

ROSEB Initiative

*Three Regions –
One Experience*
Serbia – Romania
– Bulgaria
Cross-border
Tourism Initiative



Mehedinti – Dolj – Olt – Bor – Zaječar – Vratsa – Montana – Vidin

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Aim and objectives

ROSEB Initiative is the common trilateral initiative aiming to enhance smart, inclusive and sustainable socio – economic development through improving tourism and sustainable use of the natural and cultural heritage of the cross-border area.

The ROSEB Initiative has 95 members, Local Administration, Ministries / National Authorities for Tourism, NGOs, Tour Operators and Agencies for Tourism, Clusters, High Schools, and Universities.

ROSEB Initiative Specific Objectives are:

- To create a Platform for cooperation in tourism by setting-up cross-border network of tourist stakeholders;
- To facilitate better utilisation of joint tourism potentials by setting-up mechanisms for structured participatory processes of needs assessment, priority setting, action planning and project implementation.

To this regard, ROSEB Initiative is:

- Area-specific (versus countries)
- Integrated (across sectors)
- Inclusive (communities)
- Participatory (bottom-up)
- Flexible (responsive to changes).

The ROSEB Initiative was formally agreed during International Tourist Fair on March 18th 2016 in Craiova, when the three organizations agreed on the content of ROSEB Initiative.

The ROSEB Initiative was signed, on November 8th, 2016, in Kladovo.

Why ROSEB Initiative?

Tourism development in border regions has been state-centric, characterized by hierarchically organized centralized state institutions, including the regional and local administrative districts.

Bordering regions in Serbia, Romania and Bulgaria need some joint, cross-border approach since:

- *There is a common administrative border between them;*
- *Tourism is common development priority for all three border regions;*
- *Tourism and as well natural and cultural setting doesn't consider state or any other borders;*
- *Lack of regional integration in the tourism sector and a baseline for improvement of the competitiveness of tourism in ROSEB Initiative area;*
- *Natural and cultural potentials of the area are a significant comparative advantage and an important development asset stretching across the border;*
- *We have to change border discourse – from barriers to resources.*

Various Territorial Analysis indicates that tourism is a growing sector but the growth is not associated anyhow with the trilateral CBC region as a tourism destination. On the one hand, the area have own problems and challenges in developing tourism that certainly affect negatively the development of overall tourism in the ROSEB Initiative area.

On the other hand, there is a tourism potential that is currently not utilized. Such potential is significantly correlated with the urgent needs to overcome challenges that this trilateral CBC region is facing. Uniting the forces from three sides, the challenges would be better approached and problems solved in comprehensive manner.

To achieve sustainability, tourism actors have to recognize both external and internal accelerators for tourism in a desired area, possibly manifesting in tourism planning where has to be shown a wariness of the possibly negatively circumstances affecting natural and cultural heritage. In the context of border regions, natural and cultural heritage in neighborhood countries has to be respected at highest level.

First round of discussion was led by one responsible organization from each of the participating bordering regions:

- RARIS – Regional Development Agency Eastern Serbia, Serbia
- Vidin Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Bulgaria
- ARoTT - Romanian Association for Technology Transfer and Innovation, Romania

As a result of such consultation process ROSEB Initiative was redefined in line with the inputs gain from the stakeholders.

ROSEB Initiative territory

ROSEB Initiative covers three bordering regions from Serbia, Romania and Bulgaria:

- East Serbia
- North West Bulgaria
- South West Romania

Joint cross-border region have 2.191.000 inhabitants in total.

The area considered as the eastern Serbia is consisted of territories of Bor and Zaječar districts which includes municipalities: Majdanpek, Kladovo, Negotin, Bor, Zaječar, Sokobanja, Boljevac and Knjaževac. Region has 242.000 inhabitants.

Northwest Bulgaria region is consisted of:

- Districts Vratsa, with municipalities Vratsa, Borovan, Byala Slatina, Kozlodui, Krivodol, Mezdra, Miziya, Oryqhovo, Roman and Hayredin.
- District Montana with municipalities Montana, Berkovitsa, Boychinovtsi, Brusartsi, Valchedram, Varshets, GeorgiDamyanovo, Lom, Medkovets, Chiprovtsi and Yakimovo.
- District Vidin with municipalities Vidin, Belogradchik, Boynitsa, Bregovo, Gramada, Dimovo, Kula, Makresh, Novo selo, Ruzhintsi and Chuprene.

Region has 435.000 inhabitants.

The area considered as the South West Romania consist of the counties Mehedinti, Dolj and Olt (south of Oltenia Region).

Region has 1.514.000 inhabitants: 306.000 in Mehedinti County, 720.000 in Dolj County and 488.000 in Olt County.

The ROSEB area is characterised by some additional features, which can be summarised as:

- Coverage of a large area with a high diversity of regions and often conflicting interests;
- Full integration into a Macro Region framework, the Danube Macro Region, which generates substantial challenges and opportunities of coordination and synergies.

