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**Conference Paper**

## Is City Marketing Opposed to Urban Planning? The Elaboration of a Pilot City Marketing Plan for the Case of Nea Ionia, Magnesia, Greece

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**46<sup>th</sup> CONGRESS OF THE EUROPEAN REGIONAL SCIENCE  
ASSOCIATION**

*‘Enlargement, Southern Europe and the Mediterranean’*

**August 30<sup>th</sup>- September 3<sup>rd</sup> 2006,**

**University of Thessaly, Department of Planning and Regional Development,  
Volos, Greece**

**Is City Marketing Opposed to Urban Planning? The Elaboration of a  
Pilot City Marketing Plan for the case of Nea Ionia, Magnesia,  
Greece**

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**Abstract**

The role of city marketing has been increasingly important in Europe. Today it has become a necessity with regard to the processes of global competition of cities, tourist attraction, urban management, city branding and urban governance. Many European cities support their competitiveness through cultural and tourism development. In addition, the majority of the implemented city marketing policies relate with culture and tourism. City marketing has faced many criticisms, the main one being that it substitutes for urban planning. However, the work done, especially in cultural planning, indicates that, in order for cities to be successful, marketing must be inter-connected with planning. There are even international examples of

cities that have elaborated marketing plans in order to attract the potential target markets (new investments, tourists, new residents etc). One recent approach argues that marketing can contribute to the sense of place.

The data for this paper are provided by the INTERREG IIIc *CultMark* project (*Cultural* Heritage, Local Identity and Place *Marketing* for Sustainable Development) that has been in operation in five European places since 2004: Nea Ionia/ Magnesia/ Greece (lead partner), Chester/ UK, Kainuu/ Finland, Rostock-TLM/ Germany and Pafos/ Cyprus.

As a case study the elaboration of the marketing plan of Nea Ionia/ Magnesia/ Greece is chosen, and the aim of the paper is to show the interconnection of marketing and planning by trying to answer, among others, the following questions: a) does marketing planning constitute strategic planning?, b) how can marketing contribute to sustainability?, c) can cultural heritage be marketed?

**Key words:** city marketing, cultural planning, strategic planning, sustainability, cultural heritage, CultMark project, Nea Ionia/Magnesia/Greece

## **Introduction**

The role of city marketing has been increasingly important in Europe. Today it has become a necessity with regard to a plurality of processes e.g. global competition of cities, tourist attraction, urban management, city branding and urban governance. City marketing has faced many criticisms, the main one being that it substitutes for urban planning.

The data for this paper are provided by the INTERREG IIIc *CultMark* project (*Cultural* Heritage, Local Identity and Place *Marketing* for Sustainable Development) that has been in operation in five European places since 2004: Nea Ionia/ Magnesia/ Greece (lead partner), Chester/ UK, Kainuu/ Finland, Rostock-TLM/ Germany and Pafos/ Cyprus. *CultMark* is applying a place marketing strategy with a cultural approach and its main aim is to create a final successful image for each city/ region partner, as well as the study area as whole. We would like to express our thanks to the JTS INTERREG IIIC East and to the partners for the use of the delivered material

As a case study the elaboration of the marketing plan of Nea Ionia/ Magnesia/ Greece is chosen, and the aim of the paper is to show the interconnection of marketing and planning by trying to answer, among others, the following questions: a) does marketing planning constitute strategic planning?, b) how can marketing contribute to sustainability?, c) can cultural heritage be marketed?

## 1. The Definition of City Marketing as a Strategic Process

Place/city marketing constitutes one of the most interesting areas of research the last twenty years, since many cities, especially in Europe, use promotion policies in order to support their images and become competitive among other cities (Ashworth and Voogd, 1990; Kearns and Philo, 1993; Gold and Ward, 1994; Kotler *et al.*, 1993; 1999; Duffy, 1995; Ward, 1998; Avraham 2000, 2004; Urban, 2002). Apart of the Anglosaxon experience there is also a strong German experience (Zerres, 2000; Tsegenidi, 2001; Konken, 2004). 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. 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, 1998/2001). In case of place marketing this product (Goodwin, 1993), or 'good' (Metaxas, 2003), is a place or a city or an island, especially when we talk about tourism destinations (Buhalis, 2000; Chaudhary, 2000) or tourism products (Meler and Ruzic, 1999; Morrison, 1989/2001), or destination products (Oppermann, 1996; Choi *et al.*, 1999; Murphy *et al.*, 2000; Morgan *et al.*, 2002/ 2004).

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). 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.

The most significant issue is that the vision of the city and the development objectives and strategies, depend on the local distinctive characteristics and the particularities of each city and the strategic City Marketing Final Plan (CMFP) in order to become effective should be based on these characteristics.

## **2. City Marketing and Urban Planning**

City marketing complements, and does not substitute, urban planning. The main fields of complementarity are the following: a) urban development, b) urban management, c) urban governance, d) cultural planning, e) city branding, f) planning of demonstration actions, g) urban regeneration, h) urban policy.

The application of city marketing policies as tools for *urban development* expanded in several sectors such as tourism, sports, recreation, the arts and the media (Bianchini, 1993: 29), creating, 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 a city's identity and external image (Pratt, 1997; Deffner, 2000; Kong, 2000). City/ place marketing is also connected to urban/ spatial development as an innovative approach to planning (see Section 4).

Primarily, a city marketing procedure should be evaluated under the philosophy of *urban management* (Ashworth and Voogd, 1990), in the same way that the promotion process is a basic part of marketing (Sandhusen, 1998/ 2000). The strategic planning process concerns the analysis of the internal and the external environment of cities (SWOT and PEST analyses)<sup>i</sup>, relating to the examination of the relationships, which developed inside the organization (city/ place)<sup>ii</sup>. City marketing depends on the cooperation of a plurality of local actors and the building of social consensus, and thus relates to *urban governance*.

A very interesting recent elaboration argues for an alternative, *cultural planning* approach to place marketing that, apart from the link to place development, can contribute to the sense of place (Murray, 2001). This initiates an additional link to the construction of local identity and the promotion of cultural heritage (see Section 4). Generally, the work done in cultural planning indicates that, in order for cities to be successful, marketing must be inter-connected with planning. There are even international examples of cities that have elaborated marketing plans in order to attract the potential target markets (new investments, tourists, new residents etc). A city in order to be successfully marketed has to be 'branded', or vice versa, thus city marketing is interrelated to *city branding* (Morgan *et al.* 2002/2004; Patteeuw, V./ Urban

Affairs, 2002; Kavaratzis, 2004; Kavaratzis and Ashworth, 2005). City marketing is also related to the planning of demonstration actions (see Section 4)

From the aforementioned issues it is clear that city marketing is related to urban regeneration as well as the implementation of urban policy actions (see Section 3).

### **3. City Marketing in the Field of Culture and Tourism**

The international experience indicates a focus on tourism and culture and shows an extensive variety of initiatives that concern urban regeneration, by using particular strategies and tactics (i.e. the cases of Sheffield – Bramwell 1998, Bradford – Hope and Klemm 2001, Pamplona and Holstebro in Spain – Kotler *et al.*, 1999, York – Snaith and Haley 1999). All these cases focus on tourism development and use as *tools* some particular actions in order to achieve their main goals. These tools are: a) identification of the city's environment strengths and weaknesses, b) identification and evaluation of cities' particularities and distinctive characteristics, c) use and implementation of market research analysis, d) development of promotional policies, and e) development of partnership between city's actors.

The existence of *a sustainable and effective tourism and cultural economy* is based on the capacity and knowledge of the places' internal actors to create particular plans of action, by evaluating which fields of implementation of tourism and cultural policies could constitute a competitive advantage at a given time (Deffner and Metaxas, 2003). The contribution of tourism and culture must be related to the marketing of heritage (Misiura, 2005) the conformance and the implementation of urban policy actions, the 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 place, the contribution of citizenship to achieving a better quality of life, and to the construction of a place competitive advantage.

### **4. The *CultMark* Project**

*CultMark* (*Cultural* Heritage, Local Identity and Place *Marketing* for Sustainable Development) is an INTERREG IIIC project. *CultMark* 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.<sup>iii</sup>

The main aim of *CultMark* is to create a final successful image for each city/ region partner, as well as the study area as whole. The main objective 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.

## **5. The Production of the City Marketing Pilot Plan (CMPP) for Nea Ionia**

City marketing needs plan like urban planning needs a plan. The CMPP is based on the City Marketing Pre-Plan (CMP-P) and aims to establish the main axes for the preparation and the development of the City Marketing Final Plan (CMFP). Taking into consideration the CMP-P,, as well as the available data and all the reports that have been produced up till now in the context of the *CultMark* project, the CMPP aims to become a guideline for the effective implementation of the CMFP. The CMPP has a strategic character. It constitutes a significant means of CMFP implementation, in order for the image of each city to be effectively promoted and supported to the potential target markets. All plans are based on the strategic planning process, always starting from the identification of each city's vision and the primary urban development objectives that have to be satisfied (*CultMark*, 2005b).

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) [June, 2004], 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) [June, 2004], 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) [December, 2004], 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) [December, 2004], e) Cultural Data Report (it concerns the analysis of the internal environment of the cultural sector and the identification of its role in economic development) [June, 2005], f) City Marketing Pilot Plan for Nea Ionia [December, 2005].

The structure of the CMPP is presented in Tables 1 and 2

**Table 1:** The structure of the City Marketing Pilot Plan  
(use of primary data)

Steps	Method	Purpose	Sources
The identification of the vision	<p><b>Questionnaire 3</b></p> <p>Interviews and survey-questionnaire analysis (open-ended questions and Likert scale 1-5) to 'key' local actors and decision makers in each place (sample: 20-30 individuals per place) [period: January to March, 2005]</p>	<p>Identify the factors that constitute advantages of the cultural sector</p> <p>Identify the vision and the image of each place</p>	Cultural Data Report (June 2005)
The identification of the image as a final provided good	<p><b>Questionnaire 2a</b></p> <p>A survey-questionnaire analysis (open-ended questions and Likert scale 1-5), to domestic visitors (70%) and foreign tourists (30%) (sample: 50-100 individuals per place) [period: June to September, 2004]</p> <p><b>Questionnaire 2b</b></p> <p>A survey-questionnaire analysis (open-ended questions and Likert scale 1-5), to 'key' local actors and decision makers in each place (sample: 20-30 individuals per place) [period: June to September, 2004]</p>	<p>Identify and evaluate visiting criteria to each place</p> <p>Identify and evaluate the degree of place capacity to satisfy the demands of the target markets</p>	Final Provided Good Report (December, 2004)
The identification of the potential target markets	Questionnaire 2a and 2b	Propose the appropriate target markets for each place	Promotional and Distributional Maps Report (December, 2004)
The selection of the appropriate strategies	Questionnaire 2a, 2b and 3	<p>Identify tourism services provided by each place</p> <p>Identify promotional policies that are implemented by the local actors</p>	Strategies, tactics and alternative scenarios report (June, 2004)



**Table 2:** The structure of the City Marketing Pilot Plan  
(Proposed methods and actions)

<b>Steps</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Sources</b>
Connection of the implementation of the selected strategies with the vision and the development objectives	To provide an important link between the selected strategies and the vision and the development objectives of each place, to the local decision makers	City Marketing Pilot Plan Report for Nea Ionia (December, 2005)
The implementation of Critical Path Analysis method	To provide a technical tool, based on project planning, by putting the whole CMPP, into a specific time horizon, identifying the primary and secondary actions per phase.	City Marketing Pilot Plan Report for Nea Ionia (December, 2005)
The implementation of '8ps' model by Morrison	To present and propose a marketing mix model, that fixed to the effective promotion and support of the image of the places as final provided goods	City Marketing Pilot Plan Report for Nea Ionia (December, 2005)
The development of Communication process	Places decision makers and planners have the opportunity to audit the weaknesses of each step and each tactic in order to re-design or to re-construct the main strategies by using other alternative ones.	City Marketing Pilot Plan Report for Nea Ionia (December, 2005)

## **6. The Case of Nea Ionia, Magnesia, Greece**

### **6.1 Profile**

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. By having one of the most significance harbours of Greece (Volos) 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 other smaller areas, and it has a population of about 130,000. Volos and the wider area have been developed as manufacturing and industrial centres, especially in the last three decades. The economy of the city is based on the industrial and the service sector.

An important advantage in the attempt for Nea Ionia's tourist development is the construction of a modern, organized and large (in size and possibilities) sport centre around Panthessalikon Stadium sports centre, and the gratis international promotion of the city. This constitutes a comparative advantage against other cities that, like Nea Ionia, don't have a classic tourist destination profile to promote. The elements that could lead to tourist development should be focused on:

- The staging of special sport events after the Olympics (this is actually happening: European Gymnastics and Volley Championship)
- The promotion the great arched Mycenaean tomb in 'Kazanaki' area that could become the 'heart' of a visited archaeological site
- The promotion of the local cuisine.

### 6.2 Analysis of the cultural sector

In Nea Ionia most local experts (sample: 20 individuals) believe that the cultural sector has a moderate to low influence in the local economy. Medium economic impact is perceived through the use of the cultural sector as a vehicle for participation in European programmes. Other areas where the cultural sector is reckoned to have an influence, albeit a weak one, are towards GDP growth, unemployment reduction and enhancement of competitive advantage, whereas the least effect is recognised in the creation of an entrepreneurial climate and the attraction of foreign investment in the city (Table 3).

**Table 3:** Contribution of the cultural sector to economic development  
(Likert scale - 1: lowest, 5: highest)

<i>Factors of contribution</i>	Nea Ionia
Constitution of the main axis of city participation in European programmes for culture	2,7
Reduction or minimization of unemployment	2,3
Support of the economic dynamism of the city through the creation of competitive advantage on the field of culture	2,2
Creation of higher GDP per capita	2,0
Production of positive economic effects not only to the city but to the wider community	2,0
Keeping of the high qualified workforce in the area	1,8
Growth of the foreign investments in the area	1,4
Support of the creation of a powerful entrepreneurial climate in the area	1,3
<i>Average</i>	<i>2,0</i>

Source: *CultMark*, 2005a.

### ***6.3 Factors that constitute advantages of the cultural sector***

Nea Ionia is moderate in regard to the specific cultural elements that give an advantage to the city. Most of the specified factors are seen as not particularly important, apart from the existence of private and public cultural organizations with active role in the planning and implementation of cultural activities, which are perceived to support the cultural sector at a moderate degree. Furthermore, the attraction of investments and European funds seems to be quite advantageous factors but not able to create, by their own, a strong advantage for the city. Areas that are regarded as least significant are the existence of museums and art galleries. It is characteristic that all other factors are evaluated very low (Table 4).

Nea Ionia focuses on cultural development, but the major contradiction is that it presents a strong cultural historical background with weak current facilities and even weaker cultural environment. The main focus seems to be on specific cultural events and projects, even if these factors present a low score as advantages (Table 4). International experience shows that both these dimensions are based on the ability and the capacity of each city to provide a strong cultural position, in connection to its ability to satisfy each time the demands and expectations of cultural tourism. This creates the necessity that public and private organizations are appreciated as the top advantage factors of the cultural sector, so that they evaluate the weaknesses of the city, and plan the appropriate policies and actions that enforce Nea Ionia's cultural position, in order that the 'final provided good' has positive impacts for economic development and competitiveness.

**Table 4:** Factors that constitute advantages of the cultural sector  
(Likert scale - 1: lowest, 5: highest)

<i>Factors</i>	Nea Ionia
The existence of private cultural organizations with active participation in planning and implementing cultural activities	3,2
The existence of public cultural organizations with active participation in planning and implementing cultural activities	2,7
The existence of a strong and worldwide known historical background	2,3
The exploitation of European funds for the development and support of cultural investments	2,3
The existence of conservatoires and/or orchestras with worldwide fame	1,8
The existence of cultural heritage buildings with worldwide fame	1,8
The holding of major cultural events (festivals, exhibitions etc) with worldwide fame	1,8
The existence of qualified and specialized work force in cultural organisations	1,8
The existence of strong commercial activities (businesses that focus on the production of cultural products)	1,7
The existence of graduate or postgraduate programmes on cultural studies	1,5
The existence of theatres and/or operas with worldwide fame	1,3
The existence of famous historical personalities related to the city	1,2
The existence of museums (archaeological and/or modern) with worldwide fame	1,2
The existence of large cultural art galleries with worldwide fame	1,2
<i>Average</i>	<i>1,8</i>

Source: *CultMark*, 2005a.

#### **6.4 The definition of the vision of Nea Ionia**

Nea Ionia envisages a city that is economically robust, socially balanced and pays due respect to both the natural and the cultural environment. Experts regard that a well planned development, which takes care of the environmental problems (including traffic) and provides the necessary cultural infrastructure (museums, theatres, galleries or other spaces to house culture), will support further development of the city as a tourist destination and attraction pole. The local cultural characteristics of the people (mainly refugees for Asia Minor), the beauty of the natural environment of the wider area, and the available sport infrastructure

(mainly developed for the 2004 Olympics), constitute some of the main assets of the place (*CultMark*, 2005a).

Regarding the factors that contribute to the accomplishment of the city vision, those that score high are two: the participation in European development programmes in cooperation with other cities, and the acceptance of the vision by the local community. The diagnosis and evaluation of the distinctive characteristics of each development sector for Nea Ionia, is a crucial factor that could contribute to the accomplishment of the vision. Also the significance of developing partnerships between local authorities with the universities and citizens, in the context of a cooperative marketing strategy, is very crucial in order that the vision of the city is satisfied. Also, the ability of local authorities to adopt and implement innovative policies presents a quite high degree of importance (Table 5).

**Table 5:** Factors that contribute to the accomplishment of vision  
(Likert scale -: 1: lowest, 5: highest)

<i>Factors</i>	Nea Ionia
The participation to specific European development programmes in co-operation with other cities	3,8
The understanding of the community that the vision of the city is a common interest	3,5
The planning and the development of partnerships between the local authorities and the citizens	3,3
The adaptation and the implementation of new innovative promotional policies by local authorities	3,2
The diagnosis and the evaluation of city's distinctive characteristics in each development sector	3,0
The planning and the development of partnerships between the local authorities and the and the academic or research centres	3,0
The representation of common interests for city development by the local authorities, the enterprises and the community	3,0
The level of capacity and the level of knowledge of the local authorities to plan and to implement development policies	3,0
The planning and the implementation of particular urban development plan	2,8
The development of a systematic collection of data and information supporting the decision making process	2,8
The identification of particular main development goals	2,5
The planning and the development of partnerships between the local authorities and the business community	2,5
The analysis of city's internal and external environment (based on particular methods, such as SWOT analysis)	2,0
<i>Average</i>	<i>3,0</i>

Source: *CultMark*, 2005a.

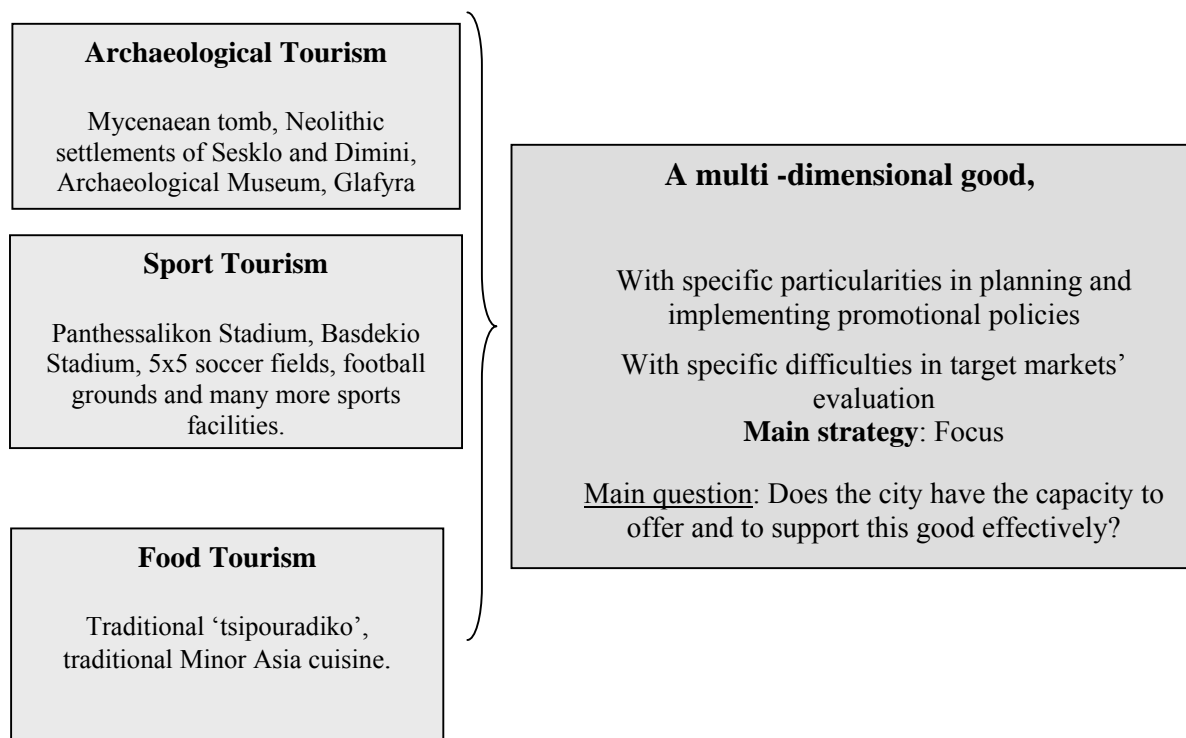
### **6.5 The definition of the image of Nea Ionia as a 'final provided good'**

The image of Nea Ionia comprises of two elements, the traditional and the modern. On the one hand, it is a city that seeks to keep its links with its distinctive traditions and cultural heritage, and, on the other hand, it strives to become modern and economic robust, confronting the same problems of urbanisation that most Greek cities face (i.e. congestion, pollution, etc.). Local experts support that the city has a high level of natural environment quality (77,8%, i.e. the added percentages of columns 4 and 5), of local community hospitality (66,7%) and of provision of open and green spaces (55,5%).

The combination of the traditional and modern image is also supported from the responses of tourists (*CultMark*, 2004a). Most of the tourists believe that Nea Ionia constitutes a strong ‘attraction tourism pole’ (69,5%), is a destination which provides the opportunity to develop several kinds of tourism activities (65%), and combines a modern and traditional image which is acknowledged worldwide (50,9%).

Combining the results above and considering the particular strategies that Nea Ionia wants to develop, its final provided good is based on tourism with the following three dimensions: culture, sport and food activities (Figure 1).

The main question relates to the capacity of Nea Ionia to support and promote this good effectively to the selected target markets. The particular combination is very difficult, since it requires particular promotional policies and, consequently, particular sub-promotional channels, but it offers the opportunity for a multidimensional good. The creation of specific promotional packages will be a very good action, but it depends on the identification of the particular tourist markets that Nea Ionia wants to attract.



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

## ***6.6 The definition of the appropriate target markets in Nea Ionia***

The 'Promotional and Distributional "Maps" Report' (*CultMark*, 2004a) selected the target markets that Nea Ionia can distribute and finally promote its image. In all *CultMark* places the selected target markets were separated into two levels of activity: the microeconomic and the macroeconomic one. At the first level, the selected target markets concern the internal city environment (residents, enterprises, organisations, local authorities, groups with special needs and characteristics, minorities, decision makers, unions, universities, research centres etc). All these groups are potential 'consumers' of the final provided good, and all of them want to satisfy their needs and perceptions. The most important point is to identify which of these target markets are profitable for the city, i.e. which target markets are interested for the final provided good. In the case of Nea Ionia the focus is on the following internal potential target markets:

*Enterprises* that relate to the multidimensional character of the final provided good (arts, sport centres, restaurants, hotels, travel agencies etc). The role of these markets is crucial, since there are representatives of Nea Ionia's image. These enterprises should provide the best quality of services satisfying the demands and the perceptions of the potential target markets. These enterprises are also 'consumers' of what Nea Ionia offers.

*Decision makers, authorities, organisations* that relate to the multidimensional character of the final provided good (cultural organisations, public enterprises, tourist associations, universities, etc). The role of these groups is very important, since it is related with the decision making process.

*Residents*: This group is the key factor in order that a local community effectively adopts and performs a place marketing policy. Residents are both consumers and providers of the distinctive goods that Nea Ionia offers.

At the macroeconomic level, the final provided good has to be supported and promoted at national, European and international level. The identification of the selected target markets is more difficult and requires a strategic development process. Taking into account that Nea Ionia is a small area that decides to promote a multi-dimensional image, the selection of the image receivers has to be done very carefully. The existence of three tourist dimensions in the creation of the final good requires the identification of separate groups for each dimension, and also the creation of common promotional packages where the 'consumer' could combine activities through this package. More particularly:

*Tourists with special interests at national, European or international level*: This target market consists one of the most important and profitable for Nea Ionia. The procession of this market is difficult, since in order to attract people with special interests, the city should have the ability to satisfy their demands offering high quality of services and combine innovative



promotional packages. The attraction at European level is even more difficult, since it is related with a continuous representation of Nea Ionia's distinctive image at the international tourism market.

*Cultural, tourist and sport organizations at national and European level (museums, galleries, exhibitions etc):* The representation of these organisations is crucial. It is related with the international promotion of Nea Ionia and its relevant worldwide acknowledgement. Nea Ionia should attract national and European organisations in order to host and organise special events, which is the most important goal of its marketing orientation. Especially in the case of sport, the new facilities as an Olympic municipality offer the opportunity to develop special sport events.

### ***6.7 The identification of the distribution channels***

The identification of the distribution channels concerns the transmission of the final provided good, the 'message' of the city to the potential target markets. Two kinds of geographical distribution channels are identified: the internal and the external, relating to the separation of the aforementioned selected target markets. 'Level A' concerns some generic distributors that constitute also target markets at national, European and international level, and 'Level B', concerns the selection of distributors relating to the multi-dimensional character of the final provided good.

The management of these distribution channels concerns the rapid and effective transmitting of the 'final provided good' to the potential target markets. Each of the distributors has to be able to inform and to propose Nea Ionia as a destination with multi-dimensional tourist character, able to satisfy the demands and the perceptions of the selected groups. The separation of the distributors according to the character of the provided good is an important process and it is related to the effectiveness of the distribution. This separation also satisfies the Nea Ionia's effort to become known for specific tourist activities focusing on culture, sport or food. Each dimension is working in two levels. The first level requires the planning and the performance of specific actions per sector. At the second level all the sectors participate to the implementation of common activities. The primary goal is to promote and to distribute Nea Ionia as a 'multi-tourist destination', but this goal is very difficult to be achieved quickly in relation to the acknowledgement at European or international target markets. Thus, it is proposed that city planners and marketers focus primarily on the effective promotion at national level and then move to activities at European and international level.

In both these channels the feedback procedure plays a crucial role. The effective contribution of this process requires the existence of alternative scenarios and tactics in order

to be faced problems that might rise. Finally the whole distribution process presupposes the existence of a promotional office with specialized workforce.

### **6.8. Proposed strategies and tactics**

The identification of the strategies should satisfy the development objectives of the place. Kotler *et al* (1993, 1999), pointed out two crucial questions concerning strategies formulation: a) what advantages do we possess that suggest we can succeed with the strategy and b) do we have the resources required for successful implementation of the strategy. Concerning the evaluation of the most appropriate strategies, Porter (1980) proposed two basic strategies that could be implemented in the case of city/ place marketing: a) differentiation strategy and b) focus strategy. The first strategy is related to the awareness of the competitive advantages and the uniqueness of the place, while the second one focuses on a specific target market in which the place should cover and satisfy particular needs. Deffner and Metaxas (2006), proposed two additional strategies, those of penetration strategy and co-operative marketing strategy. At the first one, the place image penetrates into a new target market promoting and supporting the local goods that already exist, while the second strategy requires the planning and the implementation of promotional actions, through the representation of common interests of place internal actors.

In the case of Nea Ionia the main proposed *strategy* is the focus one. The implementation of this strategy relates neither to large metropolitan centres, nor large urban centres, but to small and well organized places which focus on the provision of their image to particular target markets aiming to increase their market share on these markets. The effectiveness of this strategy requires the identification of city's major strengths (answering the question: which is our competitive distinctive characteristic?) and then the provision of this characteristic to the selected target markets.

The main *tactic* refers to the correlation between the diagnosis of the specific demands and perceptions of the distinctive selected target market and the level of capacity of the place to satisfy these in the highest degree.

Taking into consideration that the vision of Nea Ionia is based on the identification of distinctive characteristics and the strong cultural identity, a *focus strategy* could satisfy the vision and the development objectives for the following reasons:

a) the city tries to increase its market share to specific tourist markets at national level and to penetrate in the same markets at European and international level. Thus, the enforcement of its tourist economy is based on the effective attraction of these target markets and the total satisfaction of their needs and perceptions,

b) the creation of a competitive advantage based on the analysis and the evaluation of these target markets. Nea Ionia should focus on their particularities, in order to plan and to perform the appropriate actions that secure the successful development of its promotional policy,

c) the vision of Nea Ionia is to become an attraction pole, promoting to the potential target markets a multi-dimensional image. The implementation of a focus strategy provides the opportunity to the city to get knowledge and experience through this process that allows, at the same time, the satisfaction of its development objectives, and

d) the implementation of a focus strategy is closer to the vision and the objectives of the city, since it is a strategy that is proposed for small cities, with low level of reputation, low ability to implement a variety of promotional policies and also an internal weakness in developing effective partnerships between city's internal actors.

## **7. The Methodology of the CMPP**

### ***7.1 The implementation of the Critical Path Model***

The implementation of the CMPP of Nea Ionia has a temporal horizon of 410 'working' days. The character of the Pilot Programme 'Promotion Methodology' is strategic and could be characterized as a 'project', in a whole process of the CMPP. The method used in the research in order to set up a particular time limit for the promotion methodology is based on the 'Critical Path Method Analysis' (Aravantinos, 1987/1994: 78-9; Nokes *et al.*, 2003). CPM is based on the identification of three basic factors:

- a) *Hierarchical Presentation of activities.* This characterizes each activity with a particular name. The presentation of the activities is hierarchical. The important thing is to include all the appropriate actions in order the City Marketing Pilot Plan, to become a useful database, for the implementation of the City Marketing Final Plan.
- b) *Immediate predecessor:* This presents those activities (one or more) that have to be finished first and then the present activity to take place. This view has major significance for the project, since it allows estimating which of the activities are core (have to be done first and any delay on their implementation affects the total planning of the project), and which are secondary (they could be implemented at the same time with other activities)
- c) *Temporal horizon:* The existence of a specific temporal horizon is very important for each step and of course for the whole project. Time horizon is closely related to the satisfaction of city's objectives in the frame of a specific time planning. Time planning also related with the existence of alternative scenarios in case that some actions have to be changed and replaced by others.

CPM includes the following four main phases of the project.

- *PLANNING*: In this phase, the city decision makers and the local actors have to plan and prepare all those actions that related with the promotion and the support of Nea Ionia multidimensional good. The first step is the creation of the Executive Management Group (EMG), which will take the overall responsibility to plan and to perform the City Marketing Pilot Plan for Nea Ionia. Each part of this model has been separated in particular steps of planning phase, in order to become a guideline for the EMG. The crucial point is that the effectiveness of the whole project based on the phase of Planning. Any kind of steps delay, means delay of the following phases and consequently delay of the whole project. The overall temporal horizon of this phase is 120 ‘working’ days. The primary actions need 65 days and the secondary actions 55 days.
- *PROGRAMMING*: In this phase, the EMG has the main responsibility of programming, a number of core actions that have take place before the phase of implementation. These actions concern the building of the communication process, the preparation of focus group analysis, the positioning of the final provided good of Nea Ionia to distributors and finally the development of a mini-guide seminar to all participants and the selected distributors. This phase requires brainstorming methods and discussions, for the continuation of the CMPP. The temporal horizon of this phase is 60 ‘working’ days. The primary actions need 45 days and the secondary actions 15 days.
- *IMPLEMENTATION*: This phase is characterized by the existence of promotion process, almost in all of the actions. In particular this phase is the promotion phase. The core actions related with the focus groups analysis, the primary research, the improvement or the creation of the website, and finally the implementation of a variety of advertising activities on Media, magazines, newspapers, etc. In addition, the participation of Nea Ionia in two events (i.e. exhibition) in national and European level, is also proposed. The implemented actions it is crucial to be supported by a good and effective group of Public Relations. Finally the project proposed some additional actions, such as the creation of a TV programme (documenter), the creation of info-kiosks, the production of DVD, CD-ROM and Videos. All the promotion activities of this phase are on a continuing process. The temporal horizon of each is a potential time and mainly concerns the time of scheduling these actions. The phase of implementation is the longest of the pilot project: it takes 175 ‘working’ days. The primary actions need 65 days and the secondary actions 110.

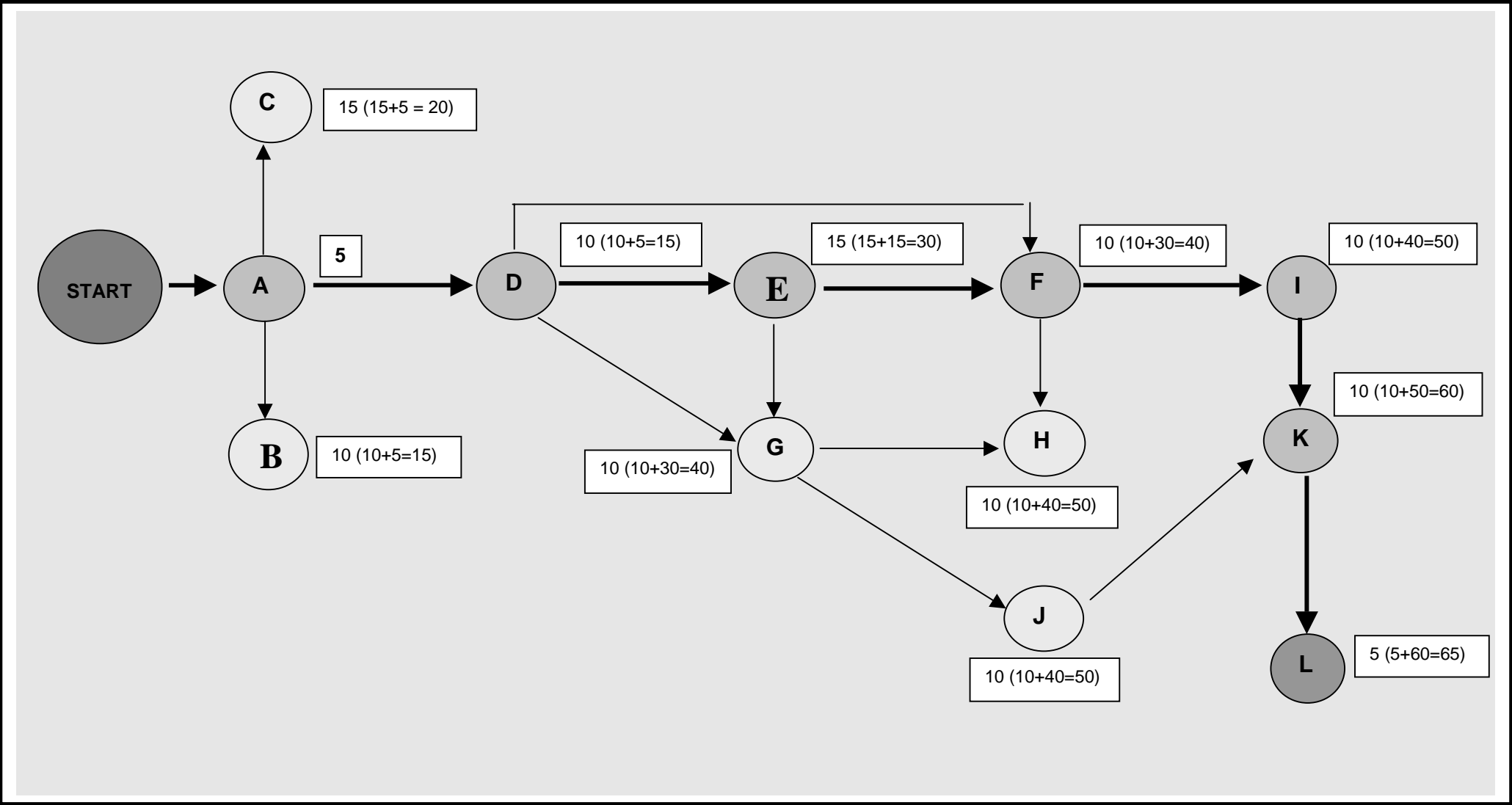
- *EVALUATION – FEEDBACK*: This phase is related with the evaluation of the actions that take place in the phase of the implementation. The main aim of this final phase is EMG to come up to the final decisions in order to continue the programme by preparing the City Marketing Final Plan, or to reject the whole effort. So, it's very important for EMG, to analyse all the available resources and evaluate in which phases of the project is needed to become changes, reductions, reconstructions etc. One very important point, of this phase is that EMG has to prepare a very functional City Marketing Final Plan, with specific actions and with main concerns to support and promote the distinctiveness of Nea Ionia. The umbrella of this process is the vision of the city and the major development objectives. EMG needs to implement a plan flexible, innovative, and according to the evidence and the guidelines of the City Marketing Pilot Plan. In other words it is necessary to provide an official plan that faces the demands of the potential target markets on the one hand and city's development aims on the other. The whole phase needs 56 'working' days: 46 for primary actions and 10 for secondary ones.

Table 6 and Figure 2 present for instance the proposed steps of the first phase of Critical Path Method (Planning), which is common for all the places of *CultMark* project, i.e. for the case of Nea Ionia.

**Table 6:** The steps of the Planning phase for the CMPP of Nea Ionia

	ACTIVITIES	ACTIVITY CODE	IMMEDIATE PREDEC ESSOR	TIME (days)
	<b>1st phase: PLANNING (1-12)</b>			
1	Composition of the Executive Management Group (EMG) and the groups that participate in each action (Morrison model: <b>partnership</b> and <b>people</b> )	A	-	5
2	Analysis of the competition at the regional and national level	B	A	10
3	Analysis of the competition in the Balkans and at the European level	C	A	15
4	Identification of the ‘final provided good’ – The ‘multidimensional good’ of the city (Morrison model: <b>product</b> )	D	A	10
5	Creation of tourism, cultural and sports ‘packages’ (Morrison model: <b>packaging pricing</b> )	E	D	15
6	Re- Evaluation of the selected target markets based on their characteristics analysis– Choose the appropriate sample (internal environment)	F	D, E	10
7	Re- Evaluation of the selected target markets based on their characteristics analysis– Choose the appropriate sample (external environment)	G	D, E	10
8	Evaluation and selection of the distributors for each part of the ‘final provided good’ (Morrison model: <b>place</b> )	H	F, G	10
9	Evaluation of the selected strategies and tactics per target market (internal environment)	I	F	10
10	Evaluation of the selected strategies and tactics per target market (external environment)	J	G	10
11	Evaluation and final selection of the promotional means (Morrison model: <b>promotion</b> )	K	D, E, I, J	10
12	EMG meeting 1	L	K	5
	<b>End of the first phase</b>			<b>120</b>

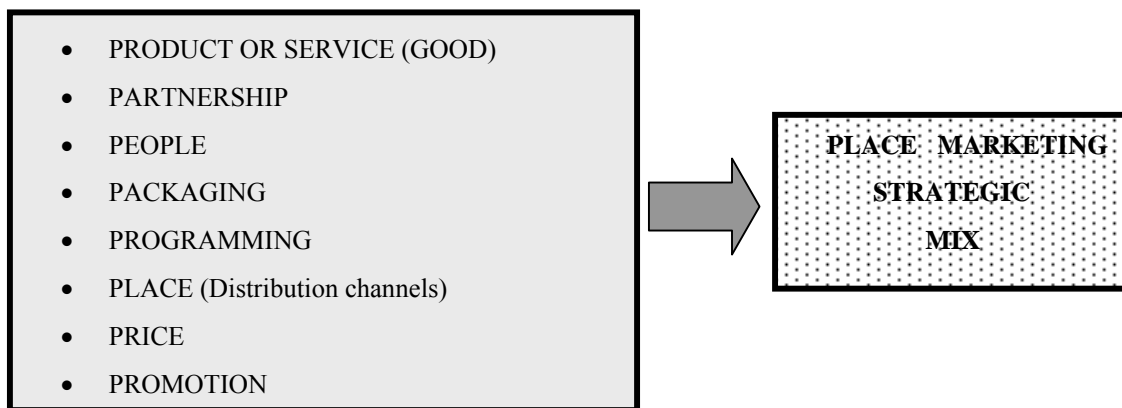
Figure 2: Critical Path Diagram of the 1<sup>st</sup> phase



## 7.2 The proposed model of '8ps'

In all partners' cases, the study used, in order to set up a 'production procedure', two models from the world of marketing world. The first one is the generic and very popular model of '4ps' (Kotler and Armstrong, 2005): product, price, place and promotion. The second one is more complicated and it is called the '8ps' model (Morrison, 1989/2001): product, partnership, people, packaging, programme, place, price, promotion. From the two models, the study selects the model of '8ps' as the most appropriate. The '8ps' model is mainly used for tourist destinations, which have as their main axes travel and hospitality.

**Figure 3:** Place Marketing '8ps' model by Morrison



The 8ps for Nea Ionia focus on the parameters presented in Table 7.



**Table 7:** The ‘8ps’ model for Nea Ionia

8Ps	Nea Ionia
PRODUCT (GOOD)	A multiple tourism good based on heritage, sport and food’, a combination of distinctive characteristics that characterised the city.
PARTNERSHIP	The study proposes three levels of partnerships for Nea Ionia: a) partnerships with actors and decision makers into place environment b) in regional level and c) in national and European level. These actors concern: local and regional authorities, enterprises, cultural organizations, industrial and commercial associations, chambers of commerce and industry, food organisations, tourists agencies, universities and research centers, EU cultural and sports organizations, environmental associations and residents
PEOPLE	Focus on two dimensions: a) <i>The ‘Human resources management’</i> process. Referring to human resources management for visitors’ attraction, Swarbrooke (1995/2002: 244) supported that it is concerned with obtaining, organizing, training, motivating and rewarding the people needed by the organization so that they can perform in a way which allows the attraction to meet the needs of customers and b) <i>the citizens’ contribution to the city’s development</i> . The citizens of a location have been recognized as one of the most important internal target markets (actors) of a city’s environment. According to Woolley (2000) ‘local people are the key to urban vitality’. McIntosh <i>et al.</i> (1995) used the term ‘motivation’ supporting that the citizens have to be motivated in order to develop actions or to participate in decision analysis procedures, i.e. the case of Winterhur in Switzerland (Ringli, 1997), or to express their opinions on the implementation of particular issues which concern cultural activities, tourism programmes or international events (i.e. festivals, Hanefors 2000; Yeoman <i>et al.</i> , 2004)
PACKAGING	<p>The proposed packages are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In CULTURE –HISTORY –NATURE [Archaeological tourism package (Karla, the Neolithic settlements of Sesklo and Dimini - Nea Ionia and the prefecture of Magnesia), Escorted tours package (Nea Ionia and the rest Thessaly region), ‘Places of Spirit’ (Nea Ionia and the rest of Magnesia and Thessaly) Nature tourism packages focus on the development of ‘alternative forms of tourism’]</li> <li>• In FOOD-LOCAL CUISINE (Tsipouradika package, special and traditional cuisine)</li> <li>• In SPORTS (‘Panthesalikon package’, ‘Preparation Teams’ from Greece and Europe, Summer and winter sports activities’)</li> <li>• In EVENTS (common package for all <i>CultMark</i> places) [Cultural, food and sports events]</li> <li>• In CONVENTION AND CONFERENCES MEETING (common package for all <i>CultMark</i> places) [in culture, food and sports]</li> </ul> <p>All packages have particular duration and is applied to specific target markets</p>
PROGRAMMING	Programming is a very close related process to packaging. Actually is the process that completes the ‘ <b>Successful Provided Package</b> ’. Programming is based on the existence of ‘Available Time’ of the visit, of the event, and any kind of activity that the potential target market spend into city’s environment. Programming has an ‘ <b>organized dimension</b> ’. In other words we talk about <b>Effective Time Management</b> , since each of the provided packages has to be planned and also programmed in such way, that will provide the ability of timing to the potential target markets, in a specific and limited time that they have, in order to receive the maximum of the offering city’s services.
PLACE (Distribution)	Each of the distributors has to be able to inform and to propose Nea Ionia as a destination with multi-dimension tourism character, able to satisfy the demands and the perceptions of the selected groups. The separation of the distributors according to the character of the provided good, is an important process and its related to the effectiveness of the distribution. This separation also satisfies the effort that Nea Ionia to become known for specific tourism activities focusing in culture, in sports or in

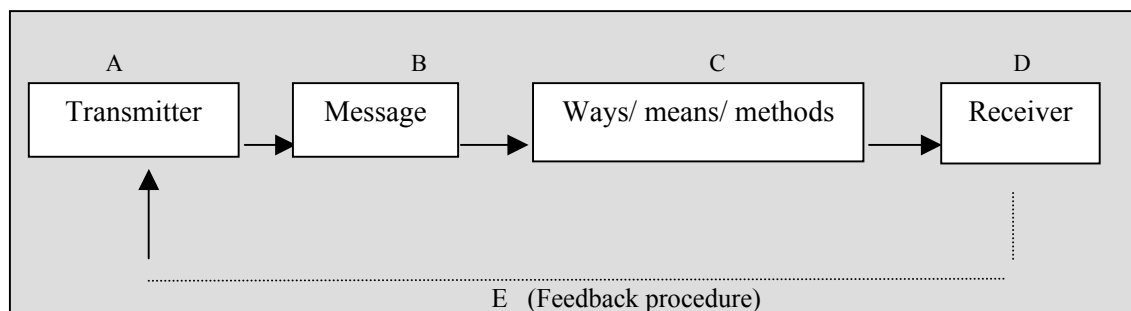
channels)	<p>food. Each dimension is working in two levels. First separately. This level requires the planning and the performance of specific actions per sector. Secondly all the sectors participate to the implementation of common activities. On this point we have to mention that the primary goal is to promote and to distribute Nea Ionia as a multi-tourism destination', but this goal is very difficult to achieved quickly concerning mainly the acknowledgement of the European or international target markets.</p>
PRICE	<p>The identification of pricing concerns all the services that Nea Ionia provides to the potential target market. This is the general option of pricing and something that concerns all the participants to the provision of these services.</p> <p>The second option related with the pricing of the proposed packages. The EMG has to identify what will be the final cost of each package, taking into consideration the relationship between pricing and quality. This is very important since it is related with the implementation of the strategies that we proposed, in order the final provided good to be posit effectively in the market that each place wish to penetrate.</p> <p>The third option is related with the promotion costs of the multidimensional good. For instance and according to the CPM, Nea Ionia has to run a number of advertising activities (electronic and printed media etc.). For each of these means it is necessary to exist a particular cost budget (i.e media: the scenario, actors, timing – TV programme zone, frequency, copyright, etc).</p> <p>The study proposes the creation of a particular cost-budget analysis plan that will include all the promotion activities of each place in an annual base in order the whole cost to be covered by the Total City Marketing Budget of Nea Ionia.</p>
PROMOTION	<p>Proposed promotional means: Television, Internet, Magazines, Newspapers, Newsletters, Brochures, Prospectus, Direct sales, Exhibitions fairs and events etc.</p>

Source: Source: *CultMark*, 2005b

### 7.3 The proposed model of the communication process

A city promotional plan is developed in the last phase of the City Marketing Pilot Plan, which is the promotional one. At this stage, the planners/ actors / marketers have to design, evaluate and implement those strategic actions which connect the image of the place with the potential external and internal target markets (communication process) [Figure 4]. The effectiveness of the promotional package is related to the feedback procedure which concerns the collection and the evaluation of the potential target markets reactions and attitudes.

**Figure 4:** The communication process - Steps



Sources: Morrison (1989/2001); Metaxas (2003)

Analyzing each of the steps in Figure 3 we have to concentrate on the following:

**Transmitter:** The transmitter is Nea Ionia (internal actors: planners, marketers), which transmits the message to the potential target markets (receivers).

**Message:** The message is related to the image of Nea Ionia. At this point the image of the place has to be specific, based on the city's distinctive characteristics. In addition, the message has to be related to the character, the particularities, the needs and the perceptions of the potential target markets where it is applied. This point is crucial because it concerns the level of understanding and acceptance of a city's image by the potential target markets. Under this option the message has to be clear, direct, real and orientated towards the satisfaction of the demands and perceptions of the potential target markets, based on the level of city's capacity to cover all these. This last point has major importance since it concerns the relation between the image that has been produced by the city image planners and the perspective image that the potential target markets have for the city. If the produced image does not respond to the perspective image (it is worse) then this phenomenon affects the development of the city negatively.

Ways/ means: According to Haider (1992), advertising is the main tool/ strategy of local economies promotion. The use of slogans and campaigns is also very popular in a cities' promotion process. In addition, public relations, the Internet and the cyberspace are very important promotional tools, concerning the significance of the place image creation and the purchase of this image from the potential target markets.

Receivers: To whom does the image of Nea Ionia apply and why? This question is related to the necessity of market research and market segmentation processes on a Place Marketing procedure. The place image planners/ marketers have to analyse and evaluate the characteristics, the trends, the demands and the perceptions of the potential target markets, in order to focus on the particular market segments.

Feedback procedure: this step concerns the evaluation of the receivers' responses. The feedback procedure is a continual action. The decision makers and planners have the opportunity to audit the weaknesses of each step and each tactic, in order to re-design or to reconstruct the main strategies, by using other alternative ones. Furthermore, this step is related to the level of image management capacity, since the feedback procedure is performed in order to improve the communication process, every time, by increasing the degree of place/ city marketing effectiveness.

## **8. Conclusions**

It is time to return to the three main questions set out in the introduction. Contemporary urban planning in Greece must focus in strategic planning. However, planning is not sufficient by itself if a city wants to attract businesses and investors, international and/or domestic tourists or new residents, or creating a sense of place and civic pride to its existing residents. For these aims it needs city marketing, which, nevertheless, cannot substitute planning but only complement it. *City marketing* can proceed without planning, but planning can substantially contribute to marketing, which also needs to be *strategic* in order to achieve the aforementioned aims. The strategic planning process also concerns the analysis of the internal and the external environment of cities (SWOT and PEST analyses) as a well as the process of urban regeneration, especially focusing on tourism and culture.

The INTERREG IIIc *CultMark* project is applying a place marketing strategy with a cultural approach. The City Marketing Pilot Plan of the studied case of Nea Ionia has a strategic character. It constitutes a significant means of City Marketing Pilot Plan implementation, in order for its image to be effectively promoted and supported to the potential target markets. All partner's plans are based on the strategic planning process,

always starting from the identification of each place's vision and the primary development objectives that have to be satisfied.

The *link of marketing to sustainability* is something difficult to be perceived immediately. It is easier to be grasped if the focus is on tourism and culture, since the existence of a sustainable and effective tourism and cultural economy is based on the capacity and knowledge of the places' internal actors to create particular plans of action, by evaluating which fields of implementation of tourism and cultural policies could constitute a competitive, as well as sustainable, advantage at a given time.

The main objective of *CultMark* 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.

As far as the possibility of *marketing cultural heritage* is concerned, one could skip the argument that everything can be marketed, and concentrate again on the focus on tourism and culture arguing that their contribution of tourism and culture must be related to the marketing of heritage. The secondary objectives of *CultMark* include the promotion of heritage as a significant factor in local and cultural development and the final provided good of Nea Ionia is a multiple tourism good based on heritage, sports and food.

Thus, marketing planning constitutes strategic planning, it can contribute to sustainability, and it can include cultural heritage.

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## Notes

<sup>i</sup> SWOT analysis: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats  
PEST analysis: Political, Economical, Social and Technological factors.

<sup>ii</sup> In the case of Place Marketing case, but also in Marketing generally, the analysis parameters are the following:

- a) Basic factors examining the identification of the relationships between the organisation and Strategic Planning in the past (where we were)
- b) Basic factors examining the identification of the relationships between the organisation and Strategic Planning in the present (where we are)
- c) Basic factors examining the identification of the relationships between the organisation and Strategic Planning in the future (where we would like to go)

(Needham, *et al*, 1999: 17).

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