

# Mediterritage

Valorisation économique du patrimoine naturel et culturel des montagnes méditerranéennes

## SOUS-PROJET « VILLAGE »

### Présentation de la contribution de La commune de Polykeraso Région de Macédoine Occidentale (Grèce)

#### 1. Présentation générale du territoire/village *Overall presentation of the territory / Village*



**Traditional Church**

The *Community of Polykeraso* is located in the mountainous area of Vitsi, being part of the central axis (Prespes – Varnountas – Vitsi – Siniatsiko – Vourinos) of the “natural heritage distinguished zones” of West Macedonia that starts from Varnountas with the mountainous complex of Verno or Vitsi (2128 m.), which is part of the Greek Network of NATURA 2000 (GR134006). According to the administrative division it is part of the *Municipality of Vitsi* in the *Prefecture of Kastoria*. The main characteristic of the Community of Polykeraso is its very low population with only 29 registered inhabitants in 2001, while the relative number for the Municipality of Vitsi was 1473 residents for the same period. Nevertheless, this small Community with less than 40 buildings (11 of them are being lived) is allocated in very close distance from some of the most famous and developed touristic destinations in the *Region of West Macedonia* (lakes of Kastoria and Prespes, Vitsi ski center, traditional settlement of Nymfaio, town of Kastoria). Also, the few remaining buildings of the village are characterized by the traditional architectural design based on stone materials, that was very typical in West Macedonia during previous periods.

The **SWOT** (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) **Analysis** of the Community of Polykeraso in the Region of West Macedonia consists of the following:

<p><b><u>STRENGTHS</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Being in the geographical center of the wider mountainous area of Vitsi and abutting with important destinations of tourist interest ((lake-city of Kastoria, Vitsi ski-centre, Nymfaio settlement), the settlement of Polykeraso attracts visitors of several tourist interests.</li> <li>2. Traditional settlement under National legislative framework</li> <li>3. Various and pretty interesting natural environment.</li> <li>4. Maintenance of historic and cultural characteristics.</li> </ol>	<p><b><u>WEAKNESSES</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Desolation of the mountainous village and ageing of its population.</li> <li>2. Devalorisation of built-up environment due to a large number of abandoned buildings</li> <li>3. Remarkable lack of several technical infrastructures.</li> <li>4. Not a widely known tourist destination.</li> </ol>
<p><b><u>OPPORTUNITIES</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Creation of multi – required tourist product emphasized to authenticity, in accordance with new entertainment preferences.</li> <li>2. Exploitation of regional and prefectural policies, and also of interest for investments, focused in the sustainable development of mountainous areas.</li> <li>3. Integration of the wider region of Vitsi in the national zoning plan concerning the tourist growth.</li> <li>4. Completion of large-scale transport works enhancing the easy access to the community.</li> </ol>	<p><b><u>THREATS</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Intensive competition of other areas with similar characteristics in visitors’ attraction.</li> </ol>



**Countryside of Polykeraso**

## 2. Situation du territoire / village par rapport au thème du sous-projet

*Situation of the territory / village with regard to the sub-project*

*Economic development* in the mountainous area of Vitsi and specifically in the almost desolated *community of Polykeraso*, is the main topic for co-operation, concerning the natural and cultural resources of the area. The motivation comes from the origins of the proposed Project, concerning that the mountainous areas are eminently places for developing alternative activities of cultural, touring, ecological, sports and agrotourism and that the limited human interventions in this area has maintained all its natural and cultural characteristics as a landscape of special interest. Thus, the implementation of a Project of Integrated Development in the community of Polykeraso, an almost abandoned village in the Mediterranean mountains, aims to *the valorisation of its natural and cultural resources*.

Mainly, the **objectives** of the proposed project are:

- The integrated development of the mountainous community of Polykeraso
- The attraction of environmental and cultural bodies in terms of clustering for the economic exploitation of the relevant resources
- The provision of consulting services in potential investors in the proposed area

The **proposed activities** are:

- Study for the integrated exploitation of natural and cultural resources in the community of Polykeraso, via its adoption by public authorities, non-state actors and private funds, using best practices from other mountainous areas
- Promotion via electronic and printed publications of the natural and cultural resources of the community of Polykeraso
- Clustering of administrative authorities and non-state actors of the participating mountainous communities

## 3. Les attentes par rapport au sous-projet

*Expectations from the sub-project*

*Expected results* refer to:

§ Social and economic regeneration of an almost abandoned community

§ Promotion of the natural and cultural resources of the area

§ Information of potentially interested

§ Clustering and transfer of know-how among the participating actors in the field of economic valorisation of natural and cultural heritage.

The possible *follow up* could arise from the potential investing interest of public and private funds, using the deliverables and the expected results of the Project. Also, the Project has synergies and could be enhanced by relevant financial Programmes, such as European Initiatives (INTERREG and LEADER+) and National Programmes (Regional Operational Program of West Macedonia / Integrated Development of Mountainous and Lake Areas, Operational Program of Development and Reconstruction of the Countryside, Integrated Programme for the Development of North and Central Pindos) which already exist and are being implemented in the wider area of intervention. The contribution to future regional policies could arise from continuation of these policies and the added value of the Project in terms of regional development.

Evaluating the priorities and the principles of the regional policies in West Macedonia, the *vision for the future* of the community of Polykeraso can be reality through the achievement of the following main goals:

- Improvement of the basic technical infrastructures
- Improvement of the quality level of social and other services given to residents and visitors
- Enhancement of the enterpretenity, using local sources and products of high quality and trademarking
- Protection of the natural environment

- Conservation and promotion of the historic and cultural heritage
- Enforcement of the multi – level employment accomplished with vocational training
- Development of networks and clusters (spatial and sectoral) exchanging best practices and promoting the extraversion of the areas
- Implementation of new communication technologies and applications of computer sciences to ensure the success of development policies



**Demodernised village houses**



**Traditional village house**



**Traditional village house**



**Architectural detail indicating the year of construction**



**Traditional village house**