



DOSSIER ON THE 2016 EDEN RUNNER-UP DESTINATIONS Template

Project number: GRO/SME/16/C/071-Tourism	Project Acronym: BULCULTOURism
Destination: ARDINO Municipality	

SECTION 1 – INTRODUCTION

1. FOREWORD MESSAGE OF THE MANAGEMENT OF THE DESTINATION

(Max 250 words)

Ardino Municipality is the main administrative-territorial unit in which local self-government takes place. It pursues policy in the fields of education, culture, sports, tourism and humanitarian activities. The municipality is directly involved in adopting specific strategies and development plans aimed at the socio-economic development of the municipality, as well as carrying out activities for their implementation. Tourism is a factor influencing the development of the municipality, which puts the measures for improving the tourist infrastructure in the priorities of the municipal management.

SECTION 2 – DESCRIPTION OF THE DESTINATION IN A MARKETING PERSPECTIVE

In this section the destination is described from a pure place-marketing point of view (travel-friendly communication style, attractive slogan, and some pictures) for promotional purposes. This part of the document should be prepared with a support of a travel journalist or expert in place marketing.

2. POSITIONING DECLARATION

**What makes this destination excellent?
Why should a tourist visit it?**

Here it should be stated (in max 2 or 3 lines) in which way the destination is excellent (from a traveller's point of view). The prospect traveller should immediately get clear in what sense this destination is excellent.

Please, add a picture that symbolizes the statement.

You need a cultural relax?
Welcome to Ardino – a mountain municipality situated on the border between the Eastern and Western Rhodopes with rich cultural history, natural phenomena, landmarks, and favourable weather conditions for recreation. The area is accessible and has good conditions for almost all kinds of alternative tourism - cultural, ethno-cultural, eco, natural, hunting, fishing etc. Everybody could find his/her place here.



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3. EXPERIENCES

What can a traveller do in visiting the destination?

Please, describe max three iconic experiences the destination has to offer:

Headline

A short three- to five-word phrase

Visit the Protected Area - Devil's Bridge

The Ministry of Environment and Waters have declared the Devil's Bridge area as a protected area. It is a field of the flower called Rhodope Silivryak - the symbol of the Rhodopes. It is included in the Bulgarian Red Data Book. In case of dehydration (loss 91 per cent of the body's water), it has the ability to fall into anabiosis (mild death), and can stay in this state for a long time, and under appropriate conditions can restore all its vital functions. In this protected area is located main tourist destination - the magnificent Devil's Bridge.

that captures readers' attention and imagination.

Benefits

Focus on what travellers will gain from the experience.

Call-to-action:

Be clear and concise in describing the primary action you want readers to take (start the sentence with an action verb). In case you want to have descriptions of the amenities that may be important for certain promotional activities, make sure it supports the experience. Do not position buildings and beds as the reason for travel.

Devil's Bridge is the largest and most magnificent bridge in the Rhodopes, an emblem of Ardino municipality and one of the wonders of medieval building art in the Balkans - due to its amazing architectural elegance but also as an engineering and technical achievement. Actually, the landscape and the site are marvellous. The bridge provides a strong experience for its visitors, motivating them to come back repeatedly.

Explore Ardino's culture walking along eco paths

There are many eco-paths to remarkable natural, historical and architectural sites. Destination offers a great variety of cultural attractions such as the Devil's Bridge, the Thracian sanctuary Eagle Rocks, the Old Barutchinitza, the Historical Museum, the Kaleto Fortress, the Crivus fortress near the village of Bashevo, peak Alada, the Kardzhali and Borovitsa dams, the natural phenomenon Hladilnika, Rhodope silvayak deposits in the villages of Dyadovtsi and Lyubino, etc.

Old Crafts and Applied Arts

The colorful palette of old crafts combined with modern applied art are yet another opportunity to experience the rich cultural heritage of Ardino municipality.

There are blacksmithing workshops in the town of Ardino as well as in the villages of Byal izvor and Gorno Prahovo. In these workshops, the old masters will gladly show you the fineness of the craft and you can take with you a little horseshoe for luck. In Gorno Prahovo, next to the smithy, you will see how the only potter in the region produces "Sach"- a plate made of clay, in which is cooked the traditional local dishes. Zhaltusha is the only village in which almost in every house people continue to produce beautiful friezes and rugs. Very impressive is the talent of the local self-taught who uses various techniques such as carving, painting on stone and canvas to create attractive samples of the Devil's Bridge - the most wanted souvenir in Ardino.

4. MAIN TOURISTIC FEATURES

Iconic/Famous people

Famous historical facts happened in the destination

Cultural and Natural sights

Celebrations, festivals and events

Please, describe in no more than 200 words the main features that are worth a travel to the destination.

The old name of Ardino is Egri-Dere - called after the name of the little river, which runs through the settlement. After the Russian - Turkish war it was joined to the newly created Gyomyourdjinski region, Vilayet Odrin. At the end of 19th century Egri-Dere is a little settlement with several sheds at the market and a mosque (preserved up to the present), with a small narrow bridge over one of the gulches. In year 1934 the name of Eri-Dere was changed into Ardino.

Sabahattin Ali (February 25, 1907 – April 2, 1948) was a Turkish novelist, short-story writer, poet, and journalist. He was born in 1907 in Egridere township (now Ardino in southern Bulgaria).

Dr. Waldemar Christensen (1891, Vladimir, Russia - 1950, Varna). From 1922 to 1942 - the only doctor in the Ardina County.

Hristo Filipov (1913-1980) – A public figure, a traveller and a tourist agent.

The only one natural **birch forest** in the Rhodopes mountain is located in Ardino. The area is called Belite Brezi (the White birches). The healing properties of the fresh air in the area are well known and undeniable not only within Bulgaria but around the world.

The main attraction, with the largest tourist flow on the territory of Ardino municipality is the **Devil's Bridge** over the Arda River. The National Institute for Immovable Cultural Heritage declares the site as an architectural and cultural monument of national importance. It is also one of the very few architectural structure in Bulgaria dating back to the early XVI century, preserved in its integrity so far.

5. PRATICAL INFORMATION REFERENCES

Please add websites (links) references for practical information:

Getting there & away

Ardino Municipality could be found through the search engines on the Internet, it has also had a web page:

- www.ardino.bg

- www.tic-ardino.bg

Getting around
Accommodation
Restaurants
Shopping
Touring
Health and Safety

Addresses and telephone numbers of accommodation and hotel facilities are accessible online, as some hotels have their own websites providing opportunity for online reservations.

SECTION 3 – DESCRIPTION OF ACTIONS WHICH JUSTIFY THE NOMINATION

In this section, there is a description of all reasons why the destination fulfils the European and national criteria. It is important that all actions and initiatives taken are presented in a way to underline why they contribute to make the destination considered a good practice in the field of sustainable tourism.

6. GENERAL CRITERIA

What makes this destination excellent in „cultural tourism“?

The destination – Ardino Municipality – is not fully developed. It is actually at the beginning of tourism development. However, it has everything necessary for being year-round destination for cultural tourism with its cultural heritage, natural sites, excellent accommodations, festivals and other events. The high natural potential, rich cultural history, natural phenomena, landmarks, and favourable weather conditions for recreation are prerequisites for the development of Ardino as excellent cultural destination. The cultural heritage of Ardino is combined with the exceptionally beautiful and healthy natural environment with outstanding ecological qualities. The development of the tourism is an alternative way for developing the local economy and achieving higher living standard for locals.

What makes this destination emerging, not traditional and off the beaten track?

On what basis was it assessed that the destination offers authentic tourism experiences?

The main attraction, with the largest tourist flow on the territory of Ardino municipality is the **Devil's Bridge** of the Arda River. The National Institute for Immovable Cultural Heritage declares the site an architectural and cultural monument of national importance. It is also one of the very few architectural structure in Bulgaria dating back to the early XVI century, preserved in its integrity so far. The Devil's Bridge is the largest and most magnificent bridge in the Rhodopes, an emblem of Ardino municipality and one of the wonders of Medieval building art in the Balkans due to its amazing architectural elegance but also as an engineering and technical achievement. The bridge is located in an indescribably beautiful narrow gorge, connecting the eastern and western coasts along the middle part of the Arda River, where it forms a canyon with large meanders.

On what basis was it assessed that the destination has local authorities with a capacity in managing their destination in a way to ensure social, cultural and environmental sustainability?

On what basis was it assessed that the destination has a management destination organisation that has a capacity in sustainable tourism management?

The only one natural **birch forest** in the Rhodopes mountain is located in Ardino. The area is called **Belite Brezi** (the White birches). The healing properties of the fresh air in the area are well known and undeniable not only within Bulgaria but around the world. The area Belite Brezi has a beneficial effect on the treatment of pulmonary and allergic diseases. It is believed that because of the crystal clear air in the area, surgical operations could be performed even outdoors.

On what basis was it assessed that the destination has agencies, NGOs or authorities with a capacity in adopting sustainable tourism practices?

Please, specify criteria, facts and data upon which you have based the assessment

The various **old crafts** are combined with the modern applied art - blacksmithing, pottery, traditional local dishes, weaving, carving, painting on stone and canvas. There are blacksmithing workshops in the town of Ardino as well as in the villages of Byal Izvor and Gorno Prahovo. In these workshops, the old masters will gladly show you the fineness of the craft and you can take with you the little object for luck. In Gorno Prahovo, next to the smithy, you will see how the only potter in the region produces "Sach"- a plate made of clay, in which are cooked traditional local dishes. Zhaltusha is the only village in which almost in every house people continue to produce beautiful friezes and carpets. Very impressive is the talent of the local self-taught who uses various techniques such as carving, painting on stone and canvas to create attractive samples of the Devil's Bridge - the most wanted souvenir in Ardino.

The local authorities that are engaged in tourism sector are 3 experts, one of who is a professional "Guide", which corresponds to the continuous demand on the labour market in the Tourism sector.

Moreover, the **Tourist Society "Belite Brezi"** adds value to the popularization and socialization of tourist sites on the territory of Ardino. It is an independent, voluntary,

non-political, non-ethical, social non-profit organization for social, tourism, cultural, patriotic and nature-loving activities. It is working very closely with the local government. The tourist society aims to create conditions for social tourism and tourist activities to attract more people to these leisure activities. The Tourist Society works closely with the state in its social policy to strengthen the health of the population, and especially the youth, to communicate with nature, and to educate in universal human values.

Ardino Municipality is also a member in various non-governmental organizations such as: The National Association of Municipalities in the Republic of Bulgaria, Association "Tolerance", Association for Development of Mountain Municipalities, Organization for management of the tourist region "Rodopi", etc.

7. SPECIFIC CRITERIA

Please, specify criteria, facts and data upon which you have based the assessment.

1. Unique cultural identity in national traditions.
2. Presence of potential of cultural and creative resources.
3. A significant number of real and movable cultural assets have been identified.
4. Existence of a rich and varied intangible cultural heritage.
5. Functioning of 20 community centres, which are considered as a natural environment for cultural heritage communities.
6. Active Working Council for Cultural Heritage Conservation.
7. Implementation of investment projects under the programs of the European Union.
8. Diverse and wide-ranging cultural and historical heritage with sites of national and local importance.
9. Presence of priority in the strategic documents of the municipality for development of cultural tourism.
10. Traditions in organising cultural events and developing new events' plans.

SECTION 4 – INFORMATION ABOUT THE DESTINATION MANAGEMENT ORGANISATION

8. THE ORGANISATION MANAGING THE "DESTINATION"

(i.e. organisation which submitted the application for the EDEN Award)

	Governance System	Overall Budget (in €)	% Budget in tourism	Staff working in tourism activities
What type organisation is it?	Select of the following:	Select of the following:	Percentage	Total: 3
	Municipality	Up to 50,000 50,001 – 75,000 70,001 – 100,000 100,001 – 250,000 250,001 – 500,000 500,001 – 1M <u>more than 1M</u>	5 %	Breakdown - permanent: 3 - temporary: 0 - consultants: 0
Which tasks in tourism management are performed by the organisation?	Strategic planning Tourism infrastructure development Human Resources development (within our DMO) Advance Innovation and Information Communication Technology systems (ICT) Promotion activities/publications Management and development of events Management and development of attractions <u>New tourism products/services development</u> Capacity building programs for SMME's Training and education seminars for tourism professionals Business advice/consultancy			
Please choose one of the list on the right				

	<p>Quality management Tourism facilitation activities (reservations and bookings) Information services for tourists/visitors Customer Relationship Management (CRM) Monitoring and evaluation of consumers' behaviour Develop sustainable tourism products/services Research and development actions</p>
<p>Please indicate the partnership or co-operation schemes in which the private sector has been involved in the organization?</p>	<p>Advisory boards Joint Management units Sectorial liaison groups Corporate partnerships with private associations and agencies Membership Registration (annually or periodically) <u>Outsourcing/subcontracting private companies</u> <u>Visitors/tourists services and products</u></p>
<p>Please indicate if there are special agreements with the regional or national tourism offices for marketing the destination in the domestic and international markets.</p>	<p>Concerning the marketing of the destination, Ardino Municipality put an effort on the production of materials recommended by leading consultancy agencies. The main purpose is having the highest level of efficiency in tourism promotion and targeting as larger visitors audience as possible. Through a recently completed project, a 7-minute video was produced, in Bulgarian and English, with information about the attractions in the area. It is used for screenings in the Tourist Information Centre's conference hall with advertising and educational purposes. It is also used in publication in popular Internet portals and social networks. A leaflet with a map of the routes and information about the attractions on the territory of the municipality are available in 5 languages (Bulgarian, Turkish, Russian, English and French). In order to popularize the destination, Ardino has started to participate in tourist fairs and experience exchange in the country. A Public Council for the Protection of the Cultural Heritage was established due to the need of providing cultural sustainability in the municipality. The Public Council, in accordance with Article 17 (1) (2) of the Cultural Heritage Act, organizes activities for the research, study, preservation and promotion of cultural values on the territory of Ardino Municipality.</p>

9. CONTACT DETAILS

<p>CEO, General Manager, Legal representative of the Organization</p>	<p>Resmi Mehmed Murad – Mayor of Ardino Municipality Ardino, 3 Beli Brezi Street, Tel. 03651/42-38, Fax: 03651/45-68; E-mail: ardino@abv.bg</p>
<p>Tourism Manager <i>The person who will attend the EDEN Network meetings and who is in charge of tourism management</i></p>	<p>Tanger Gyunerov Chobanov – Curator of the Ardino Municipality Ardino, 2 Cinar Street, Tel. 0887118099, Fax: 03651/04681; E-mail: taner_ch@abv.bg , museum_ardino@abv.bg</p>

SECTION 5 – STATISTICS AND FACT ON SUSTAINABLE TOURISM IN THE DESTINATION

10. TOURISM STATISTICS

		Hotel	B&B, apartments, other
<p>Tourism Volume</p>	<p>Number of establishments</p>	<p>7</p>	<p>10</p>
<p><i>Please, in counting the tourism volume consider all accommodation</i></p>	<p>Number of bed places</p>	<p>76</p>	<p>22</p>
	<p>Number of days of the peak</p>	<p>60</p>	<p>60</p>

establishments close (less than 30 minutes) to the destination	season		
	Arrivals	509	30
	% of arrivals from abroad (international arrivals)	39,49 %	27 %
	Nights (overnight stays)	867	58
	Average daily rate per room in the peak season	25	20

11. FACTS ABOUT SUSTAINABILITY

Facts and data on a sustainable tourism supply chain	80% of restaurants are using local and organic foods
Facts and data demonstrating results to reduce the use of the cars in the destination	Ardino is situated 30 km away from the district town of Kardzhali. The road from Kardzhali to Ardino is a third-class road in good condition and the transport links between Kardjali and the nearest large cities are first class and second class roads. The distance from Sofia is 247 km, from Plovdiv – 100 km, from Asenovgradis – 75 km, from Haskovo – 53 km, from Smolyanis – 80 km. From Zlatograd and the Zlatograd border checkpoint to Ardino the distance is a 37-40 km third-class road. Most tourist attractions located on the territory of Ardino Municipality can be reached by car, on foot or by bicycle.
Facts and data demonstrating results in waste reduction	An important environmental problem in the municipality is the management of the waste collection system, the state of the existing solid waste landfills and their treatment. According to the accepted waste management program and in accordance with the legal regulations, Ardino Municipality organizes the collection of its entire territory. This activity is carried out with 4 garbage trucks and 1100 garbage containers. The number of unregulated landfills has dropped drastically over the past few years by providing bins for solid urban waste for the 97 % of the population of the town. The municipal solid waste is transported and disposed of at the regional depot in the town of Kardzhali. With the implementation of the project "Regional Waste Management Center" and the construction of a reloading station in the village of Svetulka, municipal waste will be pressed and separated, the quantity of landfill will be significantly reduced and the collection, transport and landfill costs will decrease, therefore the municipal waste tax will be reduced.
Facts and data demonstrating results in decreasing water consumption	25 % water reduction per resident since 2015
Facts and data demonstrating results in reducing energy consumption	20 % energy consumption reduction per resident since 2015

12. GENERAL STATISTICS

How many inhabitants?	The population of the municipality is 12 518.
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