

Tourism Master Plan for Kars and Local Economic

Development Initiatives for Tourism Development (LDITD) Grant Scheme Programme



Ani Archeological Site /Site Management Planning © MDG-F JP Turkey

- Promotion of tools for supporting women's participation in the workforce
- Mobilisation of partnerships between NGOs and government institutions
- Enhancement of public/private partnerships in the field of tourism

BACKGROUND

Based on national strategic documents such as the 9th Development Plan of Turkey, Tourism Action Plan (2007-2013), Tourism Strategy 2023, and Kars Brand City Action Plan, the Diagnostic Report for Kars was prepared to assess the current situation of the tourism sector.

Following this report, a sustainable tourism strategy was developed to define the objectives aimed at mitigating constraints, benefiting from opportunities and key success aspects. Thus, the tourism development strategy focused on definition of product, destination and promotion strategies considering human resources. An action plan was prepared for the period 2010-2023 in line with the schedule of the Tourism Strategy of Turkey. The programmes composing the Action Plan were based on analysis of gaps between the current situation and the desired situation which is intended to be reached by 2023. The Action Plan foresees realizing the tourism development strategy defined for the region, with gender, poverty reduction and sustainable development taken into consideration as primary factors.

PROCESS

The JP aimed to develop national ownership through the effective cohesion of programme outputs and to build local capacities to achieve sustainable tourism development beyond the project. The studies in the field revealed that competencies of the local stakeholders are not sufficient to sustain the momentum created during the project. Social capital, which refers to connections within and between social networks, had not emerged in the region either. For this reason, a Grant Scheme, which is considered a tool to build competencies and social capital, was launched for civil societies in Kars. This tool is expected to contribute not only to build the capacity of cluster stakeholders, but also to facilitate the implementation of actions identified within the JP. In line with the outputs and complementary activities of the JP, a support scheme within the activity plan was foreseen. Taking into account both the progress of activities and feedback from local stakeholders, a grant scheme programme was formulated as 'Local Economic Development Initiatives for Tourism Development in Kars' in order to support small scale infrastructural and organizational efforts that will meet the immediate requirements for further development of the Tourism Industry in Kars for Culture, Winter, and Nature Tourism.

Selected activities supported institutional capacity building, product development, and income-generating activities for women. Special attention was given to poor or disadvantaged rural communities and areas with high-potential for natural tourism. Local development initiatives covered small scale actions having the potential to boost larger-scale economic developments in Kars and its environs.

Outcomes The activities suggested within the project proposals had a concrete impact on the tourism potential of Kars. On the global level, initiatives including meeting immediate small scale infrastructure or organizational needs for the development of tourism within the context of the project proposal; enhancing public/private partnerships in the field of tourism; raising awareness on the importance of tourism in the economic development of Kars, and supporting collective actions within tourism actors for enhanced public-private partnerships.

More concretely, an alternative tourist route incorporating cultural assets of Kars together with historic and well-known characters in literature was developed. In line with the development of the long term tourism strategy which focused on the winter season, a snow-park for an alternative winter tourism product was established, as were capacity building activities for hotels and restaurants for improved service quality. Training facilities and hygienic packaging equipment for local goose producers was obtained, and a cheese museum for showcasing the local cheese making tradition and for determining the relevant inventories was established. The JP promoted the fabrication of felt products and traditional dress dolls as important tools for supporting women's participation in the workforce. Training programmes were organized in cooperation with municipalities. As an added bonus, the projects mobilized partnerships between NGOs and government institutions.