

Place Marketing as a Future Oriented Process: Preparing a Pilot City Marketing Plan for the case of Nea Ionia, Magnesia, Greece

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 more attractive and, consequently, competitive, as well as to increase their market share in a globalized economy. Thus, cities have been elaborating and implementing particular competitive policies and strategic plans in order to attract the potential target markets (tourists, new investors, new residents etc.).

In Greece, however, the place marketing process is almost unknown especially in relation to tourism, cultural and sport events, as well as developing locations and new products. Thus, the strategy of the vision for the future leads to the urgency of planning. This paper is based on the traditional models of marketing and focuses on the preparation of a Pilot City Marketing Plan for the case of a small city such as Nea Ionia, Magnesia, Greece. The structure of this plan is based on the identification of the distinctive characteristics (eventually leading to place branding), the vision, and the sustainable development objectives of the city. The paper presents the -final provided good- of Nea Ionia (a combination of gastronomy and sport), identifies the potential target markets, develops the distribution channels in the internal and external environment of the city, selects strategies (focus and cooperative) and tactics, and proposes particular ways and means of promotion.

The data for this paper are provided by the INTERREG IIIc project CultMark (Cultural Heritage, Local Identity and Place Marketing for Sustainable Development), which has been in operation in five European places since the beginning of 2004: Nea Ionia/ Magnesia/ Greece (lead partner), Chester/ UK, Kainuu/ Finland, Rostock-TLM/ Germany, and Pafos/ Cyprus. The main aim of the project is to construct an innovative and creative image for each place and for the study area as a whole.