easter Egg, Berovo, Vlach Meetings of Petrovden, Kochani, Pavlovden. These types of events also include religious events that are generally accepted by Orthodox believers and, for example, Bajram among the Islamic population.

In addition, the Register contains the following cultural events: Ethno Festival, Berovo, Pijanechko-Maleshevo Wedding, Delchevo - organizer Cultural - Artistic Association "Goce Delchev", Istibanjsko Zdravozhivo, Vinica, organized by the ensemble "Kitka" from the village of Istibanja, Cheshinovo - Obleshevo (The Little Mother of God), Kochani Days of Rice, Kochani in the village of Dolni Polog, Festival of Brass Orchestras, Pehchevo-Pavlovden, Festival "Joy of the City", Probishtip, Profest, Probishtip, World Day of the Roma People, Acting Performance of amateur actors, Kochani, Lesново Art Colony, Probishtip, International Art Colony "St. Panteleimon", Kochani, Raspeano Maleshevche - Festival of Children's Songs, Pehchevo, Golak Folklore Meetings on Golak Mountain, Delchevo, In Vinica, Veritas festival of humor and satire, Vinica, Days of Fashion, Shtip and Shtip cultural summer.

This register of events shows the range of possible solutions in the creation of tourist products. Their inclusion in the tourist offer is heterogeneous. This creates the opportunity for a successful performance on the tourist market.

Gastronomic events Identified in the Register have a special place in the development of rural tourism. These are the following: Pastrmajlijada, Shtip, Traditional Ethno Fair, Pehchevo, Pehchevo Pavlovden, Pehchevo and Ethno Festival - Maleshevo on the palm, Berovo. In this way, tourists are able to experience part of the ethnographic cultural heritage through an unusual presentation of the values of the region as a whole. Ethnography in the region is one of the main developmental, attractive drivers of rural tourism. In this regard, the regional culinary specialties occupy a special place. They are important for the development of rural tourism in terms of their preparation, serving and consumption at local homes and in terms of catering offer in the restaurant sector outside of rural households. In the Register, they are determined by typological individuality and spatial location. These are the following: Makedonska Kamenica - Banica pod vrshnik, Komita lamb. Shtip - Shtip green beans, meatballs in onion, Shtip pastrmajlija. Zrnovci - Endemic river trout and river crab, hot pepper "Zrnovski lut" and industrial pepper from the varieties "Amfora" and "Kurtovska Kapija", Zrnovo leek, Zrnovo pink eggplant known for its coarseness and mildness, peas, plums, dzanka plum, peach, cherry, and pear. Pehchevo yellow and white cheese, Maleshevo cheese, Maleshevo potato. Kochani/Cheshinovo – Obleshevo – Sutliash, lapa, oriznik, rice with chicken, pilav, zelnik pod vrshnik, baked zelnik, banica sukano, stuffed pepper, musaka, sarma, sheep, goat, cow cheese, roast pork. Probishtip - Lesново lamb, potato and grain. Karbinci - wheat, rye, barley, corn, sunflower, poppy seed, potato, onion, garlic, bean, pea - grain, lentil, cabbage and kelj, tomato, pepper, watermelon, cherry, sour cherry, apricot, quince, apples, pear, plums, peaches, nuts, almonds, and vineyards. Berovo - Berovo cheese, white potato, sour milk, pine honey, klisi with leeks, bulamach, blue plum and sour cherry, forest fruits (wild strawberries, blackberries, raspberries, blueberries, thorns, mushrooms, or medicinal herbs for thyme tea, bela rada and ajduk grass).

As the basic potential for the development of rural tourism should be considered the population, i.e. human resources. Justification for the development of rural tourism should be sought in the region's growing depopulation. The development of this type of tourism is aimed at preventing emigration and starting the process of re-migration. This means that tourism cannot develop without a vital and active population which should be a factor for vitalization. The total number of inhabitants in the region is 177988 out of which the working-age population is 150184. The unemployment rate is 19.5 %, of which in the rural regions it is 14.1 % for men and 13.8 % for women. Employment in agriculture, forestry and fishing industry accounts for 2560 employees. At the level of RN Macedonia the employment in this sector

is 17964 employees. The links between this sector and rural tourism points to a significant factor in their mutual development.

The situation in the hospitality sector is important from the point of view of its links connection to rural tourism activities. Employment in the hospitality sector is of particular importance for the development of rural tourism. The number of employees in this sector is 867. The total number of accommodation facilities in EAPR is 89 accommodation facilities. The structure of the accommodation facilities is as follows:

Hotels – a total of 18 hotels Hotel with 5* - 1, Hotels with 4* , Hotels with 3* - 4, Hotels with 2* - 9, Hotels with 1* - 4

Motels – 2. Spa facilities – 1, Worker Resorts – 2, Children and Youth Resorts – 3, Villas and apartments – 63, 2066 beds in EAPR , 856 rooms.

According to the Register for Rural Tourism Development in the East Planning Region (2017) in the rural areas there are a total of 66 accommodation facilities.

5.3 Analysis of the situation and opportunities for development of rural tourism in the Polog Planning Region

The Polog Planning Region (POPR) covers an area of 2416.9 km². It covers 9.7 % of the territory of the RN Macedonia and is characterized by an emphasized dissection of the landscape in which the rural characteristics are under considerable pressure by modern urban processes. It is therefore important to protect the traditional culture and take care of the rural components of space, which can be achieved through the development of rural tourism. Its international contactability is based on the connection with the bordering Albania and Kosovo. Because of the national structure in which the predominant population is of Albanian nationality, the contactability allows the region to be described as having favorable accessibility and the opportunity to utilize resources of rural tourism. The existence of rural areas in the surroundings allows this type of contents to be complemented in this region. Combined tourism products can be created with those regional units because the proximity of the neighboring tourist values allows the polyvalence of the tourist-geographical location to be utilized. Such is the case with the ski centers of Brezovica and Prizren in Kosovo, as well as the cultural and seaside characteristics of Albania. The region has contact features with the Skopje Region and the South-west Planning Region indicating that heterogeneous content is present in the bordering planning regions as an opportunity for enriching the tourist demand with the aim to create tourism products with rural content.

The favorable connection with neighboring regions and the offer of mutual (combined) tourism products will have a very positive impact on accelerating tourism development. The region has transit features because the regional route R-1 203 runs through it, which has international features. Important locations for development of transit tourism are the following: Jazhince, Tetovo, Dzepishte, Neproshteno, Leshok, Slatino, Tearce, Brezno, Jegunovce, Dobroshte, Belovishte and Vratnica.

Rural tourism is closely linked to mountain region activities. The creation of tourist products of this type also possesses mountain-related contents. These contents even have dominant or recognizable importance. The region is famous for its mountain activities. On the other hand, the rural areas and sites have a pronounced level of tourist attractiveness. It is therefore important to consider not only the areas

such as mountainous sites suitable for the development of rural tourism, but also mountainous regions as a content of stay that constitute a complex category. Precisely the Polog Region has the highest level of attraction in this regard. In this region there exist several mountains allow an intensive tourist development. The most important mountains in the Register for Development of Rural Tourism are the following: Shar Mountain, Suva Gora, Zheden, Bukovikj and Bistra. These mountains have the most favorable conditions for the development of ski tourism activities, which should be accepted as an excellent opportunity for combining them with rural tourism products.

Located in this region is the Polog valley which is one of the most important ones in the RN Macedonia. The population of Polog has a long tradition in agricultural production. It is a prerequisite for reviving geo-tourism activities as a component of rural tourism. Of particular importance in this regard are the sides of the surrounding mountains, as well as the narrow alluvial expanse of the banks of the Vardar River. The Polog valley itself is characterized by fertile land on the riverbanks.

According to the data of the Registry, the length of the Polog Valley measures about 40 kilometers, while the average width is 6.5 km. The smallest width is between 5.2 km between the villages of Pirok and Radiovce, and this narrowing also represents the border between Gorni Polog in Gostivar and Dolni Polog in Tetovo. The valley covers an area of 1475 km². This relatively large area of the valley region indicates that in this context also located are several attractions that are the basis for the development of rural tourism. The average altitude of the plain is 500 meters above sea level and ranges from 360 to 430 meters above sea level in Dolni Polog and from 430 to 580 meters above sea level in Gorni Polog.

The geological structure allows for the creation of karst-based landforms with caves. Caves are the foundation for the development of speleological tourism (with educational features that can be a complementary activity in the development of rural tourism). Such are the caves as the following: Ubavica, Alilica, Kalina Dupka and Sharkova Cave, which is equipped for visitation.

Fluvial landforms have similar tourist educational and recreational values. The most popular landforms are the Barich Gorge, Dervenska Gorge and Karpalak. These values are a favorable basis for encouraging rural tourism in the context of ambient environments.

The region is characterized by the developed hydrography. In the region beside the Vardar River, which is the main artery of development, important tourist values are the following rivers: Pena, Mazdracha, Bistrica, Rostushka River, Radika, Lakavichka, Bogovinska, Palchishka, Karabunar, Rechica, Porojska, Vejnichka, Neproshtenska, Slatinska, Dobroshka, Odranska, Belovishka and Ljubotenska. This means that it is a wide catchment area and that the rivers are suitable for walks, fishing activities and pleasant stay on their banks. In the development of rural tourism, these attractions are part of the complex content and elements for beautifying of space.

Particularly attractive in this regard are the numerous waterfalls. In the other areas, they represent a rarity, but in this region, it is a noticeable value that refines the rural tourism offer. The most visited waterfalls are Belovichki and Gjenovishki Waterfalls, Korab Waterfall and the waterfall Duf.

Of the hydrographic tourist values in the region, Mavrovo Lake has a special importance. It allows rural tourism to be complemented by fishing activities, hiking around the lake and cycling. Glacial lakes are a factor that enables tourists who come to rural attractions to enrich their content of stay by visiting the unique characteristics and aesthetics of these values. The most famous glacial lakes are the following: Karanikolichko Lake (26240 m²), Belo Lake (18000 m²), Black Lake (33520 m²) and Bogovinsko Lake (66880 m²).

The development of rural tourism is closely related to agritourism values that are based on the size and structure of the agricultural land. The total agricultural area in the region measures 170980 ha. The arable land is 41756 ha which represents 24 % of the total agricultural land. The structure of arable land is dominated by plough fields and gardens with 30357 ha or 72.7 %. Orchards cover 1054 ha or 2.5 %, vineyards 44 ha or 0.1 % and pastures 10301 ha or 24.7 %. Such relatively modest structure of the arable land should be improved with the purpose of developing rural tourism.

Pastures as a non-arable area extend to a total 129223 ha. They represent 76 % of the total agricultural area of the Polog Planning Region. Natural conditions represent the potential for the development and improvement of livestock breeding that has a long tradition.

Livestock breeding determines the direction of development of rural tourism. It is a precondition for equipping and adapting farms for agro-tourism purposes. In the region, the situation with the livestock fund is expressed through the figures. The total number of cattle is 34033, of which 18969 are stallions and dairy cows. The total number of sheep is 51713, pigs are a total of 25372 while goats are 10158. This is a relatively solid fund, but it needs to be upgraded and adapted to the requirements of the tourists.

Sheepfold farming is one of the original forms of rural tourism. Its development as an integral element includes the use of the Shar Mountain sheepdog which is not only in the context of the value of the sheepfolds as a form of rural tourism but also has a canine value and in this sense has been established as a value of the region.

The region is famous for the Shar Mountain lamb. This is a brand of the Polog Region and a recognizable specialty in the gastronomic sense.

Hunting tourism is closely linked to rural tourism. Characteristic of the region is the abundance of wildlife, dominated by indigenous and endemic species. Mainly, the specimens are rarely found not only in RN Macedonia but also abroad. They are the basis for hunting with camera and educational activities. However, hunting is primarily based on hunting specimens and the established hunting areas in the Polog Region. The Register for Development of Rural Tourism in this region identifies two hunting areas, namely Tetovo Hunting Area and Gostivar Hunting Area.

Identified are several hunting grounds in the abovementioned hunting areas. They can be divided into hunting grounds for large game and small game. This differentiation arises from the predominance of the type of game.

In Tetovo as hunting grounds for large game are the following: Jelovljane, Leshnica, Ljuboten and Sedlarevo. Hunting grounds for small game are Miletino, Zherovjane, Grupchin, Trebosh, Janchishte and Orashje. In the hunting area of Gostivar, hunting grounds for large game are the following: Zhelezna River, Simnica, Jelovce and Mazdracha. Hunting grounds for small game are the following: Vrapchishte and Balin Dol. Based on the presented prevalence, it should be noted that this is a remarkable content for the tourist stay within the rural tourist offer.

Rural tourism is also linked to fishing in a similar way as to hunting. In this regard, the function of the development of rural tourism is fishing as an economic branch that enables the connection of fishing and hospitality sector, sport fishing and gastronomic offer of the population involved in rural tourism activities. According to the Register for Development of Rural Tourism in Polog Region, the territorial scope of fishing areas is determined.

The fishing area "Vardar 1" covers the waters from the upper flow of the river Vardar from the source of Vardar to the mouth of the Lakavichka River. In this area included are the tributaries of Ravenska River, Lakavichka River with the tributaries Simnichka River, Bigorska River, Padalishka River and Trnovska River and Melca River. All small and micro accumulations belong also to this fishing area.

The fishing area "Vardar 2" includes the waters of the Vardar River from the Lakavichka River to the mouth of Uleverichka River including the tributaries Mazdracha and Bogovinska River, Bogovinsko Lake, the Uleverichka River, the Jahorka River and the waters of the spring of the village of Chegrane, as well as all small and micro-accumulations belonging to this region, and have been identified according to the basis of fishing.

The fishing area "Vardar 3" covers the waters of the Vardar River from the Uleverichka River mouth to the mouth of Bistrica River with the tributaries Pena, Leshochka River and Bistrica, as well as all small and micro-accumulations that are identified based on the possibility for fishing.

The waters on the territory of the Mavrovo National Park are a fishing area of the Mavrovo Lake with its tributaries. It includes the Mavrovska River, the Nikiforovska River and the Leunovska River. The Radika River up to Boshkov Most is also included in this area. This River is included in this fishing area with its right tributaries: Ubav Potok, Shtirovichka River, Ribnichka River, Zhirovnica, Lopushnik, Trebishka River, Bitushnica, Rostushka River, as well as Adzina River, Brodechka River, Bogdevska River, Mavrovska River, Galichka River and Mala River as left tributaries.

The region is characterized by its distinctive woodland. It contains floor like distributed compositions of oak, beech and conifers. There also exists herbaceous vegetation and medicinal plants, which is a positive condition for the development of herbal tourism as an integral content of rural tourism activities. The abundance of floristic ecosystems is a favorability for eco-tourism development, educational and scientific research activities

The development of rural tourism is closely linked to the traditional architecture of villages. Although the architecture has disappeared in many settlements of the region, it still has a real treasure trove of buildings and complexes that represent indigenous architecture that is preserved. The architectural complexes are integrated in the surroundings and follow the configuration of the terrain. It should be noted that different villages have various unique urban settings, which is driven by the economy of space and dispersion. In this regard, they differ. These are distinctive architectural units with a remarkably integrated architectural appearance of the old houses, linked to the ambient features. The villages are picturesque with a panoramic view towards the beautiful terrain configuration and the expressive forest cover. These complexes express the typical Balkan architecture and the uniqueness of the old Macedonian style with spacious verandas, wooden exterior staircases, kepenici and erkens. The most attractive village complexes can be found in the following: v. Bitushe in the area of Dolna Reka, the villages of the Mala Reka area – Rosoki and Tresonche, Selce, Galichnik, Lazaropole, and Janche as well as in the Shar Mountain area of Brezno.

Cultural events play an important role in the development of rural tourism in the region. In the religious context, these are the events like: Bajram and Orthodox holidays, which promote values that imply visits to relatives and friends, and which have a positive contribution to tourism in rural areas. Most important are the following cultural events: Tetovo Folk Filigree, "Days of Naim" - international poetry event - Tetovo, "Teho"- international chorus singing, "Bletezat" and "Tetovo apples"- children's music

festivals - Tetovo, "Shara Sings"- folklore festival, Galichka Wedding, Dolna Reka Wedding, Galichnik Art Colony and Reka Cultural Summer.

Of the gastronomic events, a special place deserves "Sheep and Goat Breeders Day". Shepherds and goat breeders compete for the fastest cutting of wool, the fastest milking, while the judges are tasked with choosing the best quality white and yellow cheese produced in a traditional way in mandras. The event is being held for several years in the locality Smrdlivi Virovi near Galichnik just one day before the famous Galichnik Wedding. It is an extraordinary tourist event.

In this region there is also being held the event Pitijada - (Mavrovo Rostushe). At this event, the best and most delicious Mavrovo-Reka pie is being chosen. Traditional economic activities have certain continuity. This can be observed only in the development of certain crafts and skills (carpentry, blacksmithing). The products from these crafts show very low volume of production and limited product placement. The traditional skills that were once nurtured today include the following: weaving, embroidery, tapestry and wood-carving which, although modernized with the use of new raw materials, retained the traditional features of the workmanship. In this context, firstly we have to mention the making of traditional folk costumes. They provide opportunities for educational content, creative workshops and promotion of old crafts. This enables an active participation by tourists during their stay. It is also an opportunity to produce original souvenirs.

The region is characterized by culinary specialties. The most famous ones are: Bakrdan, Komat, Pie, Zelnik, Shar lamb, Shar cheese, hard cheese, Galichnik cheese, Galichnik yellow cheese. They are also regional products with the possibility to be branded. This group includes Tetovo beans and Tetovo apples.

Demographic potentials are the basis for the development of rural tourism. It is characteristic that in this region live 15.5 % of the total population and it is one of the most densely populated regions with 132.4 inhabitants per km². Although the region has a relatively high population density, emigration is still present. This means that the development of this type of tourism is aimed at preventing emigration and at contributing to keeping the population at its centuries-old places of living. It should be noted that modern-day migration involves whole families including even young people. It is a fact that tourism cannot develop without a vital and active population and that the development of rural tourism should contribute to the involvement of young people and women. The total number of working-age population is 261113. The rate of active population is 47.1 %. This means that a relatively high rate of active population is present. This should be assessed as a positive indicator for the possibility of their involvement in rural tourism activities. The Registry specifies the following parameters. The unemployment rate is 29.6 %, which can be defined as the highest rate. It is present in both the male (35.6 %) and female (27.6 %) population. However, it is a fact that in the region, the female population is reporting less into the employment agency. For these reasons, unemployment in urban areas is higher than in rural areas. In the urban areas it is 32.6 % (31.9 % for men and 34.1 % for women). In the rural areas it is 28.1 %, (with men participating with 25.7 % and women with 36.7 %). The high level of unemployment in rural areas is the basis for their involvement in rural tourism activities. In this sense, the high rate of inactive population, which is 52.9% in total, should also be accepted.

There is a higher unemployment rate that is characteristic of other regions in the RN Macedonia, especially the high unemployment rate of women in the rural areas of the region opens up opportunities for their involvement in rural tourism activities.

Although a significant part of the region's total territory belongs to rural areas, the low share of employees in the agriculture, forestry and fishing sectors is evident, which is a great opportunity for employment and self-employment as well as possibilities for generating income in the function of rural tourism development.

The number of accommodation facilities is provided in the following chart:

Chart no. 3 – Accommodation facilities

Municipality	No. of accommodation facilities	Rooms	Beds
Bogovinje	2	17	26
Gostivar	9	116	205
Zhelino	1	8	16
Mavrovo – Rostushe	27	606	2054
Tetovo	19	394	989
Total in POPR	58	1141	3290

Source: State Statistical Office of the RN Macedonia

The Register for Rural Tourism Development identified the accommodation facilities in rural areas according to name and location.

Municipality of Gostivar: Motel Neptun, v. Zherovjane, *Municipality of Zhelino:* Hotel Agropolog, *Municipality of Mavrovo Rostushe:* Hotel Bistra v. Mavrovo, Hotel Sport v. Mavrovo, Hotel Lodge v. Mavrovo, Hotel Srna v. Mavrovo, Hotel Alpina v. Mavrovo, Hotel Makpetrol v. Mavrovo, Hotel Fershped v. Mavrovo, Hotel Radika v. Leunovo, Hotel Tuto v. Janche, Hotel Neda v. Galichnik, Hotel Golden Place v. Mavrovo. Resort ELEM v. Mavrovi Anovi, Hotel Kalin v. Lazaropole, h. Korab v. Trnica, *Municipality of Tetovo:* Hotel Kasa Leone, Popova Shapka, Tetovo, Hotel Konak of Noli, Popova Shapka, Tetovo Hotel Snow Patrol Lodge, Popova Shapka, Tetovo, Hotel Teteks, Popova Shapka, Tetovo.

Based on this presentation a high level of representation of facilities can be noticed that should be put in function of the development of rural tourism. Even more important is the private accommodation data. They are registered in the municipalities of Tearce and Mavrovo Rostushe.

Municipality of Tearce: 4 rooms with 12 beds v. Barbara, Villa Ilievski Shar Mountain, Tetovo 10 beds, *Municipality of Mavrovo Rostushe:* Villa Lazarevski village v. Leunovo, Villa Anna Maria v. Leunovo. Apartments St. Moritz v. Mavrovo, Apartments Kristijan v. Mavrovo, Apartments Club Glamor v. Mavrovo, Apartments Mavrovski Merak v. Mavrovo, Apartments Rostushe v. Rostushe, Ethno House Angelovski village v. Mavrovo, "Baba and Dede" v. Galichnik.

Although there are only a relatively modest number of accommodation facilities in private households, it is the basis for the development of rural tourism in the hospitality sector, for the simple reason that active homeowners should be an example of starting such activities in this region.

5.4 Analysis of the situation and opportunities for development of rural tourism in the South-east Planning Region

The South-east Planning Region (SEPR) covers an area of 3304 km². It covers 12.8 % of the territory of RN Macedonia and is predominantly a region with emphasized rural characteristics. It has an important contactability with Bulgaria and Greece. This contactability is achieved through the border crossings of Bogorodica and Star Dojran with Greece, as well as Novo Selo with Bulgaria. This allows the region to be identified with having favorable accessibility and opportunities for utilizing resources in rural tourism. The existence of developed rural areas in Bulgaria enables the use of the good practices to be used in this region. Furthermore, very important for the development of rural tourism is the contactability with Greece. The SEPR has developed good contactability with the regional units in Bulgaria - Petrich and Sandanski, while with Greece with the wide Thessaloniki valley, which has a large-scale agro-complex that is already a developed form of agritourism. The region has contact features with the Vardar and the East Planning Region. The values that these regions possess, in the rural sense, are the basis for mutual interregional cooperation. The presence of heterogeneous contents in the border planning regions is the basis for an improved function in rural tourism development. Very important for the development of rural tourism is the transitivity which is expressed through its typical basis as a distinct transit type and as an opportunity for transit tourists to visit the rural centers in the planning region. The following sites could be identified for transit tourism development: Udovo, Miravci, Marvinci, Smokvica, Negorci, Mrzenci and Gevgelija, i.e. the Bogorodica border crossing, as well as Nov Dojran, Star Dojran and Sretenovo on the way to Kukush in Greece. Transit locations towards Bulgaria are the following: Novo Konjarevo, Samoilovo, Novo Selo, Turnovo, Bosilevo and Dabile.

Polyvalence represents the possibility for combining tourist values SEPR with values that do not exist in the region, but exist in neighboring countries (combining own values with the values in other rural tourism areas). These sites are in close proximity to the development centers of rural tourism by providing appropriate accessibility to the region. This means that rural tourism in this region can be combined with seaside tourism activities in Greece and a developed agro - complex as well as spa and winter sports tourism in Bulgaria.

Mountain tourism offers the opportunity for a solid tourist offer. This feature includes the mountains: Ograzhden, Kozhuf, Plachkovica, Belasica, Gradeshka Mountain, Plavush Mountain, Marjanska Mountain, Serta-Konechka Mountain, Elenica, Smrdesh and Maleshevo Mountains. Their use in combination with rural tourism implies not only snow sports and recreation, but also a pleasant stay, walks and camping. One of the centers that could be of benefit in the development of rural tourism is the Kozhuf ski resort

According to the Register for Rural Tourism Development in the South-east Planning Region (2017), the region is characterized by valley areas. The Gevgelija-Valandovo valley (municipality of Bogdanci, municipality of Valandovo, municipality of Gevgelija, and municipality of Dojran) encompasses 63 rural communities (settlements) of which 3 the inhabitants have emigrated from. The Strumica - Radovish valley is located in the southeastern part of the RN Macedonia, following the upper and middle part of the Strumica River watershed, in the areas around the cities of Strumica and Radovish. The Damjan valley (Damjansko Pole) is located northwest and gravitates along the Madenska River. Furthermore, the Lakavica valley and the Dojran valley are also in the region. The aforementioned valleys are suitable for conducting agricultural activities.

The gorges, volcanic landform forms and rare speleological landforms have the function of developing combined tourism products in the region. They are suitable for conducting educational and recreational activities.

The hydrographic structure of the region is very favorable, because the region has an abundance of cold and thermo-mineral springs, Dojran Lake as a tectonic lake, artificial lakes and rivers that are of great importance for the development of rural tourism. Furthermore, the region is characterized by waterfalls that can be included in the list of the most attractive in RN Macedonia, and are suitable for picnics and creating unique experiences for the tourists.

Well-known springs within the SEPR are the following: Spring of Radovishka River (1540 m asl), The spring of Madenska River – Damjansko Pole, spring Gjavato - Municipality of Dojran, River springs: Radovishka, Oravichka and Plavaja River – Plachkovica Mountain spring Toplec - Dojran, Mokrinski Springs, Bansko Springs, hot water spring - Raklish, Mineral and Thermal Springs at the Smrdiliva Voda Tourist Site, Near Smokvica Village there are 4 hot springs, in the Serta Mountain there is a spring of carbonized water. These are places for organizing picnics, excursions and outdoor activities like games, etc.

Significant rivers in the SEPR are the following: River Vardar, River Strumica, Cironska River, River Lebnica, River Vodocha, River Turija, Radovishka River, Medenska River, Podareshka River, River Luda Mara, River Vodochnica, River Trkajana, River Sushica, River Pirava, River Sirava, Oravichka River, Lomia River, Plavaja River, River Stara Reka, River Kriva Lakavica, Selemliska River and Anska River. They have dual importance, they are attractive in terms of activities on land and in the water, and at the same time they are also used for irrigating the agricultural land.

The most important waterfalls in the region are: Smolarski Waterfall 39.5 meters high (Novo Selo), Koleshinski Waterfall 15 meters high (Novo Selo), Gabrovo Waterfalls (Strumica), Gjavolski waterfalls - formed on the southwest side of Belasica Mountain in the upper flow of Bashiboska river with a height of 17 meters (Valandovo), Prstenski waterfall - the first is 16.5 meters high, the second is 16 meters vertical while the third waterfall is 9.2 meters high (Valandovo), Radichevski waterfall, Medenski waterfall, waterfalls on the Plavaja River, Kozhuf Waterfall.

The region also has several artificial lakes: "Mantovo" in the Municipality of Konche (surface area of 4.94 km², capacity of 49 million m³), "Turija" in the Municipality of Vasilevo (area of 0.16 km², capacity of 48 million m³), "Vodocha" in the Municipality of Strumica (area 1.94 km², capacity of 26.7 million m³), "Paljurci" in the Municipality of Bogdanci, with a usable volume of 2.8 x 10⁶ m³, Accumulation "Chinarli" with a usable volume of 0.25 x 10⁶ m³ in the Municipality of Dojran, "Ilovica" dam, the dams "Markova River 1" and "Markova River 2", "Novo Selo" dam, "Selemlji" accumulation with a usable volume of 0.84 x 10⁶ m³ in Bogdanci Municipality, Toplik Dam in the Municipality of Gevgelija, "Konche 1" and "Konche 3"

Thermo-mineral springs constitute the basis for the existence of spa centers which are one of the most important attractive contents in the complex tourist offer of rural and spa tourism. These are the following: Spa Bansko - 71 ° C (12 km southeast of the Municipality of Strumica) and Negorski Spa - two springs (5 km northwest of Municipality of Gevgelija).

Taking into account that rural tourism development is linked to the environmental conditions, in the Register for Rural Tourism Development in the South-east Planning Region (2017) protected areas are designated as nature reserves and monuments of nature. They are the following:

List of Protected Areas: Cham Chiflik - south of the city of Strumica (to be viewed as a Nature Park), Koleshinski waterfall, Smolarski waterfall, Visoka Chuka – monument of nature (is being recommended as Nature Park) Dojran Lake.

List of proposed protected areas: River Lomija (Nature Park), Zrnovska River (Nature Park), Kartali - botanical value. Proposed for a strict nature reserve and is located on Lom River, Plachkovica Salandzak - peaks of Gradeshka Mountain (Nature Park), Monospitovsko Marsh – Monument of nature, River Vodeshnica (Nature Park), Samar - on the slopes of Belasica (Nature Park), Negorska Spa - Monument of Nature, Dlabok Kol - Konjska River. It is proposed for a Strict Nature Reserve. It is located in the valley of Kanska River on Kozhuf (Gevgelija), Kovanska Reka - Strict Nature Reserve, Sermeniska River - Strict Nature Reserve, Doshnica (Nature Park), Lukar – monument of nature, Studena Glava - Botanical Importance (Nature Park), Platani - Oriental stems that are a natural rarity. It is located in Dojran.

List of newly identified proposed protected areas: Gabrovo waterfalls – monument of nature, Nikolikj - zoological importance (Nature Park), Churchulum – monument of nature, botanical importance. It is located in Paljurci, Aeolian Sands - Vardar (Nature Park).

The presented protected zones and proposed sites and facilities for protection are in function of eco-tourism development. It is precisely this feature that is affecting the development of rural tourism, because visitors included in rural tourism activities are prone to such type of areas.

The development of rural tourism is closely related to the agro - complex and to the possibility of including agricultural activities in the tourist offer. Therefore, the territorial scope of agricultural land and its structure are very important in this regard. The total agricultural area in the region is 124096 ha, of which 58805 ha belong to arable land, which is 47.4 %, while the pastures account for 65171 ha, or 52.6 %. Within the arable land included are the following: Plough fields and gardens - 48815 ha, orchards - 2129 ha, vineyards - 5766 ha, meadows - 2095 ha and pastures - 65171 ha. Such structure has positive characteristics, and through the high amount of arable land, it puts the region on one of the top places in the country.

The abundance and heterogeneity of species of the ecosystems are essential features of the biodiversity in the South-east Region. This situation is a result of the specific geographical position, climatic, pedological, geomorphologic and other characteristics, as well as of the changes that have occurred in the past geological periods on this territory. Special features have the Monospitovsko swamp and the littoral and perilittoral part of Lake Dojran. It provides educational activities and a scientific and research approach.

The basis for the development of rural tourism in this region, however, is the agricultural land. Regarding the possibilities for development of rural tourism, the production of plums, their processing, preparation and storage have an important place. This means that plums represent a brand associated with the recognizability and possibility to be included in the region's tourist offer. This inclusion should be in the process of cultivating and gastronomic experiences, as well as in the presentation of events.

For the purposes of rural tourism development there is a livestock fund that can be used as an agritourism component. According to the Program for Development of the SEPR, registered are the following: Horses - 2890, Cattle - 25910, Pigs - 10862, Sheep - 81869, Goats - 26500, Poultry - 236002 and Beehives - 5991. This fund is the basis for farm-based production. Such opportunities are based on the development of farm-type agritourism. There is a need to support the development of livestock breeding in the direction of a joint development component with rural tourism.

The development of rural tourism is closely linked to hunting-tourism activities. In this sense, hunting areas, hunting grounds and the activity itself stimulate the development of rural areas. There are a

total of 31 hunting grounds differentiated for their large and small game. In the Register of Rural Tourism Development of SEPR (2017) they are provided by location and structure.

Valandovo: Hunting ground "Chestovo" - small game, Hunting ground "Pirava" - small game, Hunting ground "Gradec" – large game, hunting ground "Bashibos" - large game

Gevgelija: Hunting ground "Mrzenci" - Small game, Hunting ground "Pogana" - Small game, Hunting ground "Stojakovo" - Small game, Hunting ground "Milisin" – Large game, Hunting ground "Visoka Chuka" – large game, Hunting ground "Stara Reka " large game, Hunting ground "Crnichani" – large game, Hunting ground "Karabaliija" – large game, Hunting ground "Kovanci" - large game.

Strumica: Hunting ground "Trakanja" - small game, Hunting ground "Vasilevo" - small game, Hunting ground "Bosilovo" - small game, Hunting ground "Novo Selo" - small game, Hunting ground "Vodocha" - large game, hunting ground "Varvarica" – large game , Hunting ground "Nivichino" – large game, Hunting ground "Ograzhden 1" – large game, Hunting ground "Ograzhden 2" - large game, Hunting ground "Belasica 1" - large game, Hunting ground "Belasica 2" - large game

Radovish: Hunting ground "Gabrevci" - small game, Hunting area "Inevo" - small game, Hunting area "Prnalija" - small game, Hunting ground "Podares" - small game, Hunting area "Plachkovica" - large game, Hunting area "Smilanchi" - large game "Lipovikj" – large game

Others: Private hunting ground under concession of Mile Gjozev - on Serta, Hunting ground in Konche under concession of association, "Studenec" - Konche, four hunting grounds on the territory of the Municipality of Bogdanci, Hunting association - "Fazan", Vasilevo, Hunting association "Goce Delchev" - Bosilovo.

The abundance of hunting grounds and game opens up the opportunity for intensive cooperation with influential factors in the development of rural tourism. Hunting tourism in this sense can be one of the drivers of development in this domain.

Fishing areas are also closely related to the development of rural tourism. It can be concluded that the region is one of the most important ones in terms of fish stock and its diversity. According to the Register for Rural Tourism Development of the SEPR (2017) a total of 12 aquatic endemic species have been recorded in Lake Dojran, a total of 26 endemic species of various types, while 36 species of birds are listed in the Bern Convention from which the Miniature Cormorant and Dalmatian Pelican are endangered. Because of the decrease of the water levels and the large impact on fish populations mainly due to overfishing and loss of hatcheries, changes in the quantitative structure of fish have been observed. The largest reduction is in carp and roach, as opposed to species with a less decrease such as the crucian carp. Recorded the following fish species in the Register: Dojran roach, Carp, Dace, Dojran Dab Fish, Tench, Dojran Belvica, Rhodeus, Pachychilon macedonicus, Smelt, Balkan Barbel, Catfish, Perch, Eel, Freshwater Blenny and Pigo.

The region is characterized by its distinctive woodland. It features various forests that are defined by surface area and type. Those are the following: Deciduous forests - 88653 ha, Beech forests - 21945 ha, Oak forests - 4696 ha, Chestnut forests - 1875 ha, forests of other hardwood deciduous species - 22942 ha, forest under other soft deciduous species - 26 ha , Coniferous forest - 9183 ha, Spruce forest - 317 ha, Fir forest - 1365 ha, Black pine forest - 4253 ha, White pine forest - 1935 ha, Forest under other soft coniferous species - 1313 ha, Mixed species - 30132 ha, Degraded forests - 5996 ha.

This diversity of forests is in the function of recreational activities and educational visits, so that the forests are closely correlated with the development of rural tourism in the region.

The development of rural tourism is closely linked to cultural attractions. In this sense, the integration of the existing architecture with the ambient environments within the region has an important place. The following architectural complexes in the region can be differentiated:

Smiljanci - Radovish, Nivichino - Vasilevo, Smolare - Novo Selo, Koleshino - Novo Selo, Mokrino - Novo Selo, Veljusa - Strumica, Gabrovo - Strumica, Bansko - Strumica, Gradec - Valandovo, Bashibos - Valandovo, Nikolikj - Dojran, Furka – Dojran, Stojakovo - Bogdanci, Gjavoto - Bogdanci, Selemli - Bogdanci, Huma - Gevgelija, Konsko - Gevgelija, Sermenin - Gevgelija, Monospitovo - Bosilovo and Drvosh - Bosilovo

Interesting Macedonian architecture can be found in most of the villages in this region. The preservation of the village complexes is itself attractivity with the typical exterior of the Macedonian house and the old architectural complexes for visits. These complexes are in the function of accommodation and excursion activities. Sacral buildings and the profane architecture (of the character of monuments, archaeological sites and institutions such as museums and galleries) that is outside the established complexes have also such context.

Rural tourism relies on events. They allow the creation of combined tourism products in the region. The following events which belong to the group of religious events and which have a recognizable reputation, should be mentioned: Christmas fair, Koleda, Orthodox New Year, Epiphany, Gjurgjovden (St. George), Petrovden (celebration of the Municipality of Konche), Stranchinarski Games - Mokrievno, Church St. Paraskeva. (people gatherings have been organized around the church for the last three years). The holiday Bajram is being celebrated in Muslim villages.

In addition, the following cultural events are also being organized in the region: event "Martinki", Hid Bach Shen Fest, v. Chalakli, Valandovo, Strumica Carnival, Folk Fest Valandovo, Holy Trinity, Folklore Festival "Oro Veselo" - Radovish, Strumica Open Festival, Festival - Easter Meetings, v. Oraovica, Old Instruments Festival "Gajda" v. Injevo, Radovish, Festival of Chamber Theater Risto Shishkov, Emigrant Meetings (Municipality of Bosilovo), International Strumica Art Colony, Radovish Art Colony, Gevgelija Art Colony, Novo Selo Art Colony, Festival of documentaries films ASTRION - Strumica, Dojranski Rakuvanja, D Festival, Cultural event Bogdanci Cultural Summer (Bogdanci meetings) annually in Bogdanci (mid July to mid August), April Fool's Day (Masquerade) - elementary and high school students (April 1st) - Bogdanci, Since 2008 international graphic workshop "Sofia" is traditionally being held, the only of its kind in RN Macedonia and the Balkans, organized by the printing house SOFIA (End of August), Poetry Evenings "Karamanovi sredbi" - Radovish.

The registry of such events opens up the possibility of including these contents in the tourist offer. It should even be noted that they are a basic attraction for visiting within the offer of a relative short stay. Anyhow, their identification shows that they have a remarkable prevalence that is in the function of rural tourism development.

Gastronomic events identified in the Register have a significant place in the development of rural tourism. These are the following: Smokvijada, Prazijada - Municipality of Vasilevo, Kostenijada, Rakijada, Somun em Tatlija, Festival of Wild Figs - organized by Slow Food Rosales and the Presidium of fig jam of South-east Macedonia held annually in a different municipality (Bogdanci, Valandovo and Dojran).

In this way, tourists experience a part of the ethnographic cultural heritage through an extraordinary presentation of the region's values.

Ethnography in the region is one of the main developmental and attractive drivers of rural tourism. The Strumica area within the SEPR is characterized by the existence of traditional economic activities.

Preserved are potters, "sarachi", blacksmiths, coppersmiths, tanners, silversmiths, "koritari". Their existence has a dual function. On the one hand, ethnography is attractive in terms of the possibility of tourists to observe the production processes, and on the other hand, it is the basis for producing specific products and souvenirs that could be offered to tourists as part of the creation of tourist products.

Rural tourism is closely related to folkloric events and traditions. In this regard, the Register for Rural Tourism Development in the SEPR contains the following folklore contents: Rusaliski Games (annually performed during the period of twelve unbaptized days, i.e. the days from the birth of Christ to the baptism of Christ (from Christmas to Epiphany) (Municipality of Bogdanci). The traditional folk costumes were transported from Bojmija in all the villages along the river Vardar, around the town of Gevgelija. Bojmija is a historical-geographical area in the southern part of the RN Macedonia and northern Aegean Macedonia. It comprises the settlements around the cities of Valandovo and Gevgelija in RN Macedonia, and Bojmica and Gumendzhe in Aegean Macedonia. Folk costumes of the Municipality of Strumica belong to the Eastern - Macedonian type, sub-group of Strumsko-Mesten region. Strumica weaving products are part of the folklore created by the women of Strumica, their mothers and grandmothers through the ages, weaving with on looms with wool, silk, goat's fur, cotton, depending on their needs.

Gastronomic events and specialties have a special place in this context. Identified are the following specialties: jam made of figs, homemade ajvar, strumka, Strumica mastika, fish prepared with reed and amambalajdi. These specialties are important for the development of rural tourism in the context of their preparation, serving and consuming in private homes as well as part of the catering offer in restaurants outside the rural households.

Human resources in rural tourism development are essential because without a relatively high level of population involvement it is simply not possible to conduct any activity in rural tourism. In this respect, the characteristics of the population related to the population size and its structure are important.

The total number of inhabitants in the region is 173550 of which the working-age population amounts to 140949. The rate of active population is 66.5 %. Unemployment of the population is relatively low at 14.1 %. Unemployment of the male and female population is almost identical. In the urban areas, unemployment is higher among males than female population, while in rural areas it is vice versa. The relatively higher unemployment rate among the female population indicates that the development of rural tourism can to some extent reduce the unemployment rate among the female population which is more likely to occur in the creation of tourism activities in rural areas. Very important for the development of tourism is the employment in agriculture, forestry and fishing which amounts to 15900 people. Such employment needs to be increased, as it will serve rural tourism development. The employment in the tourism sector, i.e. in hospitality is 1492, which means that in this regard there is a significant lagging behind the sectors of agriculture, forestry and fishing. Balancing between these relations implies improving the rural tourism sector.

The structure of the accommodation facilities shows that the region has a total of 80 accommodation units with 1926 rooms available. Restaurants are listed according to the Register by municipality and facility name: Municipality of Strumica: Sirius, Gligorov, Ilinden, Aurora Resort Spa, Central, Miss Stone, Motel Podgorski An, Carevi Kuli; Municipality of Radovich: Bel Kamen resort spa, Panorama; Municipality of Gevgelija: Hotel Apolonija (80 beds), Hotel Flamingo (118 beds), Hotel Ramada Plaza (160 beds), Ramada Beach, Hotel Nar (66 beds), Pelagonija Hotel (120 beds), Motel Vardar (57 beds), Hotel Ashikot - Bed and Breakfast Ashik (36 beds), Casino Motel Senator, Hotel "Buzhor" Negorski Banji (68 beds), Hotel Jasen Negorski Banji (126 beds), Hotel Ilinden Negorski Banji (174 beds), Motel "Vardar" (57

beds), Villa "Green house" Ski Center Kozhuf (16 beds), Villa "Todorov" Ski Center Kozhuf (32 beds), Smrdliva Voda Resort (2030 beds), Ski Center Kozhuf (100 beds); Municipality of Dojran: Romantic, Istatov (190 beds), Polin (120 beds), Galeb (110 beds), Hotel Casino Hit International (68 rooms), Hotel Casino Atlantic (18 rooms), Makedonija, Jaka, Dandar Apartments, Villa Daniela, Prestige, Villa Katerina, Apartments Uzunovi, Autocamp Partizan, Autocamp Mardaja; Valandovo Municipality: Hotel Izvor (11 rooms); Municipality of Bogdanci: The accommodation facilities of the Municipality of Bogdanci include accommodation within (GEMEKS BET-EKD Hospitality and Tourism) with its own accommodation Bonanza, which has seven modernly furnished apartments, and one VIP APARTMENT. (Casino & Hotel Bonanza Bogdanci) 19 beds, private person who accommodates Ljupcho Kundurdziev v. Stojakovo (registered as a private entity operating a small scale hospitality business) has five modernly furnished apartments (Bed & Breakfast Delikates Stojakovo) 16 beds.

5.5 Analysis of the situation and opportunities for development of rural tourism in the North-east Planning Region

Rural tourism is one of the forms of development of the NEPR that is based on resource potentials which in a certain sense are insufficiently included in the tourism offer. Taking into account that the potentials can be part of the region's overall value and can stimulate the developmental directives, the Sub-Strategy relies on the situation regarding their recording. A significant place in this regard has the Registry of Potentials for Rural Tourism Development. The Register is an instrument that enables the potentials to be utilized in an optimal way and to serve in finding sustainable solutions when creating strategic and program-planning documents. In the North-east Planning Region it is indicative that there are opportunities for reviving rural tourism. This is evidenced by the identified sites and facilities as the basic facilitating activity in the development of rural tourism. Furthermore, a characteristic of the region is that the foundations for rural tourism development can be put in a complementary and complex function to the opportunities for development of other types of tourism.

The NEPR extends to an area of 2310 km². It covers 9.3 % of the territory of RN Macedonia. Within this region the municipalities of Lipkovo, Rankovce and Staro Nagorichane are considered to be extremely rural municipalities. Their combined area is 946 km² or 40.9 % of the total territory of the region. However, the development of rural tourism involves the use of rural areas in municipalities such as Kumanovo, Kratovo and Kriva Palanka. The international contactability of the region is with the territories of Serbia, Kosovo, Bulgaria. In Bulgaria the Kyustendil District or the Kyustendil municipality is the closest contact area, in Serbia it is the Pchinja district (municipalities of Preshevo, Bujanovac, Trgovishte and Bosilegrad), while in Kosovo the Gnjilane district (municipalities of Vitina and Gnjilane) is the contact area.

Its contactability allows it to be identified as a region with favorable accessibility and positive opportunities for utilizing resources in rural tourism. The existence of rural areas that have some developed types of tourism in the neighboring countries enables them to be used as an opportunity for mutual cooperation. Combined tourism products should be created with these regional entities because contactability is in the function of the development of a complex tourist offer. The region has contact characteristics with the Skopje, Vardar and the East Planning Region. Cooperation with these planning regions is contained in the use of tourist values that exist in these regional units. This represents an

opportunity for creating tourism products that can be more competitive on the tourist market. The region has transit characteristics due to it being at the junction of the main traffic arteries of the Republic of N. Macedonia. The North-east Planning Region is located at the intersection of Corridor 8 and Corridor 10 as well as the Highway E-75 (Tabanovce-Gevgelija) and E-871 (Kumanovo-Deve Bair).

Sites in the region for transit tourism are designated as places where they can be used for placement and marketing of products in rural areas, tourism promotion and offering the created tourism products to transit travelers. The following sites are identified on the E-75 corridor: Tabanovce - Church of St. Paraskeva, "Mak-Benz" Petrol Station, v. Kosturnik, R-1104 v. Gorno Kojnare - Church of St. Mother of God, Petrol Station "Detoil", Hotel - Restaurant "Harmonija", v. Dolno Kojnare - Petrol station, village Dolno Kojnare - Kumanovo, sports airport "Adji Tepe", v. Romanovce – Petrol station "Makpetrol", Agino Selo - Church of St. Mother of God, Agino Selo - Church of St. Elijah and the v. Deljadrovci. On the E-871 corridor the following sites are identified: - v. Zhidilovo - restaurant "Da-Bo" and fish restaurant "Ezerce", v. Pashina Vodenica, Babin Dol, Monastery St. Joakim Osogovski, Site Kalin Kamen, v. Konopnica, v. Martinica, v. T'Iminci, v. Psacha, Zone for recreation Park Ginovci, v. Odreno, v. Rankovce and v. Vetunica, v. Stracin, v. Kuklica, v. Rugince, v. Oblavce (Church of St. Nicholas), v. Strezovce (Church of St. Nicholas) v. Vojnik, v. Makresh, v. M. Trendajlovci (Restaurant "Ethno-village"), v. Mlado Nagorichane (Church of the Mother of God), v. Staro Nagorichane, Petrol station "Detoil", v. Karposh. The presence of these localities on the main routes allows for the provision of improved products in the rural sector combined with transit tourism values.

The region is characterized by a complex terrain configuration. Landforms can be included in the creation of a tourist offer as an important basis for rural tourism in the NEPR.

Particularly important in this respect are selective types of tourism based on mountain resources. The following mountain attractions are in the function of improving the conditions for development of rural tourism: Osogovo Mountains, Kozjak, German and Bilino Mountains. Their use for the purpose of rural tourism is determined by the possibilities for hiking, stay in snowy areas as well as winter sports activities. The most favorable conditions for ski tourism activities exist on the Osogovo Mountains. They are located around Carev Vrv, or Kalin Kamen. The favorable conditions for skiing activities are the basis for creating combined contents of stay in rural areas.

The valleys are suitable for agricultural activities. In this regard, they are the basis for the development of agri-tourism that successfully integrates into rural tourism. This is due to the fact that most of the agricultural land is located in the valleys. The following valleys are identified in this region: Kumanovo Valley with smaller plains such as Zhegligovo to the west, Sredorek with Stracin to the east and Crno Pole, Nagorichanski Plane, Vrelo Pole and Rudo Pole and Slavishte, i.e. Slavishka Valley. The Kumanovo valley covers an area of 1290 km² and is located at 330 m asl, while the Slavishte Valley covers an area 320 km² as is located at 400 m asl. Such surface areas and altitudes meet the criteria for development of rural tourism. The climatic conditions support this conclusion because they have moderate characteristics.

Geomorphology is prevalent with different occurrences in terms of micro properties. The presence of gorges, caves and post-volcanic landforms are opportunities for recreational and educational activities that can be combined with the contents of rural tourism.

Hydrography in the region has the potential to be in the function of rural tourism. This refers to the abundance of springs, rivers, waterfalls and artificial lakes. Thermo-mineral waters are also present in the region. The temperature of the water of the springs represents the potential for spa tourism activities, cultivation of early gardening products and heating of accommodation capacities. In this group of values included are the following: Thermo-mineral waters Strnovac (40°C and flow of 35l/sec) Spring of mineral

water Vizijana near the village of Klechkovice and Vrukja Voda in the village Topolovikj in the Kratovo area (48°C and flow of 12l/sec). There are mineral springs in v. Shupli Kamen, near the village of Lipkovo.

The spring of mineral water Vizijana according to the quantity of magnesium is one of the richest on the Balkan Peninsula. It provides opportunities for the use for health purposes. In this regard, a significant place has the Kumanovo Spa in the village of Proevci. (water temperature 28°C - 31°C). The development of health tourism should be combined with rural tourism while the activities in the surrounding can be a part of the possibilities for picnics and walks. These activities are also linked to rivers and lakes. The region has a distinct river network comprising the following rivers: Zletovska River, Lipovska River, Goshinska River, Kumanovo River, Pchinja, river Kriva Reka, Tabanovachka River, Stoechka River, Moshtenichka River, Toranichka River, Dubrovnichka River, Matejchka River, Otljanska River, Slupchanska River, Lojanska River, Serava River, Durachka River and Bistrica River. This developed river network is an important factor for the irrigation of arable lands, construction of dams, fisheries, development of sport fishing and mini-hydro power plants.

The possibilities for fishing activities, recreational activities, hiking tours and creating hiking trails are present in the lakeside areas and their coastlines. Two small Kozjak lakes exist in the region (natural lakes with a maximum depth of 1 m) near Karpino Monastery, Lipkovsko Lake, Lake Glazhnja, Knezhevo Lake, Accumulation Bezjachko Brdo, Kalin Kamen Lake in the hydrographic system Zletovica, micro-accumulation at Gulinska River, v. Otoshnica and a fish pond at the micro-accumulation Ginovci.

Also important to mention are the following waterfalls: existence of waterfalls such as Stenechki waterfall on Kozjak River, tributary of Durachka River (12 m high), Jamishki waterfall on Zletovska River (8 m high), cascades and waterfalls of Radibushka River (5-6 m high), 7 waterfalls on Kratovska River (2-6 m high), 4 waterfalls of Babakarina River (14 m high) and Dlabochica with fish ponds (on Bistrica River, 6 m high) near Staro Nagorichane. These waterfalls open up opportunities for recreational activities and excursions, educational visits and exotic experiences for tourists that are involved in rural tourism activities.

The development of rural tourism relies on the environmental conditions. It mostly needs a well preserved nature that is combined with the attractiveness of clean rural areas. But also the Register for Rural Tourism Development in the North-east Planning Region (2017) identifies several protected sites and facilities. The following sites can be interesting for tourists: Ploche-litotermi (Strict Nature Reserve - 50 ha) Stracin, Basalt Plates – Mlado Nagorichane (Monument of Nature – area with specific values - 120 ha), Kuklica (stone dolls, volcanic forms as a result of selective erosion - 30 ha), Bor-Kratovo (Monument of Nature - 10 ha), Karshi Bavchi (Monument of Nature - 10 ha) and Dab-Orashac (Monument of Nature - 10 ha).

The spread vegetation is also a factor for the development of eco-tourism as an integral part of rural tourism. There are 1300 plant species of higher plants in the region (90 families and over 410 genera). There are 70 flora species differentiated into the following 9 groups: boreal, mid-European, sub-Mediterranean, Pont-Central Asian, Eurasian, cosmopolitan, adventives species, relict and 63 species of endemic plants. It is the basis for of herbal tourism, educational and research activities.

Arable land and pastures are the basis for the development of rural tourism in the region. In this region this is especially emphasized. The development of this type of tourism depends on both the total surface area and the structure of agricultural lands.

The total area of agricultural land measures 146346 ha. Arable land is 46 % while pastures 54 %. According to the structure of arable land plough fields and gardens comprise 76.08 %, orchards 1.54 %, vineyards 2.30 % and meadows 11.49 %. This structure has a positive influence on the opportunities for development of rural tourism.

For the purposes of rural tourism development pastures can also play an important role, because in the region they are favorable for livestock development. The surface area of pastures amounts to 93391 ha. Such function has also the livestock fund. The following structure of the livestock is registered in the region: 30165 cattle, 17076 stallions dairy cows, 75980 sheep and 37182 pigs. This fund is the basis for farm production. The development of farm-type agritourism is based on such values.

Registered are a total of 2330 horses in the region that are the basis for horse riding and transport of raw materials and goods. Such activities are closely linked to the development of rural tourism, as in a recreational, so in a cultural and educational sense.

The development of hunting tourism is closely related to the development of rural tourism as it can be part of a complex tourist offer. The region has a developed hunting system. Of the total of 27 hunting grounds in the region, 20 are for small while 7 for large game. The following hunting grounds are registered for hunting large game: "German" - Rankovci, "Borovo" - Kriva Palanka, "Luke" - Kriva Palanka, "Ruen" - Kriva Palanka, "Strima" - Lipkovo, "Dumanovce" - Lipkovo, "Kozjak" - Kumanovo and Staro Nagorichane, Dlabochica - Staro Nagorichane, Cvetishnica - Staro Nagorichane and Trnovo - Kriva Palanka.

Fishing areas are closely linked to the development of rural tourism. These areas are spread among 4 fishing territories in Kumanovo, Kriva Palanka, Kratovo and Staro Nagorichane.

Fisheries have particular importance in the development of rural tourism. Namely, 16 households own fisheries (6 Kriva Palanka, 4 Lipkovo, 3 Rankovce, 1 Kumanovo, 1 Kratovo and 1 Staro Nagorichane). This is an optimal opportunity for recreational fishing.

The development of rural tourism is closely linked to cultural-related attractions. The city of Kratovo has an important place in this regard. Kratovo represents a city that has typical old-town Macedonian architecture. It is famous for its towers and bridges. This city has the potential for weekend tourism, excursions, cultural and recreational activities. The numerous sacral and profane buildings in this region, especially in the rural areas, are an important basis for enriching the tourist offer within rural tourism.

However, rural tourism complexes have a significant place in the development of rural tourism. The villages in the western part of the region that gravitate administratively towards the municipality of Lipkovo are mostly populated by ethnic Albanians, have a higher density, with houses and commercial buildings. This represents an opportunity for presenting the lifestyle of that population. The villages that gravitate within the municipality of Staro Nagorichane are in the largest part of a spread type, divided into neighborhoods of individual families and named after them. There are two types of houses: ground – level houses and floor – like houses with large and open courtyards, food storage facilities and facilities for keeping domestic animals. The rural architecture in the municipality of Rankovce is subordinated to the needs of the population. In addition to living houses, commercial buildings have also been built in the yards (barns, stables and other storage facilities for keeping stuff and animals).

The diversity of the type of villages allows the creation of heterogeneous content that is attractive for rural tourism activities. Tourism plays an important role in the protection of traditional values. The sacral architecture in this region, especially in rural areas, is an important basis for an enriched tourist offer within rural tourism.

Rural tourism relies also on events. Promoting the region's cultural values is an opportunity for tourists to visit the region, thereby reviving the interest for the area. The following religious events should be taken into account: Christmas Eve, Vodokrst, St. Sava, St. Theodor Tyron, St. Gjorgji Kratovski, Fiter Bajram, Kurban Bajram, Easter, Gjurgjovden (St. George), St. Paraskeva, St. Ilija (Elijah), Petti Kladenci, Holy Mother of God, St. Simeon and St. Nicholas.

The following cultural events have been identified in the region: Karadachki Poetry Meetings, Martovski Esei, Jekipe - Unity - Folk Festival of the Roma, Cvetnici (Palm Sunday), Tambourines Orchestras,

International Jazz Festival, Bajlovski meetings, Days of Comedy – meetings of folklore associations in the NEPR, barbecuing a bull in Staro Nagorichane, Golden Days in Kratovo, Day of Culture in Kratovo, European Festival of Tambourines in Kratovo, Shopska Wedding (site Kameni Kukli, Municipality of Kratovo) and International Festival St. Joachim Osogovski (plays, folklore, concerts).

Gastronomic events in the region have also an important place in the development of rural tourism. In these group of event are the following identified: Pivtijada, Prazijada v. Režhanovce (Kumanovo), Chvarkijada (Kumanovo), Bajlovski meetings (Zelnici), Kratovo Zelnici (for the Holy Annunciation - Blagoec) Komprijada (Kriva Palanka) and Kratovska Komprijada. These tourist attractions are important for the development of rural tourism in terms of opportunities for friendships, consuming gastronomic specialties, accommodation services and promotion rural ethnographic attractions.

Ethnography in the region is one of the main developmental, attractive drivers of rural tourism. Traditional economic activities are present in the region. The region is known for the following activities: woodcarving and icon painting (Staro Nagorichane), Weaving (Staro Nagorichane), Pottery (Tabanovce), Blacksmiths (Kriva Palanka and Kumanovo) and placing hooves (Staro Nagorichane and Kumanovo). The products of these crafts and activities are such an attraction in the sense that tourists can observe the production processes, to be engaged in these activities and to use the products as souvenirs that should remind them of the pleasant days spent in these rural areas.

The region is characterized by open markets and fairs organized in Kumanovo, Kratovo, Kriva Palanka and Rankovce. These also include cattle markets such as: Kriva Palanka, Kumanovo, Rankovce. This represents an opportunity for exchanging and promoting traditional local and regional food and animals, which are an attractive component in this regard.

Folklore is one of the most important attractions for the development of rural tourism. Particularly significant in this regard are the “Bridal Bestow of St. Theodore Tyrone”, v. Konopnica (Kriva Palanka), Bajlovska wedding (v. Bajlovce) (Staro Nagorichane) and Shopska wedding (village Kuklica, municipality of Kratovo). This represents a living cultural heritage that has long tradition.

Regional culinary specialties have a significant place in the development of tourism. These specialties are important for the development of rural tourism from the point of view of their preparation, serving and consuming at private households as well as in the catering offer in the restaurant sector outside the rural households. The most famous regional specialties are the following: Kumanovo sudzuk, Mezelek, Pivtija, Flija – Turi potpechi, Kratovo Pastrmajka, Palanechki Simit, Saramasaklija (sukana banica with sour milk and garlic) (Kriva Palanka), Propekj, Kumanovo hard cheese, Zelnik from Staro Nagorichane, Zeljanche from minced meat (Kumanovo) and Kratovski mantii. In the context of the opportunities for inclusion in the gastronomic tourist offer, open markets, food fairs and the preparation of regional gastronomic specialties an important role play the recognizable regional products. Such products include Kratovo and Kriva Palanka potatoes, Arbanashki potatoes from Staro Nagorichane, Lipkovo beans and leeks and Nagorichane and Kriva Palanka honey.

The population is one of the basic resources in the development of rural tourism and therefore it is very important to include demographic parameters and their impact on rural tourism. Important indicators in this regard include the overall population characteristics, gender structure, given that female population has a special place in rural tourism, the level of employment because the development of rural tourism should be a driver for activation of the under-employed population and the facilities as available capacities of the population in the rural environment because their utilization and conversion can be crucial. Without a relatively high level of population involvement, rural tourism simply cannot operate.

The total number of inhabitants in the region is 176018 out of which the working-age population is 140454. It is a parameter that provides a positive opportunity for involvement in this activity. The rate of

active population is 54.22 %. The presence of a relatively high rate of active population is a positive indicator of its involvement in rural tourism related activities.

Unemployment is high. It amounts to 44 %. Unemployment among the female population is 48.8 % and is higher than that of the male population which is 41.2 %. The higher unemployment rate for the rural population opens up opportunities for their inclusion in rural tourism activities, especially the female population. The relatively higher unemployment rate among the female population in the rural areas suggests that the development of rural tourism may to some extent reduce their unemployment rate because this population in character is closer to the creation of tourism activities in rural areas.

Employment in agriculture, forestry and fishing is particularly important for the development of rural tourism. It amount to a total of 2383 in this region. This employment needs to be improved as it will serve rural tourism development. The employment in hospitality is only 643.

The development of rural tourism is closely related to accommodation facilities. The total number of facilities in the region is 341, and the number of beds is 648. The NEPR has the smallest share of RN Macedonia in terms of available number of rooms. This situation points to the disadvantage of this region over other regions. Of particular importance for the development of rural tourism are accommodation facilities in rural areas. In the region, 3 apartments are registered in the zone of Kalin Kamen and 10 rooms in Kratovo, "Ethno Selo" - restaurant and 35 room hotel (Staro Nagorichane), in Pelince 10 rooms, in Ethno village Kriva Palanka (near St. Joakim Osogovski) and Kuklica Ethno Restaurant with 6 Rooms (village Kuklica, Kratovo).

5.6 Analysis of the situation and opportunities for development of rural tourism in the Skopje Planning Region

The Skopje Planning Region (SKPR) is characterized by having the highest level of urbanization. This is the result of housing the capital of the RN Macedonia, Skopje. Studies show that it is the most developed region in the country. However, it should be noted that even in this most developed region there are rural areas with a significant abundance of cultural, ethnographic and natural heritage. Since rural tourism relies on authentic values, these values in the region deserve special attention in terms of creating tourism products that would be acceptable on the tourism market. There is an opportunity for combining activities of urban and rural areas. Rural tourism in the SKPR should contribute to improving the content of the stay of tourists in the region, particularly those in rural areas. Hence, rural tourism will contribute to an intensified inclusion of these areas in the development processes, a higher level of utilization of its localities and facilities - in the municipalities where rural tourism is going to be developed, as well as in the region in general.

The development of rural tourism involves the identification of tourism potentials, which will allow for the creation of an information system on the quality, quantity, spatial and time-based dimension of occurrences and incomes in rural areas. This will also promote the identified values for upgrading the necessary components of rural tourism development.

Skopje Planning Region is a region in which tourism has recognizable features. Therefore, the identification of tourism values is crucial, not only for the development of rural tourism, but also for the overall economic and social wellbeing in the future. The development of rural tourism in this region has a

dual interaction character. On the one hand, it should be the basis for vitalizing rural areas, while on the other hand, to accept the established and already affirmed tourism products as complementary to the tourism development, which means that they will allow rural tourism to improve in the direction of incorporating such tourism values. Rural tourism in the SKPR should be aimed at intensifying the components contained in rural tourism and accelerating development through the prism of optimal use of rural resources as a distinctive value. SKPR is a part of the spatial units that comprise the foundation for future activities in the development of tourism in rural areas. This arises from the fact that the resource potentials should be more actively included in the tourism offer of the SKPR. Taking into account that potentials can be part of the region's overall value and stimulate developmental directions, the Sub-Strategy relies on the situation regarding their identification. An important role in this regard has the Register of Rural Tourism Development Potentials in this region. The Sub-Strategy approaches the Register of Potentials for Development of Rural Tourism of the region. The aim of the Sub-Strategy is to provide context to the documents of strategic and program-planning nature.

The SKPR extends over an area of 1812 km². It represents 7 % of the territory of RN Macedonia. The municipalities that belong to the region are Aerodrom, Butel, Gazi Baba, Gjorche Petrov, Karposh, Kisela Voda, Saraj, Centar, Chair and Shuto Orizari in the City of Skopje, as well as the municipalities of Arachinovo, Zelenikovo, Ilinden, Petrovec, Sopište, Studenichani and Chucher – Sandevo.

Its international contactability is with Kosovo through the Blace and Volkovo border crossings. The border crossing Blace provides access to the valley of the river Lepenec towards Kachanik and the Kachanik Gorge, i.e. to the municipalities of Kachanik and Vitina, while the border crossing of Volkovo controls the Skopje-Prishtina railway, enabling it to be identified as a region with good accessibility and resource utilization in rural tourism. The region has contact features with the neighboring planning regions such as the Polog, South-west, Vardar and North-east Region. Such emphasized contactability indicates that the region has remarkable gravitational features in relation to its surroundings. The cooperation with these planning regions enables the use of tourist values in a wider context, i.e. as the basis for creating tourism products with different content qualities and higher quantity. Polyvalence is the possibility to combine tourist values of mutual character. Neighboring municipalities are mainly rural areas, with the possibility of developing joint rural tourism products.

It must be stated that the SKPR is a region that has distinct transit features. Transitness relates to the location of the International Corridor 10, E-75 route, International Corridor 8, E-65 route, Skopje International Airport and Stenkoec Airport suitable for private aircrafts.

The localities in the region for transit tourism are designated as places where they can be used for product placement in rural areas, for promotion of this type of tourism and for inclusion of transit travelers in such tourist activities.

The following locations are identified on the E-75 corridor: Resting area Pchinja, Mala Bogorodica Kozhle, Resting area and restaurant "Kaplan", v. Badar, Gas station Makpetrol, Katlanovska Spa, Church of St. Nikola, v. 'Rzhanichino, Church of the Holy Trinity, Petrovec, Pizza restaurant Angelika, Bakery "Caesar", Bakery "Bukefal" Restaurant "Kaj Jack", Church of St. George, Hotel "Gardenija", Coffee Bar "Cream", Motel "Livija", v. Miladinovci, v. Tekija - A-4 v. Mralino, Car Service "Borche", Church "Shroud of the Holy Theotokos", v. Drama, Coffee Bar "Terrace Laguna-Drama", Coffee Bar "Prilep", Idrizovo, Petrol Station Lukoil - Petrovec, Petrol Station "Nechе Petrol", v. Kadino, Restaurant "Fins", Aqua Star Restaurant & Pool, Petrol Station Makpetrol, Jurumleri, coffee bar "Idila", Restaurant "Fratelo Food", v. Goce Delchev, coffee bar "Nika", v. Trubarevo.

Transit sites on the corridor E-65 are the following: Border crossing "Blace", Petrol station - Diesel, Petrol station - Besa Petrol, v. Saraj, Al-Hidzra Mosque and Matka Canyon. This location opens up opportunities for complementing the rural areas on the transit tourism offer, using the Petrovec Airport to receive and depart tourists, and transporting products and goods needed for the development of rural tourism. The region is characterized by a heterogeneous landscape structure. The landforms represent a physiognomic and functional value as a basis for the development of rural tourism in the SKPR. The development of mountain tourism is closely linked to rural activities. Therefore, mountain values are one of the most important attractions in the development of this selective type of tourism. The following mountains are particularly attractive for such purposes: Vodno, Jakupica, Karadzica, Osoj, Kitka, Zheden and Skopska Crna Gora. The mountains have favorable conditions for skiing, excursions, recreational activities, sports and combined tours that could be created as contents of the tourist stay in rural areas.

The development of agri-tourism as an integral part of rural tourism is largely tied to the Skopje Valley. This valley has suitable conditions for agricultural activities. Surface areas and altitudes meet the criteria for the development of this type of tourism. Namely, the Skopje valley covers an area of 1924 km², and the lowest point of the valley is only 223 m. The relatively low altitude conditions contribute to the creation of positive climate characteristics. In addition, it should be taken into account that it is an alluvial plain with remarkably fruitful crop characteristics.

The region is characterized by the numerous presences of gorges and caves as micro-landscape landforms. They are the basis for the development of active selective types of tourism, but can also be combined with the contents of rural tourism.

The SKPR is an area with distinct hydrography that can be used for rural tourism purposes. The existence of cold water springs and thermo-mineral springs, the well-spread river system, existence of waterfalls, artificial and glacial lakes is a significant potential that shows direct and indirect impact on the development of rural tourism. In that sense, the Rashche spring is used as a main drinking water supply in Skopje. However, the spring has also a direct impact on the rural water supply. Attractive are also the springs Pepeljak, the spring of Markova River, Karadzica, Jurichka Karpa, as well as the springs of Kadina River, Jakupica and Izvor near the v. Brdjarci and near the v. Kuchkovo.

Thermo-mineral and cold water springs are part of the complex of springs that supply the Katlanovo Spa, which forms the basis for spa tourism development - as an important complementary factor of rural tourism development. Their fumarole features are a curiosity as a tourist value and in this respect have a special appeal. In the function of tourism development is also the possibility for conducting educational activities.

The region has one of the most developed river networks. The rivers are used for irrigation of agricultural land in rural areas, fishing and sports-recreational contents. The composite valleys have impressive landscape features, which are used for creating exceptional tourist experiences. In this sense is used the River Vardar, which is the main hydrological river artery of the RN Macedonia. There are also other rivers in this region: Treska, Markova River, Kadina River, Pchinja, Lepenec and Patishka River. This means that the Vardar catchment area has a relatively large coverage. Each of these rivers has special values in the tourist sense. They can be combined with the basic attractions for the development of rural tourism. In that sense, the river Treska is the most attractive river for water sports activity in wild waters, Markova and Kadina River are suitable for outdoor activities, walks, excursions, while the steep sides for rock climbing, Pchinja is famous for its epigenetics (as a hydrological curiosity). Together with the Katlanovo Spa the river Lepenec has a complementary destination character, with favorable conditions for sport fishing, and it is used for irrigating the agricultural land in rural areas. It creates alluvial soils, while Patishka River is submersible and thus has curiosity features and educational values. Curiosity attractiveness is also shown at a waterfall in v. Kuchkovo and at cascades on Markova River.

Complementary opportunities in the region's rural-tourism areas include the Katlanovo Spa. The spa is located in the valley of the Pchinja River, it belongs to the group of hyperthermic baths, with sulfur-alkaline waters, and it may be used for treatment and recreation by tourists who stay within the rural area.

The lakes have favorable conditions for swimming activities, excursions, fishing and water sports. They are also suitable for walks, camping, and sightseeing. In this region, the lakes Matka and Treska are artificial lakes with opportunities for swimming, excursions, fishing and water sports. The glacial lakes Golemo and Malo Salakovsko Lake are located in the spring area of the Salakovska River under the peak Ubava of Karadzica mountain range, at an altitude of 2178 m. These represent convenient opportunities for tourists to visit within the framework of rural tourism products. They are suitable for walks, camping, and sightseeing.

The development of rural tourism is closely related to the preserved natural habitats. In this sense, protected areas and natural sites have particular importance. The following protected sites and locations are identified in the region: Matka, which is a natural complex under strict protection. It includes a remarkable biological and geomorphologic diversity. Jasen is a multipurpose area under strict protection. It is considered as the most developed area for hunting - tourism activities in the Republic of N. Macedonia. The site Ruchica site is a reserve for the pine *Pinus mugo* Turra on the Jakupica Mountain, north of the peak Solunska Glava. Its surface area measures 1000 ha. Ostrovo, near Trubarevo, Katlanovo Marsh is an ornithological station and a monument of nature, while Katlanovo Spa is a monument of nature. Its territory extends into a tectonic crack, visible about 350 meters in length, with pulsations and fumarole features. In addition, protected areas are the following: Forest Park Vodno, Forest Park Gazi Baba and Forest Park Skopska Crna Gora.

The agro sector is closely linked to rural tourism in the region. Its development implies that it can be fundamentally linked to the activities of tourists in agriculture, using products as part of the gastronomic offer and can represent a supply factor for the households that receive tourists. The development of this type of tourism depends on both the total territory and the structure of agricultural areas.

The total area of agricultural land is 80420 ha, which is 44.4 % of the total area of the SKPR. This data points to the existence of relatively favorable opportunities for the agro-sector to be included in the tourism sector, because it has a relatively high level of prevalence. The total arable land is 39217 ha (48.7 %), while 41170 ha, or 51 % are pastures. This structure positively reflects on the opportunities for development of rural tourism. Rural tourism development and pasture areas can be in this function, as these are favorable for livestock development. In this sense is also the livestock fund. The following fund is registered in the region: Horses 762, Cattle 25249, Pigs 22338, Sheep 40361, Goats 5455. Such fund is the basis for farm-based production. These opportunities are based on the development of farm-type agri-tourism. In the region, the Register also identified 309560 units of poultry and 4418 beehives.

Registering the horses indicates that they can be used within rural tourism in the form of horse riding, feeding and participation in breeding. In the function of rural tourism development are the organizations that are related to horse riding. These are the following organizations in the region: Horse Club "Hippodrome" - Madzari, Horse Club "Process" - Skopje, Horse Club "Dona" - Chucher Sandevo, Horse Club "Animals" - Skopje, Horse Club "Ilinden" - Skopje, Horse Club "Bistra Galichnik" - Skopje, Citizens' Association "Ilinden March 1978" - Gorno Lisiche, Aerodrom.

The development of rural areas is closely linked to the development of hunting tourism. Hunting tourism should make use of the conditions of rural areas. That way it can be part of a complex tourist offer. The hunting fund is: Large game – 1782, small game - 6106 and feathered game - 6724. The region has a large number of hunting areas. They are registered as large game hunting grounds which include:

Hunting ground no. 1 "Kadina River", hunting ground no. 2 "Elovo", hunting ground no. 3 „Kljuchka River“, hunting ground no. 4 "Brodec", and hunting ground "Jasen".

The following hunting grounds are designated as for hunting small game: Hunting ground no. 5 "Mirkovci", hunting ground no. 6 "Creshevo", hunting ground no. 7 "Bunardzik", hunting ground no. 8 "Miladinovci", hunting ground no. 9 "Gradmanci", hunting ground no. 10 "Fazanerija", hunting ground no. 11 "Trubarevo", hunting ground no. 12 "Zelenikovo", hunting ground no. 13 "Batinci", hunting ground no. 14 "Govrlevo", hunting ground no. 15 "Ramnishte", hunting ground no. 16 "Zheden" and hunting ground no. 17 "Kuchkovo".

The rivers and lakes in the region have a rich fish stock. Fishing is being conducted in the following rivers: Vardar, Pchinja, Treska, Lepenec and Lake Matka.

The development of rural tourism is closely linked to anthropogenic attractions. The integration of existing architecture in an ambient sense can be seen at the Durkovci House in v. Chucher, the houses in Ljubanci and Gornjani and "Macedonian Village" (Skopje, Vodno). The houses are built from indigenous materials with traditional use of earth, stone and wood. The newly built complex of traditional houses from RN Macedonia as between the 19th and 20th century is embedded in the surrounded forest vegetation and mountainous landscape, and it operates as a dispersed complex of hotel accommodation and restaurant services. The numerous sacral and profane buildings in this region, especially in rural areas, constitute an important basis for an enriched offer within rural tourism. Furthermore, as the basis of traditionalism in the region should be the Old Skopje Bazaar with the presence of handicrafts and commercial contents that is the complementary tourist offer of rural development.

A complementary offer included in the development of rural tourism can also represent the urban areas of Skopje, the sacral and profane architecture, cultural monuments, archaeological sites, museums and galleries. Closely related to the development of rural tourism, however, are the complexes in rural areas. The villages in Skopska Crna Gora reflect the way of life of this population. The villages that gravitate towards Skopje, that preserve the traditional architecture are of particular importance. In this regard, the villages of Chucher and Ljubanci play an important role. In Chucher there is a complex of preserved rural architecture that in which the development of the Macedonian house can be observed, while in Ljubanci there is the traditional rural architecture.

The diversity of the type of villages allows for creating a heterogeneous content that is attractive for rural tourism activities. Tourism can help in the protection of traditional values. The numerous sacral buildings in this region, especially in rural areas, are an important basis for enriching the rural tourism offer.

Rural tourism also relies on events. The following religious events are important to be mentioned: Christmas Eve fires (Municipality of Aerodrom, Municipality of Chucher Sandevo), Days of the Cross (Municipality of Gjorche Petrov), Dormition of the Holy Mother of God (Municipality of Aerodrom), Epiphany - Vodici, Bajram, Gjurgjovden (St. George's Day), Day of the Cross - v. Kuchkovo, Prochka and Easter - a masquerade is organized in the municipality of Chucher Sandevo. The following cultural events and have been identified in the region: Michurinska meeting (Municipality of Aerodrom), Ethno-skilled woman (Municipality of Ilinden), Concert on the 8. March (Ensemble of folk songs and dances "Ilinden 72") (Municipality of Ilinden), Donate a book for an Easter egg - Symbol of Christ's Resurrection (Municipality of Ilinden), Easter Meetings (Municipality of Aerodrom), International Folk Children's Festival (Municipality of Gazi Baba), Voice of the Bazaar (Municipality of Chair), Creative Workshop for pottery items (Municipality of Gazi Baba), May Opera Evenings (City of Skopje), Baskerfest (City of Skopje), Skopje Summer (City of Skopje), March of Horses (Municipality of Aerodrom), Days of Solidarity (Municipality of Gazi Baba), Parade of Folk Songs and Instruments (Municipality of Gazi Baba), White Night (City of Skopje), Young Open Theater (City of), Cultural Festival of the Bazaar (Municipality of Chair), Skopje Pivolend and Stankovi Days

(Municipality of Chucher Sandevo). Gastronomic events in the region have an important place in the development of rural tourism. The Register of Potentials for Rural Tourism Development identifies the following gastronomic events: Michurinska meeting (Municipality of Aerodrom) "Sweet mystery" (Municipality of Gjorche Petrov), Gourmet weekend Skopje (City of Skopje), Vino-Skop (City of Skopje), Tikvijada (Municipality of Gazi Baba) and Exhibition of Food in the Old Skopje Bazaar.

Fairs and markets are places of interconnection of rural and urban culture and opportunities for exchange and promotion of traditional local and regional production components. Famous are the flower stands (Municipality of Gazi Baba) and the monasteries of St. Archangel (v. Kuchevishte), St. Elijah (v. Mirkovci) and St. Athanasius (v. Gluvo). Ethnographic heritage is recognizable as an attraction in the function of the development of rural tourism. Traditional economic activities (filigree, coppersmiths, woodcarving, and silversmiths) occupy a special place in this regard. Significant folkloric elements (folk costumes, customs, dances and songs) are the following: traditional male costumes from Skopje Crna Gora, Unique female festive costume and work costume, folk dances from Skopje Crna Gora, distinctive clothing of all nationalities in v. Saraj, Traditional costumes of the Roma population - Shuto Orizari and Serbian folk costumes - Chucher Sandevo.

Regional culinary specialties have a significant role in the development of tourism. These specialties are important for the development of rural tourism in the sense of their preparing, serving and consuming in private households as well as in the catering offer in the restaurant sector outside the rural households. The most famous regional dishes are the following: Simit-Pogacha, chomlek prepared in a specific way for Skopje, many varieties of sarma, turli tavi, stuffed peppers, stuffed tomatoes, various meat pies in various ways, pitulici, shekjer pare, gjomleze, doner, baklava, pivtija (pacha), komat, vitkanica, bakrdan and topenica. In the context of the opportunities for inclusion in the gastronomic tourist offer, in organized fairs, and in preparation of regional gastronomic specialties, the recognizable regional products play an important role. The most famous regional products are the following: Skopje apple, onion seedlings, vegetable, pepper, cabbage, vine leaves, tomato - Skopski jabuchar and arpadzik – onion.

The development of rural tourism in this region depends on demographic parameters, because without proper representation and adequate structure it is not possible to utilize the resources.

The total number of inhabitants in the region is 624585 of which the working-age population amounts to 492680. According to the number of able-bodied population in 2016, the SKPR has the highest volume, with employment and unemployment rates showing oscillations relative to the overall rates at the state level. The share of the active population is 53.5 %, while the employment rate is 41.6 %

In terms of the unemployment rate, the SKPR is placed after the South-east and Pelagonija Planning Region, which opens opportunities for its reduction through various rural-tourist activities. The unemployment rate of the population is 22 %. The unemployment of the female population measures 19.7 % and is lower than the unemployment of the male population, which is 24.0 %. The higher unemployment rate of the rural population opens up opportunities for inclusion in rural tourism activities, especially for the female population. The relatively higher unemployment rate among the female population in the rural areas suggests that the development of rural tourism may to some extent reduce their unemployment rate, which is more related to tourism activities in rural areas.

Employment in agriculture, forestry and fishing is particularly important for the development of rural tourism. These sectors measure a total of 120303 people employed in this region. This employment should be improved, as it will serve the function of rural tourism development.

The development of rural tourism is closely linked to accommodation facilities. The total number of facilities in the region is 141, the number of rooms is 3102, while the number of beds is 6,510. The number of restaurants is 517 and the number of seats is 29084.

5.7 Analysis of the situation and opportunities for development of rural tourism in the Vardar Planning Region

The Vardar Planning Region is located in the central part of the Republic of N. Macedonia and encompasses the middle catchment area of the Vardar River, the lower watercourses of the tributaries Bregalnica River and Crna River and the final western part of Ovche Pole. It covers an area of 4042 km² or covers 16 % of the territory of the RN Macedonia. This region includes 9 municipalities with 215 settlements. The municipalities that are part of the region are: Sveti Nikole, Kavadarci, Veles, Gradsko, Negotino, Rosoman, Chashka, Demir Kapija and Lozovo. Typical rural municipalities are Gradsko, Rosoman, Chashka and Lozovo. However, urban territories also have rural areas. There are 34 settlements in the municipality of Sveti Nikole, but 32 are permanent along with the central part of Sveti Nikole (people from Stara and Nova Mezdra have emigrated). There are 39 villages in the municipality of Kavadarci. In the municipality of Veles there are 29 settlements outside the urban center, 18 in Negotino and 14 villages in Demir Kapija. The total number of rural settlements is 210. Such representation of rural areas represents a favorable potential for development of this type of tourism.

Internationally, the planning region is in contact with Greece especially with the area of Pella, i.e. with the municipality of Meglen (Almopia) bordering the municipality of Kavadarci. However, there is no border crossing which would contribute to a higher level of cooperation in terms of creating international tourism products.

Domestic contactability is particularly pronounced, as the region borders all planning regions except the Polog and North-east regions. It provides the highest level in creating mutual tourist offer in the rural sense.

The pronounced transitness is due to the fact that the Vardar region is located on the main traffic artery of the Republic of N. Macedonia E-75, Corridor 10, the International Railway Skopje-Veles-Gevgelija-Greece on the 106.6 km long corridor. Based on such positive tourist-geographical features of the region, rural tourism can be combined with transit tourism and the sites on the corridors. Transit – tourism localities on the Corridor E-75 are the following: Monastery of St. Bogorodica – parking place and vehicle resting area, toll station Sopot - Municipality of Veles, Lake "Mladost" - Municipality of Veles, Hotel "Romantique" - Municipality of Veles, Hotel Boat "Panini" - Municipality of Veles, Motel on Lake Veles - Municipality of Veles, v. Otovica - municipality of Veles, v. Bashino Selo - Church of St. Nikola - Municipality of Veles, Chaloshevo - Municipality of Veles, Petrol Station Lukoil - Municipality of Veles, Petrol Station Makpetrol - Municipality of Veles, Customs Terminal - Motel Macedonia - Municipality of Veles, v. Dolno Karaslari - Municipality of Veles, v. Zgropolci, v. Vinichani, v. Ulanci - Municipality of Gradsko, settlement Gradsko (Stobi winery) - Municipality of Gradsko, archeological site Stobi - Municipality of Rosoman, Petrol Station Makpetrol - Municipality of Negotino, v. Tremnik - Municipality of Negotino, v. Bistrenci - Municipality of Demir Kapija and v. Koreshnica - Municipality of Demir Kapija.

Furthermore, on a local road, there are also the sites of Elenov Winery (Municipality of Demir Kapija) and Popova Kula Winery - (Municipality of Demir Kapija). This ensures connecting to the existing wine routes.

The configuration of the landscape allows for the creation of complex tourist products. The contents should be included in the creation of the tourist offer as outlined in the VAPR. There are mountain values in the region that have a significant impact on the development of tourism in rural areas. The mountainous areas are defined by mountains that are the basis for the development of rural tourism. Such values are prevalent on the following mountains: Jakupica (proposed as a National Park - 28000 ha), Kozhuf (area of 893 km²), Babuna, Goleshnica, Dautica, Klepa, Kuchukol, Gradishtanska Mountain, Mangovica and Konechka Mountain)

The Jakupica area is rich in a variety of natural resources that can be used for recreational, scientific-research, study-educational, ecological and cultural-tourist purposes. These values are closely related to the rural tourism offer.

There is a ski resort in the region with excellent skiing conditions, two ski lifts capable of carrying 3000 skiers per hour to the top of the cable car, one six-seater unique in the Balkans, a restaurant, sheepfold, 16 suites and 16 km of ski slopes. However, it is not sufficiently included in the region's tourist offer. It is a favorable space for offering specific rural tourism products with recreational, sports and educational contents. The presence of mountain villages enables the combining of the mountains with rural values.

The development of rural tourism with agro- characteristics is particularly linked to the spatial units located in the valleys in the region. The region consists of Ovche Pole, Tikvesh Valley, Veles Valley and Raec Valley (Trojachka Valley). Such presence of valleys is a positive precondition for the development of rural tourism with agri-tourism contents.

Characteristic for the region is its rich hydrography. A total of 288 springs with a flow capacity of 0.63 m³/sec are identified in the Central Povardarie Watershed. This capacity of the flow is used as a water supply for the municipalities of Kavadarci and Negotino, while also suitable for excursions, drinking clean spring water and educational activities (nature school, school excursions). Important potentials in this regard are Beleshnica spring, Ocha, Salakova River, springs of the Babuna River, springs of Patishka River, Markova, Kadina River, Babuna, Topolka, Pepelnik and Beleshnica, Lukar 1 and 2, spring Kosmatec, springs on the Bistrichka River, Doshnica River, Kamenica, Vodovratska River, Doshnica River, Vinichanska River, Stragarnica, Veshka River, Koprishnica and Mominska River.

The development of rural tourism uses waterfalls as attractions for outdoor excursions in exotic conditions, educational activities. These are the following: the ten Koprishnichki waterfalls (Demir Kapija) on the Koprishnica River, the Momin Waterfall of Momin River and the Waterfall on the river Babuna (Chashka) located in the source part of the Babuna River.

The lakes are of particular importance for the development of rural tourism. In that sense, Tikvesh Lake is one of the largest artificial lakes by surface area, depth and length in our country, as well as by the total amount of water in it. The lake is suitable for fishing and canoeing. There are conditions for promoting sport and professional fishing and water sports that can very well be combined with rural tourism.

Podleshko Lake is also suitable for fishing and canoeing. There are conditions for promoting sport and professional fishing. Lake Mladost on the Otovica River is of particular importance in the development of the agro-complex because the river's primary purpose is irrigation of arable land and recreation related to the development of rural tourism. It is suitable for fishing in a recreational and commercial sense as well as canoeing (water sports). The Paljurci Lakes on the Luda Mara River, Lisiche on the Topolka River and the Mavrovica Accumulation located south of v. Orel on the Kiselica River (Orelska River), all have similar tourist values.

Moklishko Lake is a lake with curiosity features on the river Luda Mara. The lake is a consequence of a natural disaster with the collapse of a hill that created a dam.

Agricultural land by its presence is the basis for the development of agri-tourism activities. The total agricultural land amounts to 144411 ha, or 11.43 % of the RN Macedonia. The arable land in the region is 51856 ha or 35,9 %. Plough fields and orchards comprise 74.22 %, orchards - 2.5 %, vineyards – 21 % and meadows - 2,26 %. Such structure of arable land has a positive impact on the development of rural tourism. Of particular importance is the existence of vineyards. The percentage share of vineyards in the total arable agricultural land is the highest in the RN Macedonia, which is the basis for the most developed wine tourism. Based on such representation and processing of grapes, there is an incentive to develop wine cellars and to map wine routes, which are the basis of a specific tourist offer. The region is characterized by the largest presence of wineries. Among the most significant wineries are the following: in Veles - Zegin Veles, Vel Vin Winery, Agro-establishment "Lozar", Trist, Winery Sopot, and Winery Izvorno, in Negotino - Bovin Winery, Povardarie Winery, Venec Winery and Dolni Disan, Pivka Winery, In Kavadarci - Tikvesh Winery, In Gradsko - Winery Stobi, In Demir Kapija - Villa Maria Winery And Popova Kula Winery, In Rosoman - Movino Winery, Winery AD "Goce Delchev And Tikvesh" Trstenik and in the Municipality of Chashka – Saraginov Winery (v. Vojnica).

Pastures are represented by 64.09 %, which implies remarkable potential. Pastures and meadows are the basis for livestock activities and farm creation. The structure of the livestock fund is determined by 9664 cattle, 1121 horse, 65337 sheep, 45357 pigs and 267234 poultry. This shows a solid basis for the development of this agro-sector. There are farms in the region that are directly involved in production activities: Agria (municipality of Veles), Agrar Trade (municipality of Veles, poultry farming), v. Dolna Boshava, v. Gorna Boshava (poultry, cow farming), v. Krnjevo (goat farming), v. Chemersko, v. Bohula (goat breeding, cattle breeding, poultry farming), v. Stragovo (sheep), v. Rosoman, Bat Crni (pig farm), Demir Kapija (poultry farm), v. Sujaklari (poultry, sheep), Agro Mila Trade (pig farm with butchery Mac butchery – v. Stanjevci, municipality of Sveti Nikole) and SirMes farm - municipality of Veles .

The landscape configuration, favorable pedological conditions and climate characteristics are the basis for the presence of diverse vegetation in this region. On the Jakupica Mountain, 10 vegetation types and 53 plant communities have been identified, 25 of which are prevalent for the subalpine and alpine belt. There are 11 rare plant species registered, 4 of which are representative and 165 endemic and sub-endemic species in the Balkans. In floristic and vegetative terms "Jakupica" represents the southern border of the distribution of 56 plant communities. The other mountains in this region have similar characteristics.

Protected sites and facilities have environmental significance and are an opportunity for conducting educational visits and rural-tourism activities in the form of sightseeing. Characteristic for the region is the wide distribution of these values. In their essence, they have eco-tourism and cultural components that should be put function of rural tourism.

The possibilities for development of hunting tourism are closely linked to rural tourism activities. In this respect, the region has 42 hunting grounds with a total surface area of over 350000 hectares. About 17 % of the total number of hunting grounds in the country are located in this region, 11 of which are used for hunting of large game while 31 for small game. The largest hunting ground in VAPR is Rozhden with 14228 ha in the municipality of Kavadarci. With numerous mountainous areas as well as forests of diverse vegetation, in the region there are opportunities to improve the hunting fund and the usage of gastronomic specialties, animal observation and photography.

Furthermore, the region is also characterized by fishing possibilities. The most favorable conditions are on the rivers Babuna, Topolka and Vardar as well as the lakes Tikvesh, Podleshko and Mladost. In this sense, fishing activities should be included in the tourist offer of rural tourism.

Demographic characteristics are an important factor for the development of rural tourism. The region has a population of 153347 people. The number of inhabitants is the basis for comparative

observations of the population structure in the field of active attitude towards rural tourism. The analysis of the structure shows that the working-age population is 125461. This represents a significant potential for tourism development because the percentage of the working-age population in relation to the total number of inhabitants is 81.8 %. The percentage share of the active population is 61.4 % while the employment rate amounts to 44.5 %. The unemployment rate in the region is relatively high. It amounts to 27.6 %. Unemployment among women is higher than among men. Particularly important is the ratio in rural areas where female unemployment is higher. Given the labor-intensive nature of rural tourism, it represents an employment opportunity for this population. Of particular importance in this respect is the unemployment in rural areas, which is relatively high and exceptionally pronounced among the female population. This percentage share is 31,2 %. It is essential that the development of rural tourism be in the function of employing this population.

The situation with the employment in diverse sectors shows that in the sector of agriculture, forestry and fishing in VAPR by municipalities is the following: Veles - 948, Gradsko - 380, Demir Kapija - 70, Kavadarci - 80, Lozovo - 203, Negotino - 313, Rosoman - 219, Sveti Nikole - 751 and Chashka - 137. This employment is closely linked to the conditions that rural tourism can improve.

Employment in the tourism sector is relatively low. The total number of employees in this sector is 498, which implies that the development of rural tourism may be a factor for increasing the number of employees in the planning region. In the hospitality sector, the employment by municipalities is as follows: Veles - 231, Gradsko - 5, Demir Kapija - 7, Kavadarci - 131, Lozovo - 0, Negotino - 69, Rosoman - 12, Sveti Nikole - 42 and Chashka - 1.

The identification of hospitality facilities and rooms and beds for accommodation is also taken into account in the region. The total number of catering facilities is 131, 20 of which are accommodation facilities with a total of 666 available rooms. The number of beds in the region is 1819. This means that there is a solid basis for their inclusion in the tourist offer. Of particular importance in this regard are the accommodation facilities in rural areas. They are provided by location and number of beds: In v. Papradishte (8-10 beds), Private Accommodation in Gradsko (40 beds), v. Krnjevo (10 beds), v. Chemersko (20 beds), v. Bohula (10-20 beds), v. Dolna Boshava (10-20 beds), v. Gorna Boshava (10-20 beds), Konopishte (15 beds), v. Bojamchishte (5-10), v. Mrezhichko (10-20), v. Rozhden (10-20), v. Stragovo (5), Private accommodation in Negotino (20 beds), Private accommodation in Demir Kapija (20 beds), v. Bogomila (20 beds) (Motel Zidan Most 35 beds), v. Nezhilovo (Hotel Nezhilovo - 60 beds), v. Omorani (accommodation in households), v. Crnilishte (Motel Ilinden, 12 beds) and v. Orel (Scout's House Goce Delchev, 50 beds). Their use in the function of rural tourism development requires promotional activities that will increase interest for their visit.

The development of rural tourism is closely linked to traditional culture. In this regard, rural architecture has a special place in the following sites: Village Bogomila (Municipality of Chashka), Village Popadija (Municipality of Chashka), Village Krajnici (Municipality of Chashka), v. Novo Selo (Municipality of Veles), Village Oraovec (Municipality of Veles), Village 'Rlevci (Municipality of Veles), Village S'Ip (Municipality of Veles), Village Gorno Vranovci Village Papradishte and Village Vojnica.

Religious events represent an opportunity for combining rural tourism with religious tourism. They represent a solid potential. The following events are the most significant in the region: Monastery Evening in the Church of St. George (Little Theotokos) (Negotino), Feast at Pentecost (Rosoman), Todorica (Sveti Nikole), Vasilica (Demir Kapija), Large Theotokos (Demir Kapija), Mother of God Bajlaklija (Monastery of St. Demetrius) – Veles, Holy Kyriaki – v. Ranchenci - Sveti Nikole, Nativity of the Holy Theotokos (Monastery of the Holy Mother of God, Gjurishte) and St. Nicholas - liturgy and celebration of the patron of the city (Sveti Nikole).

Of particular importance are the following cultural events: In the heart of Macedonia (International folk festival - Gradsko, Painting and Woodcarving Colony "Papradishki Masters" (Veles), International Folk Festival - Veles, St. Trifun's Wine Week (Negotino), Negotino Evening, Tikvesh grape harvest (Kavadarci), St. Trifun (Kavadarci), Week of Tradition St. Trifun (Demir Kapija), Praskober - Peach harvest (Rosoman) and Spring-Laughter-Love (Sveti Nikole), April Fool's Day (Sveti Nikole), Todorica (International Festival of Traditional Folklore) (Sveti Nikole) and Children's Art Colony (Chashka). In this context, particularly important are the gastronomic events such as Pitijada (Veles) Komprijada (Chashka) Fair of Healthy Food (Chashka) and National Competition for best traditional dish (Demir Kapija).

Traditional economic activities are represented by the following values: In Veles - Violin production - Bogdanovski family, woodcarving (Ljubomir Bisin), Pottery, Pack-saddle production and Traditional building (Varnali locality). Traditional building is present in the municipality of Kavadarci (v. Resava, v. Dabnishte, v. Moklishte). In the municipality of Demir Kapija there is also traditional building (Klisura, Chelovec, Dren, Przhdevo; Besica; Barovo) and barrel making. In Sveti Nikole prevalent are coppersmiths.

Closely related to the development of rural tourism are traditional markets and fairs. These are the following: Traditional Negotino Fair, Kavadarci Fair, Demir Kapija Fair and Traditional Todorichki Fair.

Folklore has special characteristics as an attractive value in rural tourism. It is represented by the following forms: Veles folk costumes, Ovche Pole folk costumes (male, female and Vlach costumes) and Ovche Pole traditional dances (male Arnaut dance, female Krstachka dance, male Krstachka dance, male Tresenica dance).

Well-known regional culinary specialties are the following: Veles Pie Pastrmajlija, Veles Gjomleze, Taranenik, Sveti Nikole Pastrmajlija, Zhetvarka, Sveti Nikole Banica, Presna Pogacha and Bakardan, while regional products are: Madzun, Grape honey, Veles Alva, Negotino Alva and Ovche Pole honey.

5.8 Analysis of the situation and opportunities for development of rural tourism in the Pelagonija Planning Region

The Pelagonija Planning Region (PEPR) covers an area of 4717 km² which represents 18.3 % of the territory of the country, which includes the following municipalities: Bitola, Prilep, Resen, Demir Hisar, Krushevo, Mogila, Dolneni, Novaci and Krivogashtani. Six of them are rural municipalities that are important for the development of rural tourism. Namely, the rural area of the region covers an area of 98.7 % (4,637 km²) which is a total of 338 rural settlements. Thus, it can be concluded that the rural-tourism potential of the region is very high. The region is also characterized by significant international contactability. Namely, the border connection with the Republic of Greece and the Republic of Albania is significant. The proximity of rural areas in Albania and Greece enables tourists and visitors from these places to come in the PEPR, as well as combining services in the region with the content and services of these countries. The region's accessibility is at a relatively good level, but needs to be improved in the future. Furthermore, there is one of the most important border crossing points in the country - Medzitlija, which enables connectivity along the Pelagonija valley via Florina with the Via Egnatia highway and with Thessaloniki and Igoumenitsa. The other two border crossings are relatively underdeveloped. The Stenje border crossing does not have good road communication, while the Markova Noga border crossing is still not active. With these two border crossings the Prespa valley opens towards Albania and Greece. The Stenje Border Crossing provides communication with Mala Prespa, Korcha and Pogradec, while the Markova Noga Border Crossing represents a significant development potential for the Rural Tourism in

Prespa. Of particular importance for the area are the combined tourist contents and products that can be created given the fact that the planning region is rich in natural and anthropogenic tourism potentials and values. Significant road routes pass through the region. The transitness of the planning region is especially emphasized by the openness of the Pelagonija valley towards Greece, as well as the Prespa Lake towards Albania and Greece. One of the most important road routes passes through this region - the international corridor E-65. Relatively near to the region is also the International Airport "St. Paul the Apostle" which does not only increase the accessibility to the region but also has a positive impact on the transitness. Within the region, in the Prespa Lake is located the borderline of the three countries - Albania, RN Macedonia and Greece. This also represents a significant potential for increasing the transitness in the future as there is no water communication in the lake. This position of PEPR opens up opportunities for complementing the existing tourist offer in the rural areas of the neighboring countries, as well as their transit tourist offer. The general conclusion is that Lake Prespa's opportunities for a joint offer in rural tourism with Albania and Greece are underutilized. The polyvalence of the region is emphasized by the fact that it is a predominantly rural area that enables the inclusion of natural and anthropogenic values in rural tourism activities and contents. The relative proximity of the Greek coast as an important tourist destination in Europe provides the potential for combination with mountain, spa and lake tourism to Greece. The region's ethnographic tourist values can be combined with existing and future tourism products represented in the Albanian border area. This can drastically enrich the content of tourists' stays, as well as intensify the overall tourist development of the region.

A very important factor for the development of rural tourism is the configuration of the landscape of the region. It plays a crucial role in the way tourist activities are conducted, as well as in the type of rural tourism content that can be offered to tourists. The planning region is characterized by a complex landscape structure. Rural-tourism contents in the mountains are significant and diverse. There are various preconditions in PEPR for the creation and conducting of rural-tourist contents in the mountains. In that sense, the more significant mountains show favorable conditions for ski activities, excursion-recreational, sports and combined tours and the like, that can enrich the content of stay in rural areas. The most important mountains in the region that need to be mentioned are the following: Baba, Galichica, Plakjenska Mountain, Ilinska Mountain, Ljuben, Busheva, Selechka Mountain, Dren, Dautica, Babuna, Kozjak and Nidze. Their peaks are important not only for climbing and mountaineering, but also for locating important view points. In the mountainous areas, besides the activities in the winter period, there can also be created and offered contents in the summer period that have recreational - sports character.

The valley areas (Pelagonija and Prespa valley) are already actively used for many agricultural activities. This shows a significant potential in the rural-tourist sense.

Within the planning region there are two gorges (Skochivirska and Demir Hisar gorge) which are natural geological occurrences through which important communications pass. That means they can be used for locating transit-tourism facilities and contents. In the rural-tourist sense they are important because of their educational and curious character, but they can also be used as a complementary category for rock climbing.

Caves have a similar role. These values can be used for educational activities and speleological visits. Most of the caves in the region, although not arranged and equipped for visiting, can represent a significant potential in a sense that their characteristics can be presented at their entrances. It is only necessary to equip such places so that recreational activities and picnics can be organized. Such natural tourism values represent a significant potential for combining with rural tourism contents in rural areas. The most important caves in PEPR are: Leskoechka Cave and Ramnishte.

Hydrography in PEPR is diverse with the presence of significant springs, rivers and lakes. The areas where hydrographic values are located can represent a significant potential for the development of rural tourism. In this sense, the springs are important for locating excursion areas, picnic areas, drinking clean spring water and educational activities (outdoor teaching, excursions) as well as places where gastronomic specialties can be consumed. The rivers that deserve to be mentioned are the following: Mineral water spring Medzitlija, springs of Crna Reka, the spring Crna Dupka near Zheleznec, Springs on Baba Mountain, Germian Springs (two are operational), Spring Suna in Ribarci, Spring in Kremenica, Spring Srebrena Voda in Egre, Mineral spring on Bistrica.

The rivers in the Pelagonija Planning Region have combinational characteristics, enable irrigation of agricultural land in rural areas, and are also used for fishing and other recreational activities. Their banks are suitable for walks and excursions. In order for all available rivers to be used for the purpose of rural tourism, they should be kept clean as well as arranged for such purposes. They can be suitable for locating picnic areas, recreation areas, camping or outdoor activities of befriending. In the planning region there is also one waterfall - Brnjichki waterfall, which is characterized by the clean and unpolluted environment. Such features provide the area with many aesthetic properties, and is therefore suitable for conducting recreational and health-related activities.

The lakes located in the Pelagonija Planning Region have special development potentials. In this sense, there exist several natural and artificial lakes in this region. There are ideal conditions for swimming activities and water sports in some of the lakes, which can be considered as an underutilized potential. However, such purposes have secondary and complementary importance for rural tourism activities. They are more important if activities and content are developed such as camping, walks or recreational - sporting activities on their shores, as well as fishing activities. Furthermore, on their shores some accommodation facilities and facilities for food and beverage services can be built, which can be equipped in a traditional and rural setting. The lakes of the region that are suitable for different types of tourism activities are the following: Prespa Lake – of tectonic origin, Golemo and Malo Lake on Pelister – of glacial origin, Strezhevo - Artificial lake, Artificial accumulation Bratin Dol, Artificial accumulation Rotino, Artificial accumulation Dedebalci “Kapejnca” in Dihovo (natural fluvial form of lakes), Prilep Lake - artificial lake, Marble Lake - anthropogenic lake located in the surface mines for marble near Pletvar, Gumenje - artificial accumulation in Krushevo.

Agri-tourism values represent a particularly important category for the creation and development of rural-tourism contents and activities. In this regard, it should be mentioned that the available agricultural land in the region amounts to 263678 ha which is one of the largest in the Republic of N. Macedonia. Of this amount of land, 115348 ha is arable land. This shows a relatively high level of utilization. However, much of it is still an underutilized potential that could be put to the function of rural tourism in the future. Most of the arable land belongs to pastures, with a total of 147833 ha which opens up opportunities for developing livestock activities. Plough fields and gardens cover 96298 ha, which is a remarkable level. This is important from the rural tourism point of view, especially in terms of conducting farming activities. The vineyards occupy an almost negligible level of only 981 ha. This shows the need for increasing such participation of viticulture in the overall agricultural activities, in areas where climatic and pedological conditions make this possible. Orcharding as an agricultural activity is also at a relatively low level, with only 3968 ha of land used for this purpose. All of the listed types of land use in the PEPR are important for the development of different types of rural tourism activities and contents. Special attention should therefore be put on the future improvement of this situation.

Besides agriculture, livestock breeding is also an important economic activity for the development of rural tourism. The high level of development of livestock breeding opens up opportunities for the creation of active farms for agri-tourism purposes. The structure of the livestock fund in the planning

region is determined by the number of specific species of domestic animals. In that sense, the most represented are cattle with a total of 238333 units. They are followed by pigs (167492 units), sheep (133788 units), while the least are horses with 3082 units and goats (2066 units). The future improvement of the horse fund in the region is particularly important, given the fact that they can be used for many purposes in rural tourism, such as horse riding, which is becoming more and more popular with tourists and visitors. Studies show that horses are mostly used for commercial, rather than rural - tourist purposes.

Hunting plays also an important role in the development of rural tourism. In the Pelagonija region there is a relatively rich hunting fund with 963 registered units for large game hunting, 2428 for small game while the most numerous is the feathered game with 7661 registered individual animals. Apart from hunting as a core activity, photo-safari can also be developed in such areas, while the hunted animals can be in the function of rural tourism as part of an attractive gastronomic offer.

Fishing is also in the function of rural tourism. In the planning region there are two dominant fishing areas - Prespa Lake and Crna Reka. Apart from these hydrographic values, the other rivers and lakes in the region generally have also a rich fishing fund. Similar to hunting, fishing can also play a complementary role in rural tourism.

The level of forest coverage of the Pelagonija Planning Region is relatively high. In this sense, the total forest area is 150249 ha, which represents a significant potential in the tourist sense. Thus, forest areas are suitable for the development of herbal tourism activities which are in the function of rural tourism. The existing floristic ecosystems are suitable for the development of eco-tourism and educational activities.

Cultural or anthropogenic values are very often regarded as complementary tourism values within rural tourism. However, there are such types that may even have a dominant role in some rural tourism contents and activities. Such a type of anthropogenic value is the traditional architecture that exists in rural areas (rural settlements). As a predominantly rural planning region, the Pelagonija region has a relatively well preserved traditional architecture. Even the old town complexes can represent a significant part of content of tourists' stay, engaged in rural tourism activities. In this sense, it is important to mention that there is old city architecture with traditional characteristics in the cities of Krushevo, Prilep and Bitola. However, in order to intensify the development of rural tourism in the region, those areas which are located in rural areas and have traditional architecture, need to be activated. Important village settlements with such features are the following: Brajchino, Ljubojno, Dolno Dupeni, Slivnica, Pretor, Stenje, Oteshevo, Dihovo, Malovishte, Nizhepole, Slepche, Krani, Magarevo, Staravina. Visitors in these villages can enjoy walks in the unspoiled nature, in authentic food, fruit picking, participating in techniques for producing vegetables, dairy and honey and enjoy the beautiful landscape. In the villages located on the shores of Lake Prespa, during the spring and summer months, visitors and tourists can also swim in the lake itself. The preservation of village complexes is an attraction in itself within the as part of rural tourism. In that sense, the typical exterior of the Macedonian house and the complexes of old architecture are especially important if they are arranged and equipped in a way to be used as accommodation facilities for such type of tourists. Logically, it is necessary to respect certain regulating standards, such as those already adopted in the European Union.

Human capital is an indispensable factor for the proper functioning of rural tourism. In this sense, there is a need to determine the demographic structure of the population living in rural areas and who are willing to be involved in providing different services within this type of tourism. The Pelagonija Planning Region has a population of 231806, making it one of the most populous in RN Macedonia. As in the other

planning regions in the past several years, so in the PEPR there has been recorded a negative trend of emigration. In this regard, rural tourism can be an inhibitor of such phenomena by increasing the employment opportunities of the population. Of the total population living in the PEPR, a relatively large proportion is a working-age population (187181 inhabitants). The employment rate is 52.5 %, which seems to be a relatively large percentage. However, if the inactive population is included (people who are not actively searching for jobs), then the data will show that a large share of the unemployed or non-active inhabitants. Unemployment among women is more pronounced than men, especially in rural areas (13.0 % vs. 8.8 %). Given the labor-intensive nature of rural tourism, it represents an important opportunity for employment of the population.

Although a significant part of the total territory of the region belongs to rural areas, the small share of employees in the agriculture, forestry and fishing sectors is evident, which is a great opportunity for employment and self-employment and generating income from rural tourism development. In this sense, in the planning region there are only 2653 employees in these sectors, distributed by municipalities: Bitola - 1171, Demir Hisar - 149, Dolneni - 62, Krivogashtani - 40, Krushevo - 232, Mogila - 138, Novaci - 121, Prilep - 366, Resen - 374. This shows the need for urgent undertakings in these sectors which are directly related to the economic activities in rural areas, and thus to rural tourism. The level of employment of the population in the region's rural areas that works in accommodation facilities is very low. This is an important indicator for future development processes in the field of rural tourism. Requirements in the field of training and education of such personnel are also needed in the future.

Within the entire region (urban and rural), a relatively small number of catering facilities for servicing food and beverages – 390 and with a total capacity of 24537 seats, have been recorded. A little more favorable situation has been observed for the facilities providing accommodation services with 3431 registered rooms and just over 10000 beds available. In this regard, and in the direction of intensifying rural tourism development in the region, private households providing accommodation services are particularly important. However, no statistics are available for such data. In addition to registering such facilities, it is also necessary to categorize them in accordance with European and global standards.

5.9 Analysis of the situation and opportunities for development of rural tourism in the South-west Planning Region

The South-west Planning Region (SWPR) covers an area of 3306 km², which represents 12.99 % of the territory of RN Macedonia. The region has a total of 286 settlements. Five of the municipalities are urban (Debar, Kichevo, Makedonski Brod, Ohrid, Struga) while four are rural (Vevchani, Debrca, Plasnica, Centar Zhupa) with a total area of 622.04 km² or 18.62 % of the total territory of the region. This shows the existence of favorable territorial preconditions for the development of rural tourism. Its contactability at the international level is based on the border connection with the Republic of Albania. Given that the national structure also includes the Albanian population, the region provides conditions for the development of rural tourism with the possibilities for visits by tourists from Albania. It can be said that the region is characterized by a relatively good level of accessibility. Rural municipalities and settlements in the region provide opportunities for development through complementing the existing tourism offer that is related to sea-based tourism and cultural tourism. This means that tourists and visitors who already visit the region may also be included in other contents and activities related to rural tourism.

Particularly important are the combined tourist contents and products that can be developed in this area, given the fact that the territory has an abundance of tourist potentials and values of natural and anthropogenic character. Significant road routes pass through the area, and the presence of the airport "St. Paul The Apostle" not only provides a high degree of accessibility and availability of tourist resources, but also opens up opportunities to develop transit - tourism content. The most important roads that pass through the region are: M-5 roadway (Ohrid - Resen), M-4 roadway (Ohrid - Kichevo - Skopje), international road E - 852 (Ohrid - Struga - R. Albania), regional road R- 1208 (Ohrid - St. Naum - Republic of Albania), regional road R-1201 (Struga - Debar - Skopje), regional road R-1305 (Drugovo - Demir Hisar), regional road R - 1303 (Kichevo - Makedonski Brod), regional road R-1106 (Suvodol - Kozjak), regional road R-2246 (Debar - Kichevo), sections Boshkov Most - Debar and Melnichki Most - Centar Zhupa, local road through the National Park Galichica (Ohrid - Resen) and the local road Kichevo - Oslomej - Tuin. Along these road communications there are a number of transit-tourism values that are largely unused potential for such purposes. The polyvalence of the region is emphasized by the possibility of including mountain villages in rural tourism activities and contents. This can drastically enrich the content of the stay of tourists, as well as intensify the overall tourist development. In addition to good road connectivity and proximity to the international airport, there is also water transport in the considered planning region. During the tourist season, there are cruise lines to localities and settlements along the shores of RN Macedonia and the Republic of Albania.

Rural tourism is closely linked to the landscape configuration of a particular area. In this sense, the mountain activities are especially important. Rural areas in the mountainous areas are especially attractive for tourists and visitors. It should be pointed out that the South-west Planning Region has significant mountain areas that can be used for such purposes. In the mountainous areas, a large number of outdoor activities can be organized which represent significant forms of rural tourism content and activities. In this sense, the SWPR possesses such significant potentials. The main mountains are the following: Galichica, Jablanica, Stogovo and Karaorman, Plakjenska Mountain, Ilinska Mountain, Chelojca, Bistra, Deshat, Karadzica, Dautica, while less significant are Krchin, Suva Gora, Lopushnik, Baba Sach, Petrino, Bigla, Busheva Mountain, Ljuben, Bukovikj, Pesjak, Luchishka Mountain, Krchin, Slavej Planina, Turla and Ilinica. Ski tourism activities represent a significant potential that needs to be developed in the future, but such activities are also present - in the form of recreational skiing. This means that during winter they can be combined with the rural tourist content. On some of these mountains, there are sheepfolds, forests (pine, beech, fir), rich in forest fruits (forest strawberries, blueberries, blackberries, raspberries) and numerous hiking trails and mountain biking trails. There are also plant species as relict species, as well as species with endemic significance. It is also characterized by interesting and diverse wildlife. Herbal tourism activities, photo safari, hunting are significant potentials that can be used in the rural-tourist sense. The steep slopes and peaks can be used for hiking and rock-climbing activities, while the flat sides can be used for establishing hospitality facilities and viewpoints.

The valley areas: Ohrid - Struga valley, Debrca, Kichevo valley and Porechie are used for many agricultural activities which can represent a significant potential for rural - tourist purposes.

The geological structure is interesting for the presence of gorges and canyons in the SWPR. Registered gorges are the following: Gorge of r. Crn Drim, Gorges of r. Radika, Gorge of r. Treska, Rusjaci, Brodska Gorge, Gorge of Mala Reka (Debar), Gorge of Beleshnichka River, Jelovechka Gorge (near Boshkov Most), Gorge of River Debrshtica - Ehlovechka River. In the rural-tourist sense, they can be used for sightseeing and educational activities. In addition to the recreational activities that gorges and canyons provide (such as climbing the steep slopes), the caves and pits that exist in the region can also be used in a complementary sense to rural tourism (speleological activities). The equipping of such spatial units will contribute to enrich the content of the stay of tourists involved in rural tourism activities such as

educational activities. The most important caves in the region are: Peshna, Samotska Dupka, Alchia, Vevchani Springs, Markova Kula, Simka, Kalina Dupka, Slatinski Izvor, Orle, Korita Cave - Lavchani, Cherep Cave - towards Zajas, Cave Church St. Nicholas near Kladnik, Cave on the Mountain Lopushnik, Cave Ukukci - Dobrenoec, Tapanchevo Cave - Podvis, Kalina Dupka Cave above Ehlovec, Cave Lisichina Dupka above Cer, Caves Pod Venec and Procepon Jaorec.

There is also a post-volcanic landform in the region of the type of solfatara and mofette. It is characterized by a high degree of curiosity features, and therefore it can be used as a complementary category in the rural tourism content, primarily for educational activities.

Hydrography in the SWPR is particularly developed. In that sense, a large number of springs are important for excursions, drinking clean spring water and educational activities (outdoor teaching, excursions) and the use of gastronomic values. Important springs registered in the region are the following: Biljana Springs, St. Naum springs, springs near Ramne, Vevchani Springs, spring of r. Treska, Belica Springs, Studenchica Springs, spring of carbonized water Popolzhani, spring of carbonized water Slansko, spring with salty water Svinjishta, spring of carbonized water Kozica, Velmej, Pitran, Peshnica, Koroshishta, Shum, Frlogoec. Spa tourism activities are possible in the well-equipped spas Banjishte and Kosovrasti. They are an important complementary category of rural tourism.

Of particular importance are the hydrographic values of the rivers that can be used in different ways in the rural-tourist sense. Thus, opportunities are opened up for the construction of dams, fisheries, development of sport fishing, water sports, walks on their banks, as well as construction of mini-hydropower plants. The most important and major rivers in the SWPR include Crn Drim, Belichka and Labunishka River, Golema Reka at Zbzhdi, Jablanica River in Struga, Radika and Garska River in Debar, Treska, Studenchica, Zajaska River, Rabetinska River, Belichko-Brzhdanska River, River Temnica, River Tuinska - Kichevo, Devichka River, Slatinska, Topolnichka, Mala Reka, Fush, Belichka River, Slaneshnica, Krapska, Beleshnichka, Ocha, Pitran River, Modrach River – Makedonski Brod, Grashnica, Sateska, Letnichka, Koselska - Ohrid, Esejnca and Vevchanska River in Vevchani, as well as, Golema River, Pesochanska River - Debrca. Some of the rivers are characterized by a high degree of pollution, requiring urgent intervention to remove such conditions, as is the case in part of the river Crn Drim. The waterfalls of the SWPR are characterized by aesthetically attractive properties, but some of them also have curiosity features. Important waterfalls that have not yet been sufficiently used in tourism development are the following: Waterfall of Pesochanska River (Debrca), Waterfalls of Stogovska River (Broshtica, Centar Zhupa), Waterfalls of r. Frlogoec - Dobrenoec (Samovilski Waterfalls), Rusjachki Waterfalls (Makedonski Brod). Accessibility to the waterfalls should be improved and regulated.

Special development potentials have the lakes in the SWPR. There are a number of natural and artificial lakes present in the region. Artificial lakes such as Globochichko Lake, Debar Lake, Kozjak, Slatino Lake, Oslomej and the accumulation Shum can be used in terms of improving professional and sport fishing, as well as conducting activities such as canoeing. Some of these lakes are suitable for activities in the summer months, while others are suitable for horticultural arranging, camping, walks and other water sports activities and recreational activities on their shores. Lake Ohrid is the most significant natural potential not only in the region but also in the Republic of N. Macedonia as well as abroad. It is an essential factor for tourism development on which a large number of other complementary natural and cultural values related to rural tourism can be combined. Other natural lakes are the following: Trebenishko Lake (phenomenon of urvinsko lake), Podgorechko Lake, Labunishki Lakes, Lake Vevchani, Gorno and Dolno Lake, Marusha (glacial lakes). Glacial lakes are suitable for marking of walking paths around their shores. Studenchishko and Belchishko Marsh, as specific types of hydrographic values in the region, are suitable for walks, picnics, camping and other outdoor activities that do not endanger those areas. Further protection of these areas is needed.

For the development of rural tourism, the agri-tourism values play an important role, which are based on the size and structure of agricultural areas. The total agricultural area in the region measures 133619 ha which is 10.58 % of the total area of the country. The arable land is 50029 ha, which represents as much as 37.4 % of the total agricultural land. If this component is analyzed in more detail, its structure will be determined. In this sense, the plough fields and gardens are dominant with a share of 79.6 %. Then follow meadows with 14.8 %, orchards with 4.3 %, and vineyards with 1.2 %. From the analysis of the structure, it can be concluded that actions need to be taken in order to increase the percentage share of some components, especially of orchards and vineyards.

Pastures as non-arable land cover 62.6 % of the total agricultural area of the Southwest Planning Region. This shows the existence of excellent conditions for the development and improvement of livestock breeding which expresses particular potential for the development of rural tourism.

Livestock breeding determines the direction of development of rural tourism. This is a requirement for the equipping and adjustment of farms for agri-tourism activities. The number of different species of domestic animals can determine the livestock status in the SWPR. In that sense, the most prevalent is poultry with a total of 204540 registered units. Next come sheep with a total of 109627, cattle with 23730, pigs - 13862, goats - 13533 and horses with a total of 2805 units. The municipalities of Debar and Centar Zhupa have a higher level of livestock breeding, while specific settlements in the region are the following: Cer, Gorna and Dolna Dushegubica, Svinjishta, Kladnik, while there are small chicken farms in Popoec and Belica. This shows a relatively favorable situation of the livestock fund that is suitable for establishing farms and conducting agri-tourism activities in them.

Hunting activities also play an important role in rural tourism. There are a total of 34 registered hunting grounds in the South-west Planning Region. Apart from hunting as the basic activity, photo-safari can also be developed on such territories units, while the hunted animals can be used for preparing attractive gastronomic specialties. In terms of opportunities for development of hunting activities, the most potential is the area of Jasen where large game is prevalent such as: deer, common deer, mouflon, wild boar, wild goat, bear, lynx and other game. There also exist numerous birds and small game species. Most of the game is found in the open area of the hunting ground, where wild goats are mostly present. Hunting tourism is closely linked to rural tourism. In addition to animal species that can be hunted, there are also autochthonous and endemic species animal and plant species in the region. They are the basis for camera hunting and educational activities. The registered hunting grounds by areas are as follows: AREA OHRID - Karaorman (14030 ha), Debrca (11550 ha), Brezhani (12620 ha), Zavoј (12550 ha), Kosel (8065 ha), Mesheishta (3110 ha), Belchishta (4167 ha); AREA STRUGA - Belica (6240 ha), Drimkol (15850 ha), 'Rzhanovo (15160 ha), Veleshta (2700 ha), Draslajca (8185 ha); AREA DEBAR - Stogovo (16406 ha), Deshat (3430 ha), Bomovo (3430 ha), Banjishte (2000 ha); AREA KICHEVO - Tajmishte (12400 ha), Dobra Voda (11260 ha), Prostranje (12850 ha), Dushegubica (9950 ha), Knezhino (8710 ha), Bukojchani (6780 ha), Strelci (9670 ha); AREA MAKEDONSKI BROAD - Greshnica (10390 ha), Sushica (9540 ha), Botushe (9670 ha), Trebovlje (8350 ha), Tazhevo (7680 ha), Dautica (15560 ha), Slansko (10520 ha), Vir (5600 ha), Ramne (4350 ha).

Rural tourism is also linked to fishing in a similar way as to hunting. In this regard, in the function of the development of rural tourism is fishing as an economic branch that enables the connection of fishing and hospitality, sport fishing and gastronomic offer by the local population involved in rural tourism activities. Fishing activities in the SWPR represent a predominant potential given the fact that there are numerous hydrographic values with favorable characteristics for such purposes (rivers and lakes).

The South-west Planning Region is also characterized by numerous forested areas. In this sense, the total forest area is 218884 ha, which is 65.53 % of the territory of the region or 21.15 % of the total forest area of the country. Forest areas are often suitable for the development of herbal tourism as an integral content of rural tourism activities. The abundance of floristic ecosystems is favorable to eco-tourism development, educational and scientific research activities.

Traditional village architecture is an important anthropogenic value for the development of rural tourism. There are significant complexes of traditional houses in rural areas in the SWPR: VEVCHANI - complexes of protected houses; STRUGA - complexes of houses in Oktisi, complexes of houses Drenok, complexes of houses Modrich; DEBAR - complexes of houses Banjishte, complexes of houses in villages Gari and Osoj; KICHEVO - complexes of houses Brzhdani Kozaci, Srbjani, Malkoec, Dobrenoec, Jaorec, Lavchani, Dushegubica, Belica, Brzhdani, Vidrani, Svinjishta, Prostranje, Gorno Brzhdani. Such settlements are incorporated in the natural landscape, which gives them special attractiveness. Architecture is typical for the use of local stone and wood, and is often characteristic for the chardaks.

The demographic structure of the population is significant because it shows the human capital that can be involved in the conducting of tourism activities related to rural tourism in the region. It is significant that in this region reside 17.6 % of the total population in RN Macedonia. Negative emigration of the population, especially from the rural areas, is also present in this region. Rural tourism can be an inhibitor of such processes by affecting population activation and reducing unemployment. The unemployment rate is relatively high and stands at 36.4 %. Gender distribution is almost identical, accounting for 37.7 % for women and 35.6 % for men. The higher unemployment rate of women than men in urban areas is noticeable, while in rural areas this situation is reversed. This is a positive indicator even though unemployment is relatively high. Namely, there is a worldwide trend that in rural areas the employment of women is higher than that of men. The inactive population in the region is 45.4 % which is a significant potential in the future for this part of the population to be engaged in the processes of providing rural tourism products and services.

Although a significant part of the total territory of the region belongs to rural areas, the small share of employees in the agriculture, forestry and fishing sectors is evident, which is a great opportunity for employment and self-employment as well as generating income in the function of rural tourism development.

A total of 182 hospitality facilities and 16304 available rooms for accommodation are registered in the region. In particular, the Municipality of Ohrid is characterized by the highest number of accommodation facilities at the state level. Accommodation in rural areas is the basis for the development of rural tourism. In that sense, there exists the potential for accommodation in Izhishte, Osoj, Izvor, Manastirec, and Knezhino. The Monastery of the Holy Mother of God the Immaculate - Kichevo has available konaks for lodging. Vevchani has a high potential for accommodation in rural areas. Villa Alula, Apartments Shutinoski, Guest-House Kutmichevica, House of Pupin, Restaurant Izvor, Restaurant Domakjinska Kukja, Restaurant Via Egnatia are the most important accommodation facilities in this municipality. There are several hospitality facilities in Struga that provide accommodation services in rural areas - Gorna Belica, Radozhda, Kalishta, Elen Kamen, Lokov (memorial house with accommodation facilities). There exist a total of 111 categorized buildings in Struga as well as 182 houses with the potential to accommodate tourists. In Ohrid there is a significant number of private accommodation facilities (3539 units) with 8472 available beds. In the rural area of the municipality of Ohrid there exists a significant potential for accommodating tourists: Racha - 178 accommodation units with 409 beds, St. Stefan - 77 accommodation units with 163 beds, Konjsko - 237 accommodation units with 543 beds, Lagadin - 165

accommodation units with 360 beds, Eleshec - 58 accommodation units with 136 beds, Elshani - 12 accommodation units with 44 beds, Peshtani - 554 accommodation units with 1314 beds, Trpejca - 210 accommodation units with 505 beds, Ljubanishta - 62 accommodation units with 143 beds, Velestovo - 6 accommodation units with 16 beds. In Belica – Kichevo area, there is currently an ongoing project for renovating and transforming the school into a residential facility. Proper categorization of accommodation facilities in private households and respecting quality standards with world trends is required. Based on such data it can be noted that there is a high number of facilities in the region that should be put in function of the development of rural tourism.

5.10 Analysis of the demand for rural tourism

Tourism supply and demand are important indicators for determining the situation on the tourist market. It provides a scientific and realistic look at the needs for creating new and attractive tourist contents. Such contents should meet the requirements of both the tourist supply and the tourist demand. It is also aimed at creating competitive advantages on the tourist market.

For the purposes of conducting the analysis of the demand for rural tourism, used were field research findings from part of the expert team. A questionnaire of a relatively large research sample of 1165 respondents was used as part of the research "Study on the Provision of Data in the Field of Future Projects" - Ministry of Economy of the Republic of North Macedonia, Faculty of Tourism and Hospitality - Ohrid. The research sample consisted of domestic and foreign tourists who were questioned during their visit to the different planning regions of RN Macedonia in 2017. This provided relevant conclusions that could be used for the purposes of this research.

Во продолжение се дадени резултатите од истражувањето за прашањето кое се однесуваше на степенот на задоволство од презентацијата на гастрономските вредности (храна и вино) при посетата на туристите. Тие се важен составен дел на доживувањето на туристите вклучени во рурално – туристичката понуда. Резултатите се дадени во продолжение во табеларен преглед.

Below are the gained results from the research related to the question about the degree of satisfaction from the gastronomic presentation (food and wine) during their visit. Gastronomic values are an important integral part of the tourist experience included in the rural tourism offer. The results are presented in the following chart.

Chart no. 4 – Gastronomy presentation as part of the tourist offer (food and wine)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Poor	6	.5	.5	.5
	Fair	17	1.5	1.5	2.0
	Good	72	6.2	6.3	8.3
	Very good	359	30.8	31.3	39.6
	Excellent	693	59.5	60.4	100.0
	Total	1147	98.5	100.0	
Missing	System	18	1.5		
Total		1165	100.0		

From the chart overview it can be concluded that a total of 1147 respondents out of the total 1165 responded, which provided us with relevant answers. It can be noted that more than half of the respondents gave the highest grade (grade 5) about the degree of their satisfaction from the presentation of gastronomic values. More precisely, 60.4 % responded that the presentation of such values was excellent. In second place were the answers about a very good gastronomy presentation (grade 4), i.e. 31.3 % of the respondents. This means that over 90 % gave the highest grades (4 and 5) on this question. It can be concluded that in RN Macedonia there are good preconditions for including these values in the future tourist offer, especially in rural tourism, where gastronomic specialties are the main inevitable elements of the offer.

Following is a cross-tabulation of this question with the range of respondents' age. The results are presented in charts below.

Chart no. 5 – Cross-tabulation analysis of the respondents' range of age and the level of satisfaction of the gastronomy presentation (food and wine)

Select the range of your age * Gastronomy presentation (food, wine) Crosstabulation

		Gastronomy presentation (food, wine)			Total	
		Good	Very good	Excellent		
Select the range of your age	Till 30	Count	15	75	147	237
		Expected Count	15.2	75.7	146.1	237.0
	31-55	Count	20	107	188	315
		Expected Count	20.2	100.6	194.2	315.0
	Over 55	Count	37	177	358	572
		Expected Count	36.6	182.7	352.7	572.0
Total	Count	72	359	693	1124	
	Expected Count	72.0	359.0	693.0	1124.0	

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	.882 ^a	4	.927
Likelihood Ratio	.877	4	.928
Linear-by-Linear Association	.058	1	.810
N of Valid Cases	1124		

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 15.18.

From the cross-tabulation analysis above we can conclude that the expected values overlap with those obtained. For all three age groups (ranges) it can be concluded that the degree of satisfaction with the presentation of gastronomic values is very high. Thus, the respondents that are less than 30 years old, just over 62% responded that they were very satisfied with the presentation of those values and rated it as excellent. In the age group of 31 - 55 years, the percentage share is almost the same, but slightly less (59.7 %). From the oldest group of respondents (over 55 years), who represented the bulk of the research sample, 62.6 % stated that they were very satisfied with the gastronomy presentation (rated with the highest grade of "Excellent"). This means that the type of presentation does not depend very much on the age of the consumers, although the research shows slightly greater significance for this category in older adults. Promotional activities should incorporate gastronomic values into the creation of the rural-tourist offer.

From the obtained answers from the questionnaire, we can also cross-examine this question with the origin of the tourists who visited the country (domestic and foreign tourists). The results of the cross-tabulation analysis are presented in the chart below.

Chart no. 6 – Cross-tabulation analysis of the origin of tourists and the level of satisfaction of the gastronomy presentation (food and wine)

d_s * Gastronomy presentation (food, wine) Crosstabulation

			Gastronomy presentation (food, wine)			Total
			Good	Very good	Excellent	
d_s	Domestic	Count	3	87	213	303
		Expected Count	19.4	96.8	186.8	303.0
	Foreign	Count	69	272	480	821
		Expected Count	52.6	262.2	506.2	821.0
Total		Count	72	359	693	1124
		Expected Count	72.0	359.0	693.0	1124.0

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	25.370 ^a	2	.000
Likelihood Ratio	32.545	2	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	21.821	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	1124		

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 19.41.

From the chart above it can be seen that the Pearson test shows values of rejection of the null hypothesis. The p-value is 0 % and the limit is 5 %. Somewhat unexpected results are obtained from this analysis about the degree of the satisfaction of domestic and foreign tourists from the gastronomy presentation during their visit to RN Macedonia. Namely, domestic tourists show somewhat greater interest in the quality of the presentation of gastronomic values, as opposed to the foreign tourists. In that sense, the analysis shows that 70.3 % of the surveyed domestic tourists gave the highest grade for the presentation of these values (they rated it "Excellent"). In second place is the part of the research sample of domestic tourists that provided the answer "Very Good", or 28.7 %. This means that as many as 99 % of the domestic tourists gave the highest scores for the gastronomy presentation (grades 4 and 5).

This cumulative percentage of the obtained answers from foreign tourists with the two highest grades is slightly less than domestic tourists. In this sense, 91.6 % of the sample of foreign tourists provided answers with the highest scores (4 and 5). If this structure is being analyzed, slightly different values will be obtained compared to domestic tourists. Therefore, 58.5 % of the foreign tourists gave the answer with the highest rating "Excellent", while the answer "Very Good" was second with 33.1 %. This is slightly more than the share of domestic tourists.

6. Mapping of zones and centers for rural tourism

The mapping process allows for a taxative determining of zones and locations for rural tourism development. Based on the comparative values of each site, activities are also identified. The following charts present the existing locations, suggestions of new locations for rural tourism development and existing centers with potential for expansion.

The study used parameters for mapping the zones and localities for the development of rural tourism in RN Macedonia by planning regions, which enabled their GIS demarcation. The GIS markings are provided as annex to this document

6.1 Existing locations in the Vardar Planning Region and narrative description with features

VAPR	1. Zone: Drenovo-Tikvesh Lake, (Vatasha, Drenovo)	1. Event-related activities (Tikvesh Grape-picking), eco-tours (Drenovo gorge), rock climbing, Fishing activities Water sports
	2. Zone: Tikvesh–Vitachevo-Kozhuf (Konopishte, Kumanichevo, Rozhden, Majdan)	2. Winter sports activities (Kozhuf), visiting vineyards and wineries, visiting paleo-volcanic landscape
	3. Zone: Doshnica-Demir Kapija (Klisura, Chiflik, Barovo)	3. Eco-tours, accommodation in rural areas, water sports, rock-climbing, cultural activities, consuming gastronomic specialties
	4. Zone: Negotinski Tikvesh and Povardarie (Timjanik, Peplishte, Krivolak, Dolni Disan, Veshje)	4. Visiting vineyards, visiting wineries, selling agricultural products
	5. Zone: Bogoslovsko – Ovchepolska (Erdzelija, Amzabegovo)	5. Ecotourism activities, educational activities, cultural activities, visiting farmlands, hunting
	6. Zone: Mladost-Veleshka (Klisura, Bashino Selo, Karaslari, Vinichani, Peshti)	6. Water sports, excursions and camping, visiting paleontological sites, speleological activities, stay in ornithological station, ecotourism, mountaineering and rock climbing
	7. Zone: Breza – Jabolchishte (Gorno Jabolchishte, R'levci, Gorno Vranovci)	7. Visiting rural mountain areas, eco-tourism activities, hiking, visiting rural ambient architectural complexes
	8. Zone: Babuna-Solunska Glava	8. Panoramic sightseeing, hiking and mountaineering, excursions
	9. Zone: Stobi-Gradsko ,	9. Cultural tours, visiting wineries, educational activities
	10. Zone: Lozovo, (Lozovo, Dorfulija, Karatmanovo)	10. Visiting vineyards, visiting wineries, consuming agricultural products
	11. Zone: Rosoman (Rosoman, Sirkovo, Manastirec)	11. Participation in the harvest of peaches, consuming agricultural products

6.2 Existing locations in the East Planning Region and narrative description with features

EAPR	1. Zone: Berovsko Lake locality Ablanica v. Ratevo (Berovo)	1. Stay in clean environments; - ecotourism activities (nature reserves: Linak, Malesh and Berovo Lake, Temniot Andak, Machevo, Crna Topola); - horse riding; - rock-climbing and hiking; - religious activities and stay in monasteries; - transit tourism -selling products - hunting - fishing activities - gastronomic activities and tastings (Berovo rakija and branded products such as Berovo cheese, potato klisi with leek, bulamach) - events (Ratevski Bamburci, Easter Egg, Ethno Festival - Maleshevo on the palm (Berovo) Accommodation in traditional style buildings
	2. Zone: Rusinovo-Vladimirovo, (Berovo)	2. Sightseeing of architectural complexes and houses in the villages Consuming gastronomic specialties
	3. Zone: Suvi Laki – Bela Voda (Berovo)	3. Accommodation in traditional buildings Nature dwelling
	4. Zone: Ravna Reka, (Pehchevo)	4. Horse riding, excursions (to Pehchevski Waterfall and Izvorishte on Bregalnica with Chengino Kale)
	5. Zone: Negrevo, Crnik and Pancharevo (Pehchevo)	5. Ethno events (traditional Ethno Fair, Pehchevo Pehchevski Pavlovden Pijanechko-Maleshevski Wedding), eco-tours (Judovi Livadi)
	6. Zone: Dzvegor – Grad, (Delchevo)	6. Hunting, visiting paleontological site gastronomic specialties (Fish Restaurant Vodenica) selling products, eco-tours Kukuljeto, monuments of nature Dzvegor and Cave Konjska Dupka
	7. Zone: Razlovci, Trabotivishte, Istevnik (Delchevo)	7. Folklore and customs, excursions, geotourism in Kukulje, v. Istevnik, mountaineering, hunting
	8. Zone: Dramche, Iliovo, Bigla (Delchevo)	8. Fishing, Hunting, visiting Folk Events (Traditional dance "Kopachka") ("Golachki Meetings")
	9. Zone: Sasa,Cera (Makedonska Kamenica)	9. Mountaineering, staying in private household, gastronomic tours
	10. Zone: Blatechka (Vinica)	10. Visiting fish farms and gastronomic tour, hiking
	11. Zone: Trsino (Vinica)	11. Mountaineering, walking, hiking
	12. Zone: Pantelej Beli, Jastrebnik (Kochani)	12. Visiting rice fields, gastronomic tours, traditional architecture visit, folk gatherings, eco-tours ("Gaber"), volcanic tour (Raichanska crater), mountaineering, weekend activities
	13. Zone: Ponikva	13. Winter sports activities, hiking, hunting, gastronomic activities
	14. Zone: Orizari, Istibanja (Kochani)	14. Visit to thermal waters, event visit to "Days of Rice", visit to rice fields, eco-tours monument of nature (Dab)
	15. Zone: Zrnovci, Morodvis (Zrnovci)	15. Visiting rural complexes, excursions (St. Kyriaki excursion site) archeological site visit (Morodvis), gastronomic tours, eco-tours (Zrnovska River, Lomia River, Morodvis), spa tours
	16. Zone: Cheshinovo, Obleshevo, Banja Zhiganci, Burilchevo	16. Participation in rice cultivating, spa activities, cultural tourism, stork watching, (European Stork Village) hunting, frog hunting, use of gastronomic specialties, events
	17. Zone: Lesново, Zletovo, Tursko Rudari, Shtalkovica	17. Geotourism (volcanic crater), cultural tours, visiting traditional architecture, organizing ethno tours, accommodation in private households (in Lesново and Zletovo) using fish ponds (fish farm in Zletovo), ethno restaurant services, using gastronomic specialties (Lesново lamb), eco-tours (Crna Dudinka)
	18. Zone: Crvulevo Radanje (Karbinci)	18. Religious tours, hiking, nature tours, spa activities (Kezhovica)
	19. Zone: Novo Selo (Shtip)	19. Hunting, visiting paleo-volcanic forms (Shopur)
	20. Zone: Lakavica Leskovica (Shtip)	20. Gastronomic activities (Pastrmajlijada - Shtip) Ethno event (Pijanechko - Maleshevo Wedding)

6.3 Existing locations in the South-west Planning Region and narrative description with features

J3NP	1. Zone: Trpejca – Ljubanishta (Ohrid) 2. Zone: Velestovo – Peshtani (Ohrid)	1. and 2. Hiking on the mountain Galichica, Herbal Activities, Velestovo) Accommodation in private households, fishing, sport fishing, use of gastronomic specialties (fish) eco activities (Galichica National Park) bathing and sunbathing, educational activities
	3. Zone: Kosel, Openica, Rechica, Kuratica, Skrebatno, Zavoj (Ohrid)	3. Volcanic Visits (Duvalo-Kosel), Eco-Center and accommodation in rural settings (Openica) Visiting Valavici (Rechica), Accommodation in private households, Mountaineering, Winter Sports Activities, visiting Carnival and Ethno Restaurants, Visits to Traditional Architecture (Kuratica), visiting a picnic area with outdoor activities and celebrations, camping (Skrebatno) and hospitality services (Zavoj).
	4. Zone: Vevchani	4. Visiting sheepfolds, visiting livestock farms, horse riding, accommodation in rural areas, picking wild fruit, gastronomic facilities, river activities, picnics and camping, speleological activities, mountaineering and hiking, sightseeing of rural architecture, cultural and religious tours, eco-tours, visiting carnival (Vevchani Carnival) folk performances, visiting glacial formations.
	5. Zone: Vishni-Gorna Belica	5. Accommodation in private households, hiking, mountaineering, rock-climbing, religious activities, snow-related activities
	6. Zone: Devich, Slatina 7. Zone: Samokov	6. and 7. Speleological activities (complex of caves in Porech), visiting rural areas, eco-tours, hiking, hunting, fishing, visiting fish farms, cultural tours
	8. Zone: Zdunje, Breznica	8. Visiting village houses, fishing, water sports, picking wild berries, hiking and rock-climbing, eco-tours
	9. Zone: Drenok, Modrich, Lukovo, Nerezi	9. Visiting traditional architecture complexes, surplus of housing spaces, visiting fisheries, fishing on Lake Globochica, water sports, nature dwelling
	10. Zone: Podgorci, Labunishta, Borovec, Jablanica	10. Visiting sheepfolds, accommodation in villas on Jablanica, visiting glacial formations, eco-tourism, excursions and camping, hiking, rock-climbing and mountaineering, hunting, fishing on Lake Globochica Picking wild berries
	11. Zone: Moroishta, Vranishta, Lozhani, Veleshta	11. Visiting typical flatland villages, consuming gastronomic specialties, selling indigenous products, fishing on Crn Drim River, taking part in agricultural activities; developed hospitality sector (Veleshta)
	12. Zone: Malesija	12. Eco-tours, visiting abandoned houses, picking wild berries, hunting, nature dwelling
	13. Zone: Delogozhda, Koroshishta	13. Visiting typical flatland villages, consuming gastronomic specialties, selling indigenous products, nature dwelling
	14. Zone: Mali Vlaj, Radozhda	14. Hiking and mountaineering, herbal activities, picking wild berries, visiting traditional rural architecture (Mali Vlaj) accommodation in private households, fishing, sport fishing, consuming gastronomic specialties (fish) eco activities, bathing and sunbathing, educational activities (Radozhda)
	15. Zone: Centar Zhupa	15. Visiting sheepfolds, visiting the Memorial House of Kemal Pasha Ataturk, nature dwelling
	16. Zone: Dolno Kosovrasti and Banjishte	16. Spa tours in Kosovrasti and Banjishte, fishing on Radika River and Debar Lake, using gastronomic facilities, excursions, water sports on Debar Lake and kayaking on Radika, eco-tours and educational activities, monastery visits and advanced hospitality sector
	17. Zone: Gari, Osoj and Mogorche	17. Visiting indigenous traditional architecture, dwelling in forest areas, eco-tours (Garska River) Cultural activities (Iconostasis of the Holy Mother of God), mountaineering, Osoj, visiting the Elenski Skok bridge
	18. Zone: Mesheishta, Trebenishta and Volino	18. Visiting rural agrarian areas, visiting vineyards and tasting wine and rakija, consuming gastronomic specialties, selling indigenous products, nature dwelling, visiting the urvin Lake Trebenishta, educational activities
	19. Zone: Debrca	19. Visiting farms (Arbinovo), visiting typical mountain rural architecture (Mramorec and Brezhani), selling autochthonous products Mountaineering, visiting pastures and dwelling in forest areas in the Ilinska Mountain, lake tours at Slatinsko Lake, water sports, bathing and sunbathing, consuming gastronomic specialties.
	20. Zone: Drugovo, Cer, Dobrenoec	20. Visiting village households, karst tours at Cer, Historical Tour (Hristo Uzunov's Tomb), Monastery Tour (visit of Holy Mother of God the Immaculate), visiting fisheries (Dobrenoec)

6.4 Existing locations in the South-east Planning Region and narrative description with features

SEPR	1. Zone: Turija – Ograzhden: Nivichino, Monospitovo, Drvosh	1. Mountaineering and Rock – climbing, (Ograzhden), March “following the steps of Miss Stone” (Vasilevo) fishing activities, walks along the shores and banks of the lakes and rivers (rivers Turija and Strumica, lake Turija), visiting events (Prazijada, v. Gradashorci, emigrant meetings v. Vasilevo) Visiting religious sites and events (Church of St. Paraskeva- v. Varvarica) educational visits and creative activities (making wood chajki, i.e. boats, making gates of reed-mace and reeds, various decorative clay items) swamp sailing, bird watching and other fauna - Monospitovo marsh), hunting, excursions, visiting rural villages
	2. Zone: Gevgelija – Kozhuf v. Stojakovo, v. Gjavato, v. Selemli, v. Huma, v. Konsko and v. Sermerin	2. Visiting agricultural areas (early vegetables, Mediterranean plants) (Gevgelija-Valandovo valley), excursions and picnics, walks, dwelling in extraordinary natural surroundings by the springs and river banks, fishing activities on Vardar (Springs Smokvica and Konjska, Kovanska, Petrushka, Vardar) Winter sports activities, accommodation in rural areas, spa activities, monastery visits, educational tours Panoramic sightseeing, visiting protected areas, Wine tours
	3. Zone: Dojran – Valandovo v. Gradec, v. Bashino, v. Nikolikj, v. Furka	3. Lake activities, visiting rural areas, visiting waterfalls, fishing, gastronomic tours, attending events - Rakijada), cultural tours, excursions
	4. Zone: Mantovo Konche	4. Accommodation in rural areas, mountaineering, fishing, participating in fishing tournaments, excursions, hunting, water sports, cultural tours, attending events
	5. Zone: Plachkovica – Radovish v. Smiljanci v. Shipkovica	5. Visiting paleo-volcanic forms, educational activities, walking along the riverbanks, visiting waterfalls, visiting rural areas, visiting events.
	6. Zone: Strumica – Belasica v. Smolare, v. Koleshino, v. Mokrino, v. Veljusa, v. Gabrovo - v. Bansko	6. Spa tours, visiting waterfalls, consuming gastronomic specialties, consuming agricultural products, attending events, hunting, fishing, water sports activities, excursions on the riverbanks, monastery visits, eco-tours visiting carnival festivities

6.5 Existing locations in the Pelagonija Planning Region and narrative description with features

PEPR	1. Zone: Western Prespa Konjsko Stenje Ezerani Izbishte	1. Accommodation in villages - eco-tourism activities - lake tourism - observation activities - participation in events participating in creative tourism pottery, fishing tourism, water sports, consuming regional gastronomic specialties and products educational visits, visit and stay in rural areas, visit of religious events, mountaineering, hiking, panoramic sightseeing, eco-tours, monastery visits, excursions
	2. Zone: Eastern Prespa Ljubojno, Brajchino, Krani, Pretor, Podmochani	2. Visiting and accommodation in rural areas, visiting rural architectural complexes and facilities, consuming local specialties and products, visiting ethnological museum, mountaineering, lake tours, panoramic sightseeing, speleological visit, snow-related activities, educational activities, eco-tours, visiting religious events, monastery visits
	3. Zone: Under Pelister Velushina, Bistrica, Bukovo, Nizhepole, Dihovo, Trnovo, Magarevo, Kazhani, Malovishte, Brusnik, Capari, Orehovo	3. Skiing activities, Recreational activities, Hiking, eco-tours, excursions, hiking and camping on the banks and shores of rivers and lakes, visiting glacial lakes, visiting traditional architecture complexes, monastery visits, visiting archaeological sites, participating in religious, cultural, national, economic events use of catering services with traditional features, consuming gastronomic specialties and products
	4. Zone: Mogila-Novaci v. Mogila, v. Dobrushevo, v. Novaci	4. Visiting religious sites, visiting events, visiting an agricultural fair - Traktoriijada, visiting rural areas, consuming agricultural products
	5. Zone: Mariovo Vitolishte, Manastir, Zovikj, Gradeshnica, Skochivir, Kajmakchalan	5. Visiting waterfalls, eco-tours, visiting rural architecture complexes, cultural tours, visiting events, mountaineering and rock-climbing, historical tours, monastery visits, hiking, monastery visits, educational visits
	6. Zone: Prilep – Krivogashtani Krivogashtani, Dolneni, Zrze, Varosh	6. Using services of restaurant facilities for rural tourism, monastery visits, visits to traditional events, visiting livestock markets, visiting typical lowland rural environment, visiting archaeological sites, hunting, visiting tobacco fields, visiting cultivation and processing areas for tobacco, visiting traditional wrestling tournaments, attending ethno-festivals, folk costume parades
	7. Zone: Krushevo Krushevo, Pusta Reka, Arilevo, Dolno Divjani, Zhitoshe	7. Visiting traditional city architecture, accommodation in traditional style houses, hunting, skiing, participating in paragliding events, horse riding, educational visits, consuming specialties in traditional restaurants, visiting traditional events, visiting religious facilities and events, visiting museums, visiting cultural and historical events, water sports, hiking and mountaineering, visiting typical lowland rural areas, visiting farmlands, consuming agricultural products, participating in creative activities, visiting craft shops
	8. Zone: Demir Hisar Babino, Zhelezec, Sopotnica, Slepche, Zhurche, Smilevo	8. Visiting cultural-historical sites and facilities, mountaineering, excursions and camping in the traditional settings, visiting complexes of houses with traditional rural architecture, attending religious events and facilities, attending a special event dedicated to bread, participating in folk presentations, visiting largest private library, educational visits, hunting, consuming regional gastronomic specialties and products, fishing, monastery visits

6.6 Existing locations in the Polog Planning Region and narrative description with features

POPR	1. Zone: Dolna Reka Trebishte, Bitushe, Velobrdo, Rostushe, Adzievci, Prisojnica, Skudrinje	1. Visiting rural mountainous areas, presentation of folk costumes and folkloric values, consuming gastronomic specialties, gathering wild berries, participation in religious events, visiting traditional rural architecture, mountaineering and rock-climbing, participation in traditional events
	2. Zone: Mala Reka Rosoki and Tresonche, Selce, Galichnik, Lazaropole and Janche	2. Visiting traditional village architecture, viewing and participating in the use of indigenous materials in building, consuming gastronomic specialties and products, viewing the process of Galichnik cheese production, participating in traditional events, mountaineering and hiking, visiting waterfalls
	3. Zone: Mavrovo Mavrovo, Nikiforovo, Leunovo, Vrben, Mavrovi Anovi	3. Visiting rural areas, hiking and mountaineering, water sports, consuming gastronomic specialties, speleological activities, accommodation in private households, bathing, rock-climbing, eco-tours
	4. Zone: Bukovikj Strazha, Gjonovica, Sretkovo, Cerevo	4. Transit activities, consuming gastronomic specialties, speleological activities, locations for resting places, mountaineering
	5. Zone: Spring of Vardar Vrutok, Zdunje, Raven	5. Visiting ethno restaurants, educational activities, consuming gastronomic specialties, picnics and excursions
	6. Zone: Tearce Tearce, Leshok, Slatino, Neproshteno	6. Visiting rural areas, visiting the Leshok monastery, visiting museum exhibits
	7. Zone: Jegunovce	7. Visiting agricultural fields/plantations, accommodation in private households, consuming agricultural products
	8. Zone: Belovishte Belovishte, Vratnica, Nerashte	8. Visiting the Belovishki Waterfalls, visiting ethno restaurants, eco-tours
	9. Zone: Pena Gajre, Shipkovica, Brodec, Veshala, Brozovce	9. Hiking on the banks of the river Pena, excursions, visiting rural architecture, mountaineering, visiting sheepfolds, consuming branded products such as Shar lamb and cheese

6.7 Existing locations in the North-east Planning Region and narrative description with features

NEPR	1. Zone: Staro Nagorichane Staro Nagorichane , v. Mlado Nagorichane, v. Kokino, v. Bajlovce, v. Karpino, v. Pelince, v. Strnovac	1. Visiting historical sites and events (Pelince), visiting churches and religious holidays, visiting Kokino megalithic observatory, speleological activities (Kostoperska Karpa), visiting events (bull roasting for Gjurgjovden - St. George) – Bajlovski meetings (Macedonian wedding, services in ethno restaurant, hunting)
	2. Zone: Rankovce v. Ginovci, v. Rankovce, v. Psacha,	2. Visiting fishery with ethno contents and restaurant services, fishing, visiting the monastery Psacha, village activities, excursions, transit activities
	3. Zone: Kuklica – Konjuh Kuklica, v. Trnovac, v. Shopsko, Rudare, v. Konjuh	3. Visiting Kuklica, visiting the archaeological sites of Cocev Kamen, Zdravchev Kamen, mine entrances, visiting rural architectural complexes, visiting Shlegovski dijalozi
	4. Zone: Kostajnica – Kalin Kamen v. Stanci, v. Konopnica	4. Visiting the monastery of St. Joakim Osogovski, visiting the event Kompirijada, Kalin Kamen, visiting religious festivities, mountaineering, visiting Kalin Kamen lake, visiting traditional customs in the villages, picking wild berries
	5. Zone: Osogovo Area v. Nezhilovo, v. Knezhevo, v. Kavrak (active village) Church Council	5. Mountaineering, visiting a goat farm (v. Nezhilovo), visiting the church council v. Kavrak, hiking along the Zletovska river
	6. Zone: Lipkovo Lake v. Lipkovo, v. Matejche	6. Walking in rural areas, water sports on Lipkovsko Lake, Lake Glazhnja, visiting Matejche Monastery, visiting a Tekke
	7. Zone: Shlegovo – Kratovo Shlegovo v. Turalevo, v. Gorno Kratovo-Kratovo	7. Visiting Zdravchev Kamen, mine entrances, visiting rural architectural complexes, visiting Shlegovski dijalozi, visiting rural areas, spa activities in Proevska Banja, visiting Bislimska Gorge, speleological activities (Duemichki Cave, Studen Cave, Orlovec, Lishkov Cave, Markova House), visiting archeological sites, visiting monasteries, visiting the fishery in v. Rezanovce, visiting breeding center of AVASI sheep (Israeli desert sheep) in v. Gradishte, visiting the winery in v. Dobrashane, visiting the waterfall Zdravkov Most, visiting springs of Mineral Water Vizijana
	8. Zone: Kumanovo Spa – Pchinja – Klechovska valley v. Proevce, v. Pchinja, v. Dobrashane, v. Beljakovce, v. Skachkovce, v. Klechovce,	8. Spa tours, educational activities, eco-tours, visiting forest areas, hunting, fishing activities, selling regional products, horse riding
	9. Zone: Strazha v. Metezhevo, v. Ogut	9. Visiting rural areas, mountaineering, panoramic sightseeing, horse riding, hunting

6.8 Existing locations in the Skopje Planning Region and narrative description with features

SKPR	1. Zone: Katlanovo Spa – Taor: Zelenikovo, Taor, Katlanovo, Blace, Oreshani, Morani	1. Spa activities (Katlanovo Spa), fishing, water sports (rivers Vardar, Pchinja), hunting and eco activities, (Multipurpose Area Jasen) - Katlanovo Spa (monument of nature), hiking and mountaineering, speleological activities, educational activities, (river Pchinja-Epigenetics), visiting the swamp Katlanovo Marsh, camping and excursions, walks in nature, observation of biodiversity and rarities
	2. Zone: Torbeshija D. Kolichani, Crvena Voda - Drzhilovo, Markova Sushica, Patishka Reka, Ramni Gaber, Nova Breznica	2. Speleological activities, river and spring tours – Spring Pepeljak - Markova River, Spring Juruchka Karpa, Kadina River, Patishka River, visiting glacial lakes Golemo and Malo Salakovsko Lake educational activities, visiting Markov Monastery, hunting
	3. Zone: Vodno –Matka Shishevo, Sopsishte Gorno Nerezi, St. Paraskeva, Govrlevo Matka	3. Visiting traditional architecture, accommodation in rural areas, visiting the monastery of St. Andreja and the church of St. Panteleimon in v. Nerezi, celebration of Bajram, fishing activities, speleological activities, observation of biodiversity, water sports, use of accommodation facilities in rural areas, hunting, eco-tours
	4. Zone: Saraj Saraj, Radusha, Rashche, Kopanica	4. Visiting Dervenska Gorge, speleological activities, fishing on Vardar, event Bajram, hunting, hiking, visiting rural areas, bathing in Lake Treska, wild water sports, transit activities, visiting Kachanichka Gorge, visiting springs and waterfalls in Kuchkovo, eco-tours, visiting an ethno house in Brodec, and the houses of Durkovci in v. Chucher, Houses in Ljubanci and Gornjani, Complex of rural architecture in Chucher and Ljubanci, visits to religious festivities, presentation of folklore values, visiting onion fields and participating in the activity, accommodation facilities in rural areas – Chucher Sandevo, hunting hiking, mountaineering, observation of biodiversity and rarities, educational activities, visiting cultural and historical heritage, regional gastronomic specialties and products.
	5. Zone: Skopska Crna Gora Blace, Brodec, Kuchevishte, Mirkovci, Brazda, Chucher, Ljubanci, Kuchkovo	5. Едукативни активности, планинарење, логорување, прошетки и престој во природа, планински велосипедизам, набљудување на биодиверзитетот и реткости, лов и риболов, посета на селски средини, посета на културно наследство, посета на религиски настани и манифестации, регионални гастрономски специјалитети и продукти Educational activities, mountaineering, camping, hiking and dwelling in nature, mountain biking, observing biodiversity and rarities, hunting and fishing, visiting rural areas, visiting cultural heritage, visiting religious events, regional gastronomic specialties and products

6.9 List of new centers that have the potential for expanding and reequipping

Planning Region	Locations	Activities
VAPR	Rosoman	Participating in harvesting of peach, consuming agricultural products
EAPR	Rusinovo - Vladimirovo	Sightseeing of architectural complexes and houses in villages Consuming gastronomic specialties Accommodation in traditional buildings Dwelling in nature
SWPR	Malesija (Struga)	Visiting typical flatland villages, consuming gastronomic specialties, selling indigenous products, dwelling in nature
SEPR	Konche (Zone Mantovo)	Staying in rural areas, mountaineering, fishing, participating in fishing tournaments, excursions, hunting, water sports, cultural tours, attending events
PEPR	Krivogashtani Dolneni Zrze Varosh	Using services of restaurant facilities for rural tourism, Monastery visits Visiting traditional events, visiting livestock markets, visiting typical flatland villages, visiting archeological sites, hunting, visiting tobacco fields, visiting areas for tobacco growing and tobacco processing, visiting traditional wrestling tournaments, visiting festivals with ethno content, folk costume shows
POPR	Gajre, Shipkovic, Veshala, Brozovce	Hiking on the banks of the river Pena, excursions, visiting rural architecture, mountaineering, visiting sheepfolds, consuming branded products such as Shar lamb and cheese
NEPR	Kuklica v. Trnovac v. Shopsko Rudare v. Konjuh (Zone Kuklica - Konjuh)	Visiting the site Kuklica, visiting archeological sites Cocev Kamen, Zdravchev Kamen, mine entrances, visiting rural architectural complexes, visiting Shlegovo dijalozi
SKPR	Brodec - Kuchevishte - Mirkovci - Brazda - Chucher - Ljubanci - Kuchkovo (Zone Skopska Crna Gora)	Transit activities, visiting Kachanichka Gorge, visiting springs and waterfalls in Kuchkovo, eco-tours, visiting an ethno house in Brodec, and house of Durkovci in v. Chucher - Houses in Ljubanci and Gornjani - Rural architectural complex in Chucher and Ljubanci, visiting religious festivities, presentation of folklore values, visiting onion fields and participating in the activity, accommodation in rural areas - Chucher Sandevo, hunting, hiking, mountaineering, observation of biodiversity and rarities, educational activities, visiting cultural-historical heritage, consuming regional gastronomic specialties and products

6.10 List of existing centers that have the potential for expanding and reequipping

Planning Region	Centers	Activities
VAPR	Lozovo	Visiting vineyards, visiting wineries, consuming agricultural products
EAPR	Pantelej Beli, Jastrebnik (Kochani)	Visiting rice fields, gastronomic tours, visiting traditional architecture, visiting folk gatherings, eco-tour ("Gaber"), volcanic tour (Raichanska crater), rock-climbing, weekend activities
SWPR	Kosel, Openica, Rechica, Kuratica, Skrebatno, Zavoj (Ohrid)	Volcanic Visits (Duvalo-Kosel), eco-center and accommodation in rural settings (Openica) visiting Valavici (Rechica), accommodation in private households, mountaineering, winter sports activities, visiting carnival and ethno restaurants, Visiting Traditional Architecture (Kuratica) Visiting excursion areas with outdoor activities and holidays, camping (Skrebatno)
SEPR	Smolare, v. Koleshino, v. Mokrino, v. Veljusa, v. Gabrovo - v. Bansko (Zone Strumica – Belasica)	Spa tours, visiting waterfalls, consuming gastronomic specialties, consuming agricultural products, attending events, hunting, fishing, water sports activities, excursions on the riverbanks, hiking, monastery visits, eco-tours visiting carnival festivities
PEPR	Bukovo, Nizhepole, Dihovo, Trnovo, Magarevo, Kazhani, Malovishte, Brusnik, Capari, Orehovo (Zone Under Pelister)	Skiing activities, outdoor activities, mountaineering, eco-tours, excursions, hiking and camping on the banks and shores of the rivers and lakes, visiting glacial lakes, visiting complexes of traditional architecture, monastery visits, visiting archaeological sites, participating in religious, cultural, national , economic events and fairs, using catering services with traditional features, consuming gastronomic specialties and products
POPR	Rosoki and Tresonche, Selce, Galichnik, Lazaropole and Janche (Zone Mala Reka)	Visiting traditional village architecture, observing and participating in the use of indigenous materials in building, consuming gastronomic specialties and products, observing the process of Galichnik cheese production, participating in traditional events, mountaineering and hiking, visiting waterfalls
NEPR	v. Proevce, v. Pchinja, v. Dobrashane, v. Beljakovce, v. Skachkovci, v. Klechovce (Zone Kumanovo Spa – Pchinja – Klechovska Valley)	Visiting rural areas, spa activities in Proevska Banja, visiting the Bislimska Gorge, speleological activities (Duemichki Cave, Studen Cave, Orlovec, Lishkov Cave, Markova House), visiting archeological sites, visiting monasteries, visiting the fishery in v. Rezhanovce, visiting the breeding center of AVASI sheep (Israeli desert sheep) in v. Gradishte, visiting the winery in v. Dobrashane, visiting the waterfall Zdravkov Most, visiting the springs of mineral water Vizijana
SKPR	Shishevo, Sopishte, G. Nerezi, St. Paraskeva, Govrlevo, Matka (Zone Vodno-Matka)	Accommodation in rural areas, visiting the monastery of St. Andrea and the church of St. Panteleimon in v. Nerezi, celebration of Bajram, fishing activities, speleological activities, observing the biodiversity, water sports, using accommodation facilities in rural areas, hunting, eco-tours

6.11 Determining places and locations for marking the centers and placing signposts and info tables

The places and locations that have to be marked are determined by the location-based approach applied in the systematization of zones, sites and facilities, depending on the activities that may be part of tourism development of this type. This determining is in the function of increasing visibility and awareness of the users of this type of tourism services and of the local population. We determined the locations in the following ways. The marking shall be carried out with appropriate symbols and standards accepted by the responsible institutions for each of the contents within rural tourism. The sites and zones have a dispersive character for signage and may be outside these spatial units (along the main national and regional roads). The location itself is marked at the entrance of the spatial unit, while the activity is precisely at the place where it is conducted. Furthermore, within this type of tourism marked are the locations for accommodating and accommodation facilities of this type, events with rural tourism characteristics, fisheries and fishing areas.

The info tables are based on the identified development opportunities in the sites and activities and thus providing familiarization to all the available values in the area and the site. The opportunities to attract domestic and foreign investment are public information and are related to the underutilized opportunities provided in the structuring of new locations and locations to be reequipped. Accessibility in this regard is both to the government authorities as well as to the local governments in the planning regions.

7. Determining the mission and vision for rural tourism development

- **The mission for the development of rural tourism in RNM** is to accept this tourism as an accelerator of economic and social progress and through it to improve the quality of life in local communities. It implies an optimal use of the resources at disposal and thus providing a humane approach to spatial values.

The tradition and way of living and working in rural areas are embedded in the mentality of the population as a national pride. This culture is successfully incorporated into the ability to create tourism products and individual services for their use. The development of rural tourism on a local level, areas are promoted and affirmed that would otherwise be difficult to achieve. Hence, the mission is to improve the reputation of both the local community as well as the state in general on an international level.

The basic assumptions of the mission are the following:

- Balanced territorial development of the state and tourism as a priority, through rural tourism introducing authenticity and creativity into the specific tourism offer, preserving and affirming authentic values of the rural areas;

- Increasing the tourist turnover and effects in terms of tourist expenditure;
- Introducing new content into the tourist offer and creating tourism products with rural contents;
- Improving the quality of services offered by applying the latest norms and standards in rural tourism as an opportunity to meet the needs of this specific tourist clientele.

- **The vision for rural tourism development** is based on the following elements:

- Rural tourism in the following period should find its place in the selective approach of development of this activity as well as other separate forms;

- RNM should be identified as a country whose resources are put into service to improve rural development;

- the answer of how to create the conditions for dynamic development should be sought in removing the identified shortcomings and threats with the SWOT analysis;

- stakeholders have an active role in organizing and managing the processes in rural tourism;

- expected is a successful performance on the tourism market and acceptance of the tourism products by the segmented tourism clientele and

- the offer of rural tourism products to be competitive and to meet the needs of tourists.

8. SWOT analysis of rural tourism in the RN Macedonia

Although the planning regions, the designated zones and sites and development centers for rural tourism development have specific features, they are intertwined and provide the common recognizable characteristics. On this basis the general values of rural tourism at the state level can be determined.

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threads
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the tourist - geographical position enables the development of the area - there are spatial conditions for improved transport communication - outstanding composition of the landscape - the soil, climate, hydrographic values and vegetation are in the function of rural tourism - natural and cultural attractiveness - traditional agriculture and livestock breeding and the ethnographic heritage are a tradition - hospitality is on a high level - excess of housing facilities - hospitality facilities in rural areas - gastronomic specialties and indigenous products - arable land - positive governmental and municipal attitude towards rural development (subsidies, benefits and favorable credits and investment policies) - educational system for specialized personnel - incoming tour operators - existing Registers for rural tourism development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - low level of utilization of contactability, transitness and polyvalence of the tourist-geographical position - poor road infrastructure - slightly using landscape configuration - poor utilization of attractions and insufficient construction, arrangement and equipment of the locations - underutilization of traditional agriculture and livestock breeding and ethnographic heritage - poor promotion of hospitality - excess housing is underutilized - gaps in the provision of services - low level of branding of facilities, products and services - no participation in agricultural activities - poor use of development benefits - lack of training activities and practical training - establishing partnerships with foreign travel agencies - registries are not updated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - using the proximity of international corridors - international credit lines for improving the infrastructure of the transport communication - using international experiences on the links between the landscape and rural tourism - hiring international and national experts for the valorization of rural tourism - using experiences from competing countries and centers - hospitality as a global trend - the existence of European standards for the use of accommodation in private households - using international standards and categorization in the hospitality sector - using experiences from participation at international fairs and events - using international experiences for creating tourism products with agricultural activities - training activities by international donors on the use of benefits - use of international trainers and trainers - using global experiences in the domain of incoming operation of travel agencies - organizing lectures by foreign experts on the importance of the Registers for rural tourism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - absence of international travel routes - weak interest in using loans - poor treatment of the importance of the landscape for rural tourism - low level of awareness of the importance of arranging and equipping - underestimating the value of traditionalism - a high level of subjectivity in the hospitality - High level of modernization, i.e. urbanization of housing - occurrences of non-compliance of the level of quality with the standardization and rank - low interest by travel agencies for creating tours with agricultural activities - time limitation of the investment funds - poor response by service providers - lack of a network for incoming products - poor performance at international fairs - low interest of the travel agencies for incoming tours

9. Action plan for implementation of the Sub-Strategy for the development of rural tourism

Determining the Action Plan stems from the mission and vision for rural tourism development by the conducted SWOT analysis of all relevant components of the rural tourism situation in RN Macedonia. The general strategic objective is to improve the position of rural tourism. This implies complete harmonization of operational measures with tourism development measures in RN Macedonia.

General strategic goal: improving the position of rural tourism in RN Macedonia

Measure 1 Improving connectivity	Measure 2 Improving attractiveness	Measure 3 Standardization of accommodation facilities	Measure 4 Inclusion of rural activities in the offer	Measure 5 Marketing
Activities 1. Adoption of spatial and urban plans	1. marking of attractions	1. Trainings for improvement of the standards for rural accommodation	1. Adoption of programs for inclusion of agriculture livestock breeding and ethnographic heritage in tourism products	1. Inventory and valorization of rural contents
2. Design and construction of access infrastructure and interconnectivity	2. Arranging and equipping of attractions	2. Applying incentives for increasing the number of accommodation units	2. Training of the population for possible activities that have rural character	2. Researching the tourism market and identifying market segments
3. Signage	3. Arranging areas for sale of attractive products from rural regions	3. Networking of accommodation facilities, travel agencies, local, governmental and other stakeholders through establishing DMOs	3. Organizing planting, cultivation and harvesting activities	3. Branding of gastronomic specialties, facilities, products and services
4. Establishing line transport	4. Creating an image of traditional hospitality	4. Using of best practices in rural accommodation	4. Participation in traditional events	4. Creating rural tourism products and using international experiences
5. Organizing amusement in the transport	5. Stakeholder trainings with participation of national and international experts for tourism valorization of rural areas	5. Establishment of an environmental standardization system in and out of accommodation facilities	5. Participating in tastings (food, wine, etc.)	5. Establishing a network and distribution channels for selling of rural tourism products
	6. Encouraging agencies to include rural tours in their offer	6. Creating the image of rural accommodation tailored for tourists	6. Educational activities and organized outdoor schools	6. Selection of promotional activities
			7. Organizing excursions and picnics	7. Adoption of annual programs for promotional activities
				8. Promotion of the centers, zones and regions for rural tourism, specific tourism products, and individual content elements

REFERENCES AND SOURCES

Risteski M., Kocevski J. (2018) Applying the Fas-Methodology for Identifying and Analysing Natural Factors in the South-West Planning Region for Rural Tourism Development, *XIV International Scientific Conference on Service Sector - INSCOSES 2018*, held in Ohrid, Republic of N.Macedonia. Published in *HORIZONS – International Scientific Journal*, ISSN 1857-9884, Vol. 23, pp. 577-589, December 2018

Creative Europe

Kocevski J., Risteski M. (2018) The Complex Role of Food in Tourism, *XIV International Scientific Conference on Service Sector - INSCOSES 2018*, held in Ohrid, Republic of N.Macedonia. Published in *HORIZONS – International Scientific Journal*, ISSN 1857-9884, Vol. 23, pp. 305-312, December 2018

Korunovski S., Marinoski N., Risteski M. (2013) Plan for local inclusive development in tourism: Case study of the Municipality of Konce, Republic of Macedonia - *XII International scientific conference on service sector*, held in Ohrid, Republic of N.Macedonia. Published in *HORIZONS – International Scientific Journal*, ISSN 1857- 856X, Vol. 13, pp. 69-77, May 2014

Korunovski S., Risteski M. (2016) Culture and Food – *XVI International Conference of Partner Institutions “Planning for Change”*, La Fondation pour la Formation Hoteliere, Nestle Pro Gastronomica – Vevey, Switzerland, University “St. Kliment Ohridski” - Bitola, held in Ohrid, Republic of N.Macedonia

Marinoski N., Andreeski C., Risteski M. (2019) Natural and Cultural Values in the Function of Developing Wine Tourism in the Povardarie Region, *XIII Symposium “Modern Technologies and Rural Development”*, Faculty of Technology - Leskovac, held in Leskovac, Republic of Serbia. Published in *Conference Proceedings*

Marinoski N., Korunovski S., Risteski M. (2017) Possibilities for sustainable development of wine tourism in Demir Kapija and Florina - *First International Scientific Conference: “Challenges of Tourism and Business Logistics in the 21st Century - ISCTBL 2017”*, held in Gevgelija, Republic of N.Macedonia. Published in *Conference Proceedings*, ISBN 978-608-244-465-9, pp. 58-67, December 2017

Marinoski N., Risteski M. (2019) Tourism Potentials of the Southwest Planning Region, *The Second International Scientific Conference “Challenges of Tourism and Business Logistics in the XXI Century - ISCTBL 2019”*, Goce Delcev University – Stip, held in Stip, Republic of N. Macedonia. Published in *Conference Proceedings*

Risteski M., Kocevski J., Arnaudov K. (2011) Spatial planning and sustainable tourism as a basis for developing competitive tourist destinations - *XI International conference - Service sector in terms of changing environment*, held in Ohrid, Republic of N.Macedonia. Published in *International Scientific Journal PROCEDIA – Social and Behavioral Sciences*, ISSN: 1877-0428 Vol. 44, pp. 375-386, 2012

Risteski M., Rakicevik G. (2018) Analysis of the support services in the South-west Planning Region for the development of rural tourism – *Sixteenth International Scientific Conference “Knowledge without borders”*, held in Vrnjacka Banja, Serbia. Published in *Knowledge – International Journal* ISSN 2545-4439 and ISSN 1857-923X, Vol. 22.2, pp. 573-578, *Global Impact and Quality Factor – GIF 1,322 (2016)*, March 2018

Sekulovska M., Marinoski N., Nestoroska I., Risteski M. (2018) Macedonia in *Hospitality and Tourism in Transition in Central and Eastern Europe: A Comparative Analysis* – Vodenska M. (Ed.) ISBN (10): 1-5275-1120-0 ISBN (13): 978-1-5275-1120-0, 1st Edition, pp. 261-295, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, UK, August 2018

Protection of movable and unmovable cultural heritage – Ministry of Culture of RN Macedonia

Korunovski, S. (2011) Cultural heritage, FTU-Ohrid

Marinoski, N. (2012) Selective types of tourism, FTU-Ohrid

Marinoski, N. (2014) Tourism geography of Macedonia, FTU-Ohrid

Marinoski, N. (2015) Basics of tourism theory and practice

National Strategy for sustainable development

National Strategy for rural development

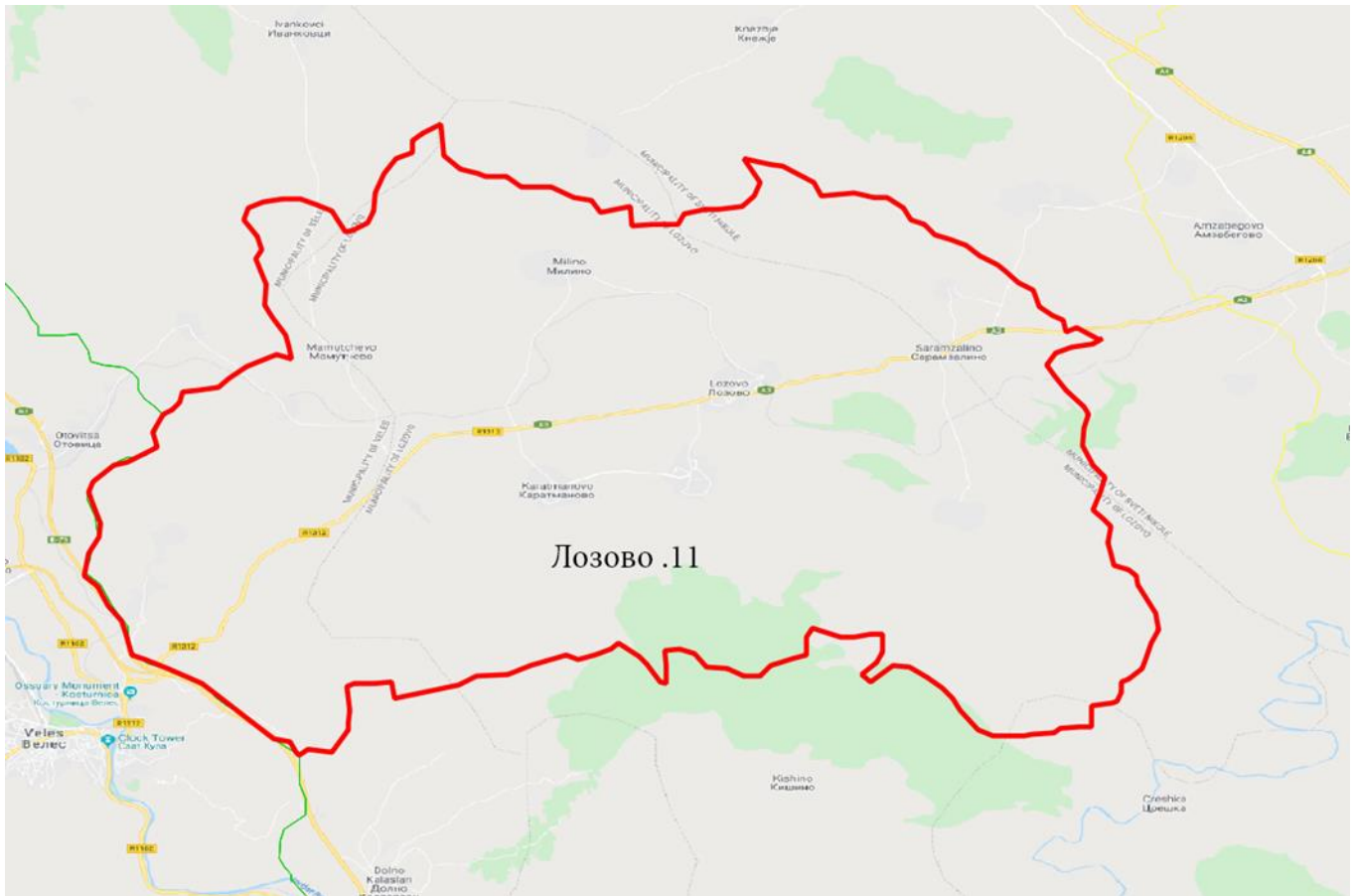
Sub-Strategy for rural development 2014 – 2018

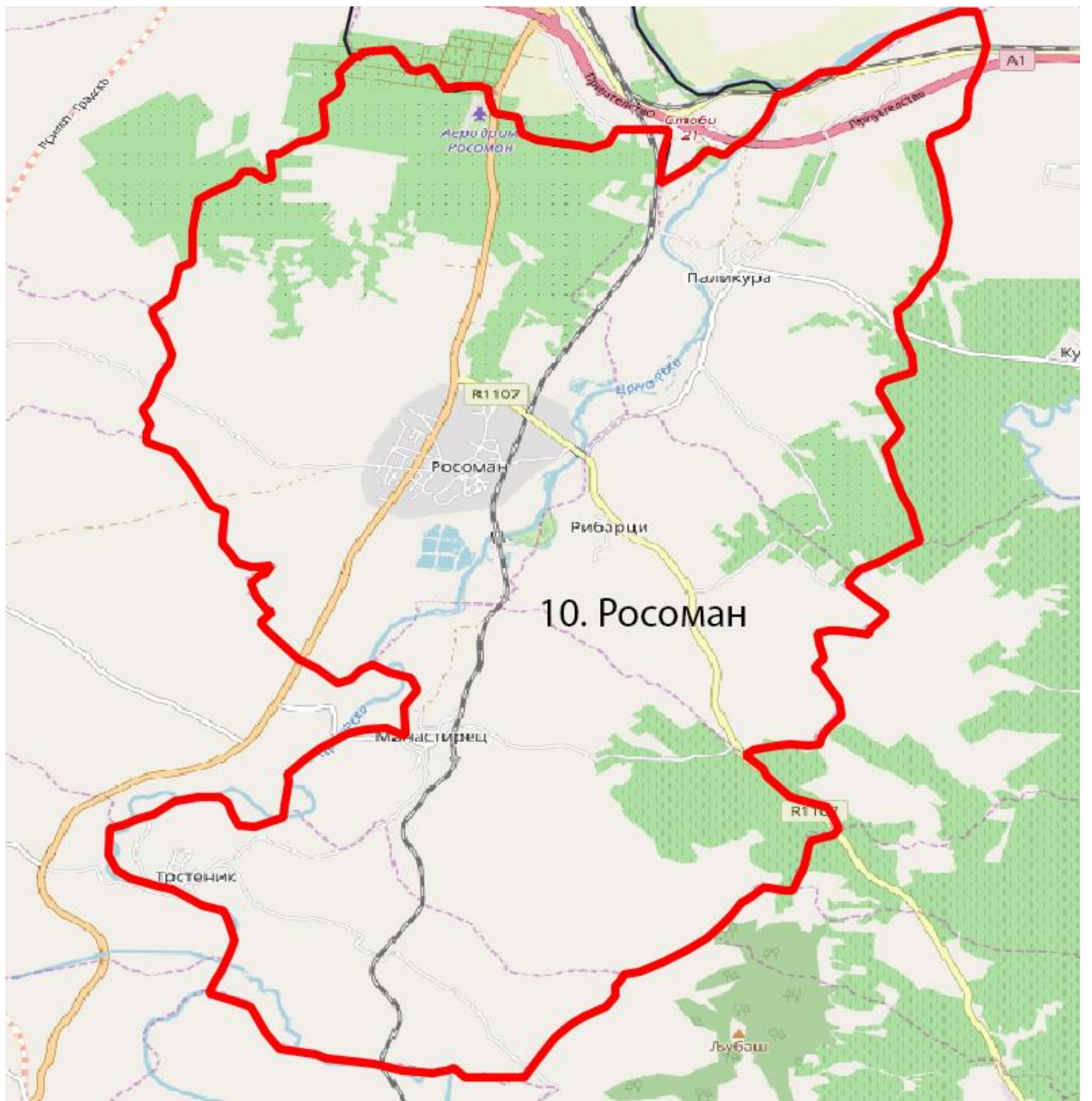
Programs for cross-border cooperation (CBC – IPA 2)

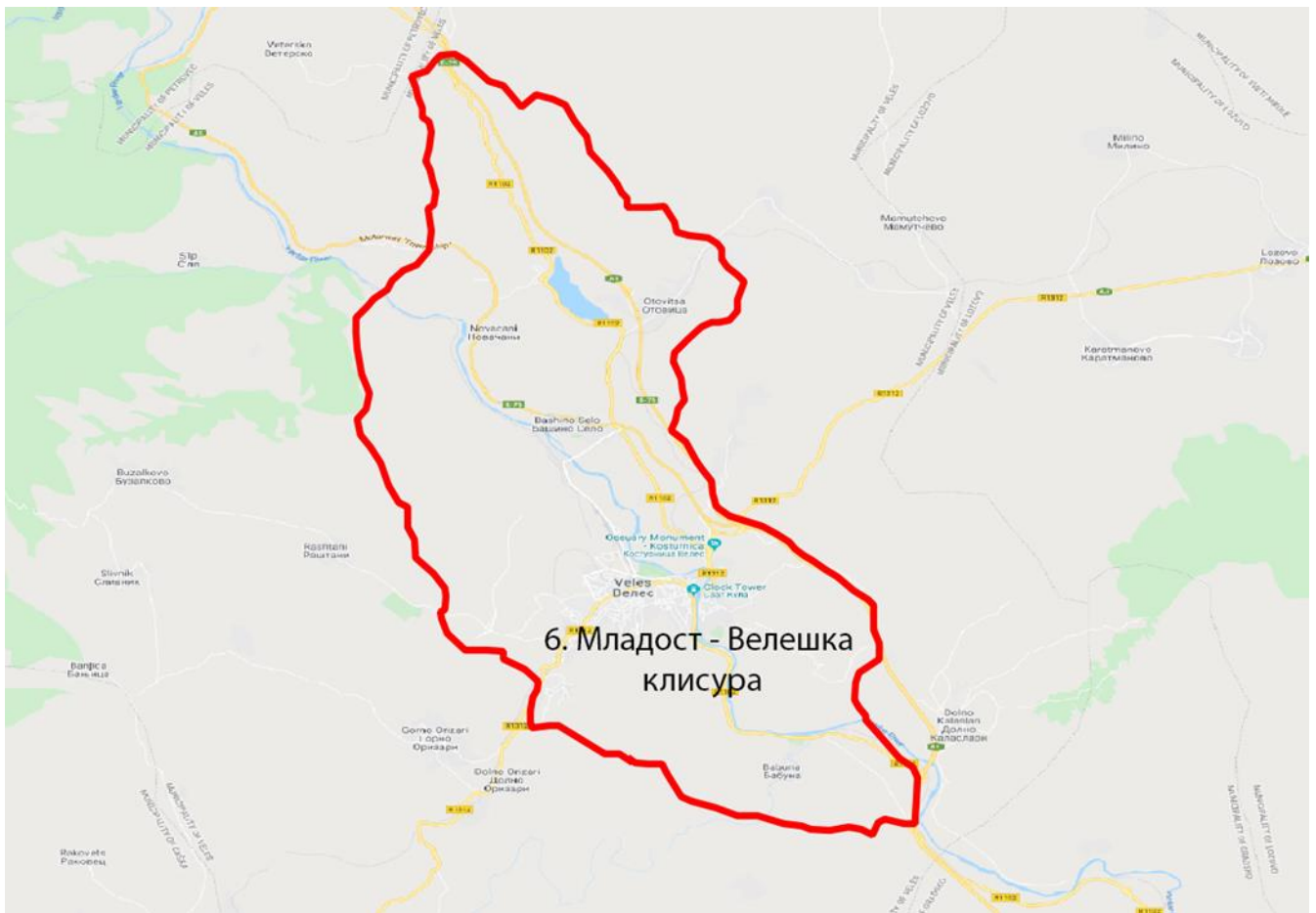
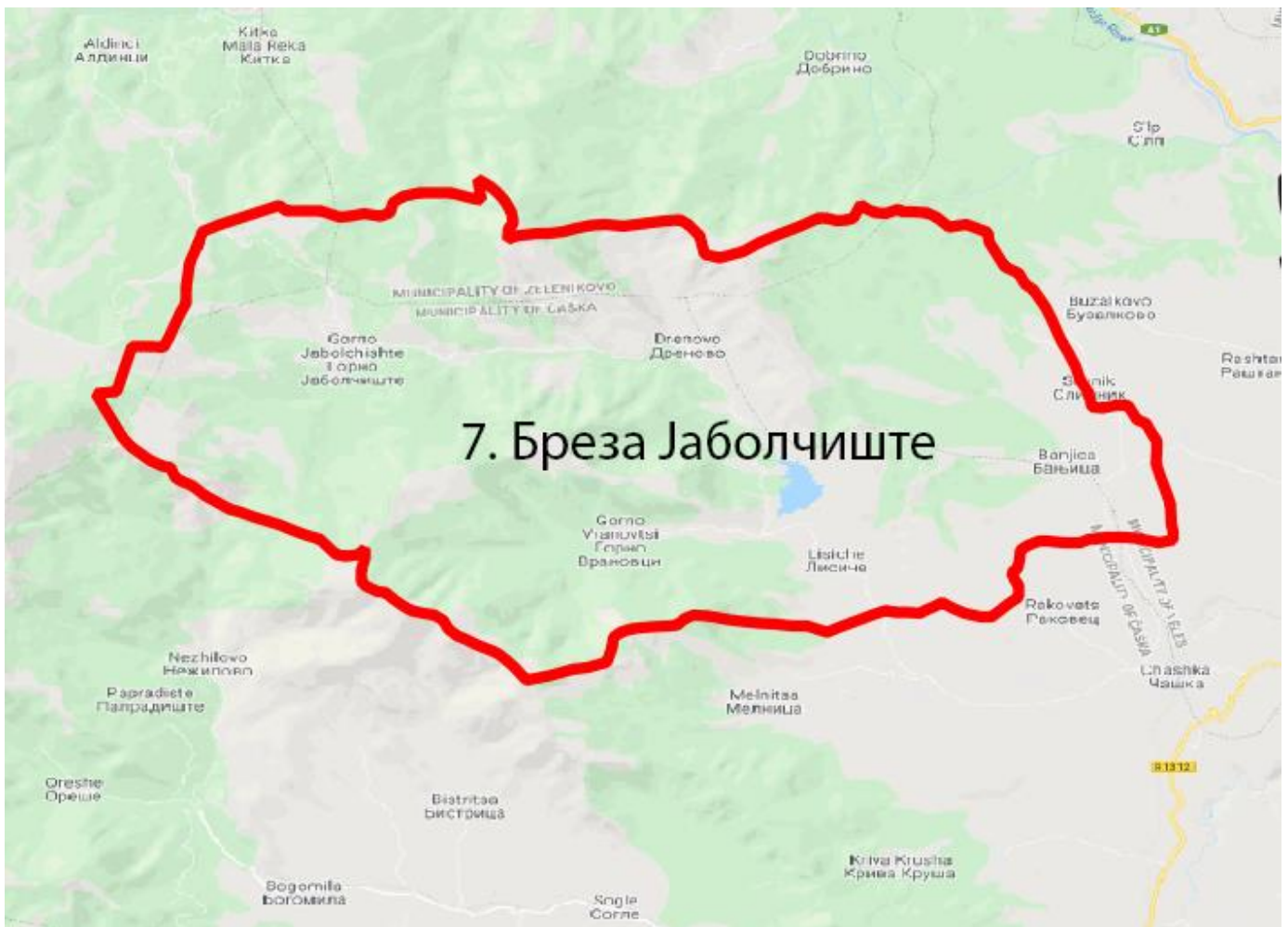
Cultural programs by several Embassies in the country (Switzerland, United States, Germany, France
(<http://ipard.gov.mk/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/%D0%9F%D0%A0%D0%98%D0%9B%D0%9E%D0%93-1-%D0%9B%D0%98%D0%A1%D0%A2%D0%90-%D0%9D%D0%90-%D0%A0%D0%A3%D0%A0%D0%90%D0%9B%D0%9D%D0%98-%D0%9F%D0%9E%D0%94%D0%A0%D0%90%D0%A7%D0%88%D0%90.pdf>)

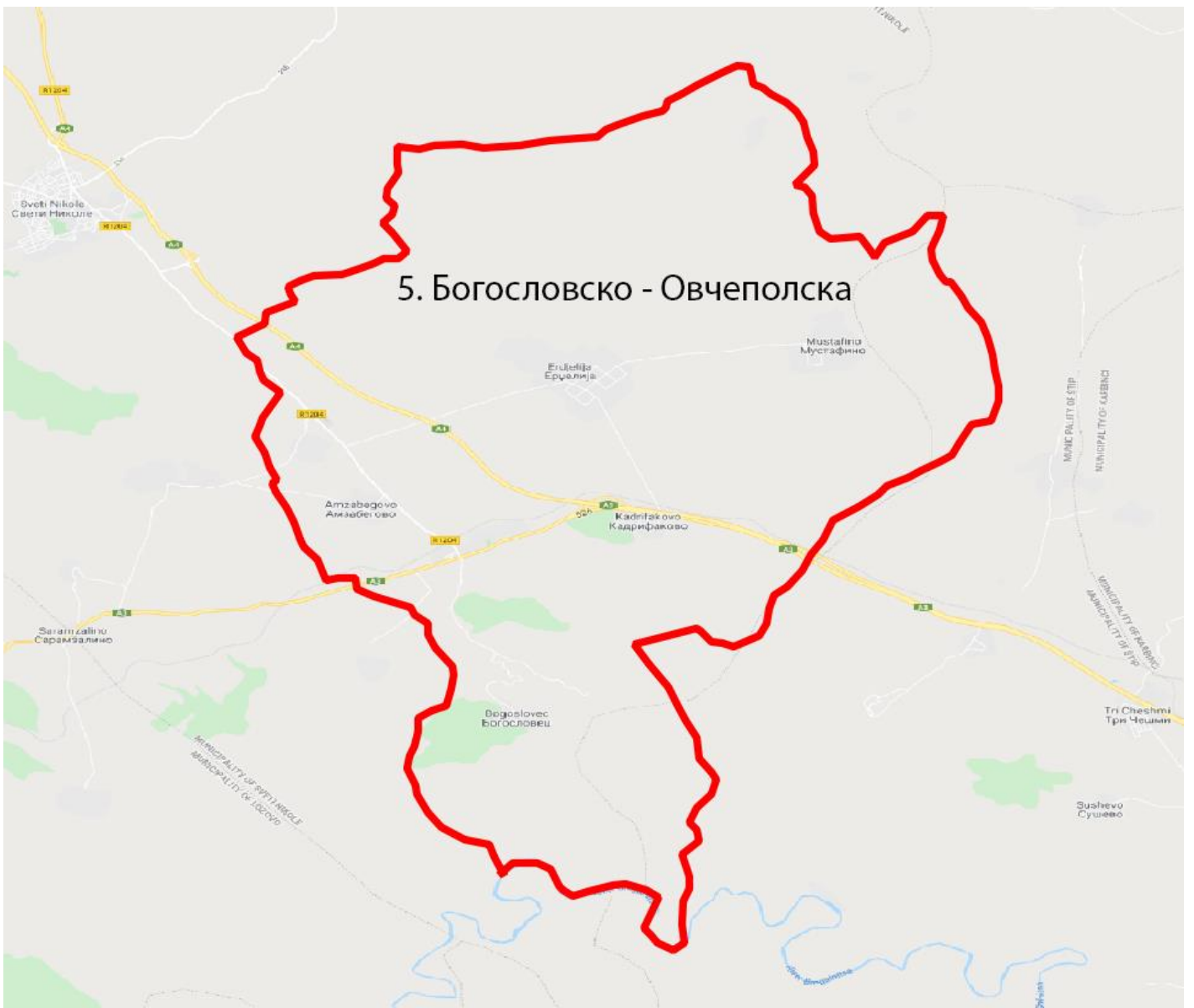
Mapping of zones for the development of rural tourism by region

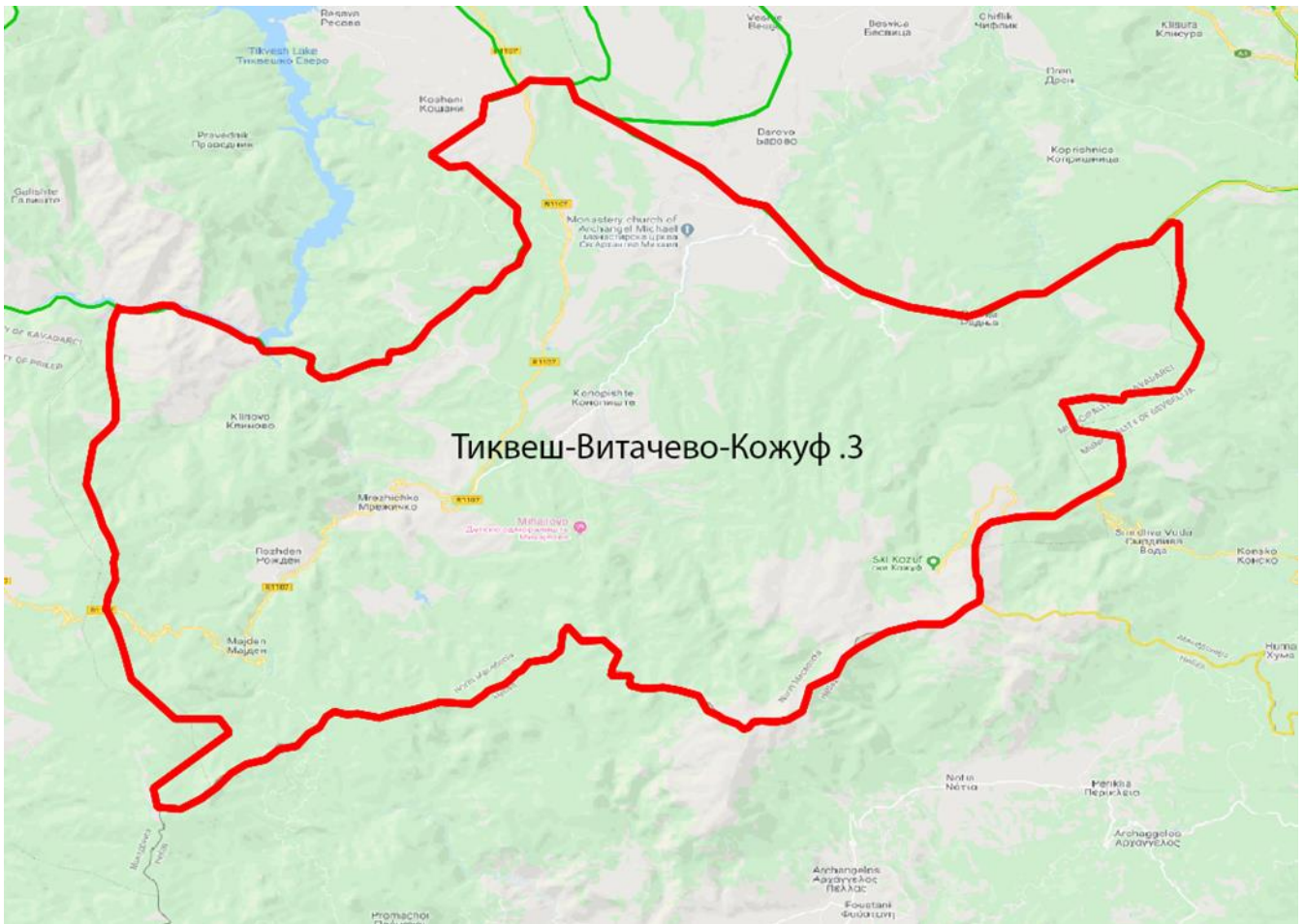
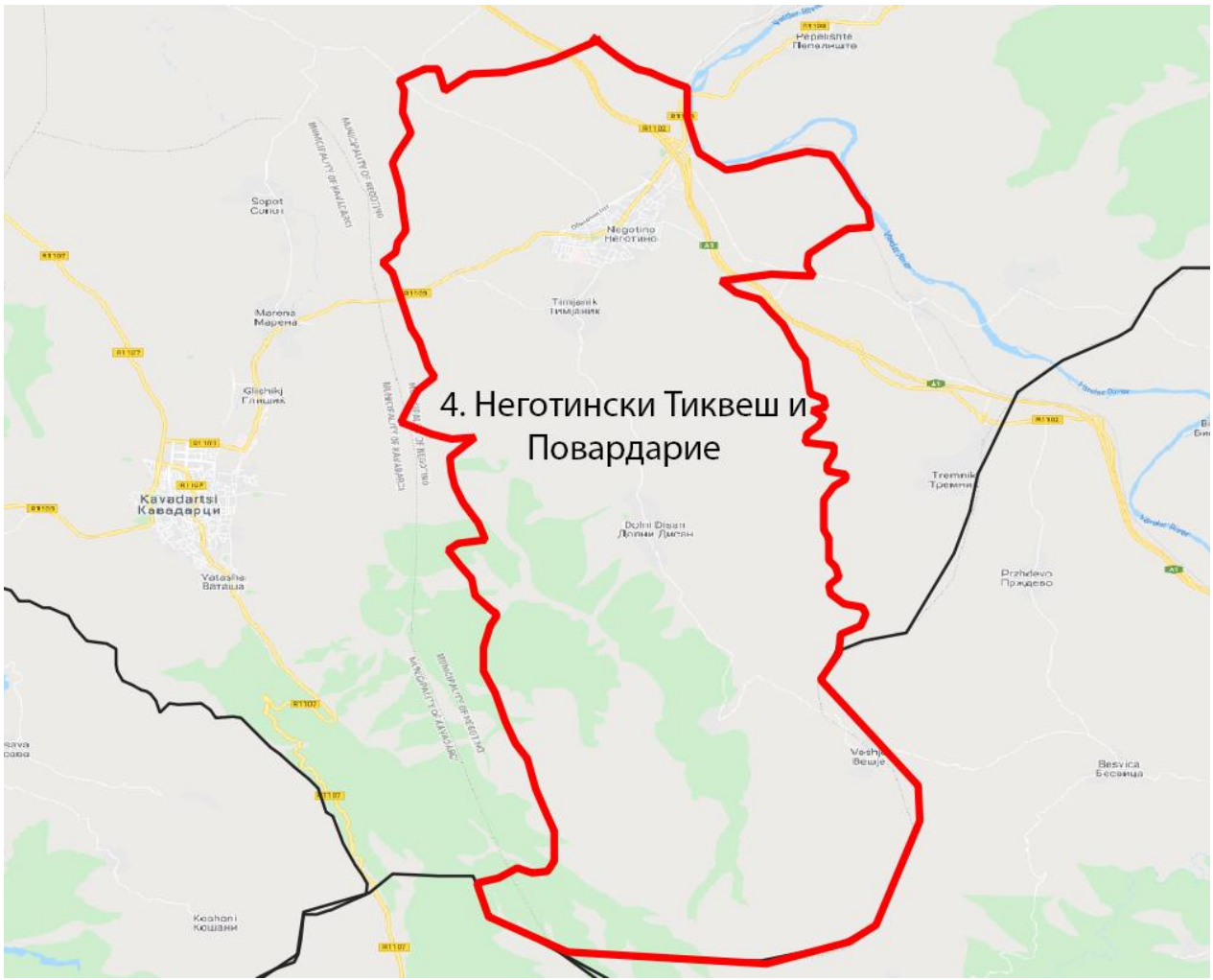
GIS marking of the zones for the development of rural tourism in VAPR

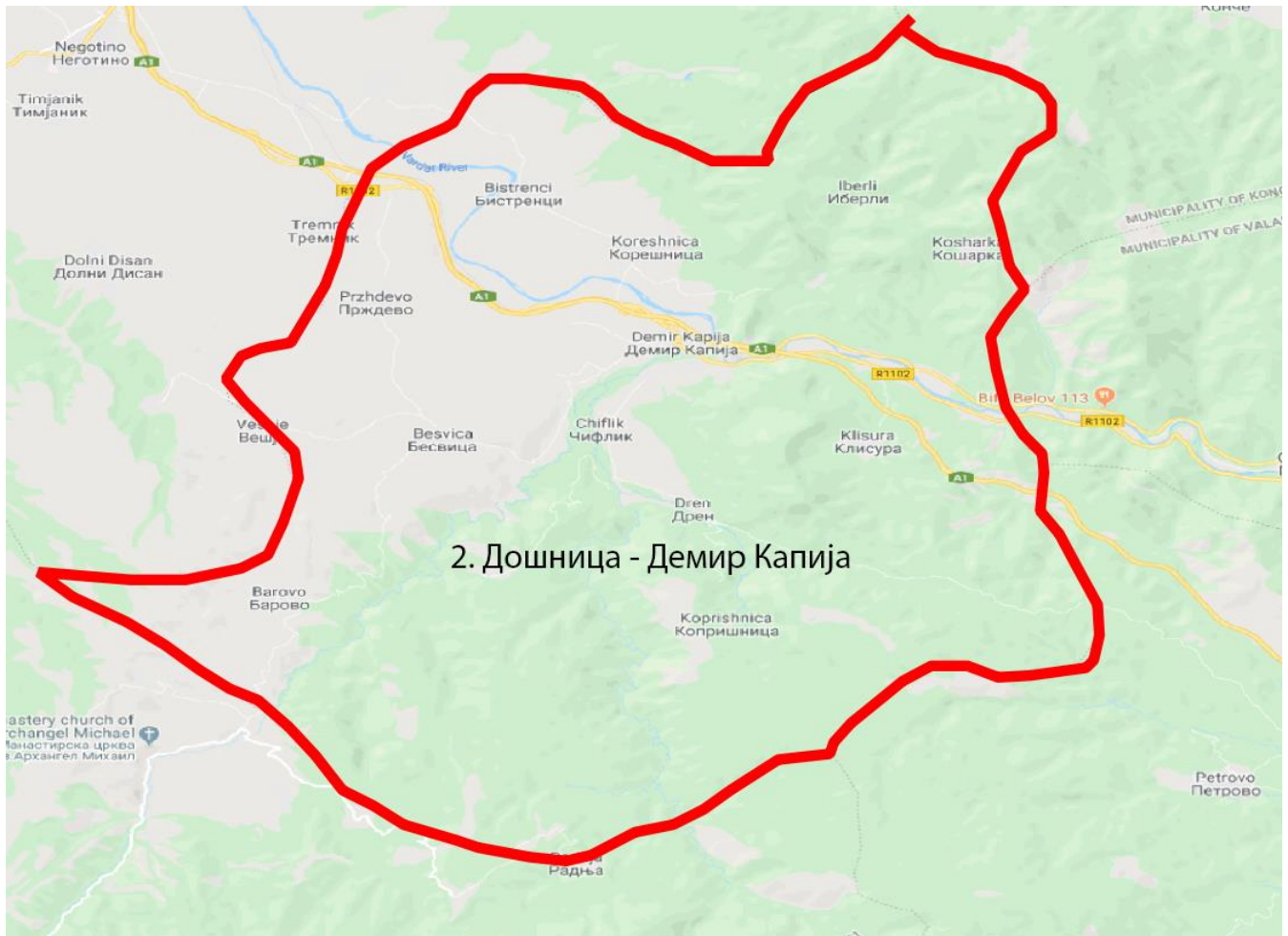






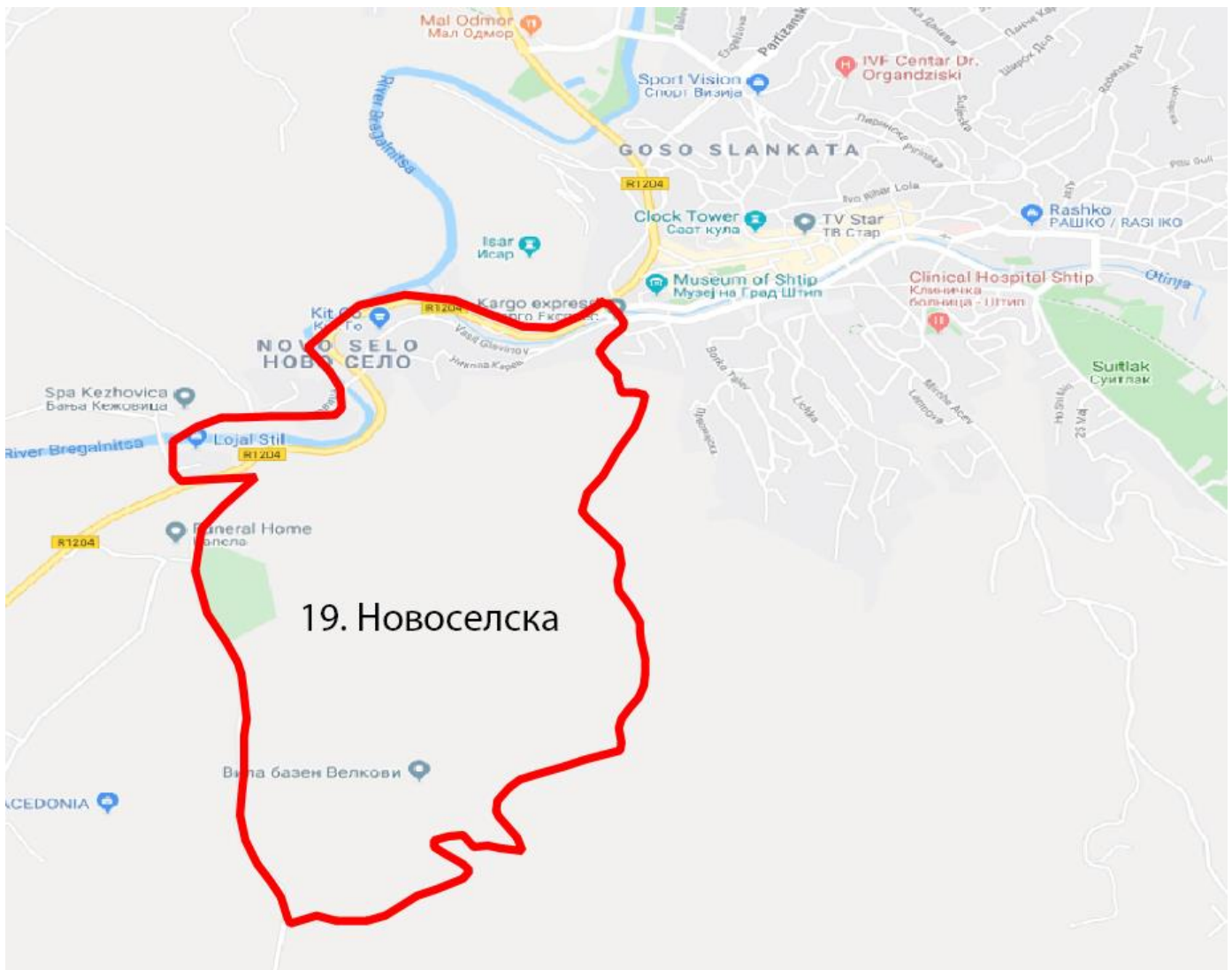


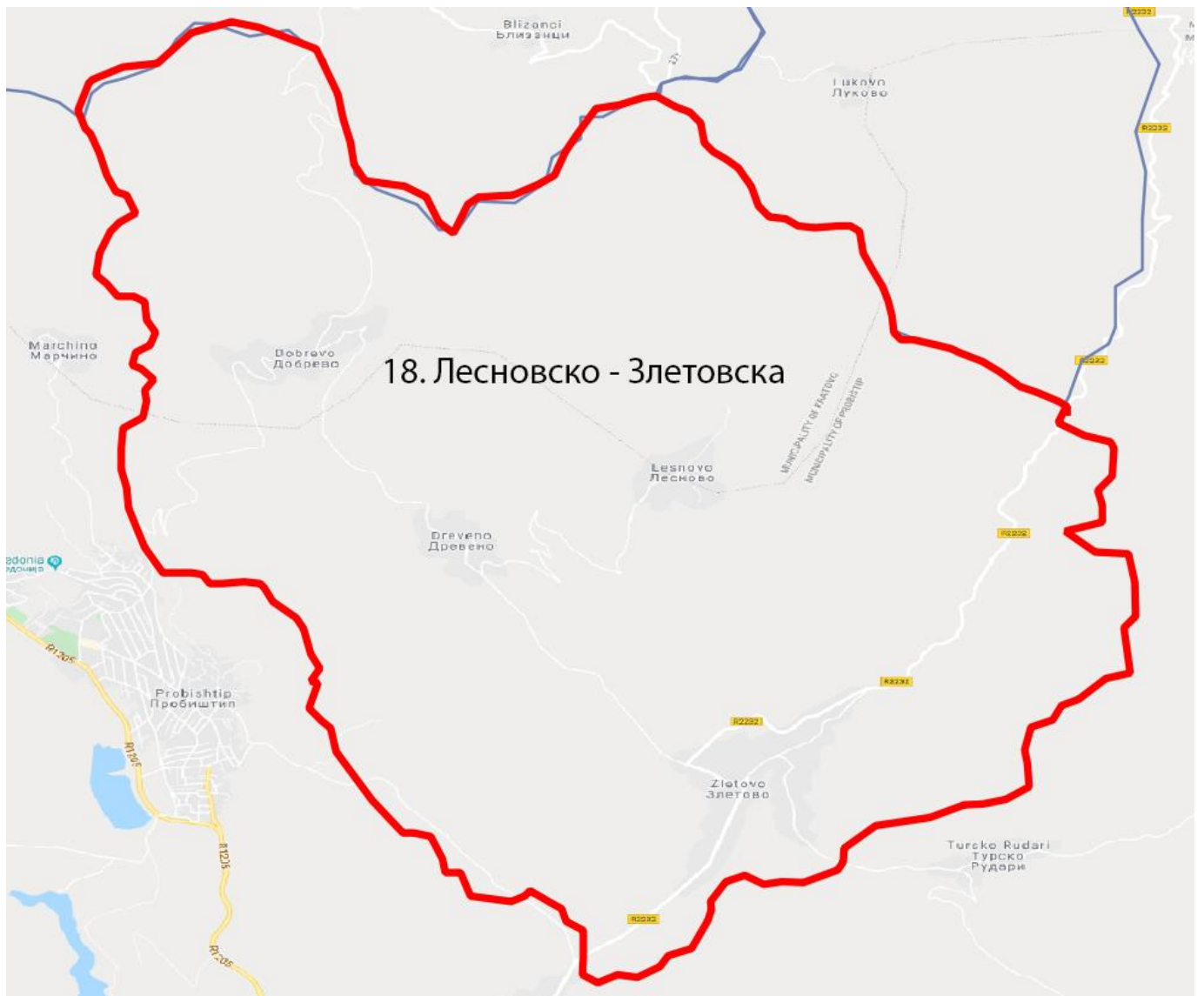


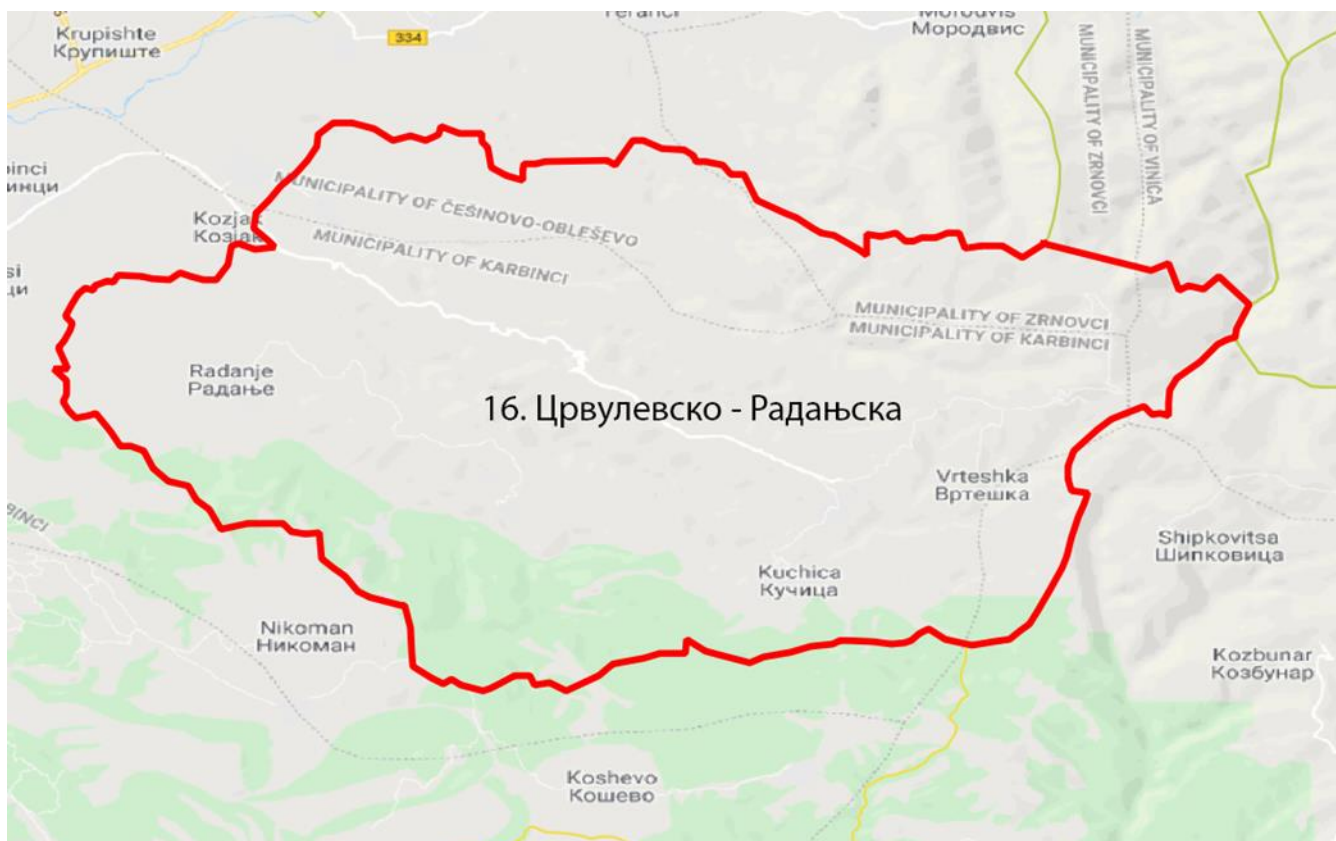


GIS marking of the zones for the development of rural tourism in EAPR





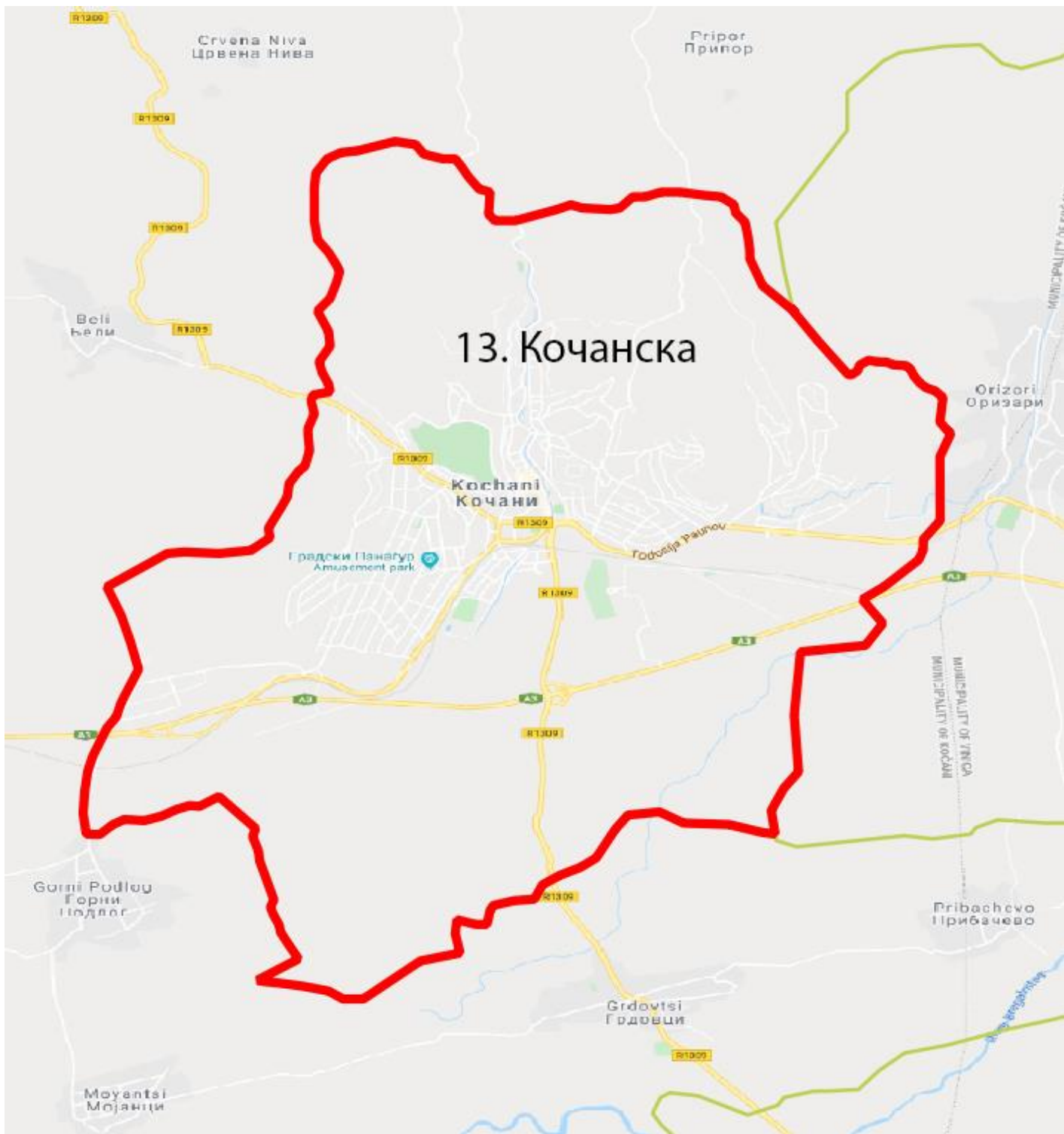


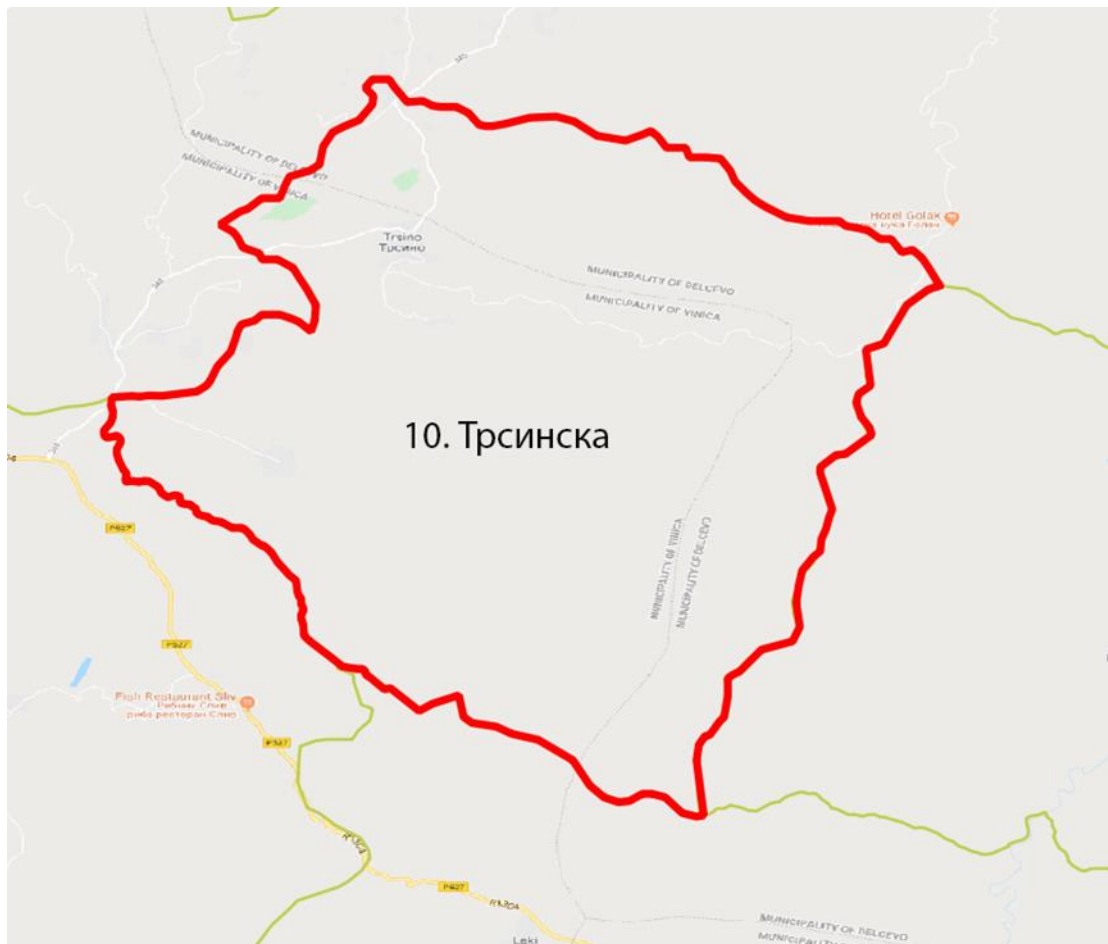
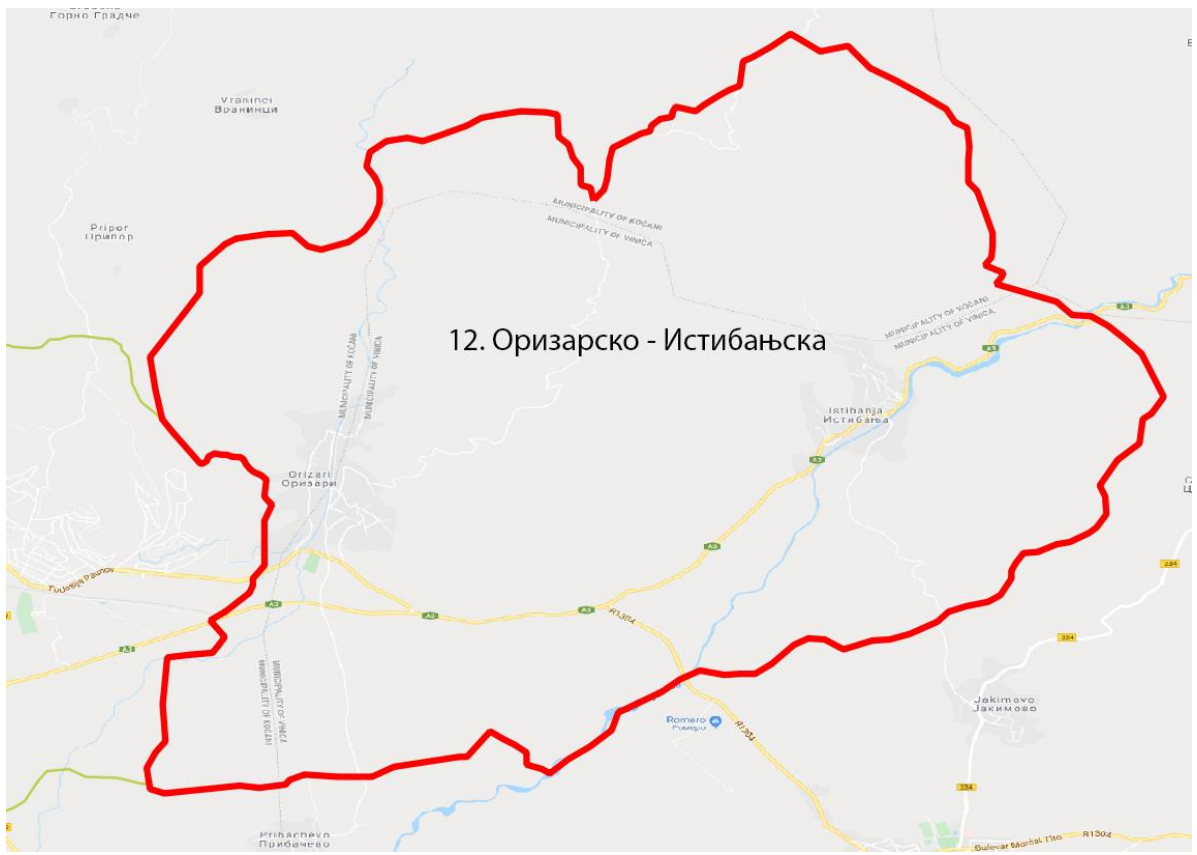


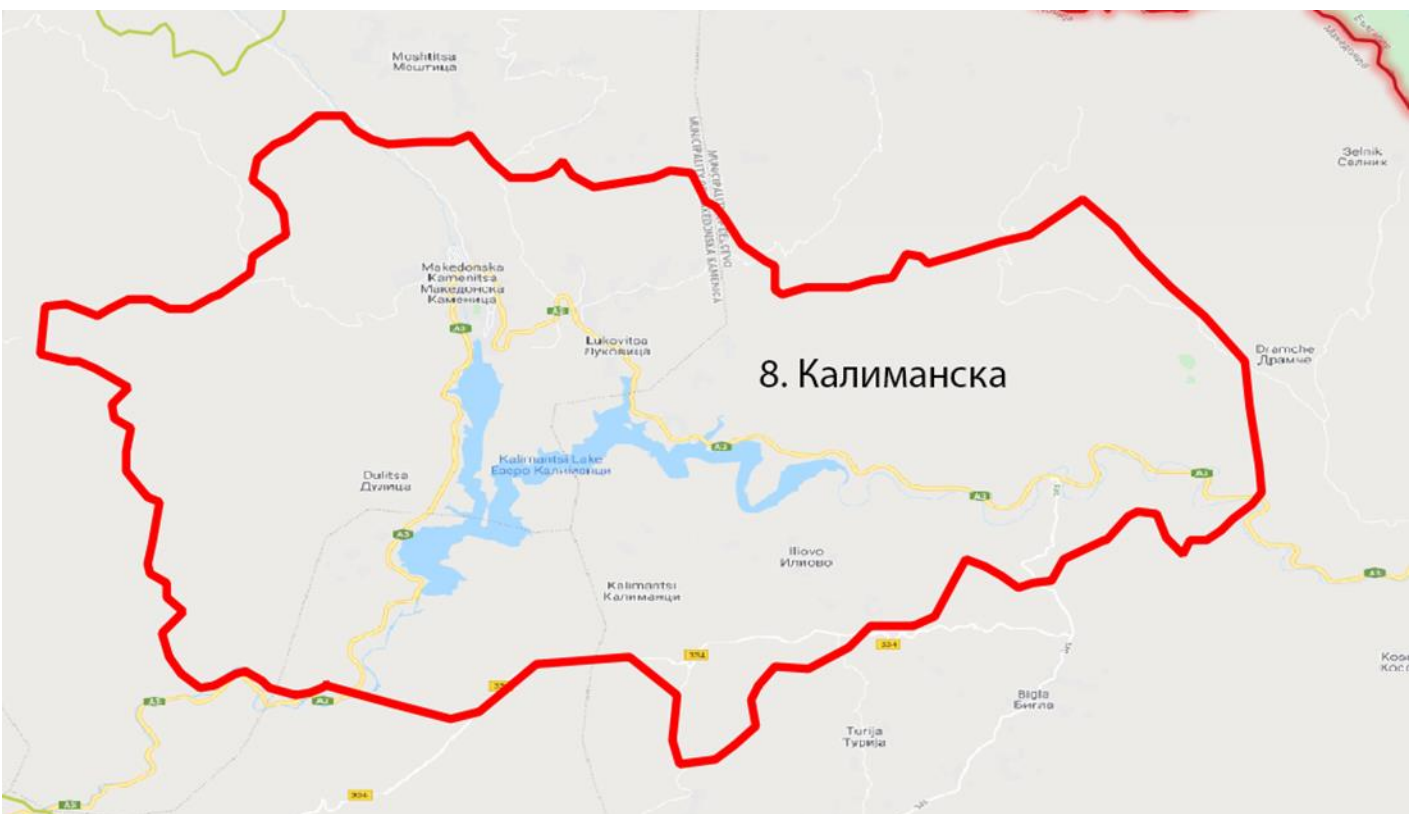


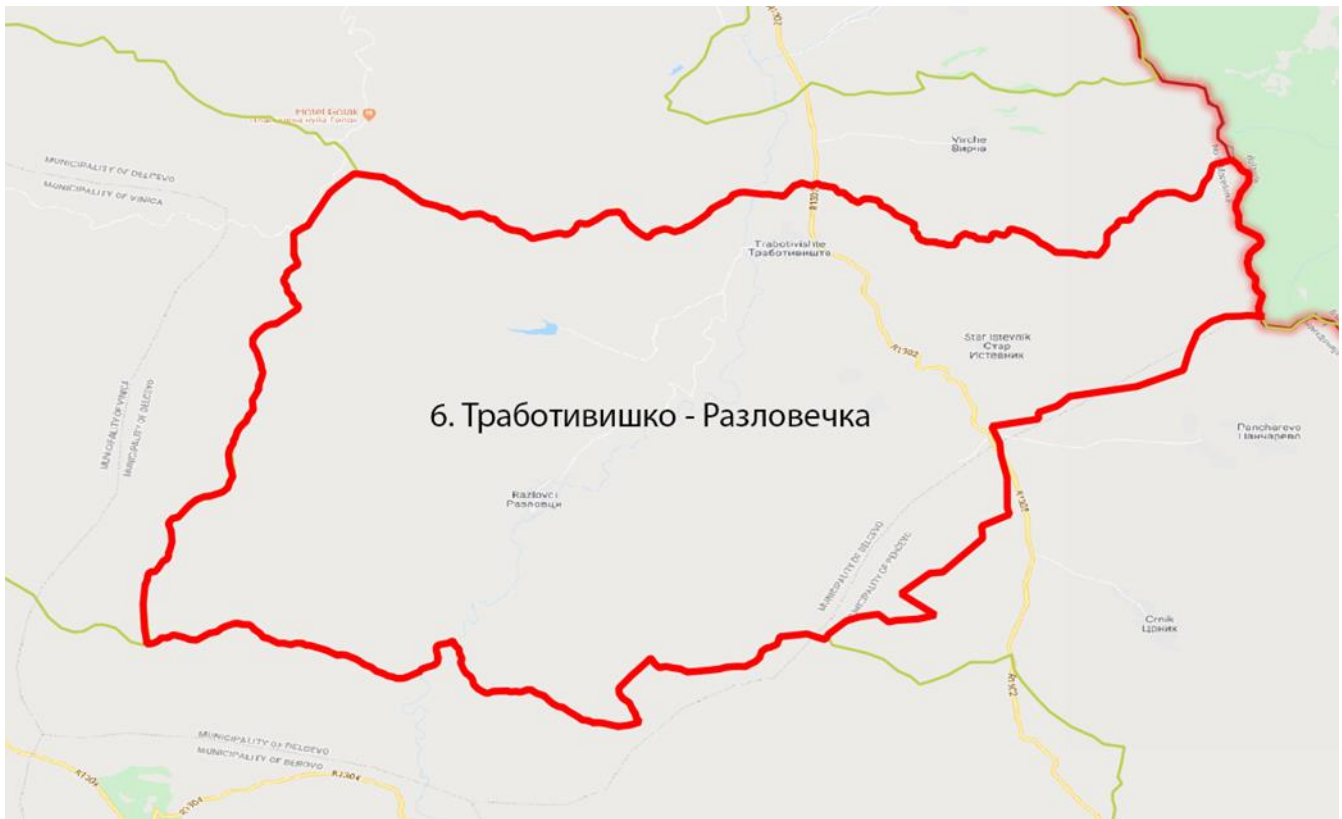
14. Пониква



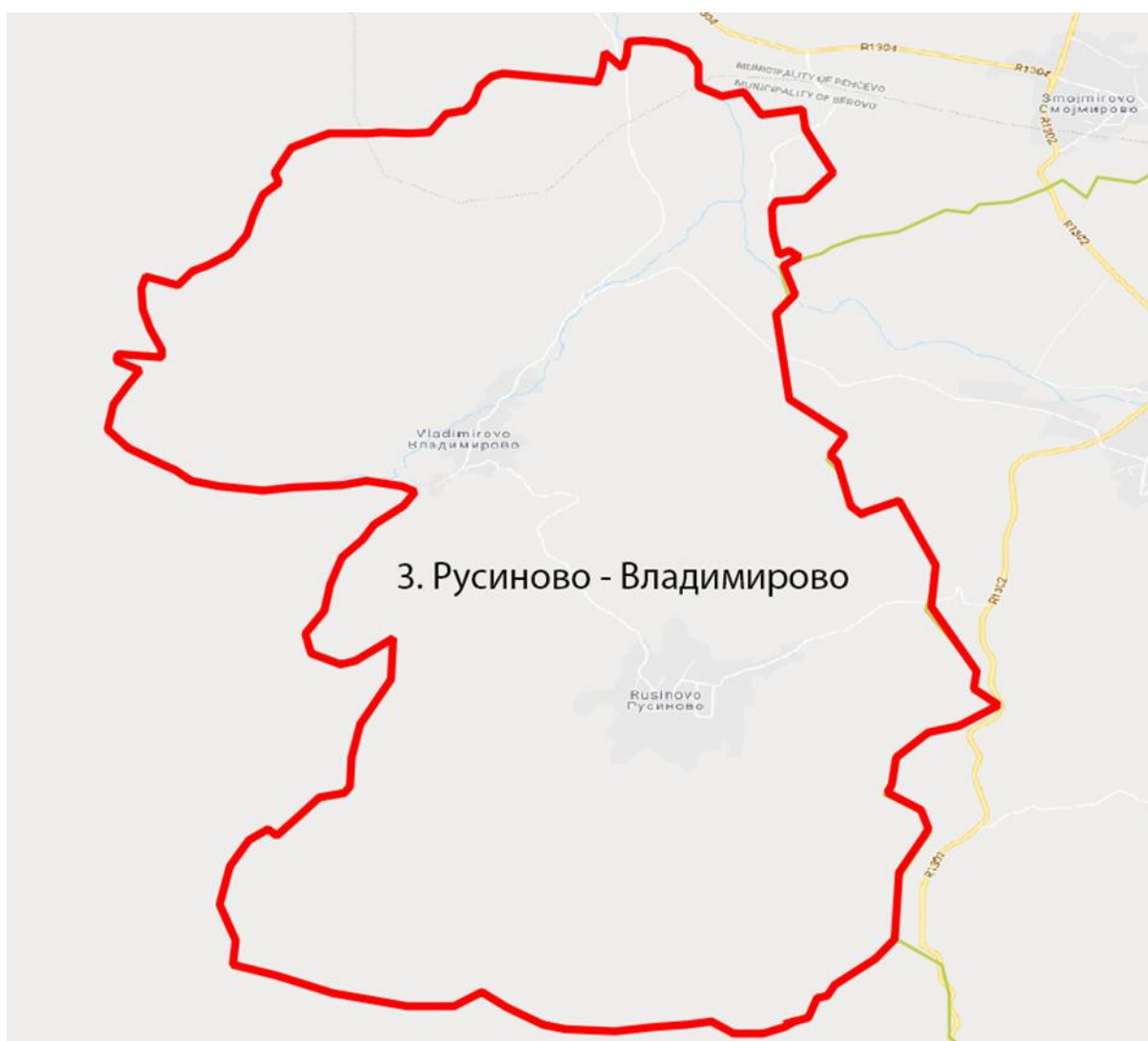
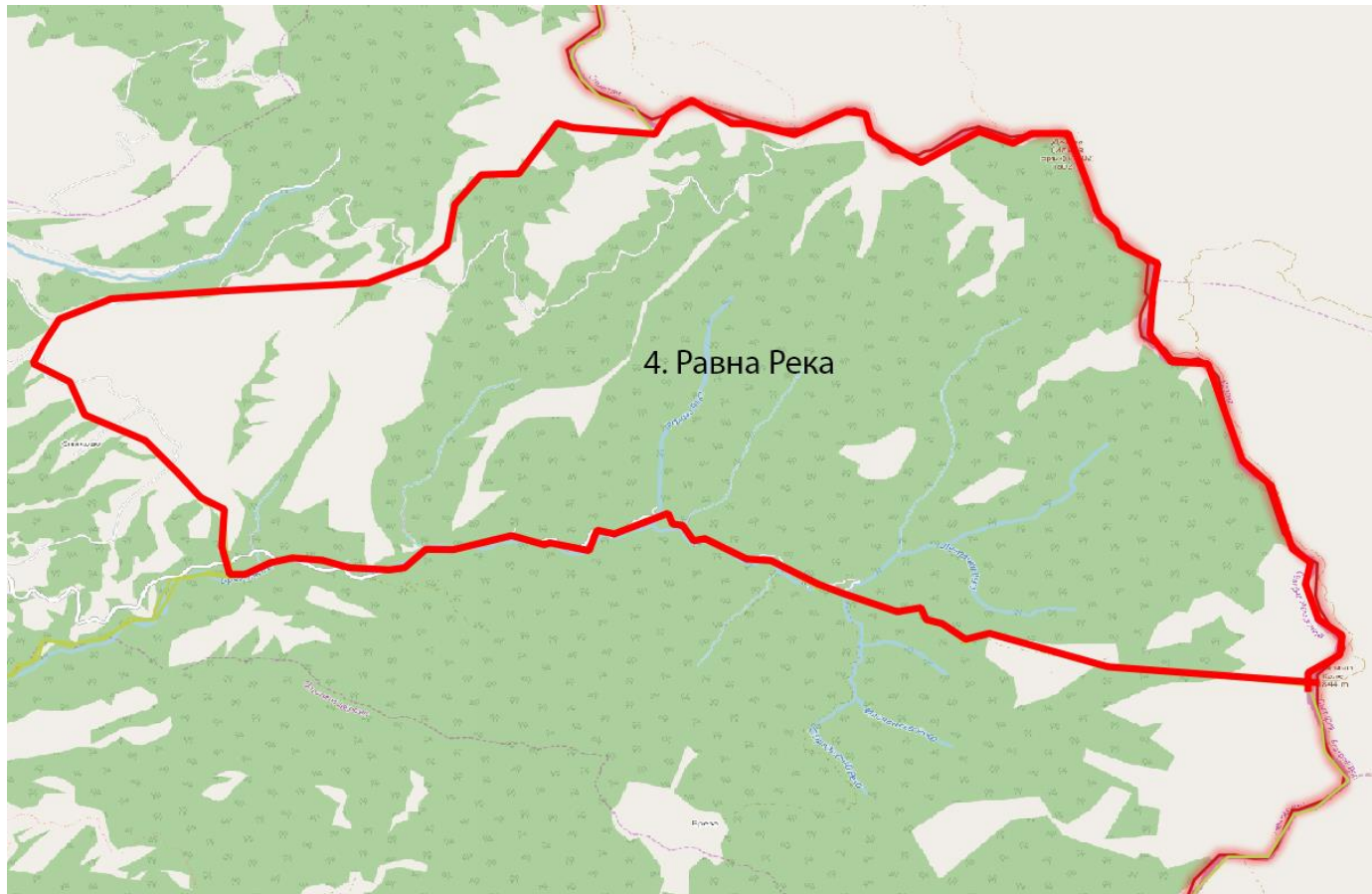




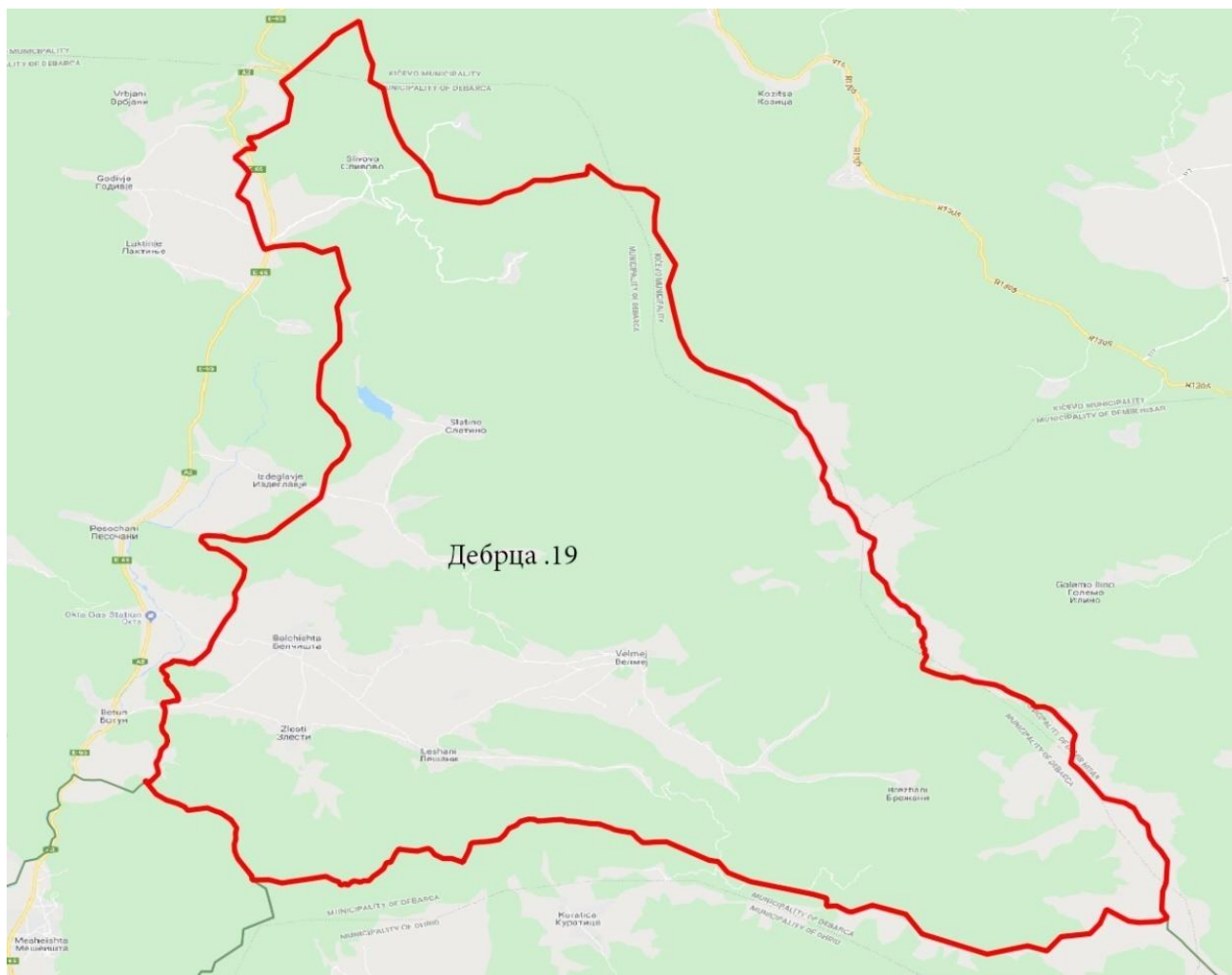


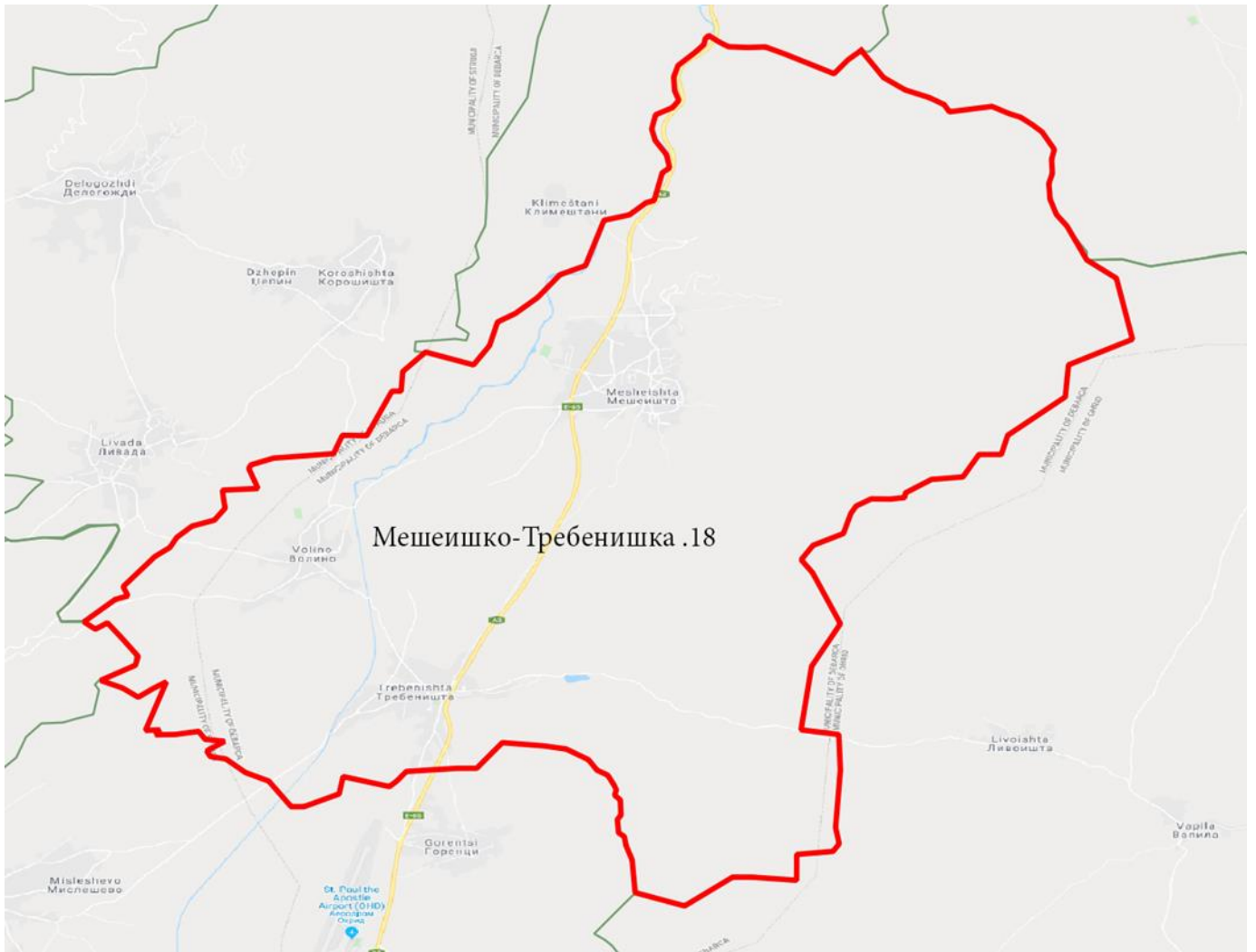


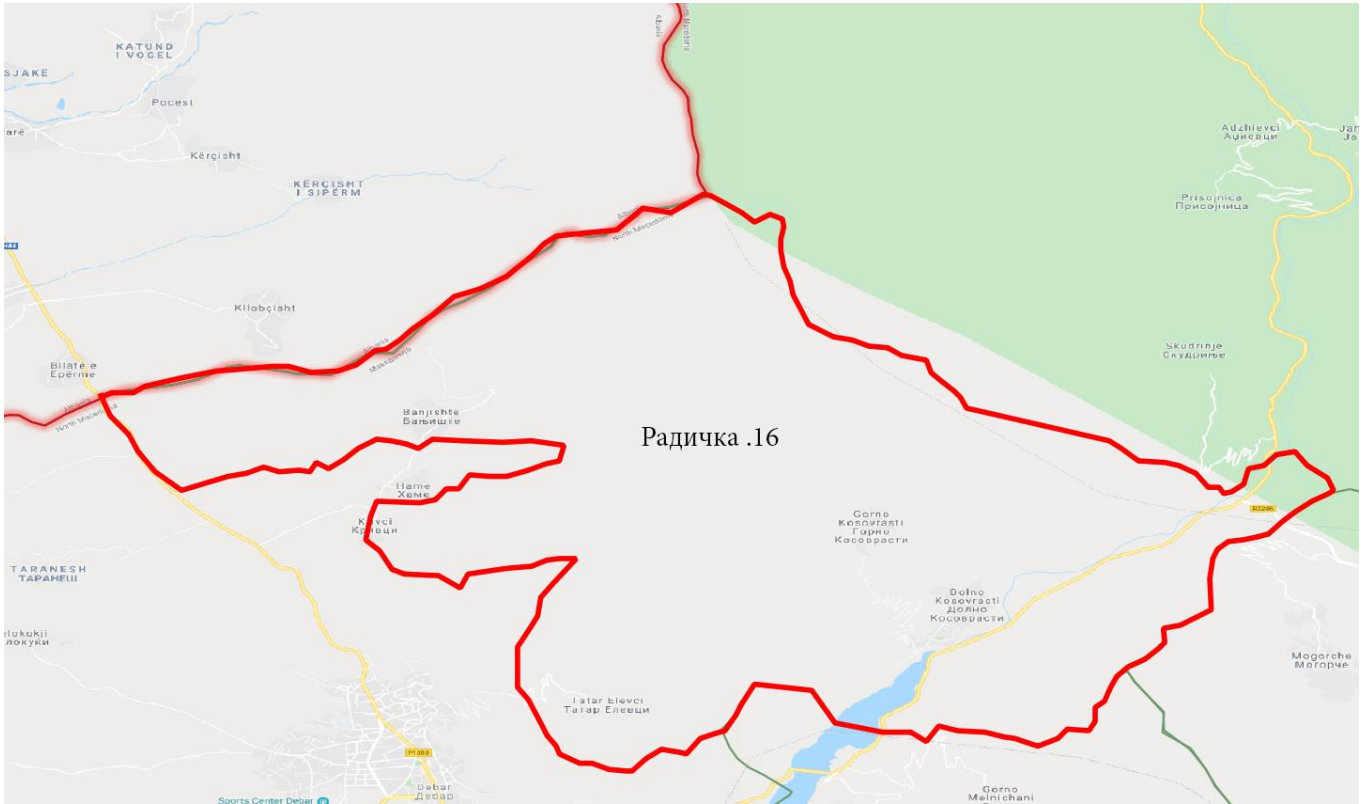


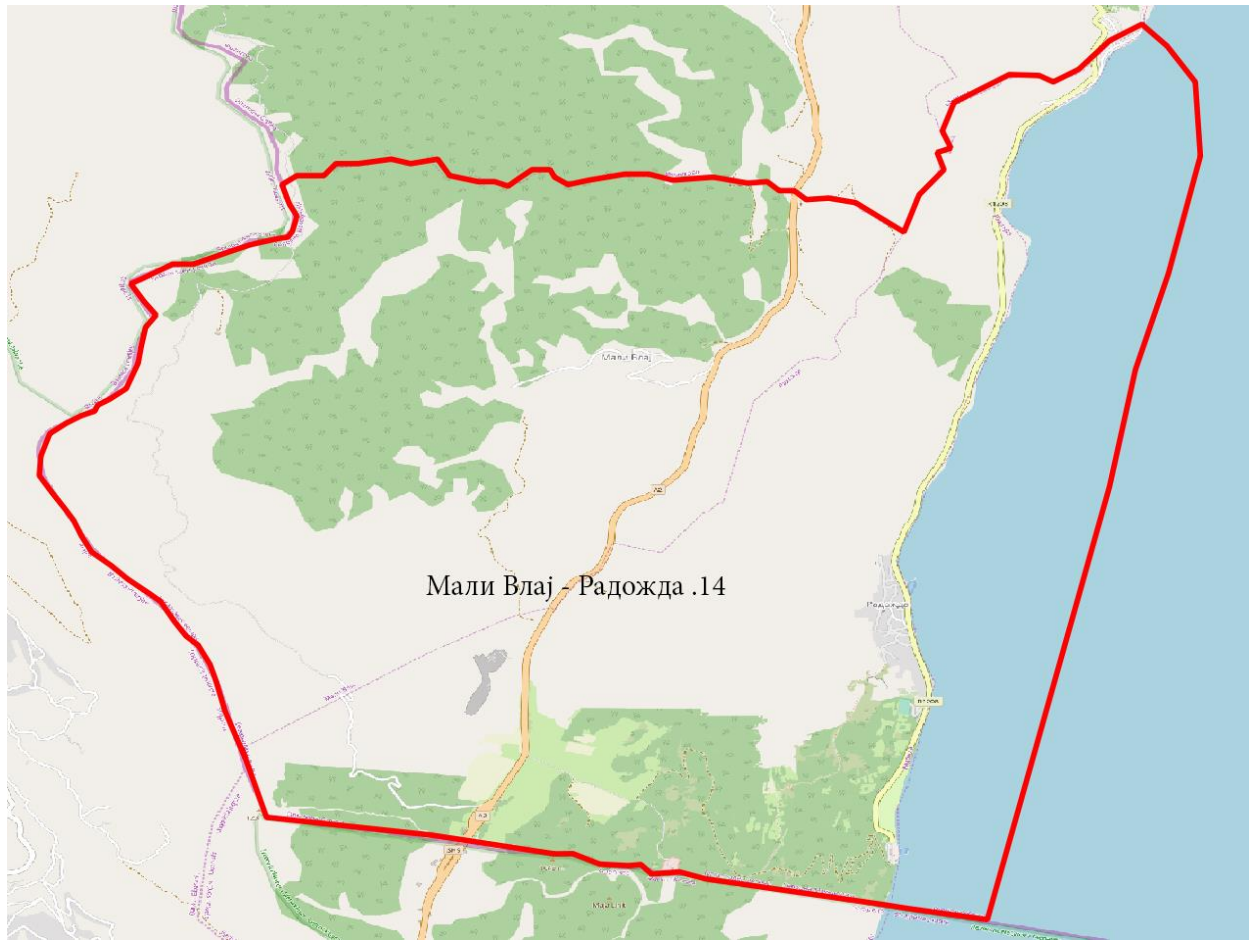


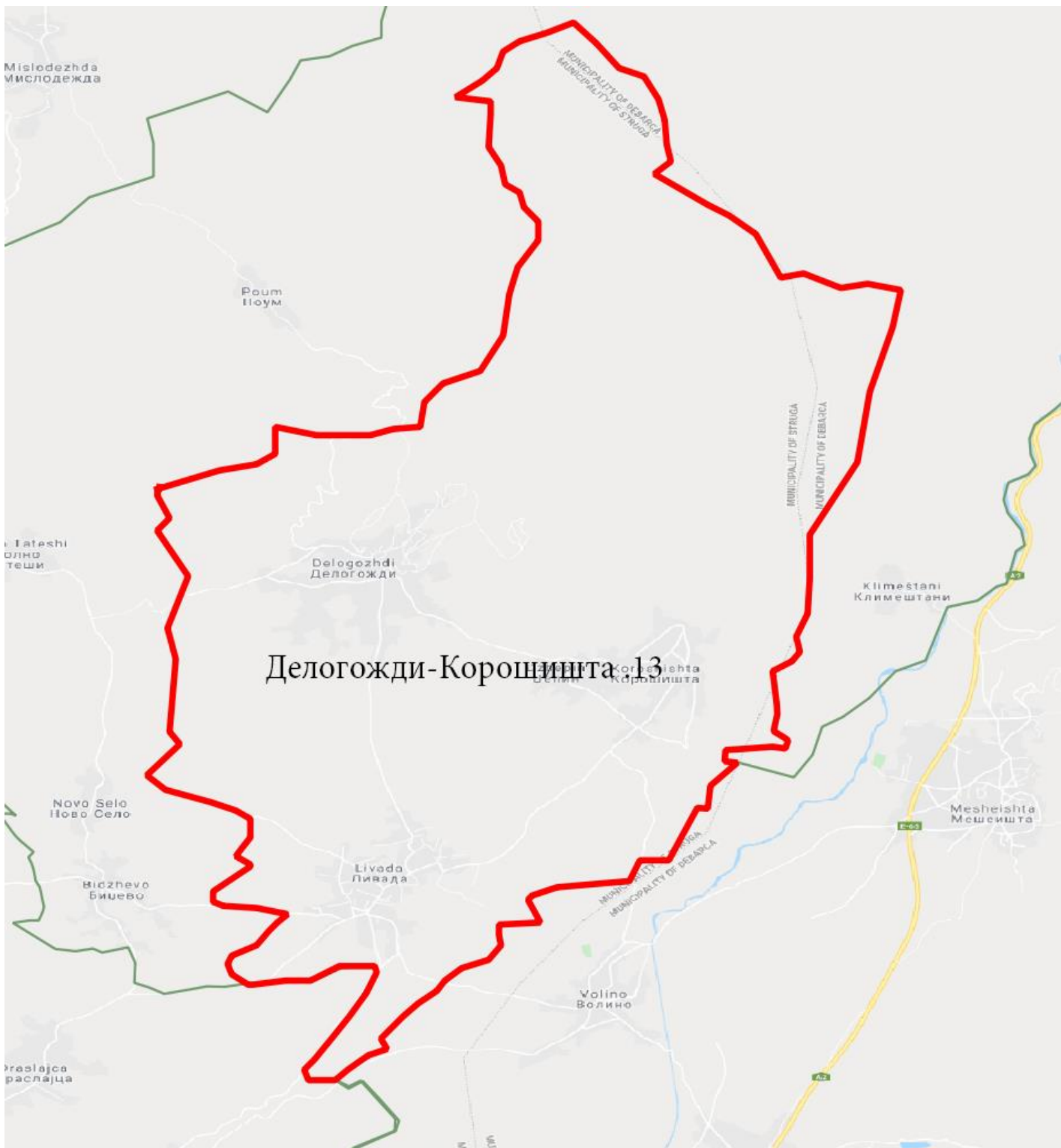


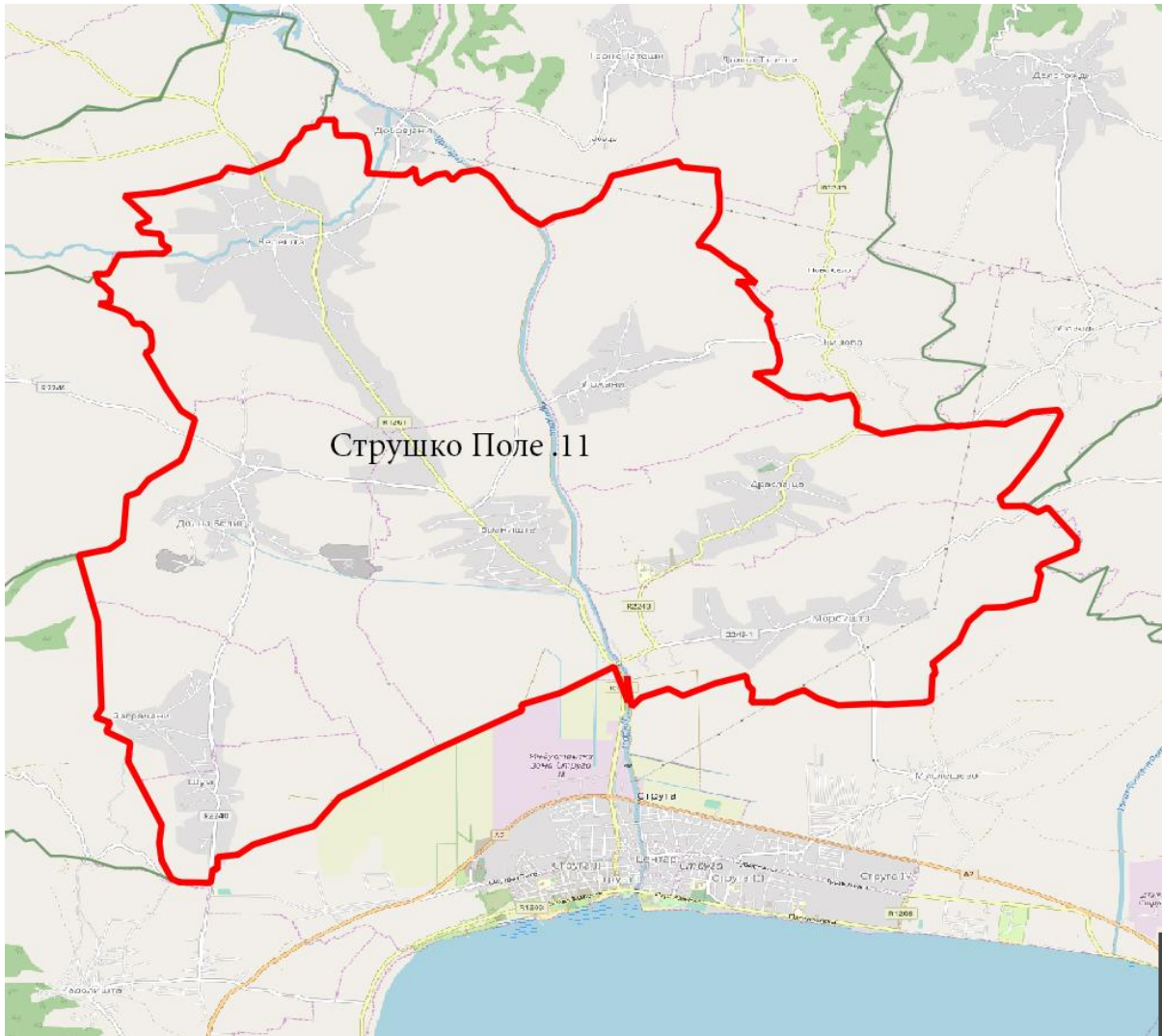


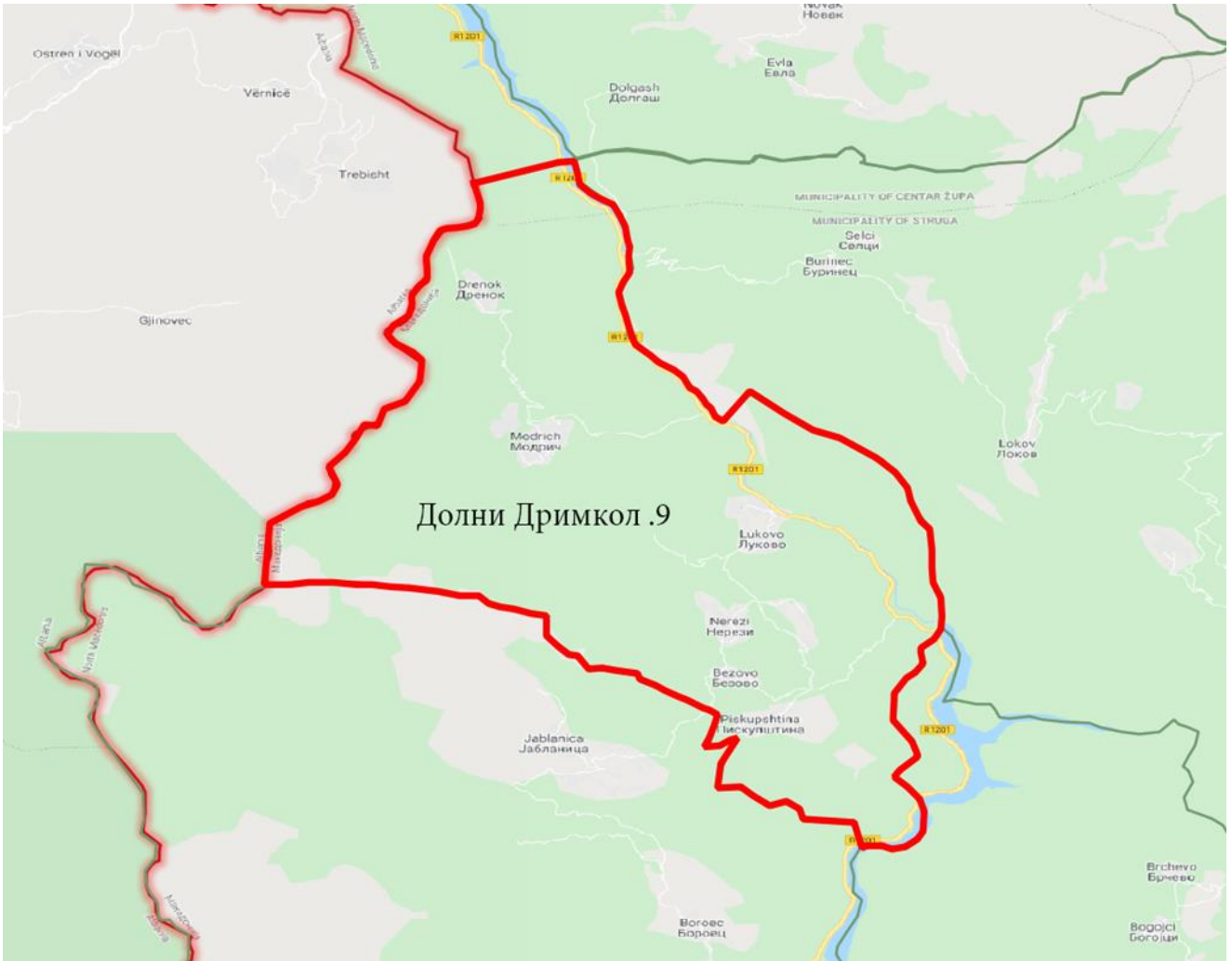
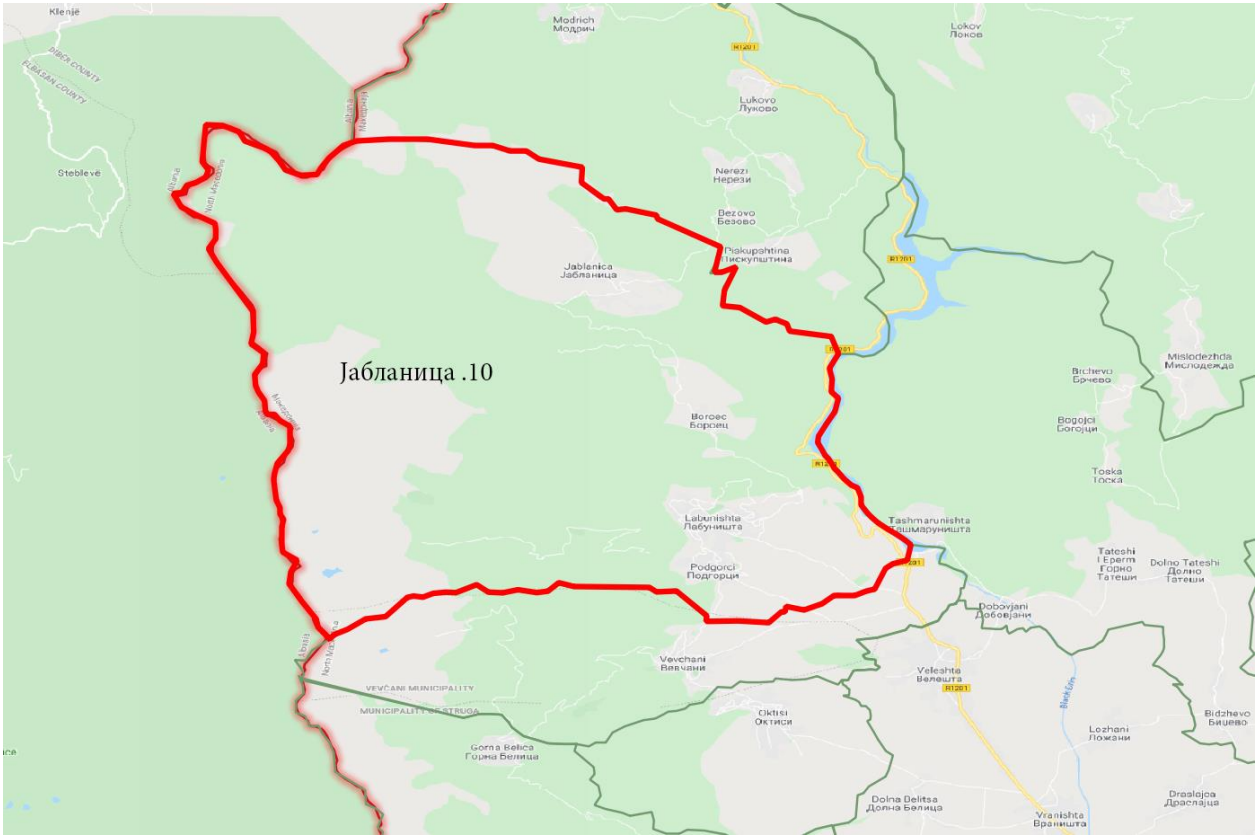


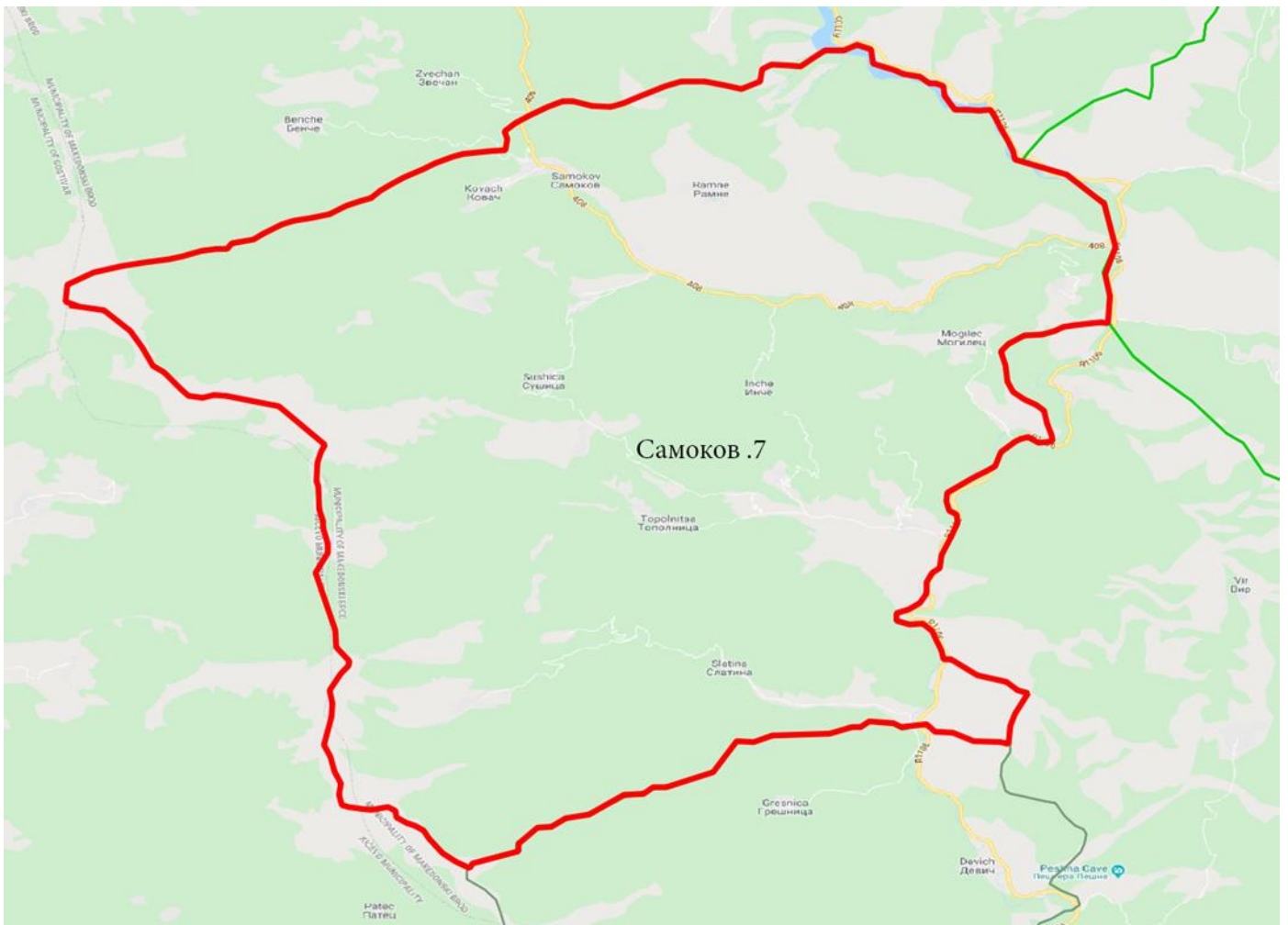
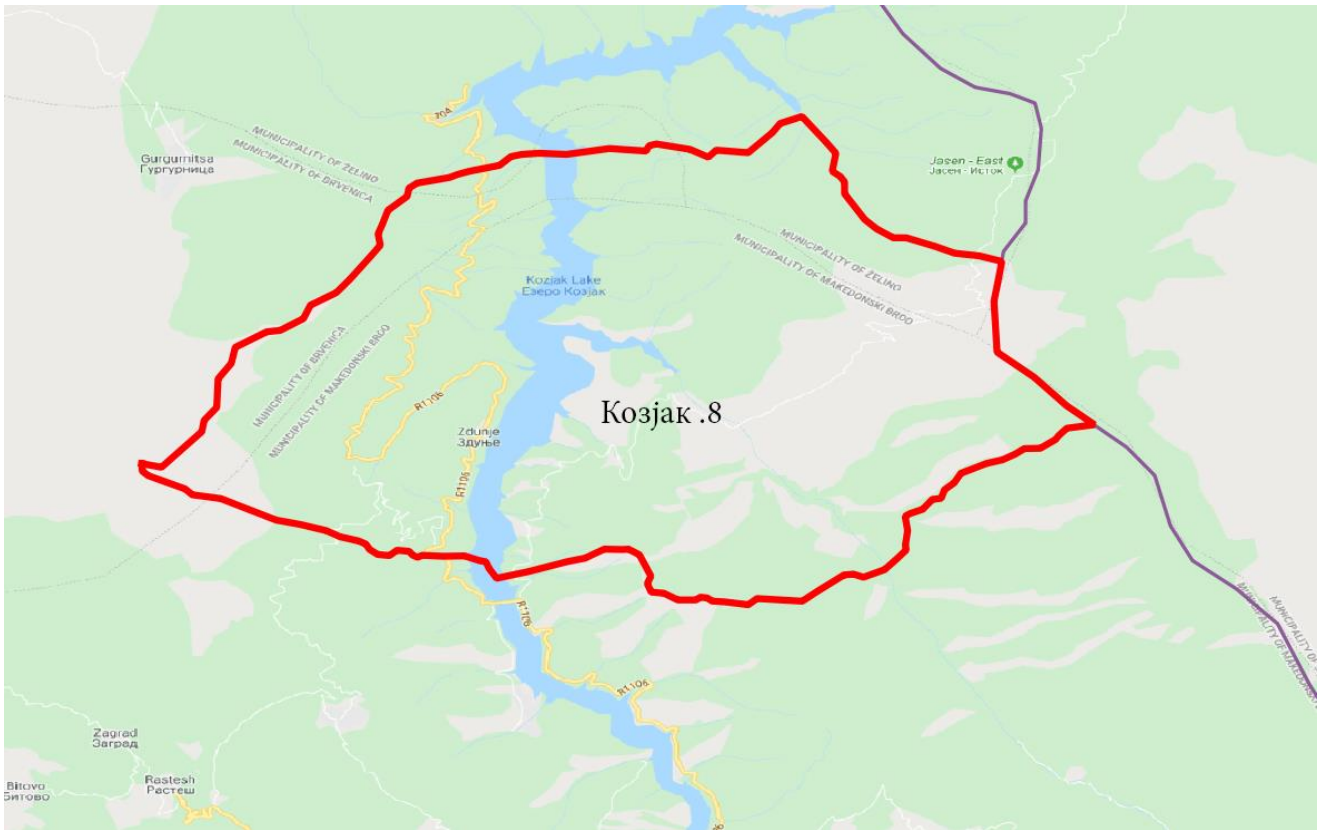


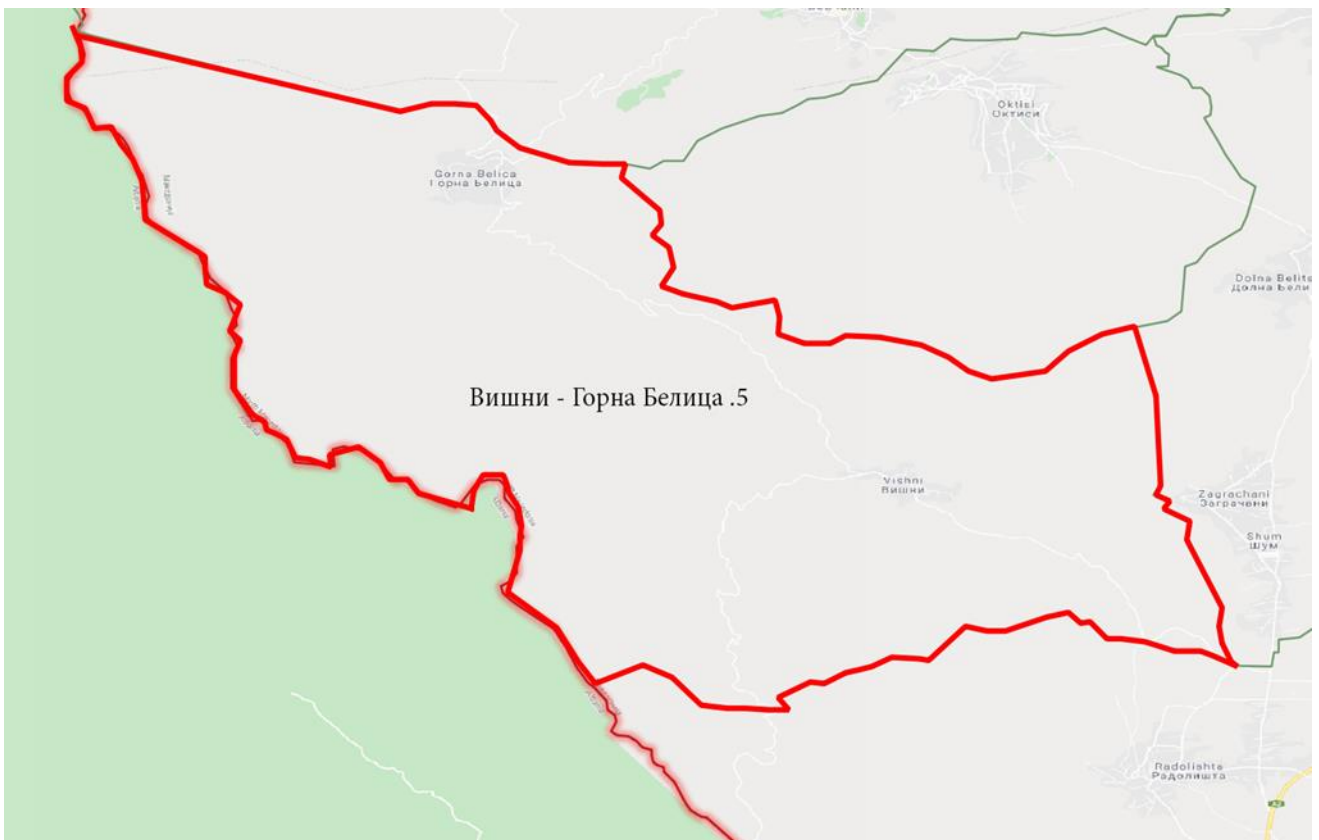
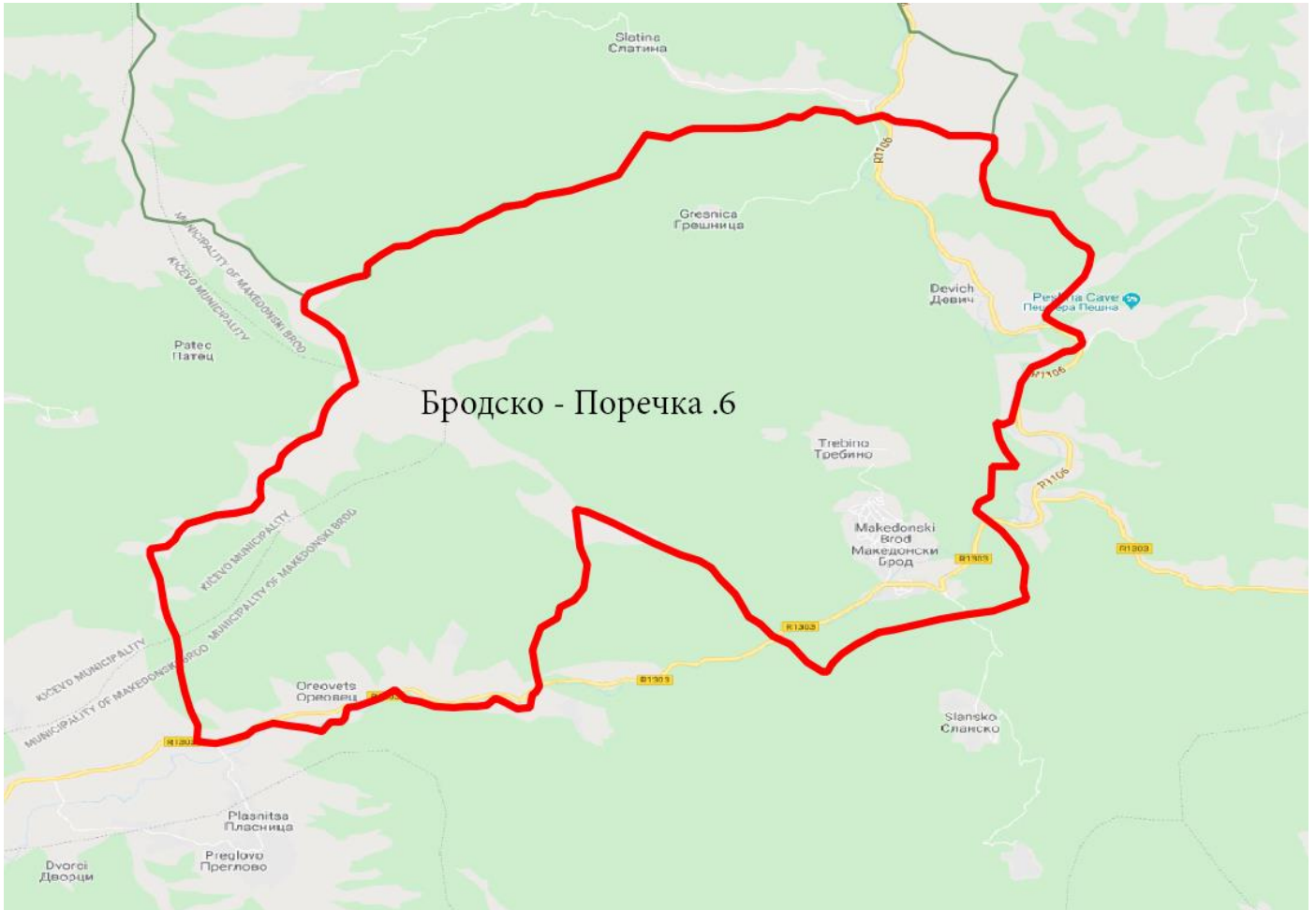




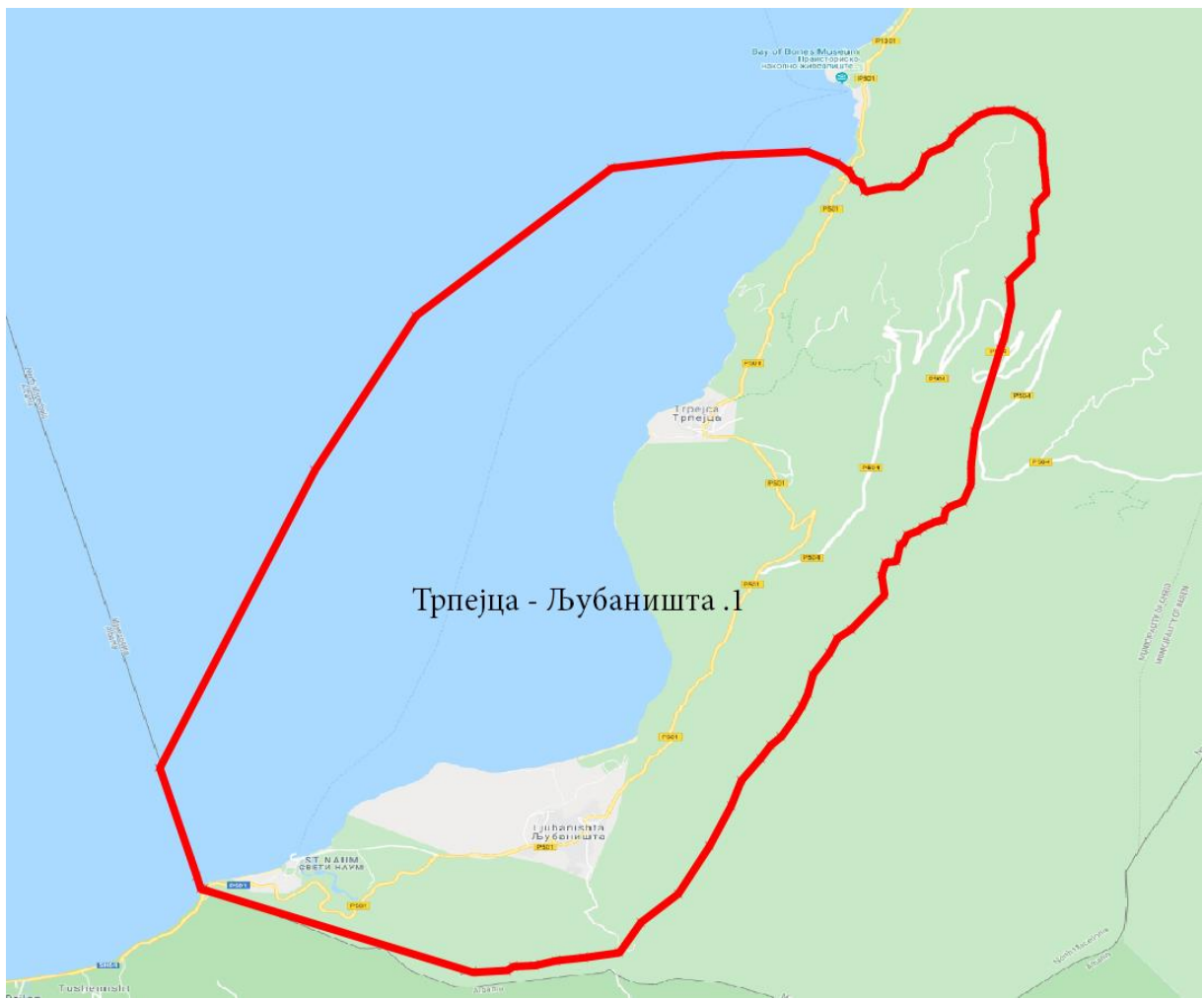


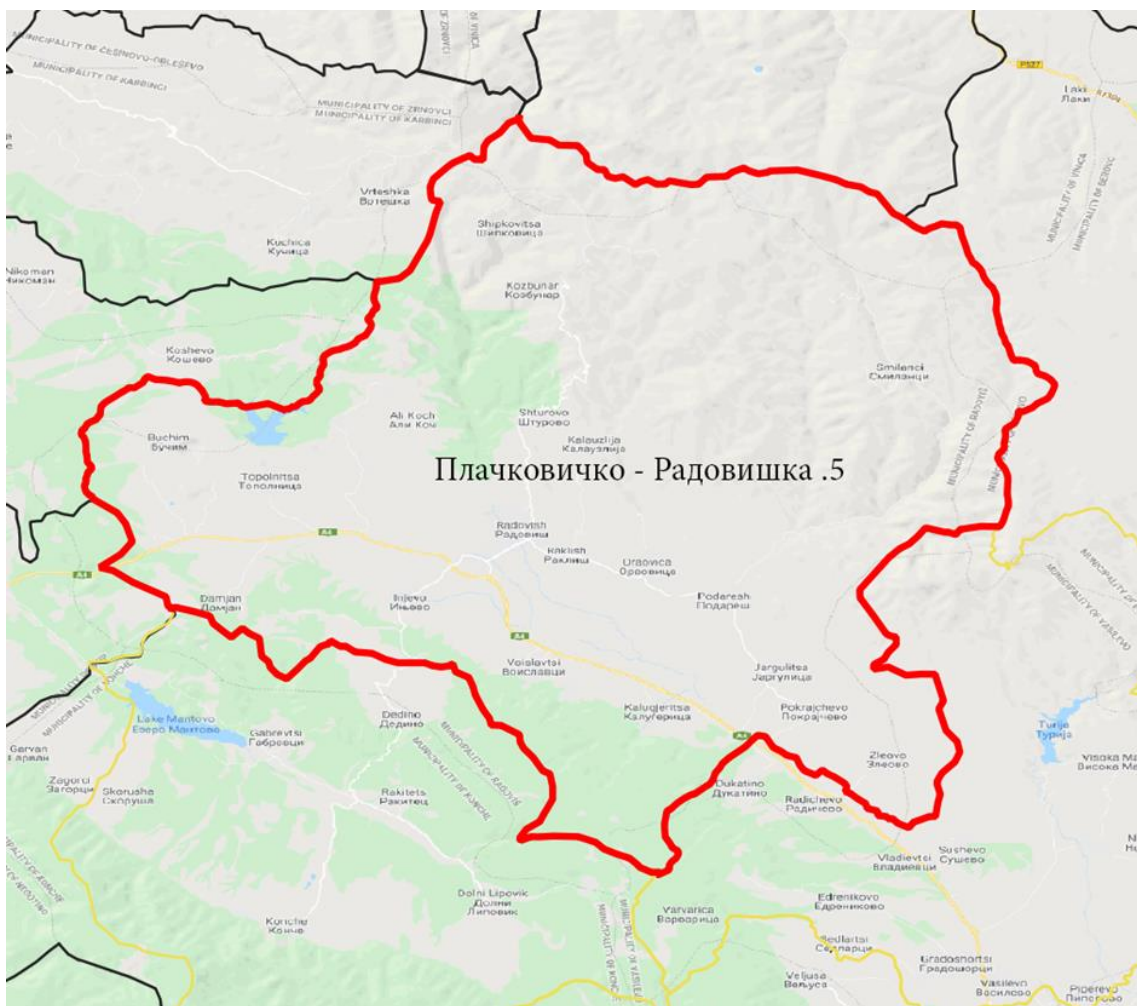
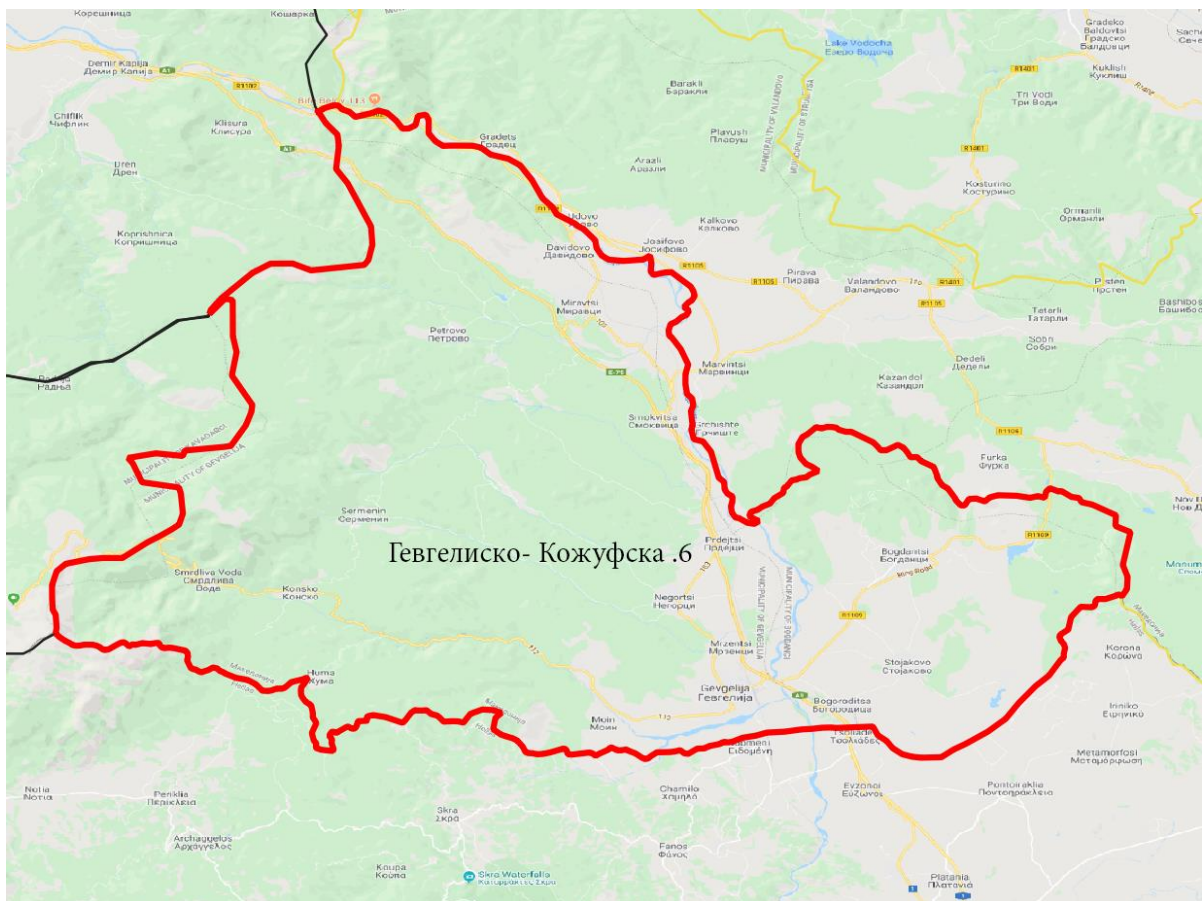


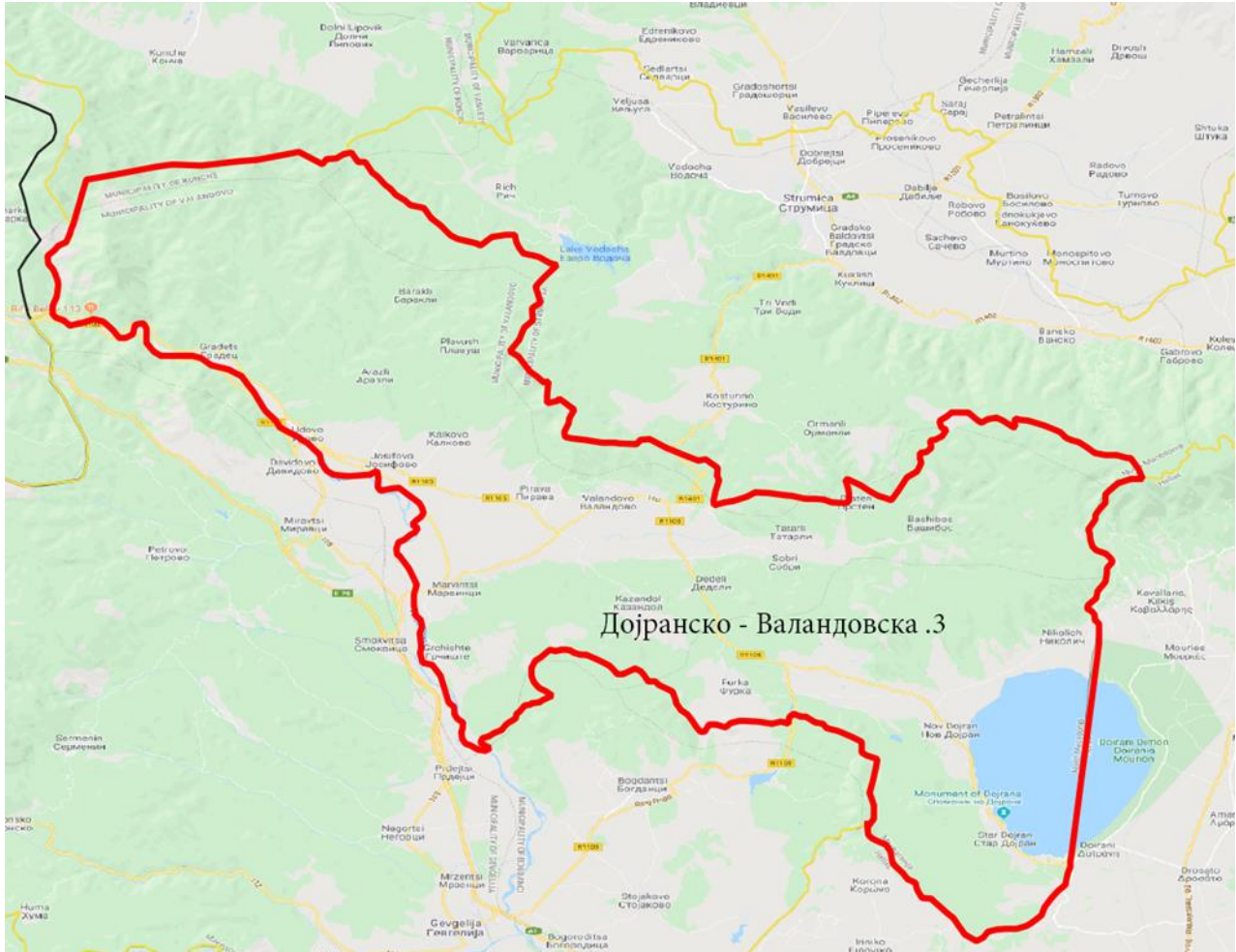
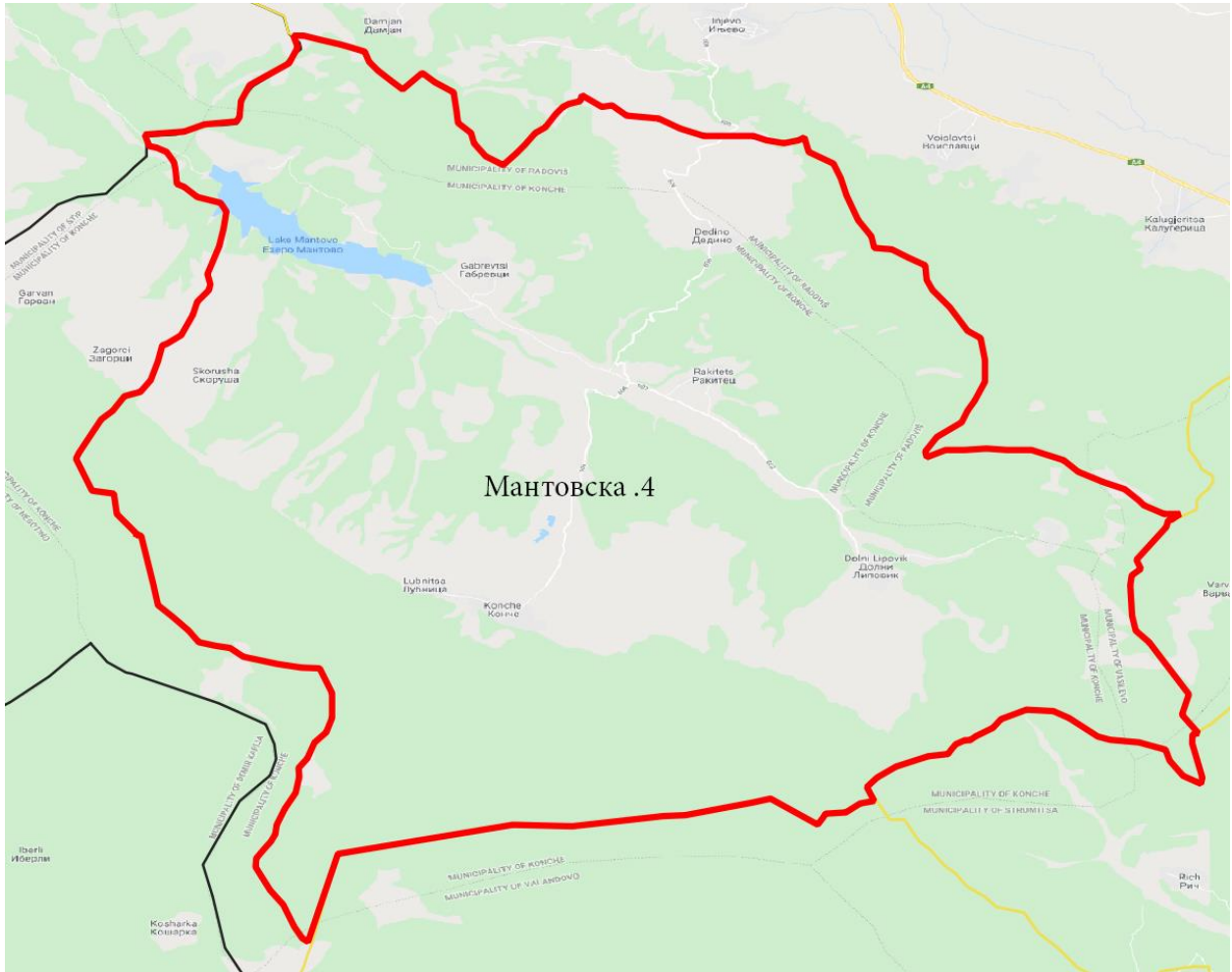


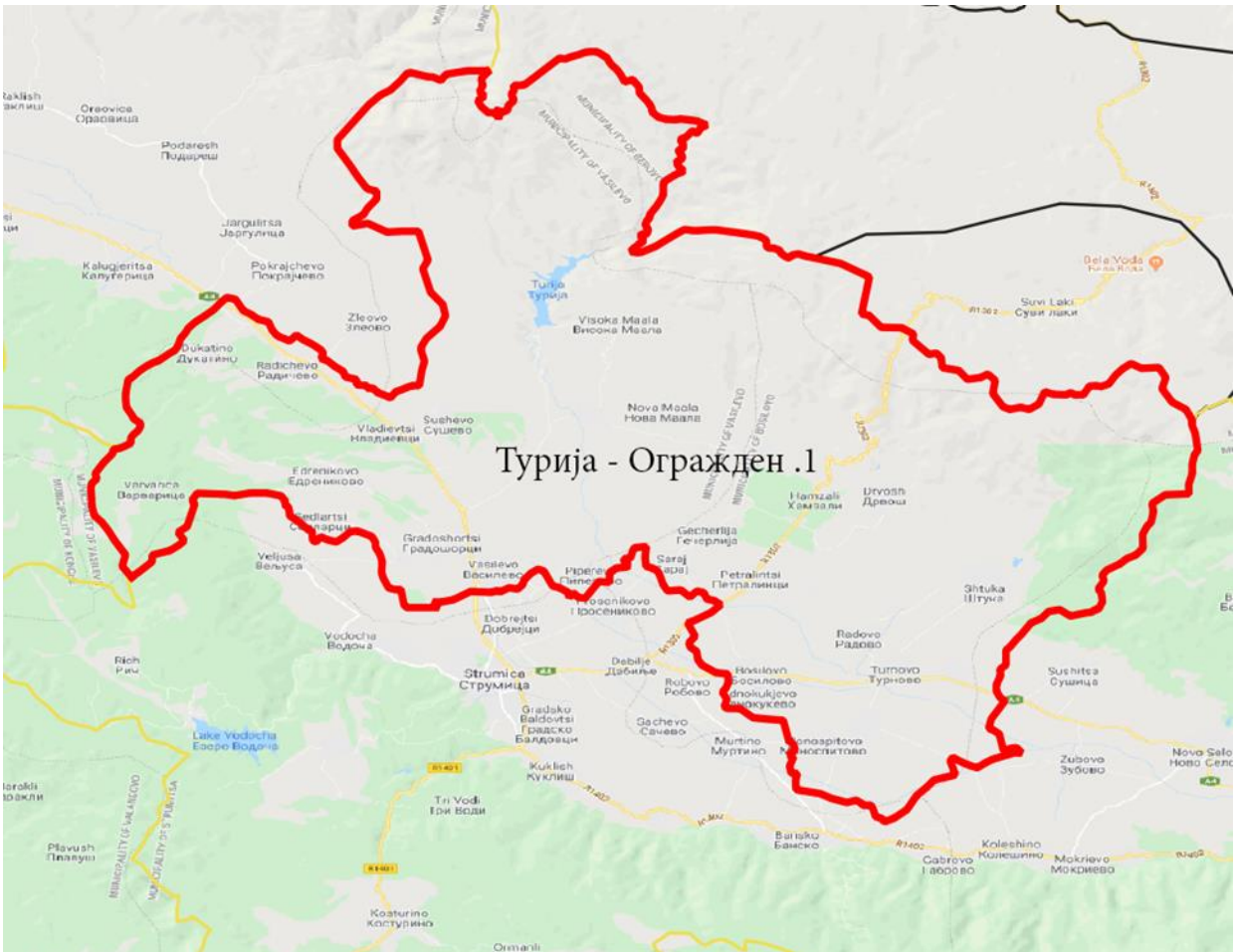
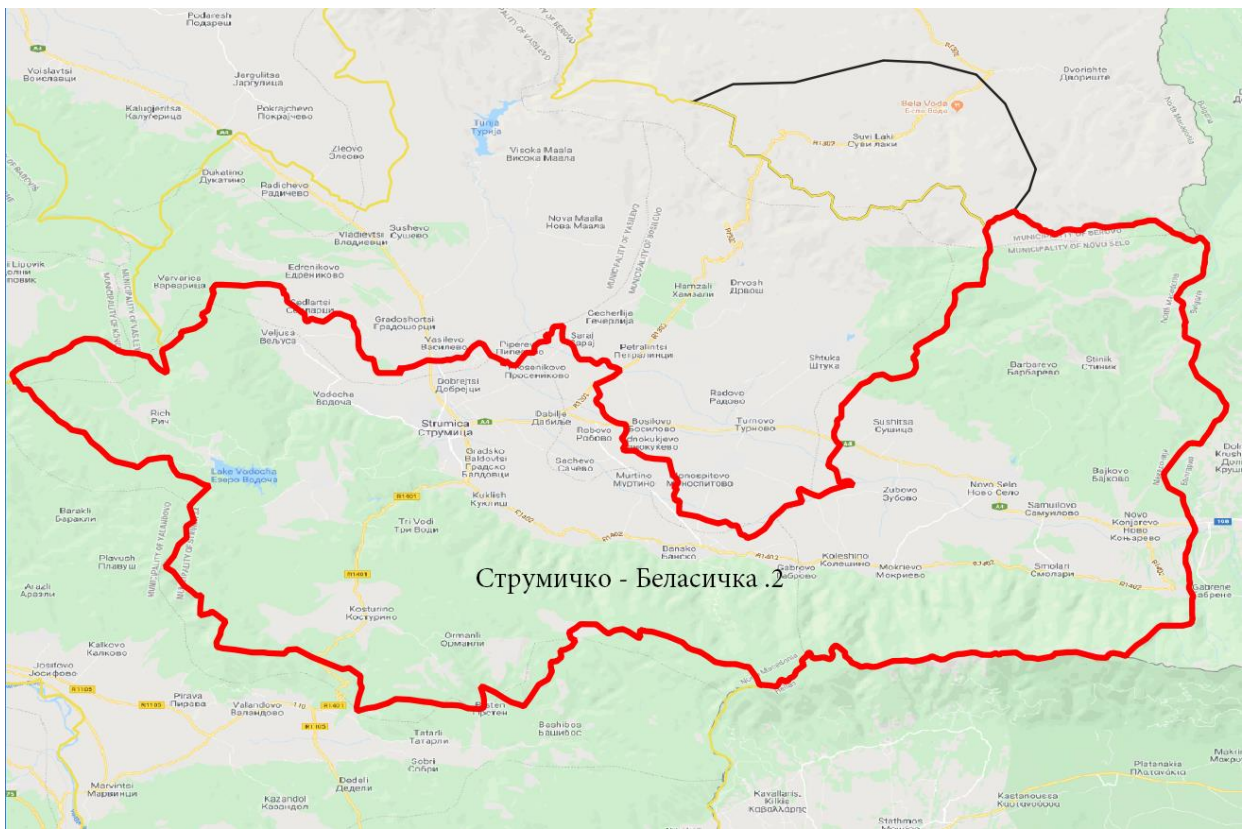


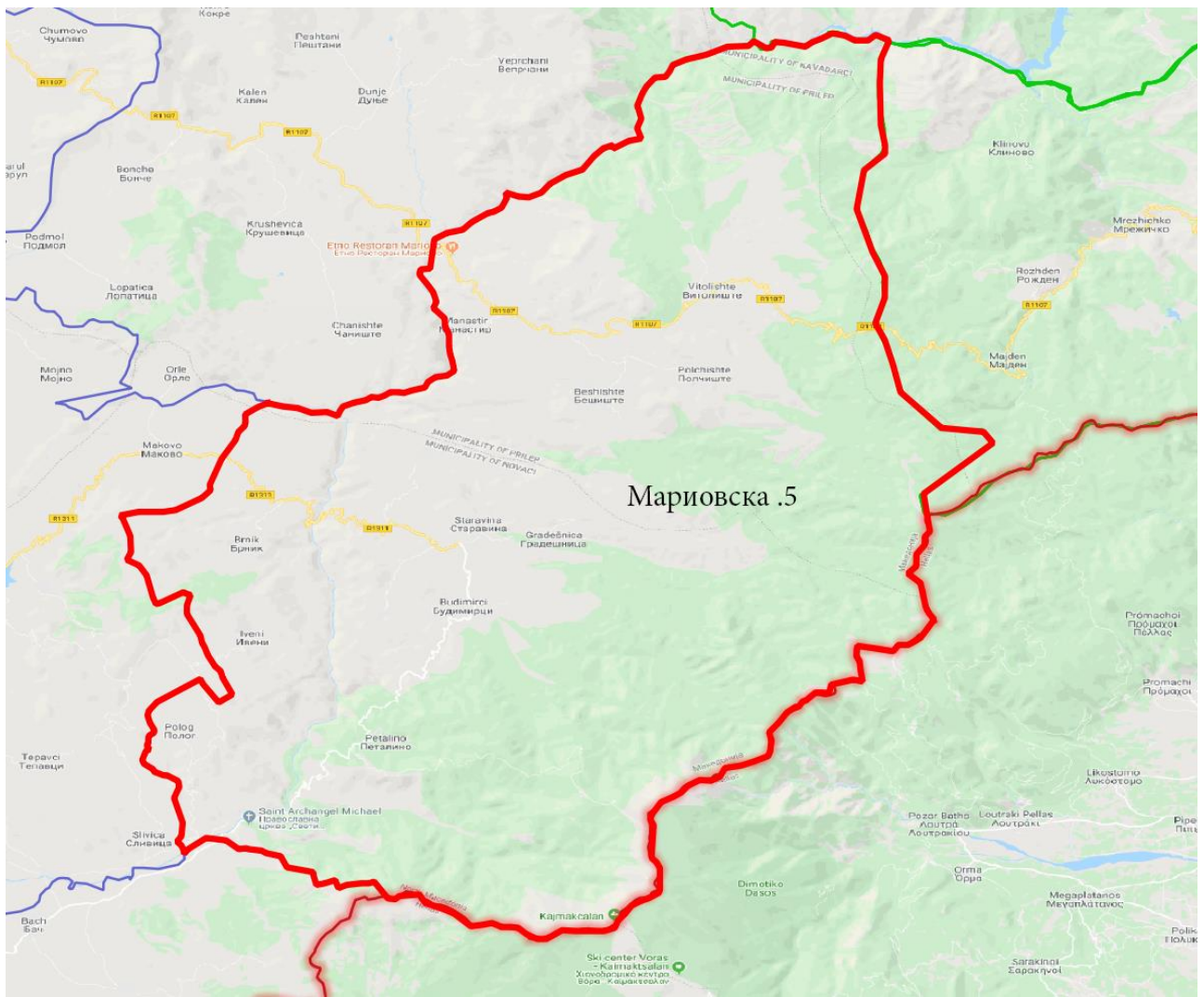




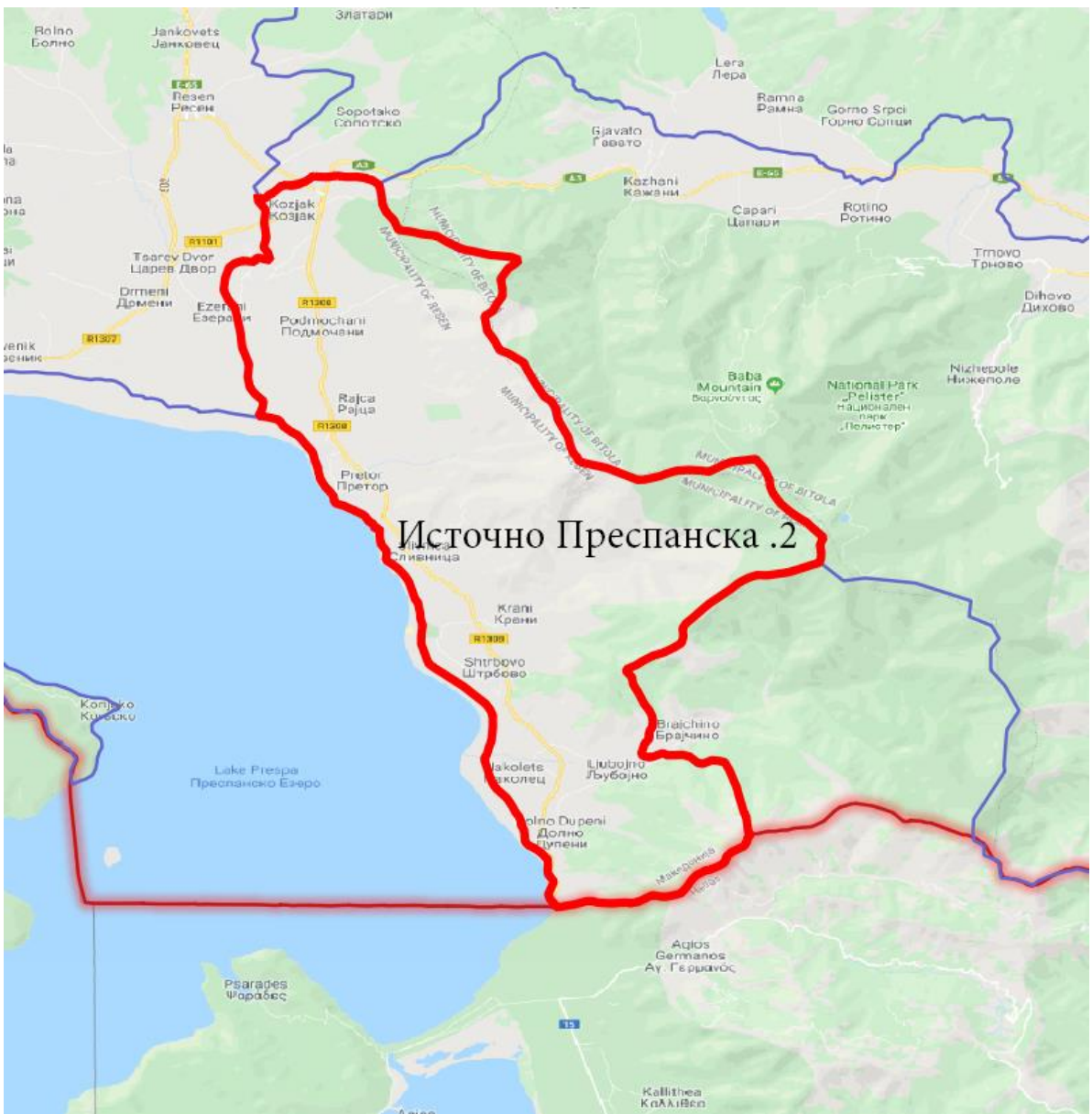


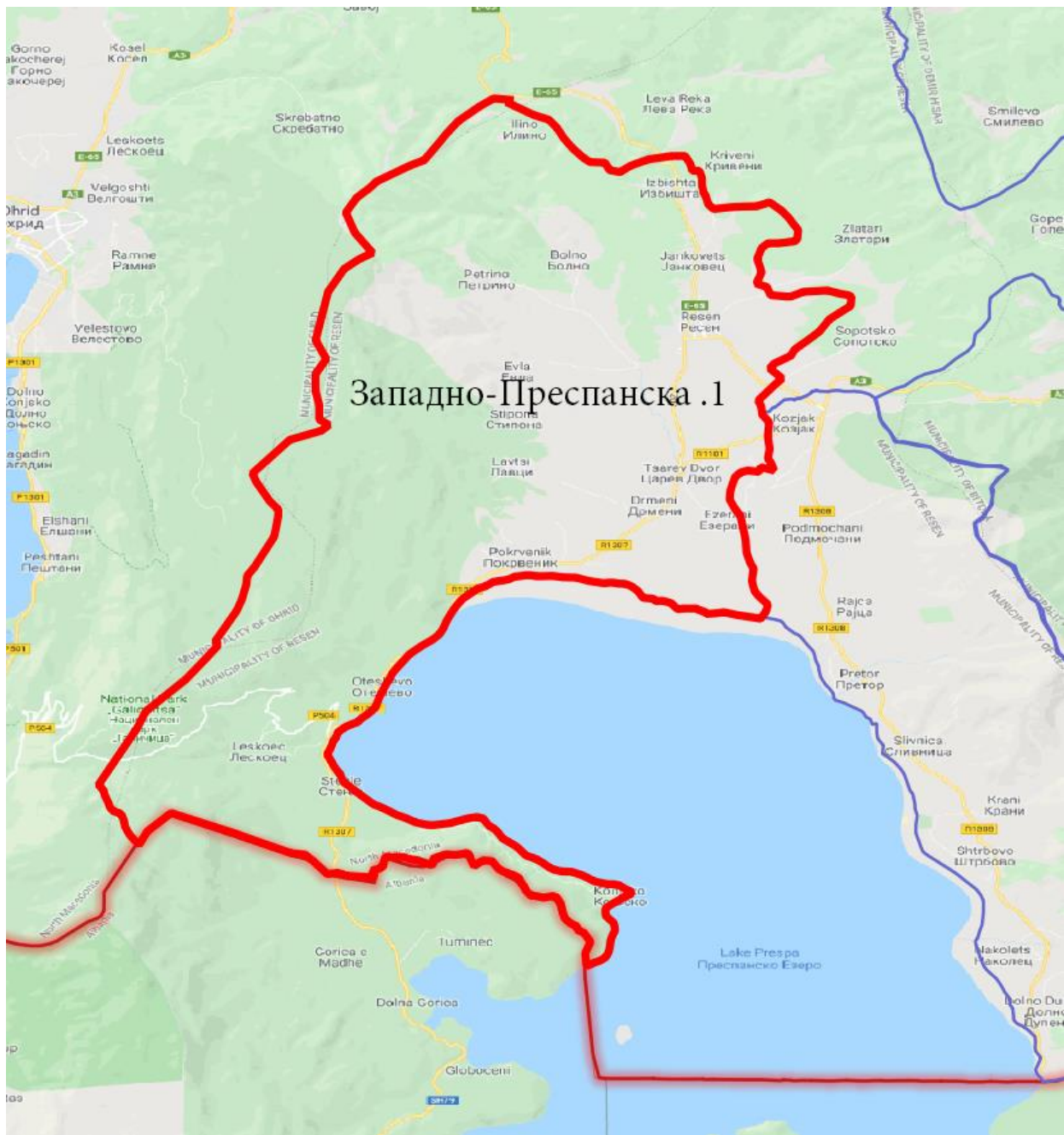




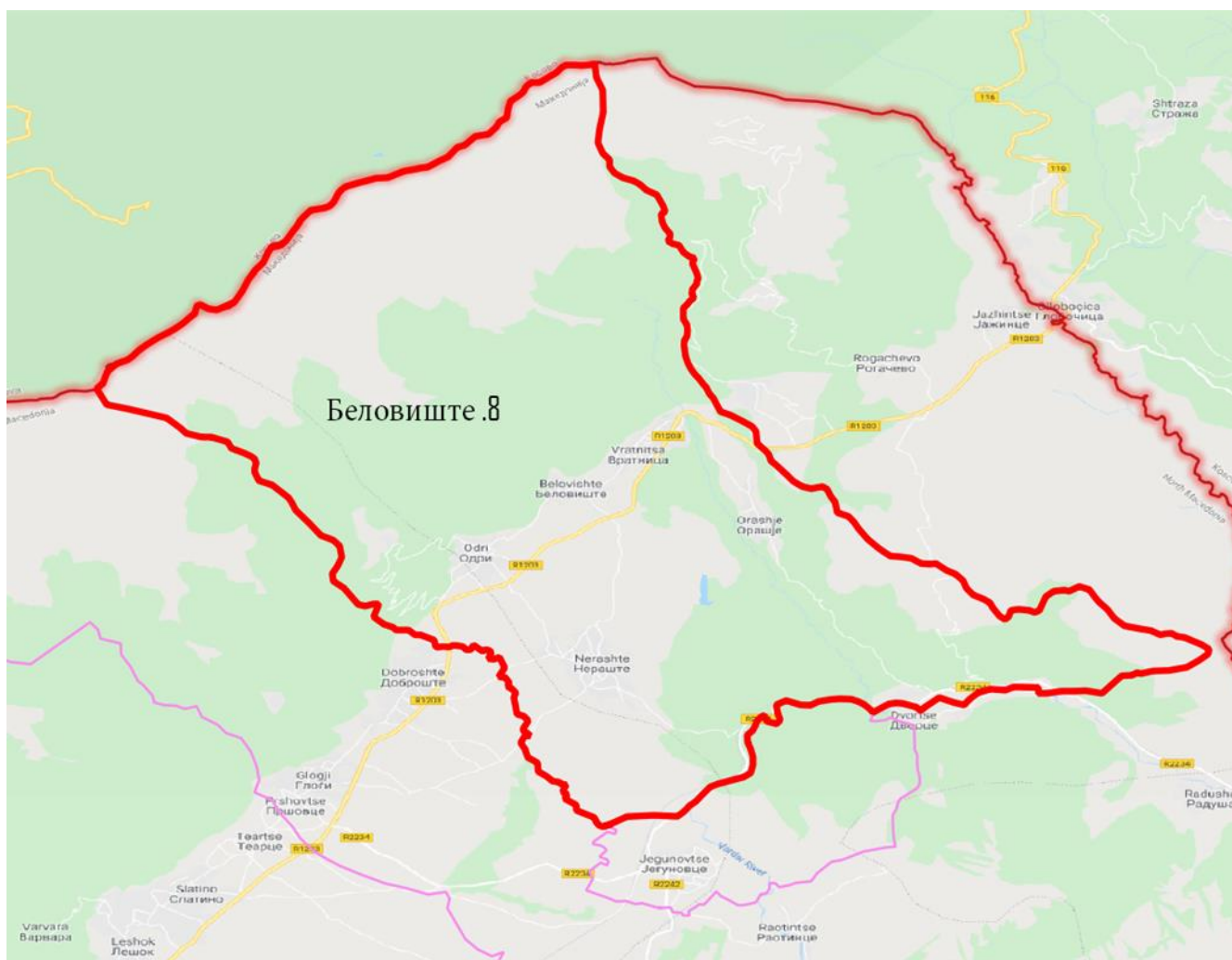
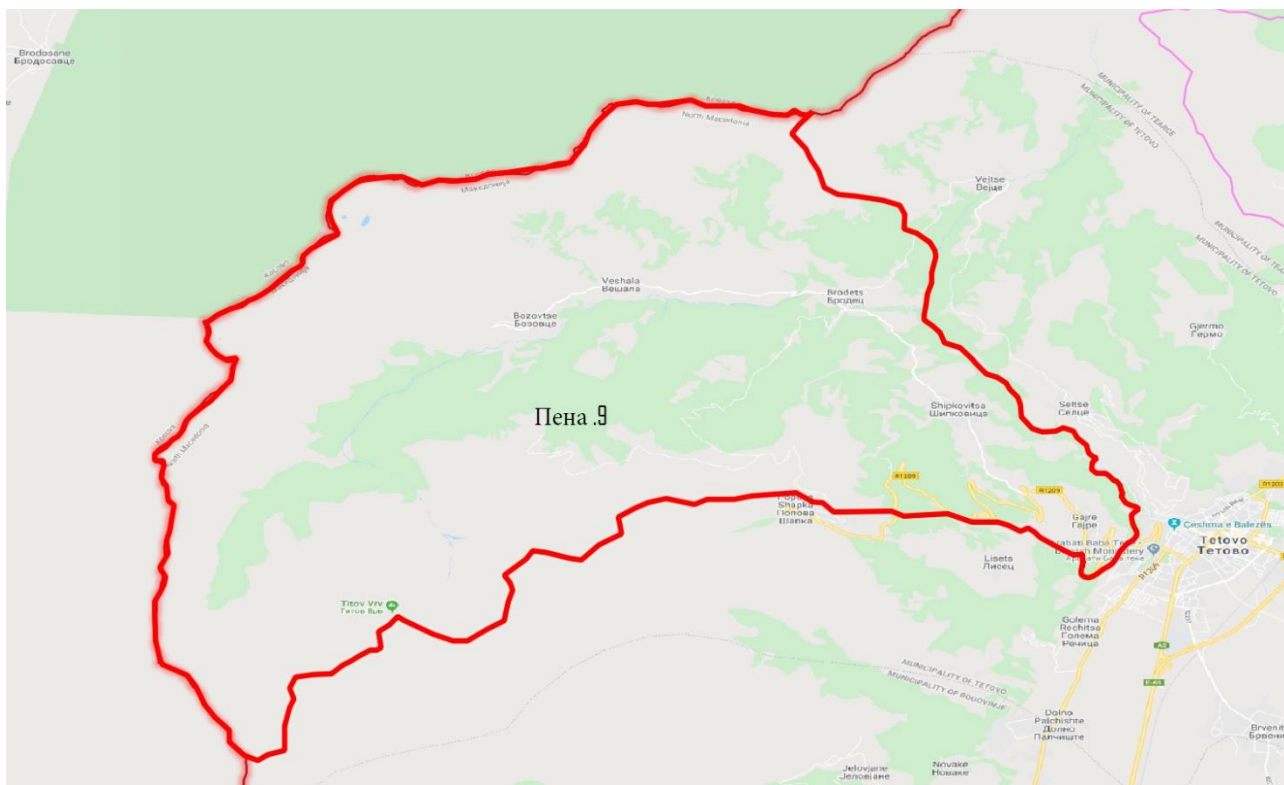


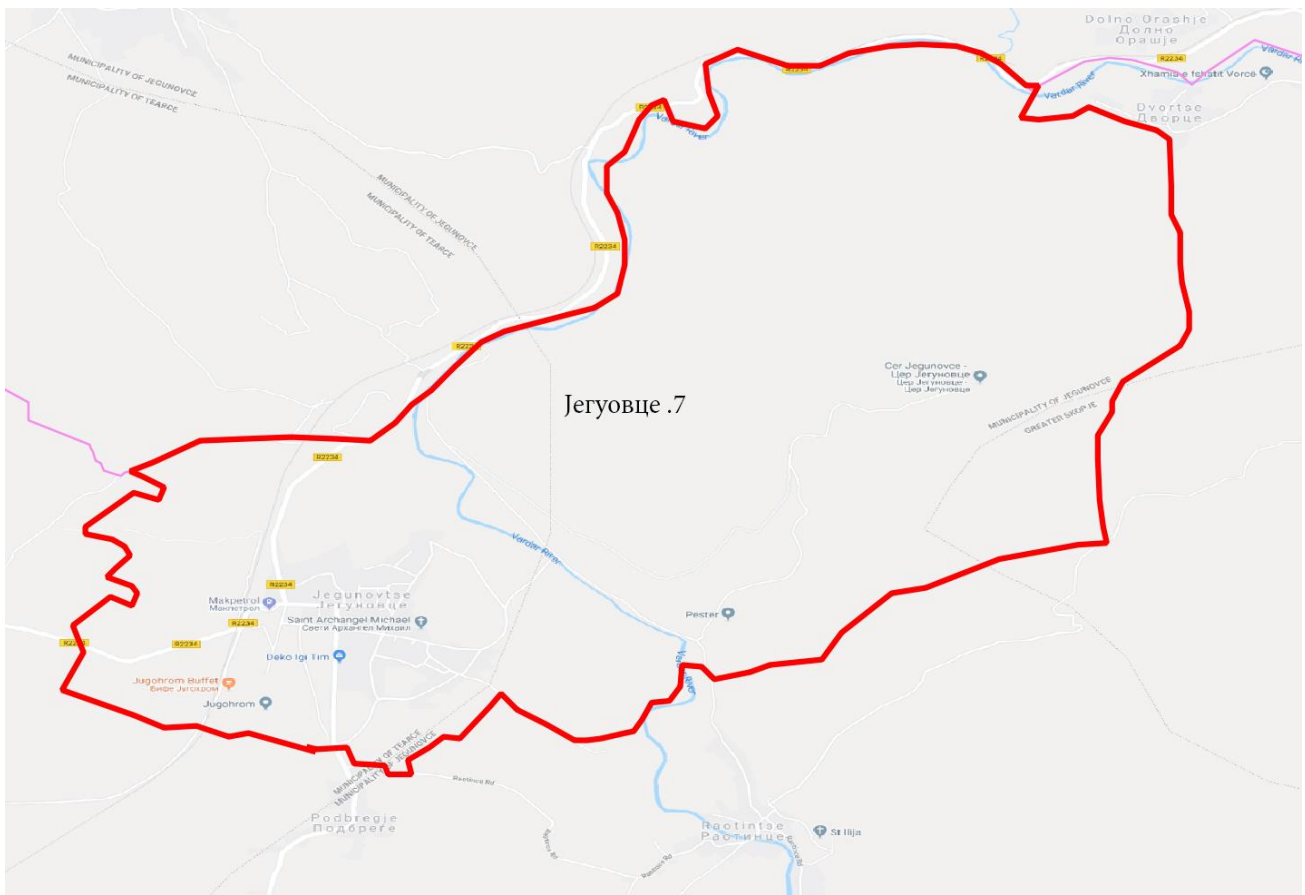


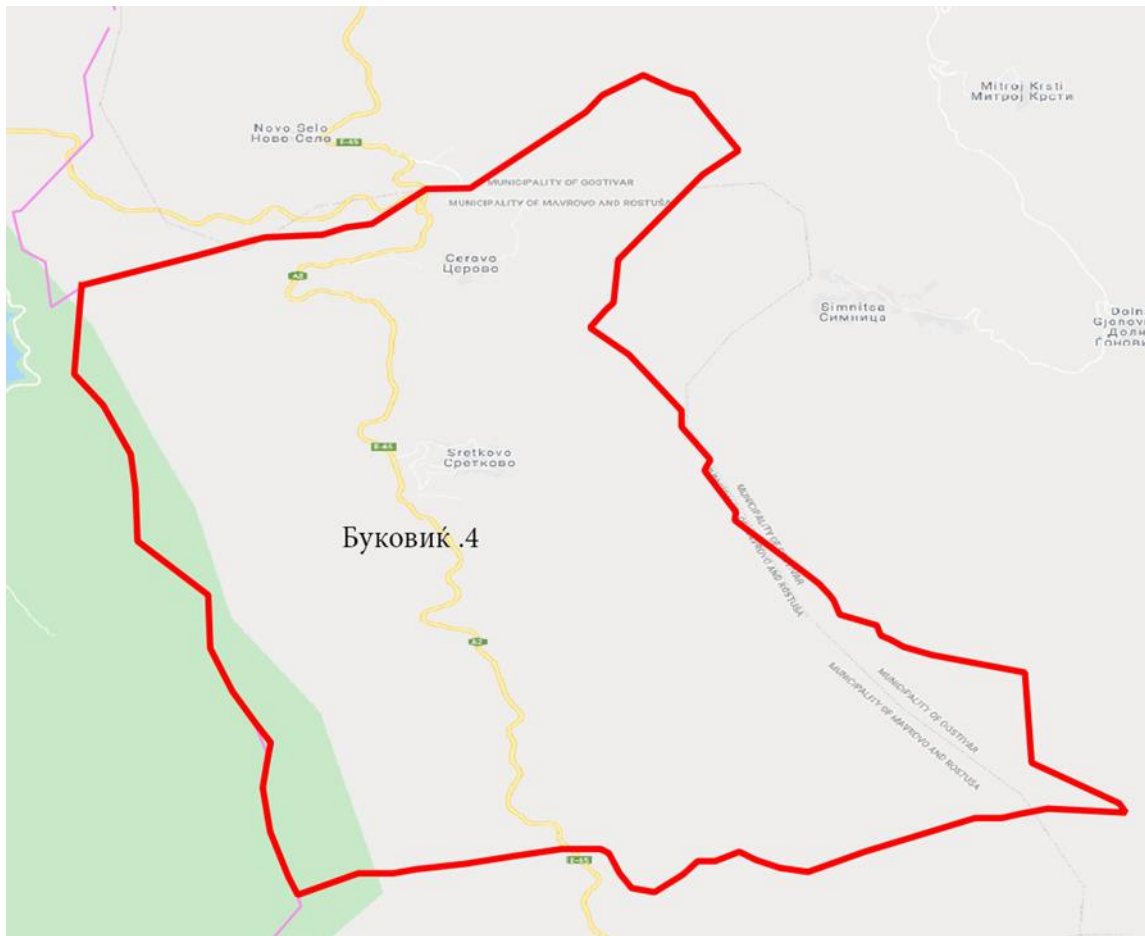
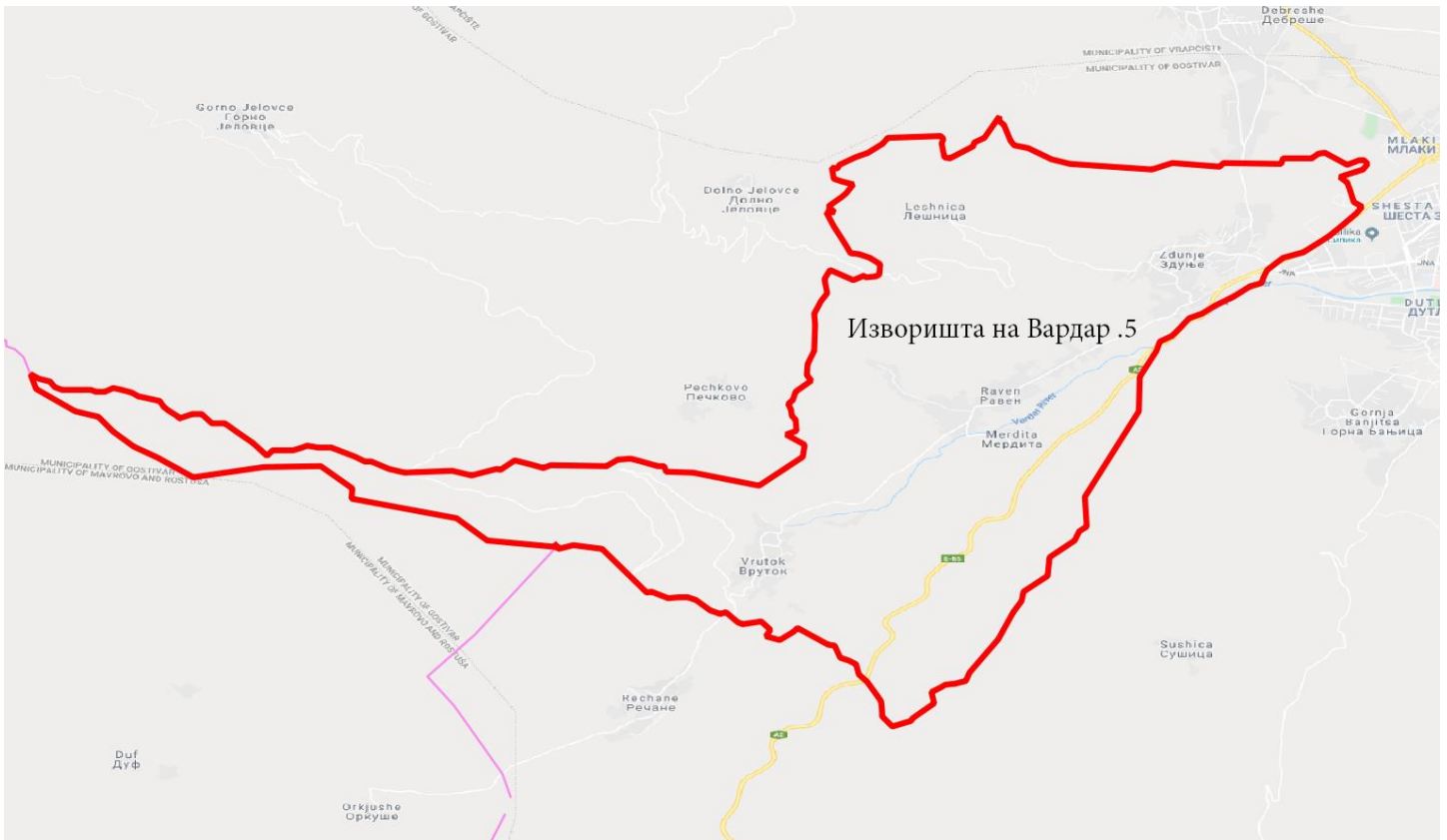


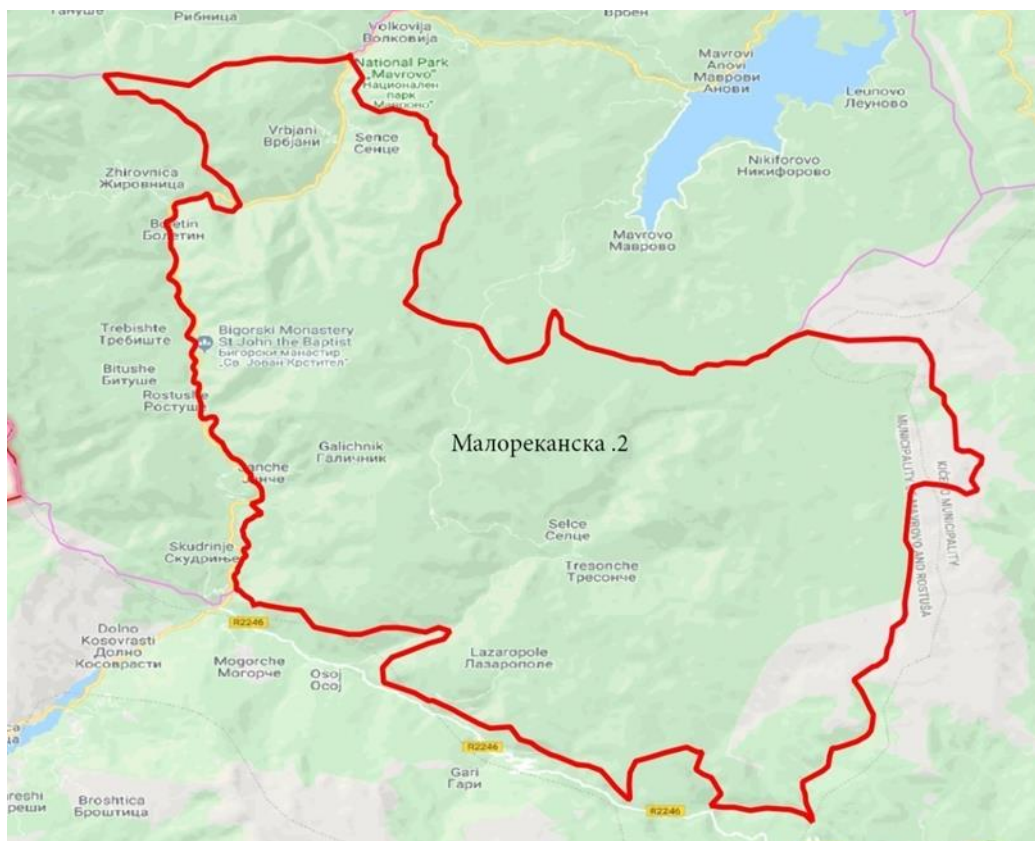
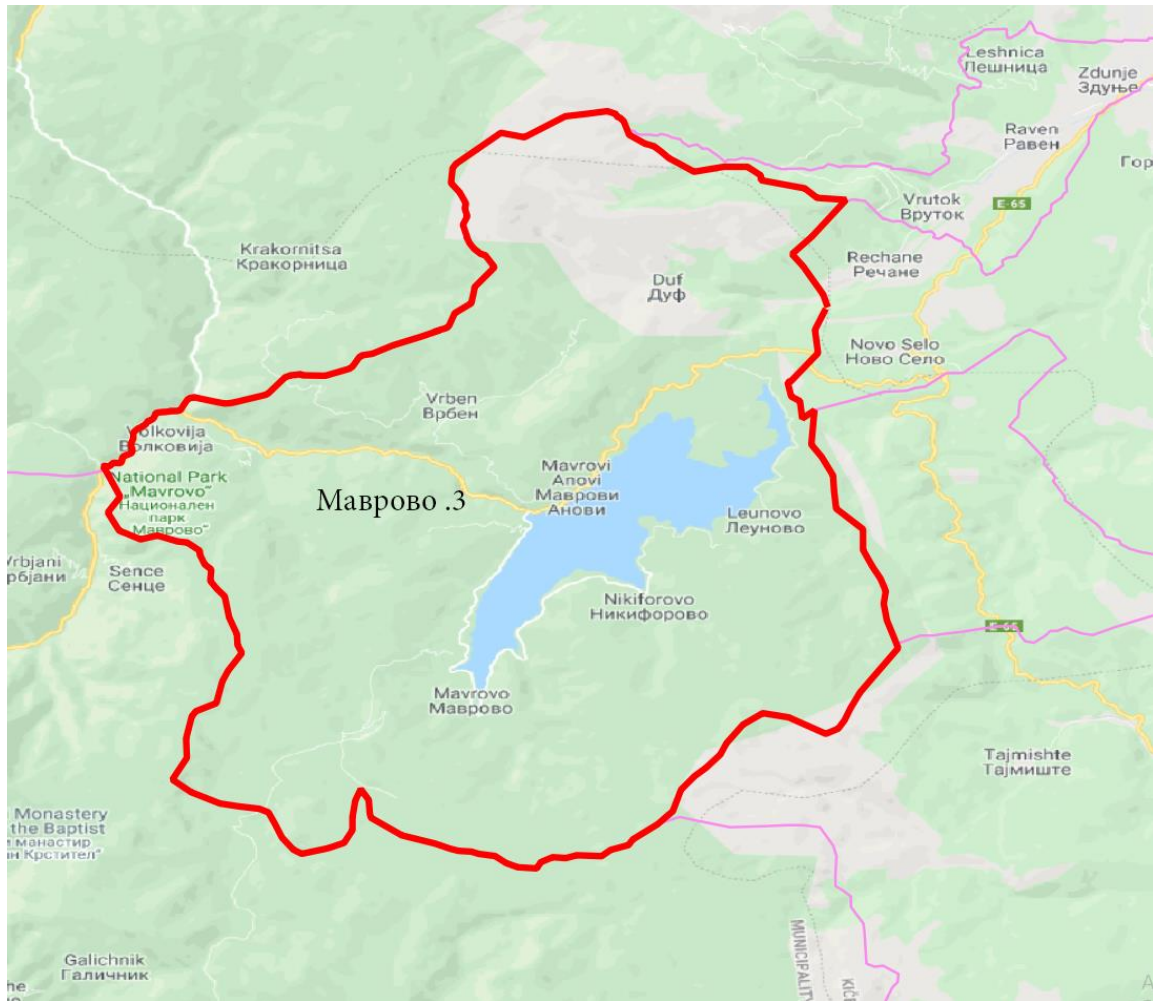


GIS marking of the zones for the development of rural tourism in POPR





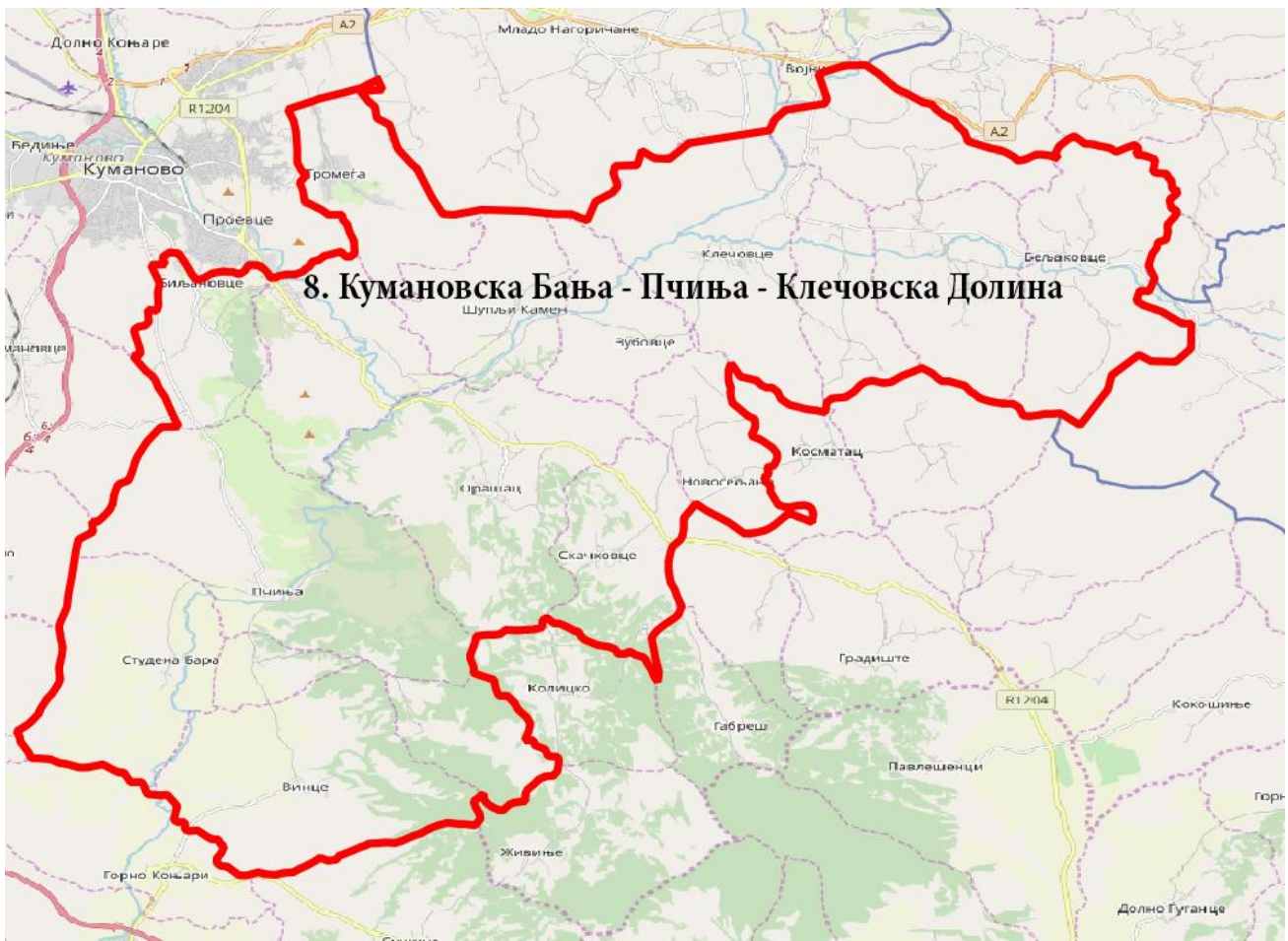


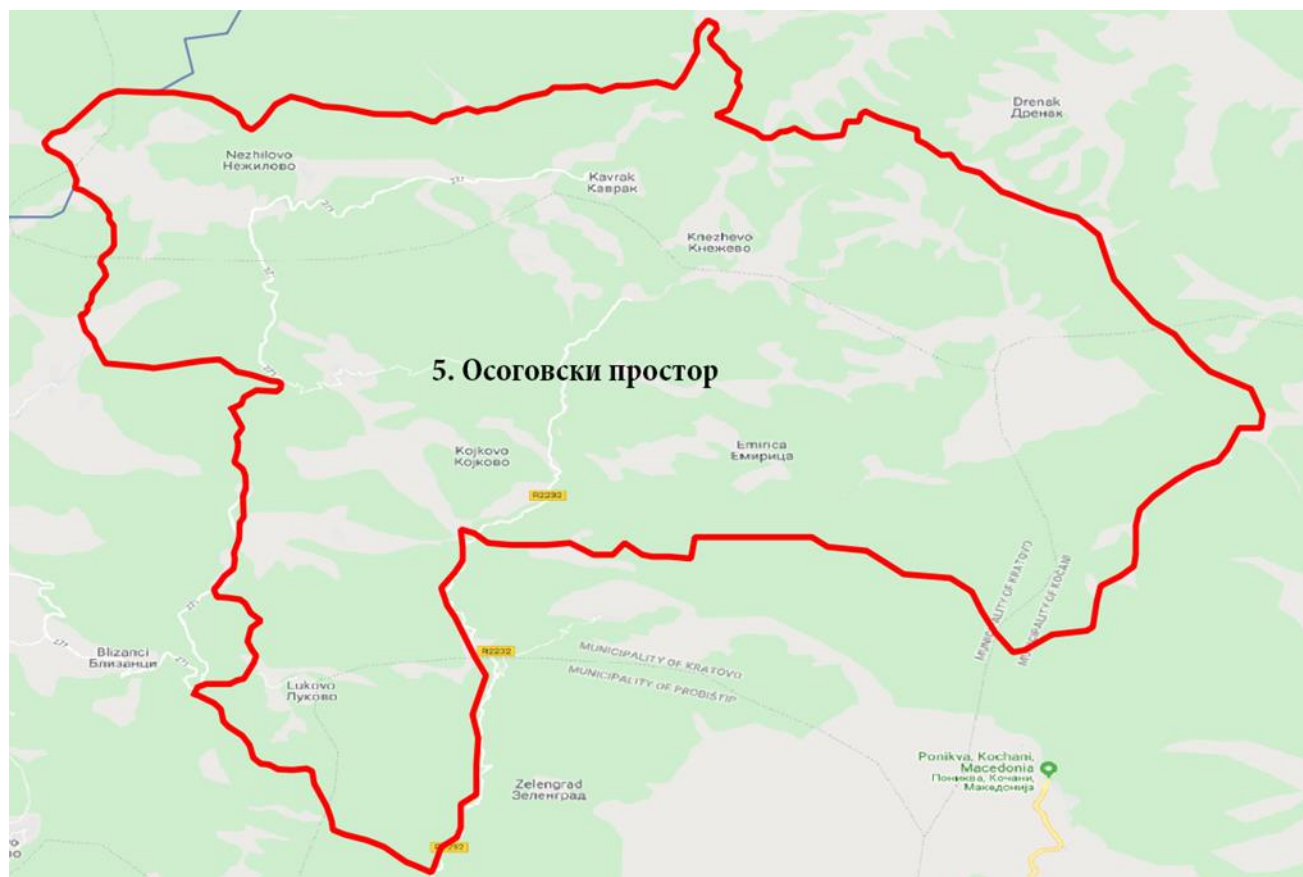
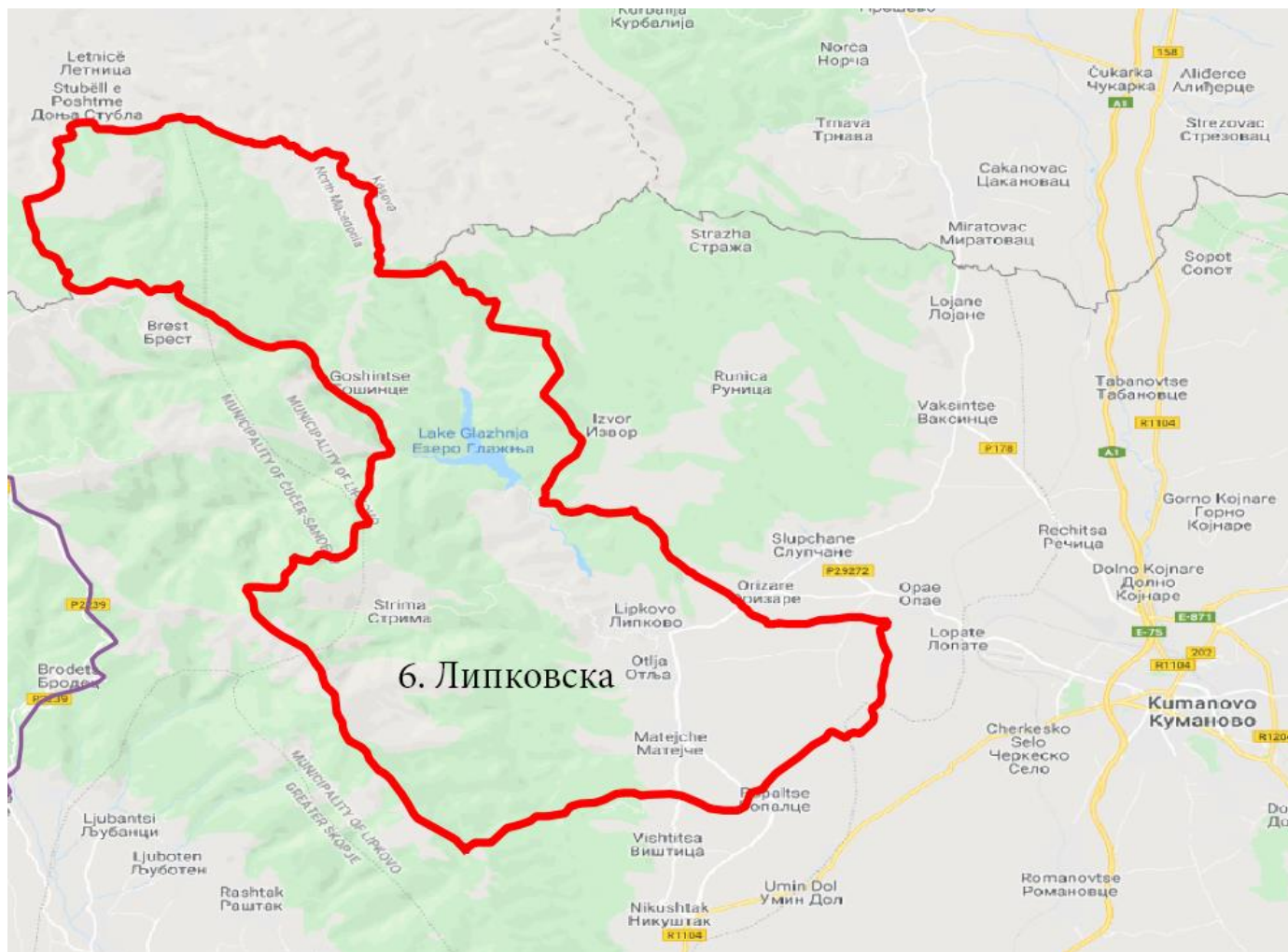


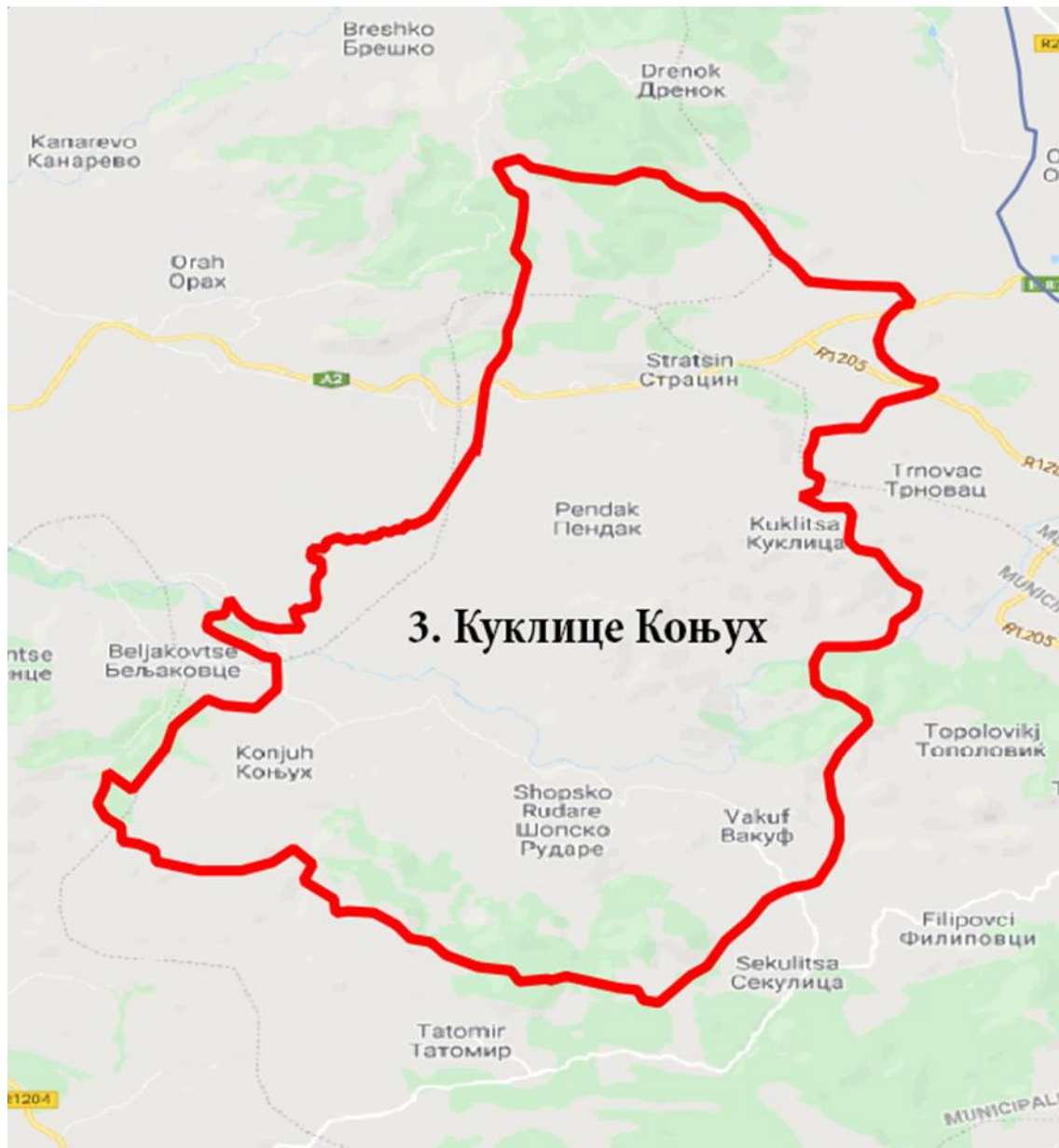
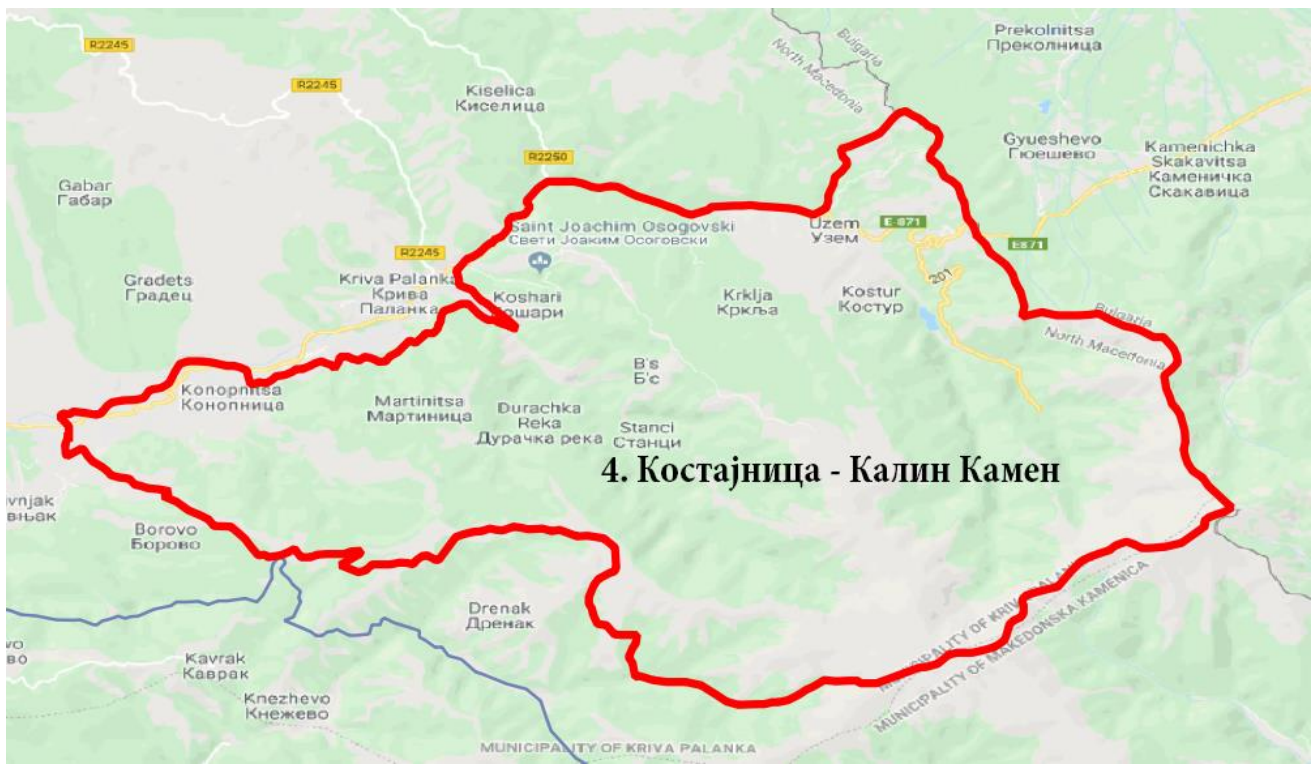


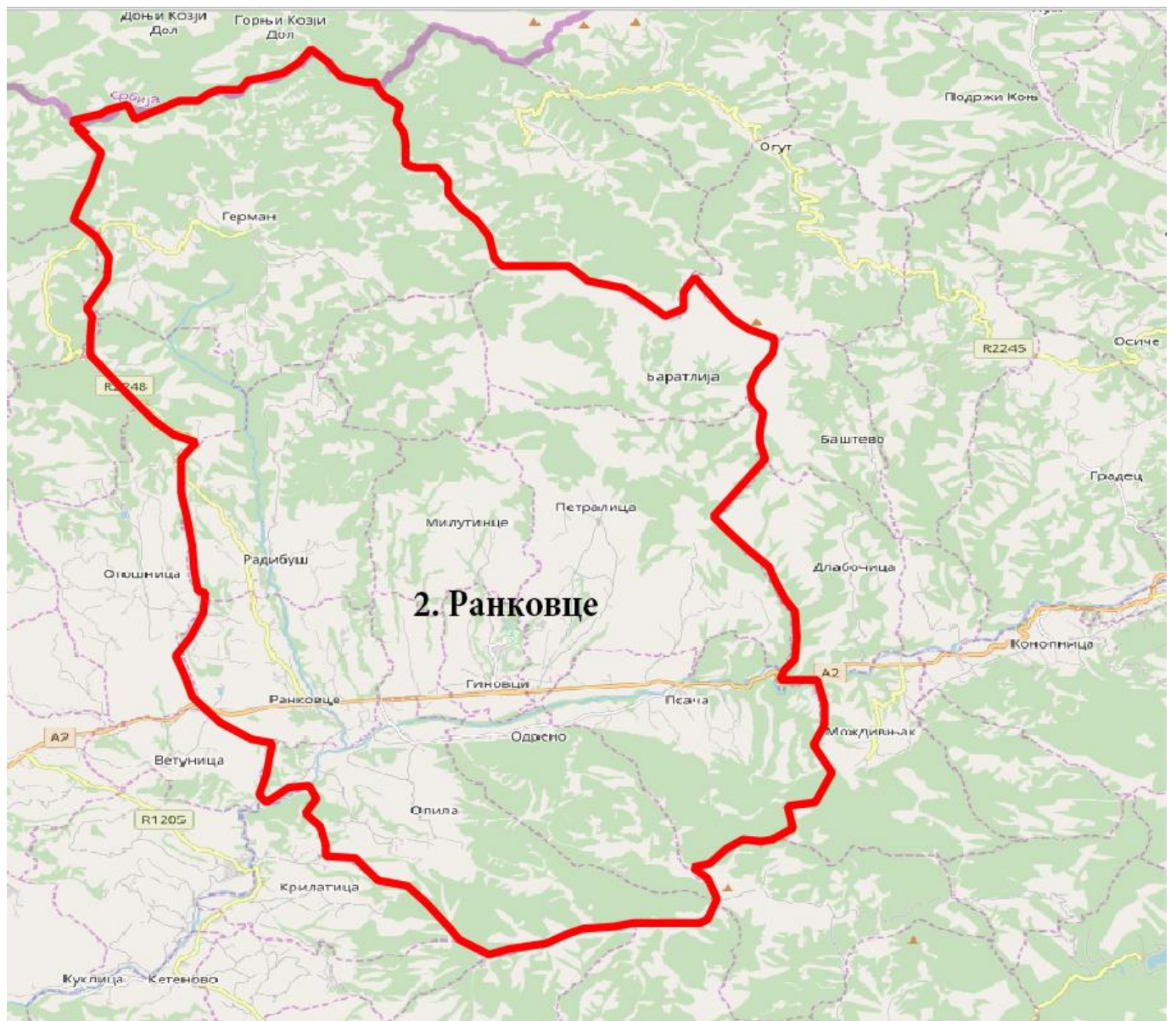
GIS marking of the zones for the development of rural tourism in NEPR



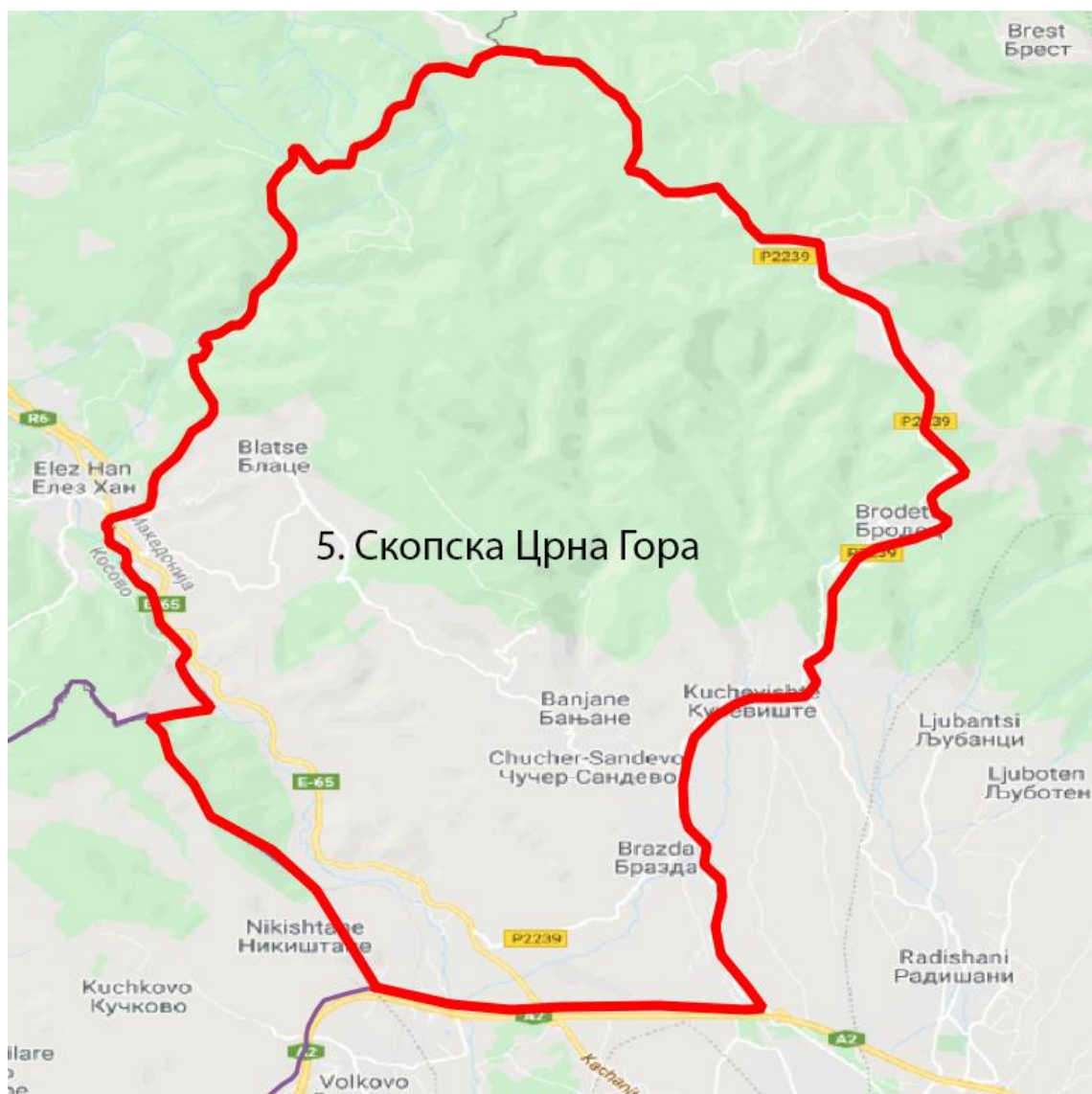


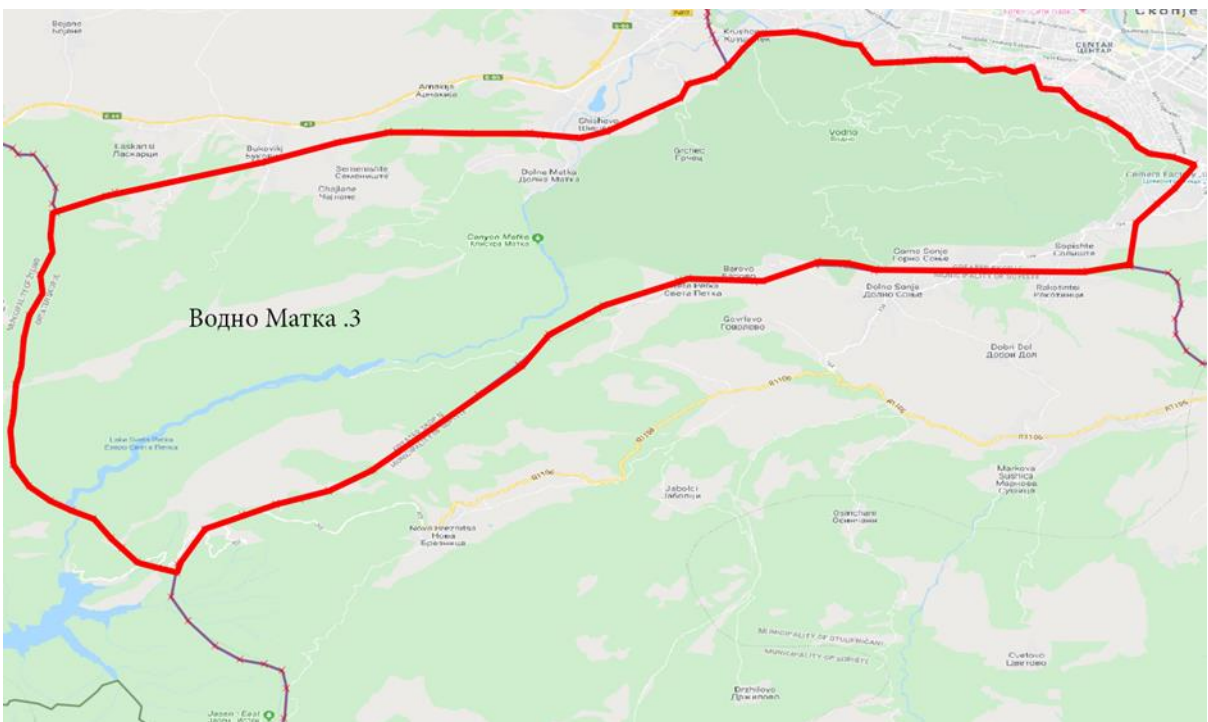


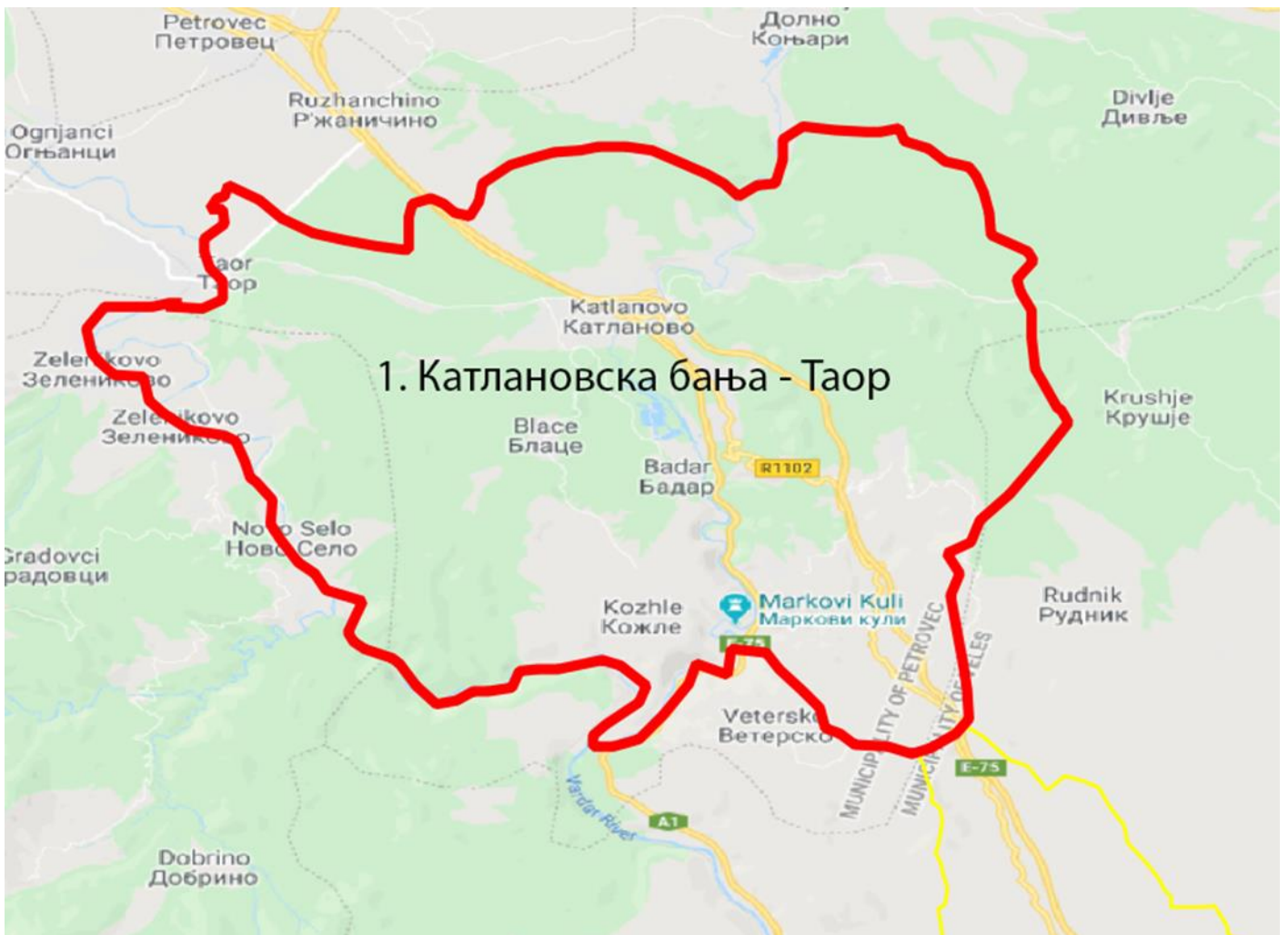
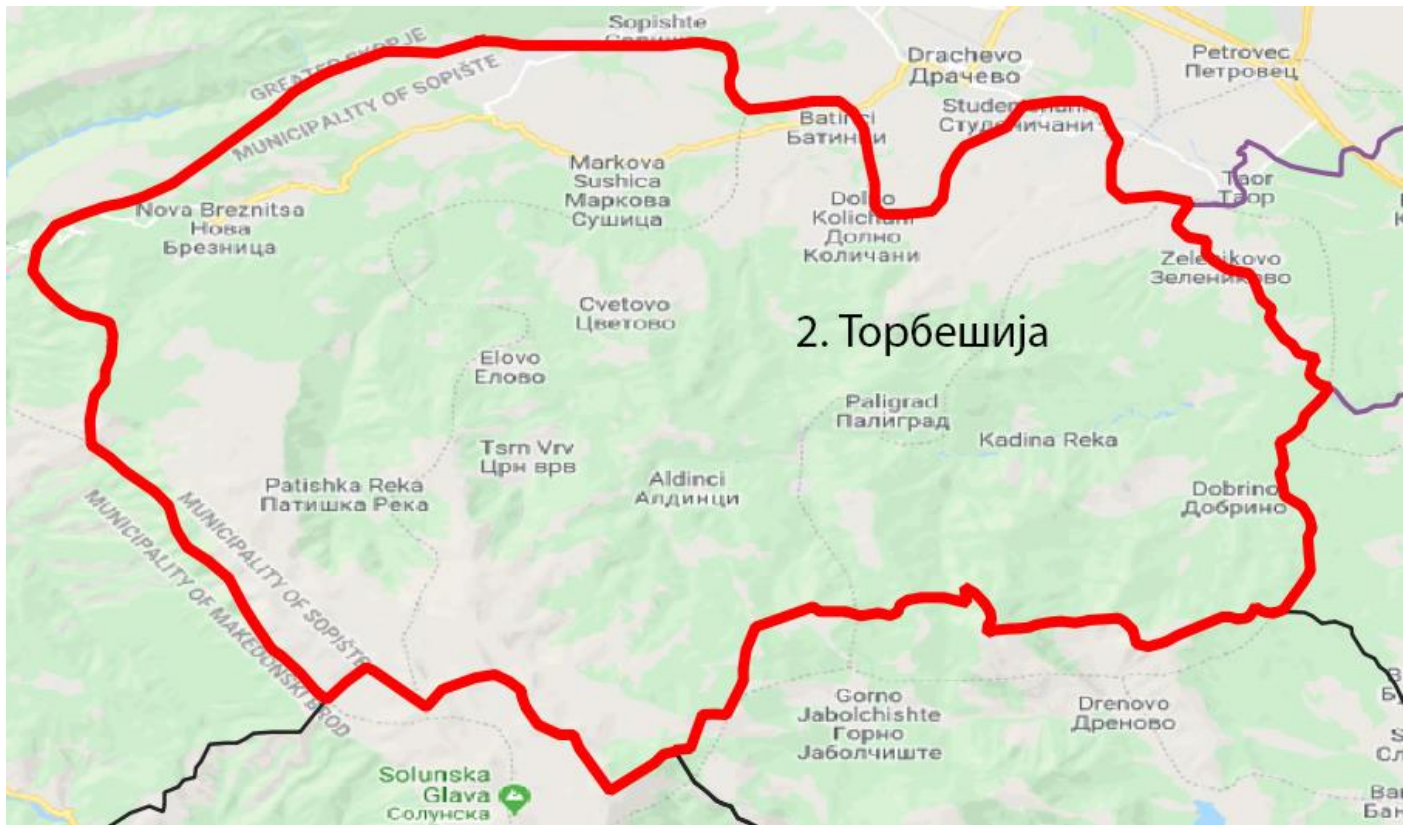




GIS marking of the zones for the development of rural tourism in SKPR







Photos for rural tourism



Lozovo

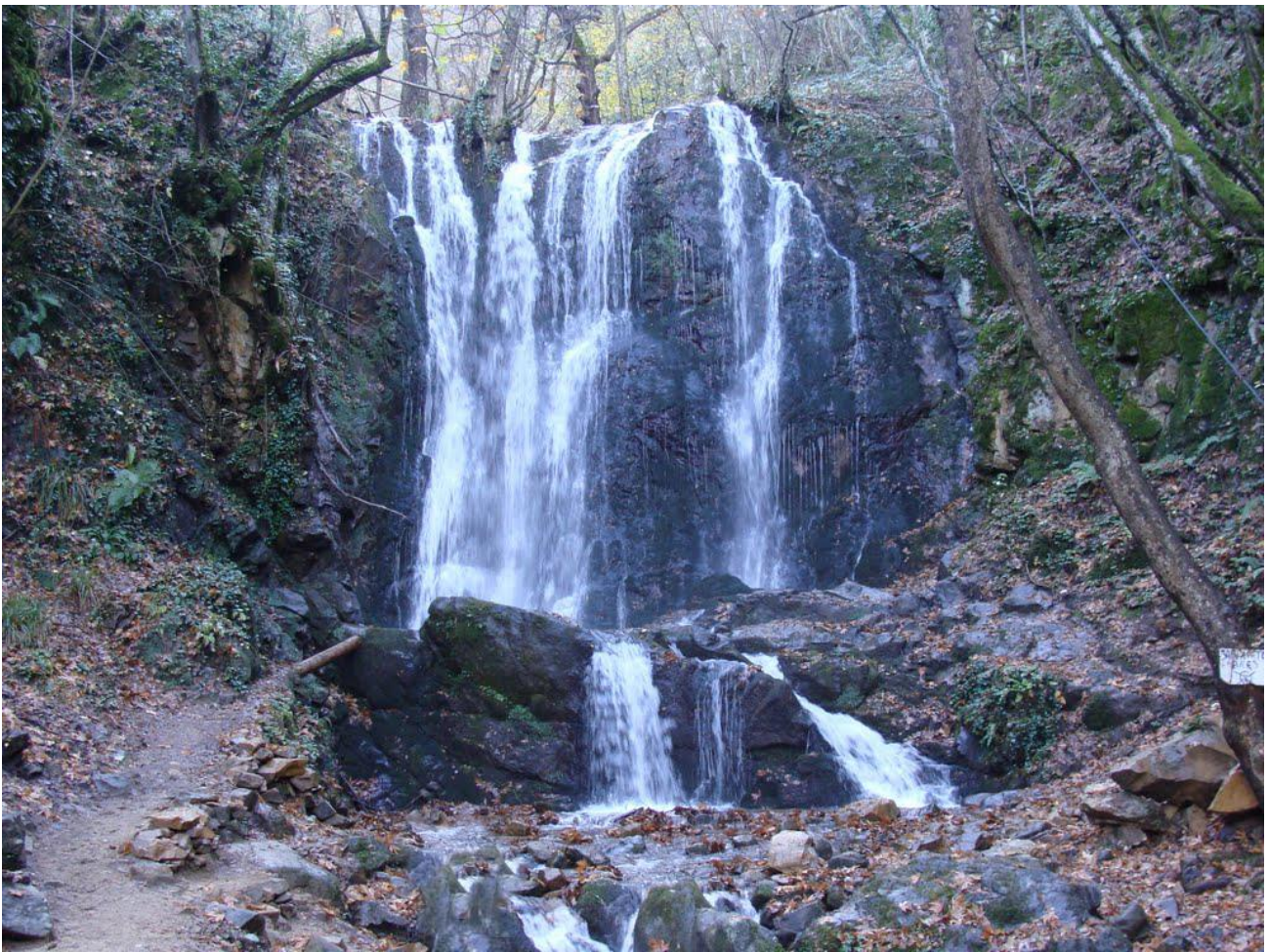
Source: Municipality of Lozovo



Village Pantelej
Source: Wikipedia



Kuratica
Source: <https://kuratica.ucoz.com/>



Smolarski Waterfalls
Source: mapio.net



Village Dihovo
Source: <https://wishfulthinkingworks.files.wordpress.com/>



Village Janche
Source: skopje24.mk



Kumanovo Spa
Source: <https://mapio.net/>



Village Shishevo
Source: <https://mapio.net/>