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Shaping the vision, the identity and the cultural image of European places

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45TH CONGRESS OF THE EUROPEAN REGIONAL SCIENCE ASSOCIATION
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“LAND USE AND WATER MANAGEMENT IN A SUSTAINABLE NETWORK
SOCIETY”

**Shaping the vision, the identity and the cultural image
of European places**

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Abstract

European regions and cities have been, especially during the last twenty years, characterised by a plurality of efforts to define their vision, to construct their identity and to shape their images, in order to become more attractive and, consequently, competitive, and also to increase their market share in a globalised economy. Further to this, places have been elaborating and implementing particular competitive policies and strategic plans in order to attract the potential target markets (new investments, tourists, new residents etc). Shaping the vision in this way concerns the identification of the objectives of sustainable development that each place perceives in its long-term perspective. Furthermore, the vision is the first step of strategic planning implementation that places have to follow in order to construct their identity and construct their image as a ‘final provided good’.

This paper investigates the relationship between vision, local identity and image, focusing on culture and tourism. The international bibliography shows several cases, mainly European places that support their competitiveness through cultural and tourism development. In addition, the majority of implemented place marketing policies relate to culture and tourism. The primary aim of the paper is to outline the ways in which the cultural image of a place as a ‘final provided good’ could be produced, supported and promoted effectively vis-à-vis the external environment. The secondary aim is to show under what conditions the promotion of this image could induce anticipated profits for a place on a long-term basis.

The data for this paper are provided by the INTERREG IIIC *CultMark* project (Cultural Heritage, Local Identity and Place Marketing for Sustainable Development, an project), which has been in operation in five European places since the beginning of 2004: Nea Ionia/Magnesia/Greece (lead partner), Paphos/Cyprus, Chester/UK, Rostock-Wismar/Germany and Kainuu/Finland – it has to be noted that the last four places relate directly to water. The main aim of the project is to create a final successful image for each place and for the study area as a whole. This paper presents a structural analysis of the project methodology and uses the available data in order to produce the ‘final provided good’ of each place.

Key words: *vision, local identity, cultural image, place marketing policy, CultMark project*

1. Identifying the concept of Place/City Marketing

The place/city marketing process constitutes one of the most interesting subjects, which over the last thirty years has been characterised by increased sophistication and professionalism (Ashworth and Voogd, 1990; Kearns and Philo, 1993; Kotler *et al.*, 1993 and 1999; Gold and Ward, 1994; Ward 1998; Hope and Klem, 2001; Bradley *et al.*, 2002; Warnaby *et al.*, 2005). With reference to European regions and cities, Kotler *et al.* (1999) point out that the economic dynamism of a region/city also reflects on the development dynamics of that place, attributing an attractive or unattractive character to it. Following Hall's (1998) position, regions/cities are characterised by their necessity to present, in their external environment, a positive image as far as their economic development is concerned, and for this reason they adopt promotional programmes and actions, which they subsequently implement. Hall proposed to talk about a 'New Cities' phenomenon. The main goal of the place marketing plan is not only to advertising the location to potential tourists and investors (Urban, 2002). Place Marketing is a main planning tool that contributes to regional/urban development, but it also constitutes a basic principle that supports economic development especially in the '80s, but that also continued in the '90s.

Place/City marketing concerns the adaptation of the traditional model of Marketing's 4ps (product, price, place, promotion) and its performance in the procedure of place/city marketing. According to Short and Kim (1998), the realisation of Place/City Marketing as a procedure is based, first of all, on the realisation of marketing procedure as a science and practice. Marketing evolved largely among commercial enterprises in the inter-war period, as a means of selling physical products to paying customers for short-term financial profits (Ashworth and Voogd, 1994). On the other hand, Ashworth and Voogd (1990: 27) define Place/City Marketing as:

...a process whereby local activities are related as closely as possible to the demands of targeted customers. The intention is to maximize the efficient social and economic functioning of the area concerned, in accordance with whatever wider goals have been established. This definition significantly shifts the secondary definitions of product, customers and goals compared to conventional marketing.

Kotler *et al.* (1999) support that:

Place Marketing refers to 'a place planning procedure concerning the satisfaction of the needs of target – markets. It could be successful when it satisfies two main parameters: a) The enterprises' and the residents' satisfaction from the purchase of goods and services that the place provides, b) the satisfaction of the expectations of potential target -markets (enterprises and visitors), as long as the goods and the services that the place provides to them are those that they wish to get

Place marketing involves adoption by the community of a city (internal forces), the identification of the vision of a city, partnerships between enterprises-public local authorities-residents, the existence of a public (or private) city's promotion office and the relevant financial budget, financial support from enterprises annually, setting up the primary development goals, SWOT-PEST analyses, the identification of a city's distinctive characteristics, The city's strategic image management (based on the city's vision and the distinctive characteristics audit), ranking primary development actions, a feasibility study per action, market research and target market segmentation, using methodologies per action (cost-benefit analysis, Delphic method, CPM etc), the creation of a city's promotional package (based on the city's distinctive characteristics), strategic planning per action (using alternative scenarios), and feedback procedure performance (Metaxas, 2003). Thus, place marketing cannot operate in isolation. It could operate only through the participation and contribution of all the city's internal forces.

2. Strategic planning and the identification of a city's vision

The strategic planning process concerns the analysis of the internal and the external environment of cities (SWOT and PEST analyses)¹, and it relates to the examination of the relationships which have developed inside the organisation (city). The main aim of SWOT analysis relates to the investigation and evaluation of the local, distinctive characteristics (of a region/city). This process serves as the base from which to examine the following strategic planning factors:

- Identification of the city's vision (Rotmans *et al.*, 2000)²;
 - Identification of Development objectives (i.e. the cases of Barcelona and Thessaloniki: Gospodini, 2000);
 - Market Research (van Limburg, 1998; Jansen-Verbeke and van Rekom, 1996, Garrod *et al.*, 2002; Metaxas, 2005) and Market segmentation processes (Chen, 2003; Kastenholtz *et al.*, 1999), in order to evaluate the potential target markets, to investigate the global tendencies, to change experiences;
 - Planning the appropriate strategies, tactics and alternative scenarios per action;

¹ SWOT analysis: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats

PEST analysis: Political, Economical, Social and Technological factors.

² According to the 'VISIONS' project, which aims to develop visions for a sustainable Europe.

- Planning the feedback procedure – effective communication model development (Schramm, 1995).

Strategic planning is a very important step, since public local authorities on the one hand and the private sector on the other co-operate in ways based on the representation of common interests and policies, in order to define the development goals and motives, that in most cases are different (Ashworth and Voogd, 1990: 33).

Shaping the vision concerns the identification of sustainable development objectives that each place sets up as part of their long-term vision. Furthermore, the vision is the first step in strategic planning implementation that a place has to follow in order to construct its identity and to produce its image as a ‘final provided good’. The most important issue is that the vision of the city, and the development objectives and strategies, depend on local distinctive characteristics and particularities of each place, and the final strategic place marketing plan, in order to become effective, should be based on these characteristics.

3. Image, identity and distinctive characteristics

The creation of a positive city image constitutes an extremely important part of economic regeneration (Hall, 1998: 115). Under this option, cities are striving towards the creation of the most competitive and attractive image in order to increase their market share in a global economy. Referring to the environment of Europe, Simpson and Chapman (1999) support that cities (especially the historic ones), are recognised as valuable resources within the increasingly competitive and integrated European economy. Harris (1997) argues that cities are the biggest dynamic centres of economic changes in international-global economies. Cities like Rotterdam (as a marked and business centre) [Jansen-Verbeke and van Rekom, 1996], Singapore (as an information city ‘intelligent island’) [Mahizhnan, 1999] and Bradford (as an industrial area) [Hope and Klemm, 2001] are seeking to develop culture, tourist and leisure policies in order to attract potential target markets and so fortify their economic development.

Following the definition of Kotler *et al* (1999: 160), the image is the sum of beliefs, ideas and impressions that people have about a place/city. The images represent a simplification of a large number of accusations and pieces of information connected with that place. From their perspective, Selby and Morgan (1996) argued that images are constructed by the amount, source and objectivity of the available information for a place/city, especially in the case of tourist destinations. It is important to distinguish image from stereotype. A stereotype suggests a widely held image that is highly distorted and simplistic and that carries a favourable or

unfavourable attitude toward the place. An image, on the other hand, is a more personal perception of a place and can vary from person to person (Kotler *et al.*, 1993).

The ultimate good is the image of the place/city that is applied to the selected city's target markets. The production of this 'good' is not something random. It is a continual process with particular development stages. In addition, the whole production (or construction) of a city's image is related to the potential target markets' perceptions of this place (in both the internal and external environment of the city). For this reason the identification of a city's image is as important as the identification of the target markets that this image is applied to. In addition, the image of the city is related to the distinctive characteristics of that city. Each one of these characteristics constitutes a 'distinctive good'. According to this view, the image of a city is more or less a puzzle of 'distinctive characteristics', each of which needs a different strategic approach (Metaxas, 2003). Additionally, the production of city image as 'good' is an integral part of Place Marketing. There are a number of cases, mainly in Europe, that support their competitiveness, based especially on culture and tourism, through Place Marketing (Amsterdam and Berlin: van Aalst and Boogaarts, 2002; Adelaide Festival in Australia: Brown and James, 2004; Edinburgh: Ali-Knight and Robertson, 2004; Apulia in Italy: Novelli, 2004; Manchester: Schofield, 1996; Trieste Italy: Kotler *et al.*, 1999).

On the other hand, a city's identity relates to the historical/heritage background and to the particularities that traditionally characterise the city/region concerned. According to Barke and Harrop (1994), the 'identity' of a place may be regarded as an objective thing. Pritchard and Morgan (2002), examining the relationship between culture, place identity and tourism representation, support that 'the representations used in destination marketing are not value-free expressions of a place's identity; instead they are the culmination of historical, social, economic and political processes....' Twigger-Ross and Uzzell (1996) support the notion that cities/places, like individuals, have characters and distinctions., where they try to explain the role of place and identity processes by using Breakwell's model as a framework (1992, 1993).

Concluding this brief analysis, the relationship between place image and place identity could be described as follows: The place/city identity concerns those distinctive characteristics that historically more or less provide the city/place with its character. The most important consideration is that this character may be either strong or weak. The creation of the city/place image is a supportive tool in order to secure two things: a) to maintain the strong identity and distinctiveness of the city as part of an ongoing process (Twigger-Ross and Uzzell, 1996) and b), to improve the weak identity of an area so that it becomes strong and competitive, by

creating effective cities images. This process characterises strategic planning according to Kotler *et al* (1999: 160), who refer to it as ‘Strategic Image Management’ (SIM).

4. Focus on culture and tourism

The identification of culture as an important factor in urban economic development is, in its own right, a scientific research area, with particular interest, especially in the last two to three decades, in the US and Europe (Barnett, 2001; Kong, 2000). The performance of cultural policies as tools for urban economic development has expanded in several sectors, such as tourism, sports, recreation, the arts and the media (Bianchini, 1993). This has created, at the same time, powerful cultural industries, including a variety of activities such as fashion and design, architecture and townscape, heritage, local history, eating and entertainment, and generally the identity and external image of a city (Pratt, 1997; Deffner, 2000; Kong 2000). The role of cultural industries has been particularly pertinent to the development and implementation of cultural policy initiatives that have taken place on a global scale (Lennon and Graham, 2001).

Table 1: *Cases of cultural policies conformance and performance*

Case	Specific interest	Reference
Lexington (Kentucky)	Identification of the relationship between culture and local economic development, in order to develop urban policy actions	McCann, 2002
Singapore	Communicating local cultures through global tourism & Negotiation of economic and socio-cultural agendas	Chang and Yeoh, 1999 & Kong, 2000
The Rocks (Australia)	Analysis of consumers needs and demands in the case of heritage tourism	Waitt, 2000
Amsterdam	Role of museums in urban development & cultural tourism and urban development	Van Aalst and Boogaarts, 2002 & Dahles, 1998
Bergen (Norway)	European City of Culture 1999: Culture as a strategic development device	Sjøholt, 1999
Berlin	Role of museums in urban development	Van Aalst and Boogaarts, 2002
Bilbao	Analysis of the relationship between culture, citizens and the quality of life (focus on the role of culture in strategic planning)	Gonzalez, 1993
Bologna	Planning and development of cultural policies and actions: Culture as a production field of urban economic development	Bloomfield, 1993
Glasgow	European City of Culture 1990 & Development and implementation of cultural strategies to promote urban regeneration	Booth and Boyle, 1993 & Seo, 2002
Hamburg	Identification of the role of culture in its economic development and the degree of its competitiveness	Friedrichs and Dangschat, 1993
Lisbon	European City of Culture 1994 & EXPO 1998	Alden and Da Rosa Pires, 1996 & Carriere and Demaziere, 2002
Manchester	Development of film images as an alternative type of heritage tourism & Development and implementation of cultural strategies to promote urban regeneration	Schofield, 1996 & Seo, 2002
Mostar (Bosnia – Herzegovina)	Reconstruction of the area’s identity and its historical image	Grodach, 2002
Prague region	Focus on the significance of the historic buildings and spaces especially in terms of tourist trade	Hammersley and Westlake, 1996

Source: Deffner and Metaxas (2003)

It's clear that culture and tourism have been used extensively in a variety of initiatives that concern urban, and especially economic, regeneration, by using particular strategies and tactics. The existence of a sustainable and effective cultural and tourism economy is based on the capacity and knowledge of the cities' internal actors to create particular plans of action, by evaluating which fields of implementation of cultural and tourism policies could constitute a competitive advantage at a given time. This argument is also reinforced by Kneafsey (2000; 2001), who claims that 'the cultural economy consists of strategies that transform local knowledge into resources available for the local territory'.

The contribution of culture must be related to the conformance and implementation of urban policy actions, a focus on the satisfaction of the needs and demands of the potential target markets, the enforcement and promotion of the cultural identity and image of the cities, the contribution of the citizens towards achieving a better quality of life, and to the construction of a city's competitive advantage.

5. The *CultMark* programme

The project *CultMark* (**C**ultural Heritage, Local Identity and Place **M**arketing for Sustainable Development) is an operation in the framework of the European Union programme of inter-regional co-operation INTERREG IIIIC. The lead partner is DEMKA (Municipal Enterprise for Planning, Construction and Development of Nea Ionia Magnesia, Greece) and the other partners are local authorities and/or organizations from Chester (Britain), Kainuu (Finland), Rostock/ Wismar (Germany), and Paphos (Cyprus). The management of the *CultMark* programme is a responsibility of the EuroTrans company in Volos (director Manos Vougioukas), and the scientific support is provided by the Laboratory of Tourism Planning, Research and Policy - Department of Planning and Regional Development - University of Thessaly (director Dr. Alex Deffner, Assistant Professor).

The *CultMark* programme is applying a place marketing strategy with a cultural approach. This means that it emphasizes: the cultural dimension of marketing, as well as the promotion of the cultural resources of each place both in connection with the planning of demonstration actions. The implemented *demonstration actions* per place are:

- Nea Ionia: Promotion of Silk Museum, Olympic City image and legacy (2004 football group games), local cuisine/ gastronomy ('tsipouradika'), Asia Minor traditions, painting, Rock and Blues festival

- Kainuu: most northern castle in the world, local cuisine, cross-roads of civilisations, lectures
- Chester or Dee Estuary: Leisure canals, Boat Museum (Ellesmere Port & Neston Borough Council)
- Rostock: industrial and maritime traditions, Hanesail 2005, Olympics bid 2012, foster a unique selling position: wind turbine industry and (kinetic art)
- Paphos: signing of St Paul's trails, info kiosk at old harbour, promotion of Aphrodite Festival.

The innovative characteristics of this project are reinforced by the use of the two concepts of: 'creativity', and 'branding destination'. The main *objective* of the CultMark project is: the development and implementation of innovative place marketing strategies, based on the elements of local identity and the cultural assets of the partner areas, in order to contribute to their sustainable economic and social development. Its secondary objectives include: the promotion of heritage as a significant factor in local and cultural development, the promotion and improvement of the investment climate of each area, the global promotion and support of the image of each area, the connection between place marketing and spatial development as an innovative approach to planning, the promotion and support of the representation of common developmental interests, the promotion and support of local knowledge and skills, the development of common and individual demonstration actions taking into account the particularities of each area, the support of the provision and diffusion of knowledge and know-how to actors, encouraging the development of entrepreneurial skills.

This paper uses material from the following *reports* that have already been delivered: a) 'The Mini Investment Guide' (it briefly provides concrete information for the economic and investment profile of the partner areas), b) 'The Strategies, Tactics and Alternative Scenarios Report' (it deals with the application of specific strategies, tactics, and alternative scenarios of the promotion and support of the image of each area both in its external and internal environment), c) 'The Final Provided Good Report' (it presents the final provided good for each area, based on the available research data and the local distinctive characteristics), and d) 'The Promotional and Distributional "Maps" Report' (it presents the ways/ means of distribution and promotion of the image of each area both in its external and internal environment).

6. The CultMark areas

6.1. Nea Ionia, Magnesia, Greece

The Prefecture of Magnesia, having a central geographical position in Greece and being almost equidistant from the two major urban centres of Athens and Thessaloniki, constitutes a very important junction. In addition, having one of the most significance harbours of Greece, the Volos harbour, it has a developed system of sea transports and a high level of communication infrastructures in the sectors of transports and energy.

The urban agglomeration includes the municipalities of Volos, Nea Ionia and Iolkos and other smaller areas, and it has a population of about 130,000. The city of Volos and the wider area have been developed as manufacturing and industrial centres, especially the last three decades. The economy of the city is based on the industrial sector, the commercial, the tourism and services.

One of most significant advantages of Nea Ionia is that, being a dynamic municipality belonging in the town planning of Volos, it has easy accessibility to other national markets because of its central position. Nea Ionia is also characterised by the availability of support business services and low local taxes. These criteria, in combination with the low cost of labour and land, create a favourable and attractive environment for the establishment of new enterprises. Finally, two of the most significant advantages of the city are the high level of cultural and sports facilities provision, since Nea Ionia has tried to invest in these two particular sectors in order to become a dynamic and competitive destination.

6.2. Chester, United Kingdom

Chester is the county town of Cheshire, and is centrally located within the UK in the North West region. Its excellent concentration of motorways, roads and railways means that most areas of the UK are within easy travelling distance. Chester is also well served by Liverpool and Manchester Airports, and private aircraft can be accommodated at Hawarden Airport, four miles from the City.

The city of Chester has a variety of very important advantages that have enabled it to become, and remain, an attractive prospect for business investments as well as new residents and tourists. With regard to the business factors, Chester has an appropriate size of local market, with easy accessibility to other national markets and to the markets of Western and Northern Europe. The major advantages of the city are the availability of natural resources and the availability of support business services (engineering, maintenance, R/D etc). Furthermore,

the city has a strong profile vis-à-vis the existence of Universities and Technological Institutes, which ensures the availability of qualified and specialised of human resources.

In the categories of Urban Infrastructures and the quality of urban environment, the city of Chester proves a dynamic and competitive character. There are high level sufficient, road/highway, train, and seaport connections and also a high level of telecommunications, the most important criteria for the establishment of new businesses in the majority of production sectors.

Chester can also compete well in terms of the urban aesthetic, the availability of cultural, tourism and sports facilities, and also the quality of social services; all of which shows that the city administration has been invested in soft attraction factors in order for the city to become a competitive destination for the potential target markets.

6.3. Rostock, Germany

The Hanseatic City of Rostock is the largest town in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania situated on the routes Berlin-Copenhagen and Hamburg-Stettin. The autobahns A 19 (to Berlin) and A 20 (to Hamburg/Stettin, under construction), the airport Rostock-Laage and direct rail links to Berlin, Hamburg and Kiel provide rapid access to commercial centres across Europe. There are regular ferry lines from Rostock to Gedser/Denmark, to Trelleborg/Sweden and, seasonally, to Finland and Estonia. Rostock is linked to all ports around the Baltic Sea by commercial shipping lines. 500,000 inhabitants live in the Greater Rostock area within a range of 50 kilometres. The Hanseatic City is a supraregional commercial, administrative, cultural and educational centre.

Shipping and related industries continue to form an important part of the local economy but are no longer the dominant industries. The shipbuilding and the port industries act as a magnet and attract numerous small- to medium-sized service organisations. New opportunities have been created, for instance, in mechanical and marine engineering, food processing, electrical engineering, electronics and advanced technologies (e.g. biotechnologies, biomaterials).

6.4. Paphos, Cyprus

Paphos is located to the west of Cyprus. The whole town of Paphos is included in the official UNESCO list of cultural and natural treasures of the World's heritage. Paphos today hosts the second International Airport of Cyprus, two industrial estates and six industrial zones. In the Paphos area there are many small, picturesque fishing harbours, including the two most

popular, at Kato Paphos where the ancient fort protects the harbour, and the Latchi harbour at Polis Chrysochous.

For the last fifteen years, tourism had been major source of income in Paphos. Tourist development has been phenomenal but well controlled. The environmental protection measurements, the special morphology and the innumerable ancient sites provided Paphos with the opportunity to become the most popular tourist destination in Cyprus. The Paphos area has charming mountain villages where life has remained unchanged over the years, and where the customs and traditions of the Country have been kept alive because that is how it has always been.

Paphos has recently experienced a rapid growth in commercial and business activity; with the development of a number of well-designed shopping centres in the tourist area, Kato Paphos, and in the town centre. Paphos is well provided for in the areas of banking, financial and consulting services. All the important enterprises have a branch in Paphos town and the Paphos area, which gives an indication of the importance of the area, especially after the recent boom in tourism.

6.5. Kainuu, Finland

The region of Kainuu is located in east-central Finland. According to the Development and Regional Plans of Kainuu, and by focusing on tourism and culture sector the region of Kainuu, primarily develops a **cooperative marketing strategy**, something which is very important from the moment that the main development objective of the region seems to be the development of each municipality and the region as a whole.

In order to support this steady growth, cooperation is required between the tourist companies. Kainuu's strength lies in its diversity. The elements which make up its tourist products include clean, unspoilt nature, a rich culture and diverse provision of both outdoor and indoor sports and pastimes, and, uniquely, a spacious and tranquil environment. Leading the development of the region's tourism are the tourist centres of Vuokatti and Paljakka-Ukkohalla with their wide range of winter and summer events packages, and the City of Kajaani, acting as a provider of general services. Service is the keyword for success in tourism. Professionally skilled, friendly and linguistically capable staff ensure visitors an enjoyable holiday or business meeting. Tourism also provides additional income for rural areas. New tourism opportunities opening up in rural districts include the provision of nature, adventure and family holidays.

6. Final provided goods

7.1. The 'final provided good' of Nea Ionia

Nea Ionia has audited its distinctiveness on a general basis and has focused on the development of particular types of tourism. The 'final provided good' is a combination of archaeological, sport and food tourism. Actually, the character of this 'good' is shaped by three different types of tourism, each with different strategies implementation and tactics. It can be argued that Nea Ionia follows a **focus marketing strategy** based on its distinctive characteristics and the advantage of having been an Olympic City. Consequently, Nea Ionia has tried to secure a strong position in the area of sport and cultural tourism.

The most important thing is to analyse the factors that support this 'final provided good'. In other words, we have to evaluate if this 'good' presents a strong or a weak structure. The main concern of the city is to plan and develop particular strategies in order to establish a strong cultural character for the city, focusing especially on the enforcement of the combination between the tourism-culture and the industrial–manufacturing base.

The main question is whether or not the current image of the city meets the demands and the perceived image that tourists have for the city. According the evidence of Table 2, the city of Nea Ionia, Volos, seems to have a lack of leisure facilities, hotel infrastructure and accommodation facilities, and a shortage of information services provision. The city's organisations seem to be satisfied by the image of the city as a whole, the level of social services and safety, the level of customer services, as well as the transport infrastructure, with the exception of air connections.

Table 2: *Nea Ionia-Evaluation of the level of city's capacity to satisfy the needs and demands of tourists, concerning the following factors (scale: 1= the lowest level of capacity, 5= the highest level of capacity)*

ORGANISATIONAL SATISFACTION IN GENERAL (OVERALL EVALUATION)	1	2	3	4	5	TOTAL
Level of hotel infrastructure – rented rooms and accommodation facilities	11.1%	33.3%	33.3%	22.2%	0%	100%
Level of transport infrastructure	0%	22.2%	22.2%	44.4%	11.1%	100%
Level of information services provided by the city	11.1%	0%	55.6%	22.2%	11.1%	100%
Level of customer services	0%	0%	55.6%	33.3%	11.1%	100%
Level of social services and urban safety	0%	0%	33.3%	55.6%	11.1%	100%
Image of the city as a whole	0%	22.2%	44.4%	22.2%	11.1%	100%
Level of leisure facilities	0%	33.3%	22.2%	33.3%	11.1%	100%

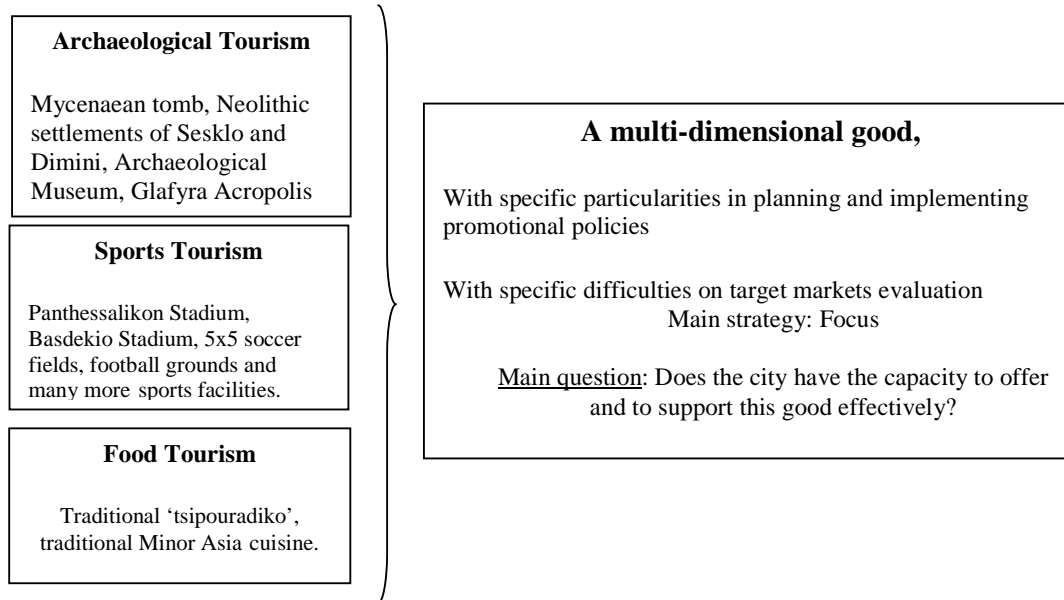
In addition, it's important to take into consideration the appreciation of tourists, regarding the visiting criteria of Nea Ionia (Table 3). It's possible to say that most tourists believe that Nea Ionia is a destination which provides the opportunity to develop several kinds of tourism activities (almost 65%), combines a modern and traditional image which is acknowledged world wide (almost 50%). The majority of tourists (70%), believe that Nea Ionia is a strong 'attraction tourism pole'. Combining the results of Tables 2 and 3, and considering the particular strategies that the city of Nea Ionia wants to develop, this paper maintains that the final provided good of Nea Ionia is based on tourism with specific development dimensions: culture, sport and food activities.

Table 3: Nea Ionia-Visiting criteria

FACTORS – CRITERIA	1	2	3	4	5	TOTAL
The historical/cultural character of the city/region in general	11.7%	21.7%	23.3%	23.3%	20%	100%
The city/region has very 'distinctive and famous' characteristics to visit and see	11.9%	18.6%	22%	28.8%	18.6%	100%
The city/region provides the opportunity to develop various alternative types of tourism focusing on sustainable development	10%	11.7%	13.3%	33.3%	31.7%	100%
The city/region provides a high level of tourism facilities which satisfies my needs and demands	5.1%	33.9%	25.4%	23.7%	11.9%	100%
The city/region combines both a modern and a traditional image which is internationally acknowledged	1.8%	24.6%	22.8%	42.1%	8.8%	100%
The city/region constitutes an 'attraction pole' by itself	1.7%	10.2%	18.6%	44.1%	25.4%	100%
The very good information that I had for the city/region	7.3%	21.8%	21.8%	36.4%	12.7%	100%

Figure 1: *Shaping the final provided good of Nea Ionia*

Figure 1 presents the three dimensions of the final provided good of Nea Ionia. The combination of the three development sectors leads to the creation of a multi-dimensional good. The main question here relates to the capacity of the city of Nea Ionia to support and promote this good effectively to the selected target markets.



A multiple tourism good, is based on heritage, sports and food. This combination is a very difficult one since it requires particular promotional actions and consequently particular sub-promotional maps. Of course, this combination offers the opportunity to the selected target markets to receive multi-dimensional final goods, combining several activities. In this case, the creation of specific promotional packages, that include all the above factors, would be one very good action. Of course, this would depend on the identification of the target markets – i.e. which particular tourist markets the city of Nea Ionia wants to attract.

7.2. The 'final provided good' of Chester

Chester's main tourism development axis is its history and cultural heritage, focusing mainly on the major features of the canal from Northgate Locks in Chester to the Boat Museum in Ellesmere Port. The canal has played a major role in the development of these communities, but it was neglected by these communities as it fell into industrial decline. Efforts aimed at developing sustainable tourism, enforcing the infrastructure around the canal, have seen major improvements in recent years. This has made the area accessible to a range of users and now provides a link between Chester and Ellesmere Port. In addition, Chester has an adopted Cultural Strategy for the period 2003-2008, which seeks to:

- develop community based cultural activity;
- enhance major cultural venues and events (e.g. provide a new Performing Arts Centre as part of the Northgate Development);
- animate the streets and the public realm (Chester Alfresco, street entertainment, outdoor festivals and events);

We could assert that the creation of the ‘provided good’ for the city of Chester is mainly oriented to the distinctive cultural and historic heritage and sustainable tourism development. This approach is also supported by the *Chester Economic Development Task Group* study ‘Towards a new economic Development Strategy for Chester 2003-8’, which focuses on the historic, vibrant and quality image for the city

Table 4: *Chester-Evaluation of the level of city’s capacity to satisfy the needs and demands of tourists, concerning the following factors (scale: 1= the lowest level of capacity, 5= the highest level of capacity)*

ORGANISATIONAL SATISFACTION IN GENERAL (OVERALL EVALUATION)	1	2	3	4	5	TOTAL
Level of hotel infrastructure – rented rooms and accommodation facilities	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%	100%
Level of transport infrastructure	0%	0%	33.3%	66.7%	0%	100%
Level of information services provided by the city	0%	0%	16.7%	83.3%	0%	100%
Level of customer services	0%	0%	33.3%	66.7%	0%	100%
Level of social services and urban safety	0%	16.7%	66.7%	16.7%	0%	100%
Image of the city as a whole	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%	100%
Level of leisure facilities	0%	0%	66.7%	33.3%	0%	100%

According to the evidence of Table 4, the Chester authorities allege that they have a quite high level of capacity to face the demands and the perceptions of the potential tourism markets. In the particular area of hotel infrastructure and the image of the city as a whole, the percentage is 100%. The percentages of the provided information services (83.3%), the customer services (66.7%) and the transport infrastructure (66.7%) are also very high. Leisure facilities and urban safety are in the middle range, with 33.3%.

Table 5: Chester-Visiting criteria

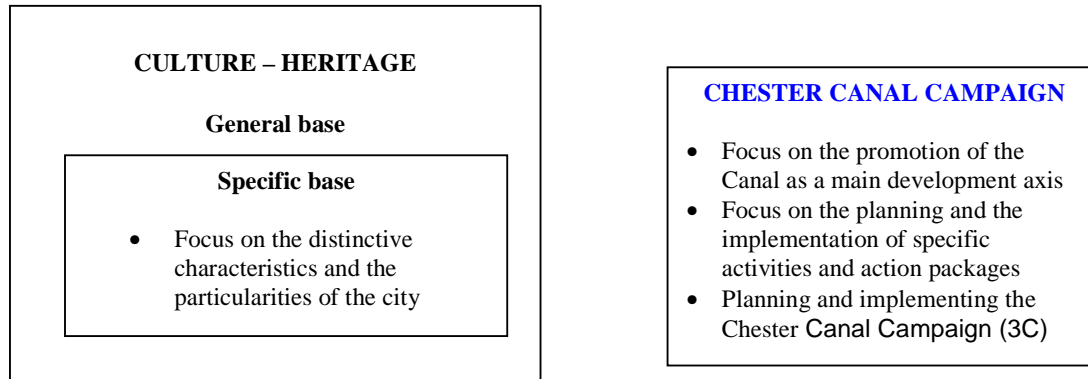
FACTORS – CRITERIA	1	2	3	4	5	TOTAL
The historical/cultural character of the area in general	68.3%	14.6%	12.2%	4.9%	0%	100%
The area has very special characteristics to visit and see	23.9%	14.8%	4.5%	20.4%	36.4%	100%
The area provides the opportunity to develop various alternative types of tourism focusing on sustainable development	69.7%	13.5%	9%	0%	7.9%	100%
The area provides a high level of tourism facilities which satisfies my needs and demands	58.1%	10.4%	15.1%	14%	2.3%	100%
The area combines both a modern and a traditional image	61.9%	14.3%	9.5%	14.3%	0%	100%
The area is attractive in its own right	69.4%	18.8%	0%	9.4%	2.4%	100%
The very good information that I had for the area	37.6%	17.7%	11.8%	12.9%	20%	100%
I came only for a particular event	57%	3.5%	3.5%	17.5%	18.6%	100%
Because Britain is a famous tourist destination	70.4%	1.2%	4.9%	9.9%	13.6%	100%
Other	33.3%	0%	0%	11.1%	55.6%	100%

The results from the evaluation of the factors/criteria that contribute to the decision to visit the city/region appear to be quite concentrated, creating two poles. The majority of the proposed criteria are judged not to be very important: the fame of Britain as a tourism destination (70.4%), the opportunities to develop various alternative types of tourism focusing on sustainable development (69.7%), the attractiveness of the area alone (69.4%), historical/cultural character of the area (68.3%). the benefit of high level tourism facilities to satisfy tourist needs and demands (58.1%), visits because of a particular event (57%). As for the combination of both modern and traditional image, although it is considered as a weak factor by the 61.9% of people asked, another 56.4 % (4 and 5 degrees) tends to believe that it is a really important one. Respectively the benefit of good information is judged as not important by 37.6% of people asked and as very significant by 32.9% (4 and 5 degrees) of them. Finally, the criteria considered very important are: the very special characteristics of the area (56.8%) [4 and 5 degrees], as well as other, not specified, criteria (55.6%).

Figure 2 presents the final provided good of Chester. Taking into consideration one very strong visiting criterion (the special characteristics of the area, which includes the Canal), we support that the final provided good is located in the area of culture-heritage and is

represented by the existence of the Canal and all the other particular characteristics of the city. The historical character of the area in general is unimportant, as is the fame of Britain as a cultural destination. The results lead to the conclusion that only the distinctive characteristics of the area, and some other reasons that have not yet been identified, create the final provided good, with the main development axis being the Canal and the implementation of Canal Activities.

Figure 2: *Shaping the final provided good of Chester*



The provision of the Canal as the main attraction pole requires the development of strategies and alternative scenarios, the planning and the evaluation of particular ‘*Canal Activities Packages*’, and finally, the creation of a competitive advantage in the area of alternative cultural tourism. Of course, the implementation of these kinds of policies requires the existence of a specialised promotional and distributional office, which in the case of Chester already exists, which will focus on the promotion and support of the Chester Canal globally. The planning of Chester Canal Campaign is a proposed action in order to satisfy this goal.

7.3. The ‘final provided good’ of Rostock

In the case of Rostock, the identification of the ‘final provided good’ requires the analysis of two basic development sectors. The first one is the heritage–culture and the second is business. Rostock has already planned a City Marketing Plan up to 2010. The current analysis aims to support this effort. The city of Rostock seems to follow a penetration strategy in order to proceed and attract the potential target markets. Under this option, Rostock tries to support and promote a cross-combination image, with its main axis being the heritage and the creation of a competitive and attractable business environment. The combination of culture and business is difficult, but in the case of Rostock is necessary. This fact can be explained by taking into account the influences of the new transition and integration political and economical environment in Europe. Within this environment, the majority of the former

Eastern European countries, and consequently urban areas, introduced a range of policies in order to face the new challenges and to exploit the opportunities for development. This situation is also the case for the city of Rostock. Rostock has to become a competitive destination in Europe, and to increase its strength and its position, firstly in the area of Baltic and Eastern Europe, and secondly in the new and international global environment.

As in two previous case studies, the identification of the ‘final provided good’ based on the analysis of the two main elements, the capacity of the city to meet the existing tourist demand, and the level of the supplied services and finally the evaluation of the visiting criteria.

Table 6: *Rostock-Evaluation of the level of city’s capacity to satisfy the needs and demands of tourists, concerning the following factors (scale: 1= the lowest level of capacity, 5= the highest level of capacity)*

ORGANISATIONAL SATISFACTION IN GENERAL (OVERALL EVALUATION)	1	2	3	4	5	TOTAL
Level of hotel infrastructure – rented rooms and accommodation facilities	0%	0%	0%	87.5%	12.5%	100%
Level of transport infrastructure	0%	0%	0%	75%	25%	100%
Level of information services provided by the city	12.5%	12.5%	25%	50%	0%	100%
Level of customer services	12.5%	0%	25%	62.5%	0%	100%
Level of social services and urban safety	0%	0%	12.5%	87.5%	0%	100%
Image of the city as a whole	0%	0%	25%	50%	25%	100%
Level of leisure facilities	0%	12.5%	25%	62.5%	0%	100%

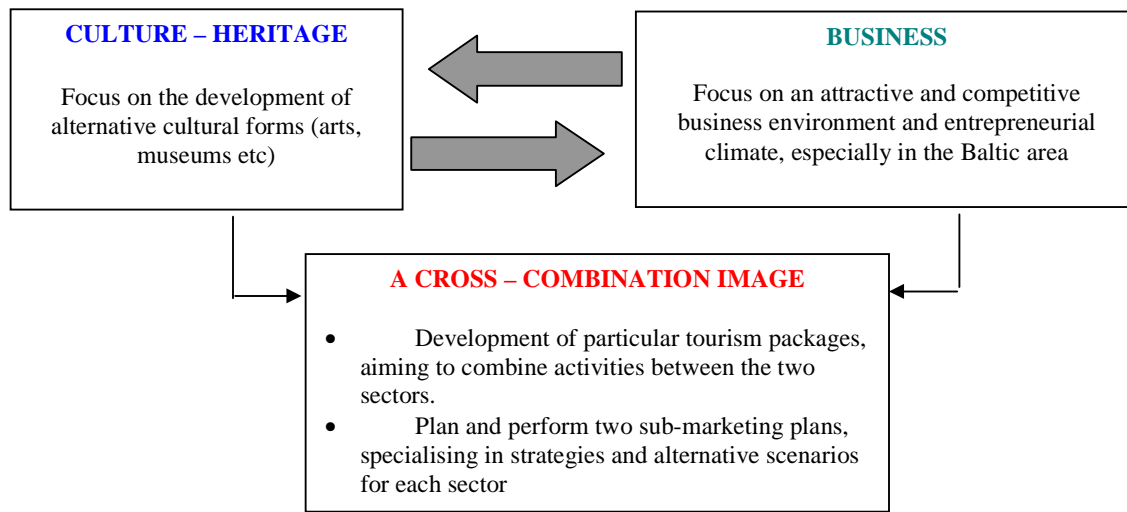
According to the evidence in Table 6, the Rostock authorities appreciate that they completely satisfy the trends and the demands of the potential target markets. The level of capacity is very high, from 50% to 100% (4 and 5 degrees). This fact generates the belief that Rostock has already identified its strengths and weaknesses in order to become and to remain a competitive destination in Europe.

Table 7. Rostock-Visiting criteria

FACTORS – CRITERIA	1	2	3	4	5	TOTAL
The historical/cultural character of the city/region in general	0%	76.9%	11.5%	7.7%	3.8%	100%
The city/region has very ‘distinctive and famous’ characteristics to visit and see	7.7%	69.2%	3.8%	19.2%	0%	100%
The city/region provides the opportunity to develop various alternative types of tourism focusing on sustainable development	0%	76.9%	7.7%	15.4%	0%	100%
The city/region provides a high level of tourism facilities which satisfies my needs and demands	0%	65.4%	15.4%	11.5%	7.7%	100%
The city/region combines both a modern and a traditional image which is internationally acknowledged	3.8%	57.7%	11.5%	26.9%	0%	100%
The city/region constitutes an ‘attraction pole’ by itself	3.7%	66.6%	11.1%	15.4%	3.7%	100%
The very good information that I had for the city /region	0%	73.1%	15.4%	7.7%	3.8%	100%

The evidence in Table 7 shows that tourists don't value all the visiting criteria. The tourists see them as unimportant in their final decision to visit Rostock. This fact has major significance and leads to two basic questions: a) why someone wants to visit Rostock? and, b) to exactly which target markets does Rostock aims its image? A small exception is the criterion of the combination of traditional and modern image that the city of Rostock provides (26.9%). These questions have to be answered by the local authorities and decision makers of the city.

Figure 3 shows the final provided for the city of Rostock. The shape of this good combines the development of two primary production sectors, culture and business.

Figure 3: *Shaping the final provided good of Rostock*

The cross-combination image development presupposes the cooperation between all the involved city actors and their direct contribution to this process. It is important to mention that the combination and the development of activities in common between the two sectors is a difficult process, but they do affect the overall concept of the competitiveness of Rostock and tourism sustainability.

Rostock has to pursue the investigation of specific market research and target market segmentations. It is important that Rostock should develop its promotion policies in two geographical areas. The first area covers the Baltic region, in which Rostock tries to support its position and its dominance among other similar cities, and the second area is West Europe in particular, and all of Europe in general.

Rostock has to build a competitive foreign investments climate, attracting mainly services and commercial enterprises. Rostock has a strategic geographical position and this characteristic should be supported and promoted effectively through the creation of a strategic business plan process.

7.4. The 'final provided good' of Paphos

In the case of Paphos, the creation of the 'final provided good' is based on the analysis and evaluation of the culture and tourist sectors. The main development axis is the enforcement of the 'special event' area and the creation of special goods and services deriving from a mix of culture and tourism. It's very obvious that Paphos needs to penetrate in international event tourism. With its main axis of development and competitiveness being the Aphrodite festival, it needs to improve its 'event image' and to become attractive among other cities.

Table 8 presents the appreciation on the part of the Paphos local authorities concerning the level of capacity of the city to satisfy the needs and the demands of tourists. The majority of the answers are above 60%, especially regarding the hotel infrastructure and the image of the city as a whole. Paphos seems to have the solutions in order to meet the international tourism trends. The city invests in tourism and is trying to build a competitive advantage on this economic development area. Of course, there are a lot of obstacles, since the Mediterranean zone is one of the highest international tourism areas, and already has a large number of top destinations.

Table 8: Paphos-Evaluation of the level of city's capacity to satisfy the needs and demands of tourists, concerning the following factors (scale: 1= the lowest level of capacity, 5= the highest level of capacity)

ORGANISATIONAL SATISFACTION IN GENERAL (OVERALL EVALUATION)	1	2	3	4	5	TOTAL
Level of hotel infrastructure – rented rooms and accommodation facilities	0%	0%	20%	80%	0%	100%
Level of transport infrastructure	0%	20%	20%	60%	0%	100%
Level of information services provided by the city	0%	20%	60%	20%	0%	100%
Level of customer services	0%	20%	20%	60%	0%	100%
Level of social services and urban safety	0%	20%	20%	60%	0%	100%
Image of the city as a whole	0%	20%	0%	80%	0%	100%
Level of leisure facilities	0%	0%	40%	60%	0%	100%

On the other hand, the ability of Paphos to successfully manage the tourist sector is dependant upon the opinion of tourists concerning the visiting criteria ranking. Table 9 presents the criteria for visiting Paphos. The cultural and historical character of the city and the recognition that the whole of Cyprus is a top tourist destination seems to be the main criteria for visiting Paphos. But also, criteria such as the high quality of provided services/facilities and the capacity of the city to combine a traditional and a modern character are also very important. The main outcome deriving from the answers is that Paphos has the ability to provide a high level of quality in the tourist sector, which is the most powerful strategy in this sector.

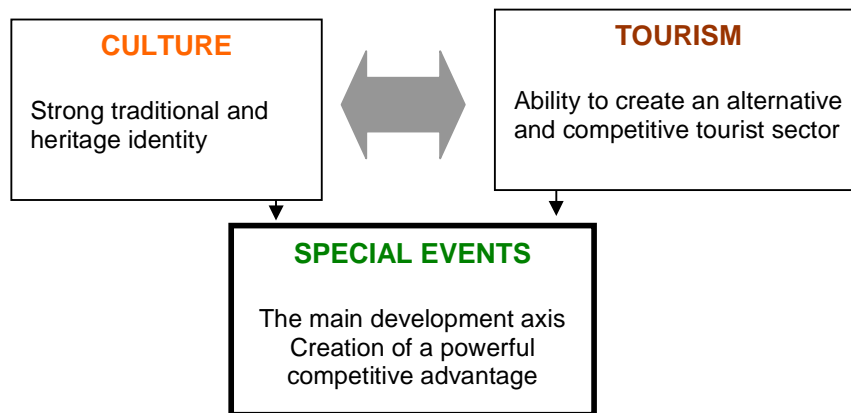
Table 9: Paphos-Visiting criteria

FACTORS - CRITERIA	1	2	3	4	5	TOTAL
The historical/cultural character of the city/region in general	0%	0%	0%	80%	20%	100%
The city/region has very 'distinctive and famous' characteristics to visit and see	0%	0%	20%	60%	20%	100%
The city/region provides the opportunity to develop various alternative types of tourism focusing on sustainable development	10%	10%	10%	60%	10%	100%
The city/region provides a high level of tourism facilities which satisfies my needs and demands	0%	10%	10%	70%	10%	100%
The city/region combines both a modern and a traditional image which is internationally acknowledged	0%	10%	0%	70%	20%	100%
The city/region constitutes an 'attraction pole' by itself	0%	0%	22.2%	55.6%	22.2%	100%
The very good information that I had for the city/region	0%	33.3%	0%	44.4%	22.2%	100%

Figure 4: Shaping the final provided good of Paphos

Thus, the final provided good could be the following 'Special event and special products'.

Figure 4 presents the final provided good of Paphos.



7.5. The final provided good of Kainuu

Kainuu has promoted its image on an international basis. The tourist sector is founded on the all-year-round attractiveness of Kainuu nature and culture. Kainuu's strength lies in its diversity. One very important factor is that Kainuu has strong competition in Europe from the other traditional winter destinations in Germany, Switzerland and Italy, and they have the advantage of being located at the centre of Europe. But this obstacle also can be overcome since Finland, and consequently Kainuu, consist 'unusual' (distinctive) destinations. The selected target markets should have also distinctive characteristics, mainly those that are not domestic. The final provided good has to be divided into three sub-goods. The first concerns the culture and historical image, the second the nature and the lovers of winter and winter sports, and the third the hospitality of events (sports or celebrations).

The creation of the final provided good was based on the separation of the tourist character of Kainuu, and on the three aforementioned subdivisions, with many special provided goods. Thus, the final provided good takes the following shape (Figure 5).

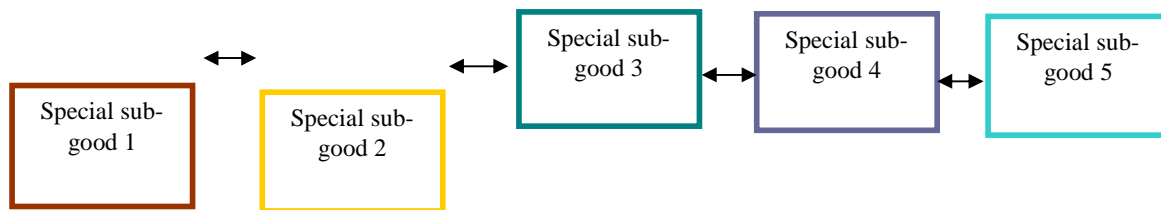


Figure 5: *Shaping the final provided good of Kainuu*

8. Conclusions

The main aim of the paper was to present briefly but clearly the final provided good of the areas of the *CultMark* project. The reason for doing this is to establish a potential image in the first place for each city, by taking into consideration the main development strategies and the particularities of each place. The paper uses primary data from the questionnaires that were completed by local authorities and tourist-culture organisations in the project areas, as well by the tourists themselves. The paper presents evidence concerning the ability and the capacity of each place to face the international tourism trends in a highly competitive tourism environment. The most crucial analysis the paper detailed was that of tourists. Why and under what consideration do tourists visit these places? What was/were the main reason/s? These

results help us to construct a potential image for each place. The ultimate image will be created in the next phase of the programme.

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