



United Nations
ALBANIA

INSTITUTIONAL AND ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURES FOR STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

(DRAFT)



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1 Introduction

1.1 Task and Objective

The Terms of Reference for the Culture Marketing Component specify that, having set out the overall cultural marketing task and proposed a Cultural Tourism marketing strategy, a one-year Action Plan and a set of strategic interventions/marketing tools, the consultants should proceed to:

Propose institutional or organizational structures and business models, possibly including Public-Private Partnerships and others to be newly-established, which are expected to take over the implementation of the strategy as well as the longterm task of Albania's cultural marketing abroad.

As an initial step we shall first briefly outline the range of institutions and structures generally available to national governments to deliver economic and social benefits from their tourism resources, concentrating on what is pertinent to destinations where culture and heritage form a core element of the tourism offering.

1.2 Organizational Models

Tourism organizational models have considerable similarities throughout the developed world. The most relevant models to the challenges facing Albania, as it seeks to position itself as a modern European destination offering a unique experience based on its very distinctive history featuring the overlapping influences and patrimony of most of this continent's major cultures and civilizations, are those which have emerged elsewhere in Europe and the Mediterranean Basin. By contrast, the (limited) structures found in Transatlantic instances, such as the USA or Brazil, or in exotic sun and beach destinations like the Maldives or the Caribbean have little relevance. Accordingly we shall focus purely on Europe.

While considerable organizational similarities exist throughout Europe, the expectations placed on tourism as a sector of economic activity vary. This is strongly reflected in the format of sponsored agencies which governments create, or support, to deliver policy in the spheres of destination marketing and promotion. The differences exist both with regard to degree of independence of the mainstream civil service administration charged with sector policy, and the extent to which the agencies exercise responsibility for, or are closely connected to other bodies charged with, sector regulation and/or enterprise support and training.

Tourism at Ministry or central administration level rarely, if ever, achieves an independent status such as might be accorded to Foreign Affairs or National Security. It is usually combined with one or more of economic development, environmental, sport and recreational, or culture and heritage functions. The combination with environmental functions has most often occurred in less densely populated Northern European countries, where high prices are accompanied by modest levels of inbound tourism, and there is little expectation that incoming tourism will ever be a major driver of economic activity.

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Where enterprises in the tourism or hospitality sector derive most of their current and foreseeable revenues and utilisation from the activities of domestic or locally-based users, tourism administrations are sometimes part of a larger Tourism and Sport/Recreation portfolio. This is the case in countries such as Poland which have a big foreign component in their total tourism, but in which there are many areas and regions which have low levels of inbound traffic. More recently both sport and culture have been added to the tourism brief in Ireland.

Where there is a recognition that tourism both significantly depends upon a cultural offering and, correspondingly that the cultural heritage of the destination concerned is an important part of a national image which supports economic development, tourism at Ministry level is often joined with Arts, Culture and Heritage. This is currently the case in the United Kingdom and Greece. It is notable that this model is found in countries in quite different parts of the spectrum of economic development within Europe.

Few Governments in Europe now choose to implement their tourism policies without the assistance of one or more specialist promotional and/or development agencies. Germany and the Nordic countries, where large negative balances on tourism account are the norm (i.e. their residents spend far more abroad than is earned from incoming tourists) either assign tourism generation as a secondary role to their economic development agencies, or part-fund special agencies from their Economy Ministry budgets.

Although once common in the centrally-planned economies, it is increasingly rare for a Ministry to also directly take on either the destination promotion or product support roles which are generally entrusted to one or more specialist, but government-supported agencies. In some countries (e.g., Sweden) support is negotiated at an arms-length basis by semi-independent Trusts or Foundations, in others the agencies are directly State-sponsored and receive payroll costs and agreed amounts of promotional funds from their governments (e.g., Ireland, Germany), but independently recruit and retain their own specialist staff who do not have civil servant status.

2 Albania-Laws and Organizational Architecture

2.1 Legal Framework and Ministry

The current organizational structures directing tourism derive their authority from Law No. 9734, dated 14.5.2007, which establishes that the Ministry of Tourism, Culture, Youth and Sports (MoTCYS) is responsible for tourism policy issues to facilitate tourism development. The law was intended to both set out rules governing the sector, and also to develop standards for tourism services and products. It is comprehensive and wide ranging and provides for a number of levels of support for the sector, to all of which practical effect has not yet been given. From the legislation MoTCYS is required to:

- a) take care of the basic requirements of tourism in line with specific requirements set out in this Law and with all other laws, in consultation and cooperation with the tourism business community;
- b) present for approval to the Council of Ministers the national strategies for tourism development and their respective action plans;
- c) implement and support national strategies and their action plans, as well as monitor their implementation;
- d) support, protect, develop and promote tourism resources, along with the culture, material and the spiritual heritage of the Albanian people in cooperation with other central Governmental institutions, with local Governments, with the tourism private sector and civil society.

With regard to Cultural Heritage, the basis for governmental policy, involvement and direction is provided in a number of legal instruments. Law 9048 of 2003 is perhaps the most pertinent of these.

This Law 9048, loosely translated as *“For the Cultural Heritage”*, sets out in some detail how heritage materials and artefacts should be protected. It details the obligations of the State institutions charged with safeguarding this heritage. In particular it prescribes the responsibilities of the National Centre of the Cultural Properties’ Inventory, the Institute of the Cultural Monuments, the Institute of Archaeology, the Institute of Folk Culture and the General Directorate of the State Archives with regard to validation and conservation. The latter four bodies are responsible for preservation of objects in locations (e.g. archives or museums) other than those in which the object concerned was first found or located.

While Law 9048 clarified the list of approved national institutions which fall under the remit of the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports (subsequently MoTCYS), and gave them responsibility for museums categorised as “National”, it is limited in the extent to which it has development objectives. Rather its focus is very much on conservation. Accordingly it does not deal in any detail with public display criteria or, indeed, any wider educational/communications role for these institutions. The Ministry appears to exercise very loose direction but yet retain all budgetary control. Coordination mechanisms are also unclear although the coming together of tourism and culture under the one General Director in the Ministry has been a positive force for common priorities in the interim.

Museums were given their own specific Law (No 9386) in 2005, with the goal of the Law being to preserve and develop the museums of national cultural heritage. While very useful in setting out how and why Public Museums are designated as national, local or typological, (and why others are under the auspices of the Academy of Science), the perspective is very much an academic and scientific one. As an illustration of this, “*offer quality service to visitors*” ranks the lowest of four criteria, determining which museums can hold the right to be termed of national importance.

The legal basis and responsibility for cultural heritage matters accordingly appears less well defined than is the case for tourism proper.

2.2. Establishment of Tourism Agency

The legislation of 2007 (Law No.9374) provided, for the first time, for the creation of a National Tourism Agency (NTA) which would be specifically responsible for marketing the country abroad as a tourism destination. The *Agjencia Kombetare E Turizimit*, hereafter termed NTA, is a governmental agency under the jurisdiction of the Minister for Tourism. With its budget and structure it is both an autonomous statutory public body, with a General Director who is directly appointed by the Minister, and exists separately from the MoTCYS. Moreover its detailed competences, functioning and, of course, budgets are determined by Ministerial decree.

The legislation allows the NTA undertake a wide range of investment support, enterprise development and monitoring functions, although, in practice the main ongoing function of the agency, is the promotion of the country as a tourist destination. Its marketing functions are focussed upon:

- *Coordination and representation of Albania in international tourism fairs and workshops together with support of regional marketing activities.*
- *Planning and publishing promotional material.*
- *Managing and updating the official tourism website.*
- *Compilation of information on the tourism potential of the country*

Articles 9, 25, 26 and 27 enable the NTA to:

- (a) Part fund and support individual enterprises ;
- (b) prepare financial assistance programmes for investment projects which, via the Tourism Minister are submitted for approval to the High Committee of Tourism; in accordance with the separate law no. 9374, (2005), “ On state aid“. The responsibility for ensuring compliance by recipients, and by tourism enterprises leasing state assets is also assigned to the NTA;
- (c) manage a wide-ranging National Tourism Development Fund capable of conservation and training interventions;
- (d) provide or assist in the provision of services and facilities to tourism private business through approved tariffs for these services;

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- (e) source funding separately from its direct state budget allocation, by using and administering revenues generated from services offered to tourism business and from grants/donations or other legitimate funding resources;
- (f) carry on other functions as provided for in Law No.9374. The law, for example, provides for inspection, registration and classification of hotels and restaurants but is not prescriptive on which agency or institution is responsible for this.

The NTA present structure is headed by the General Director and is comprised of three departments: Department of the Assistance, Department of Marketing-Promotion and Department of Support Services. Staff numbers are just 26, whereas an overall complement of 1,089 is sanctioned by Government for all the directorates, institutions and agencies coming under the overall remit of MoTCYS.

3 Issues in Matching the Structure to Strategy

3.1 Overall Principles

It is recognized at the outset that the cultural marketing strategy is designed to serve as one component of Albania's overall requirement to make the country a more attractive tourism destination and to strengthen its image abroad. It is intended to build upon the tourism strategies already in place rather than to replace them. The current organizational and institutional arrangements in place have, we acknowledge to also serve the delivery of other strategic imperatives. In that regard this analysis will concentrate, by identifying a manageable set of issues, on seeking opportunities to "flex" existing structures, rather than suggesting the creation of an entirely new institutional architecture. In this regard we are also assisted by the fact that the Tourism Law is sufficiently wide-ranging in its embrace to allow considerable structure development without any need for new legislation.

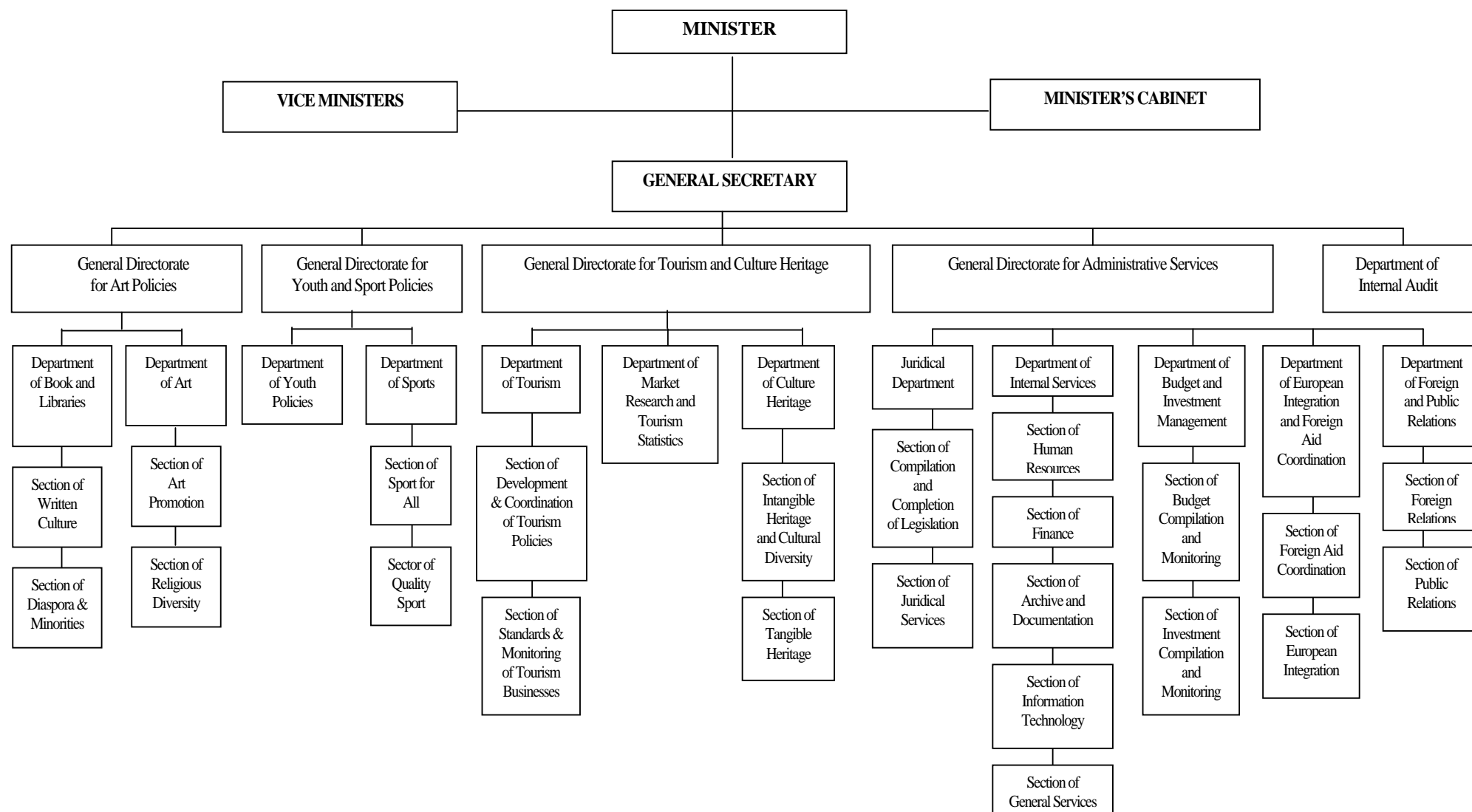
This analysis separately looks at the Ministry, the National Tourism Agency, and the Cultural Institutions.

3.1 The Ministry Structure

The current institutional structure of MoTCYS is given in Table 1.

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Table 1 – Institutional Overview – Organogram



As can be seen, the Ministry has three functional General Directorates, of which *Tourism and Cultural Heritage* is one, the others covering *Art Policies* and *Youth and Sport Policies*.

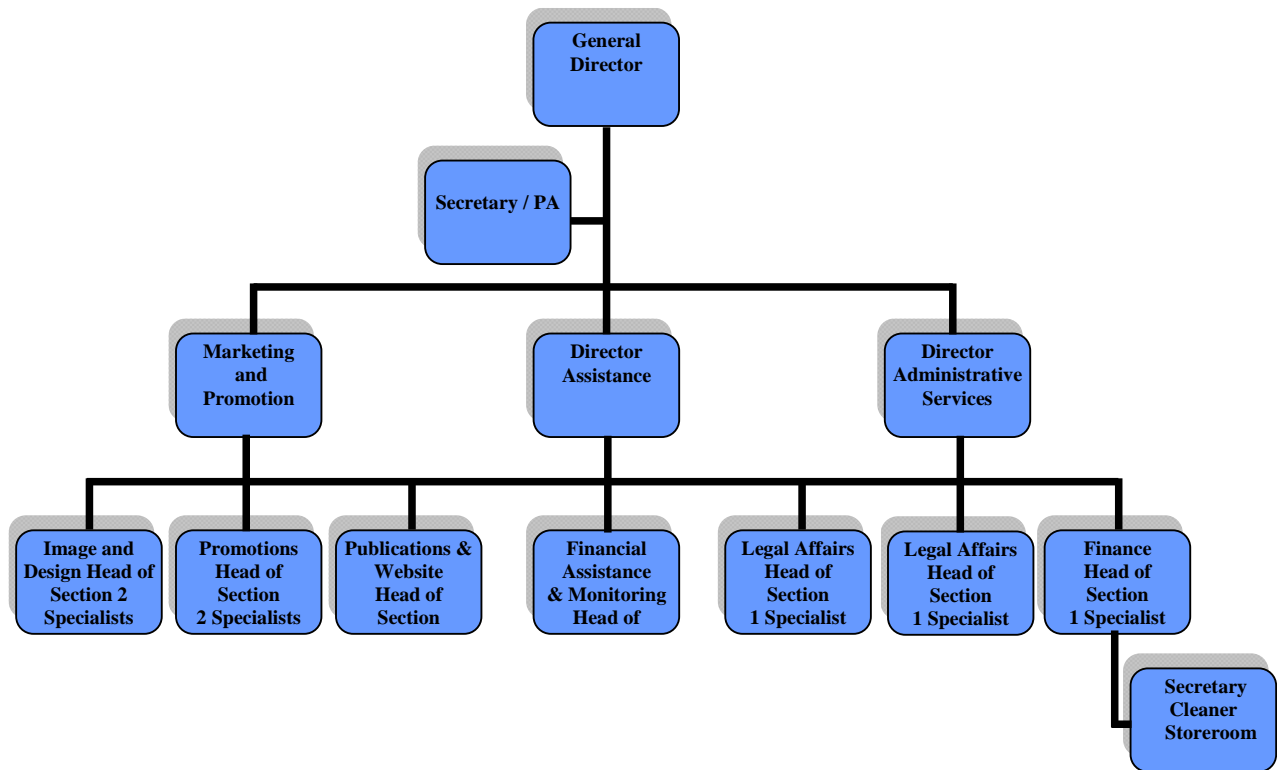
We have not received details on how the 1,089 posts funded under the Tourism, Culture, Youth and Sport budget are allocated between the Ministry and the institutions and agencies which report to the Minister. It is understood that civil servants are frequently transferred from one functional area to another, which constitutes a barrier to building up any degree of special knowledge regarding the various functions. Such a pattern of civil servant transfers occurs however in many jurisdictions, especially in Southern Europe. It only becomes a major concern when the Ministry, rather than a specialist agency, directly carries out professional or other non-administrative/policy functions. There are several such specialist functions listed, however, within the Ministry organogram. Functions which appear to fall into this category include *Art Promotion*, *Sport Quality*, *Tourism Standards* and *Market Research*. At the same time, there is a strong case that, similar to Tourism, policy coordination for Culture Heritage is a function which the Ministry ought to specifically consider highlighting.

A further issue which arises, given the stage in the tourism product life cycle of Albania, is whether the interests of both Tourism and Sport might better be served by placing them in separate Ministries. Very wealthy countries, sometimes without a very distinctive Culture Heritage product, can benefit from having these two functions together in the one Ministry. It allows, for example, government sponsorship of major sporting events, such as cycling races, sailing and other maritime sports, and golf tournaments to be carefully structured so that exactly the desired tourism messages are communicated via the media channels which feature these events. Very big budgets are required in these situations as sponsorship (itself expensive) has been proven to be effective only when the direct sponsorship cost is supplemented by, at minimum, the same level of further expenditure in promoting and “leveraging” the sponsorship. Albania is unlikely in the very near future to enter this domain, given the expense and the overwhelming probability that donor agencies will show little enthusiasm for seeing funds allocated to this arena of activity.

3.2 The Tourism Agency Structure

As earlier noted there are just 26 positions currently sanctioned for the staffing structure of the NTA. Leaving aside some support positions, the structure is as shown below.

Table 2 – Tourism Agency Structure



Of the seventeen Divisional Director, Section Head and Specialist functions, seven are in legal, financial or administrative responsibilities. This ratio of support to operational functions is considerably above what one expects in a dynamic organization. In fact, the core marketing function appears to be the responsibility of just nine people from the General Director down, just four of whom are in specialist operations roles. Notable absences in the structure, where marketing is concerned, are Marketing Research and Planning, Incoming Trade and Media Handling, Overseas/External Market Coordination and Product and Partnership Marketing. Albania Tourism may not be able to afford or require directly-operated external representation offices in the near term, but effective exploitation of opportunities created by diplomatic activity, travelling cultural exhibits and other events which can be generated in foreign markets is unlikely to happen without specific person resources being assigned to external market coordination and representation.

The most cost-effective marketing communications activity which any NTA can undertake is usually that concerned with facilitating and pro-actively developing programmes of incoming media visits. With private sector cooperation in making available heavily-discounted or free accommodation and other travel services, the only notable costs need be the payroll costs of the personnel who plan and develop the visit programmes and provide briefings and facilitations to the visiting publicists. Such publicists have well-tuned expectations and expect the host organization to provide a wealth of high quality ideas and expert knowledge. The structure and recruitment and staff development policies of an NTA ought to be geared to provide exactly such experts. The absence of a Media Handling/Publicity function in the structure may be considered a serious shortcoming, even allowing for the restricted number of posts permissible.

In the overall Ministry resource allocation, market research is recognized as a necessary function. This will be even more important if Albania increasingly sees its opportunities for market success among the inspired and motivated cultural tourist segments. However this strategy requires that research resources are placed closest to those who are tasked with campaign development and implementation. An immediate issue is that the NTA does not currently have this function, it being located instead in the Ministry.

It also emerged during the consultations that the NTA did not have full control over staff recruitment and retention and was often assigned personnel who had no previous tourism experience or functional skills which could quickly be adapted, e.g., in media or public relations or e-marketing. The lack of a supervisory Board of non-executive Directors (the reporting line for the General Director being solely to the Minister) also left it limited in its access to specialist counsel and experience outside its own executive and Ministry contacts.

3.3 *Cultural Institutions Structure*

The cultural institutions important to the implementation of a cultural heritage marketing structure are characterised by lack of any form of agency-style independence from the Ministry. We have identified a need for a favourable institutional architecture to allow a marketing and tourism-focussed orientation in the future. One way of achieving this is to have one office capable of coordinating and commercially motivating the activities of the multiple bodies currently charged with preserving and presenting the nation's rich and varied Culture. Currently there is little incentive for any one site manager to secure partnership from non-State sources to make the site more attractive to visitors as there appears to be no mechanism to reward success in this respect, for example via career progression for the manager concerned at the regional or central level. Lack of budgetary responsibility discourages the cultural institutions from being service and commercially orientated.

Good practice internationally indicates that there should, at most be two principal bodies at national level responsible for the administration of tangible aspects of a nation's patrimony or tangible heritage artefacts and features. For example, archaeological sites, and medieval built heritage together with modern era significant buildings and sites are all managed by one state properties agency in several European countries, an example of such a custodianship arrangement being the Office of Public Works in Ireland. It manages a portfolio which includes ancient monastic World Heritage Sites, medieval castles and nineteenth century great ornamental gardens.

Taking the situation of tangible heritage which is now maintained and displayed in specific purpose buildings (usually Museums), we must also identify some organizational and structure concerns. Albania, as noted, has recently updated Museums legislation. However, the responsibility for museum development rests entirely within the Ministry. There are multiple “National Museums”, as the “national” term is applied to a facility seen to have national, rather than regional or local importance. A consequence of this is piece-meal planning, rather than one strategy for best presenting the nation’s museum-held store of treasures to maximum impact for the tourist.

4 Implementing Strategy-Strengthening the Structures

4.1 General Considerations

The proposals are made in a context where the Ministry of Tourism, Culture, Youth and Sports is seen as the essential overall directing body with the ultimate responsibility, and mandate to deliver the strategy. From both the specifically culture marketing and cultural tourism points of view, the combination of portfolios within the total Ministry is not optimum. Given the role of other aspects of culture, which are associated with the learning institutions, a connection to the Education portfolio can offer advantages. More importantly again, a structural link to Foreign Affairs would be of potentially immense benefit in implementing the strategy proposed here, whereas linking Tourism plus Culture with Youth and Sports may be more appropriate in the longer term rather than the short to medium term. Nonetheless, for the purposes of producing these recommendations we assume that Tourism and Culture continue to form part of a Ministry which has the current portfolio range.

4.2 Organizing and Implementing-Government's Role

In setting out the key components of the cultural heritage marketing strategy, we have identified the paramount importance of communicating in as many impactful ways as possible with opinion-formers in key Western markets, especially in the USA, United Kingdom and Germany. Much of this task will need considerably greater resources and opportunities to create media and key social network impact, than is usually available through the channels which tourism promotion agencies operate. There is, encouragingly, an acute awareness within the Albanian government of the need to muster all the resources and operating mechanisms possible for a concerted campaign to uplift Albania's image abroad. This is now very much an overarching objective of Albanian diplomacy. As an example, donor assistance has been directed towards a full training programme for Ministry of Foreign Affairs staff in cultural diplomacy.

It is important that flexible and responsive, but formal, structures are put in place, so that the offices and agencies of state with the greatest ability to influence the image of Albania abroad come together to address the challenge in a coordinated away. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs (MFA) should be given responsibility for establishing and chairing such a co-ordinating committee, involving both of MoTCYS and NTA, national television, the academic and university sector, and the key cultural institutions. As the only Albanian functionaries located abroad in any significant numbers are embassy and diplomatic staff, it is logical that overall responsibility for implementing key programmes (e.g visits of Albanian artistes abroad, provision of material for key cultural exhibitions in major foreign cities, etc) should rest with that Ministry.

Effective communications are fundamental to the ability to create impact. The communications channels need to be those relevant to the intended information recipient. In this regard Albania cannot afford to fall behind sophisticated consumer expectations regarding the calibre and quality of information they can readily source in an increasingly web-dominated communications environment. The civil and public service must resist the temptation to become laggards in this domain. Government needs to lead its employees into the world of e-business. It is suggested in this regard that MoTCYS and NTA be given a piloting role in introducing a comprehensive “E-business in government” development programme. The aspect to be covered by the Tourism and Culture institutions might be the communications (updating and disseminating publicly managed information) rather than the transactions (payments to and from government) dimension. This proposal acts to address the important gaps identified in providing up-to-date detailed information on cultural events and facilities.

4.3 Appropriate Business Models-the role of the Ministry

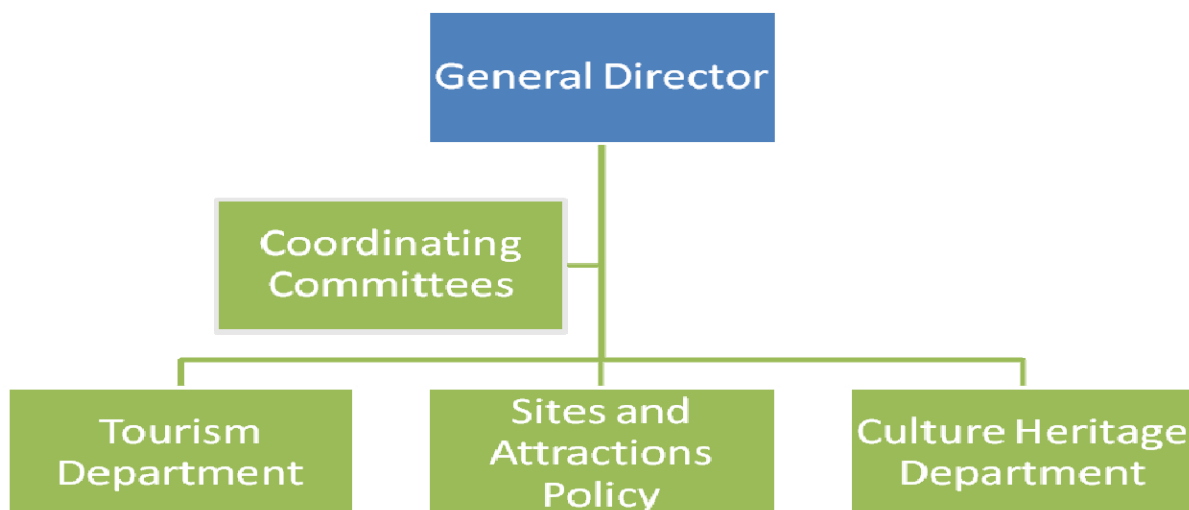
It will be very difficult to deliver far-reaching impact through a culture heritage marketing strategy if the institutional architecture surrounding _MoTCYS does not quickly evolve. It needs to be one as equally concerned with achieving development objectives as custodianship and compliance with regulations. If the strategy is to be given the best possible chance of successful implementation, the balance of resources where personnel, unit structures and supported agencies is concerned should move towards enabling and rewarding those which successfully deliver new initiatives.

A leaner structure for the Ministry itself is desirable. It is not within our brief to comment in any detail on the administrative and audit functions of the Ministry. However a better balance in the division of unit resources would see fewer sections in this part of the organization chart (refer to Table 1).

With regard to the core General Directorate for Tourism and Cultural Heritage (TCH) we see a need to re-elaborate the top-lines of the structure to render it more responsive to the priorities identified in the strategy and in our earlier analysis. This Directorate needs to be closely linked to, and influencing/influenced by parallel coordinating committee structures. Within the Ministry, it ought to link closely with components of the General Directorate for Art Policies (e.g., Art Promotion section, parts of Diaspora section), with TCH taking the lead role in this matrix style coordination. TCH would also play a most active part in the MFA-led cultural diplomacy coordinating group earlier mentioned.

Rather than continuing to assign Market Research responsibilities to the Ministry the analysis indicates this function could deliver greater value if allocated to the NTA. However, there is a need for clear responsibility for developing policy for Cultural Sites and Attractions. This needs to be a high level function within the next reporting line to the General Director. These top-line amendments to the organizational structure are shown below.

Table 3 - Top-line Amendments to Organizational Structure



In the immediate term there is no strong argument for attempting to introduce a full form of Public Private Partnership (PPP) structuring to the operation and management of the facilities within the remit of Albania's cultural institutions. Full PPP structures involve the State in providing or ensuring guaranteed levels of unitary payments to the private funder of a public facility. While often used in the development of facilities such as highways, hospitals and schools, they are less suitable when the conservation of priceless heritage needs to be a primary consideration. However while we cannot recommend full PPP, there is little doubt that opportunities will exist for the institutions to develop a partial funding stream at a small number of key sites and facilities by judicious use of parking, retail and other concessions to private sector operators. It is important that the Ministry devote considerable attention to creating the conditions for such partnerships. This is a principal reason for recommending the sub-director for sites and attractions policy shown above.

4.4 Strengthening the NTA

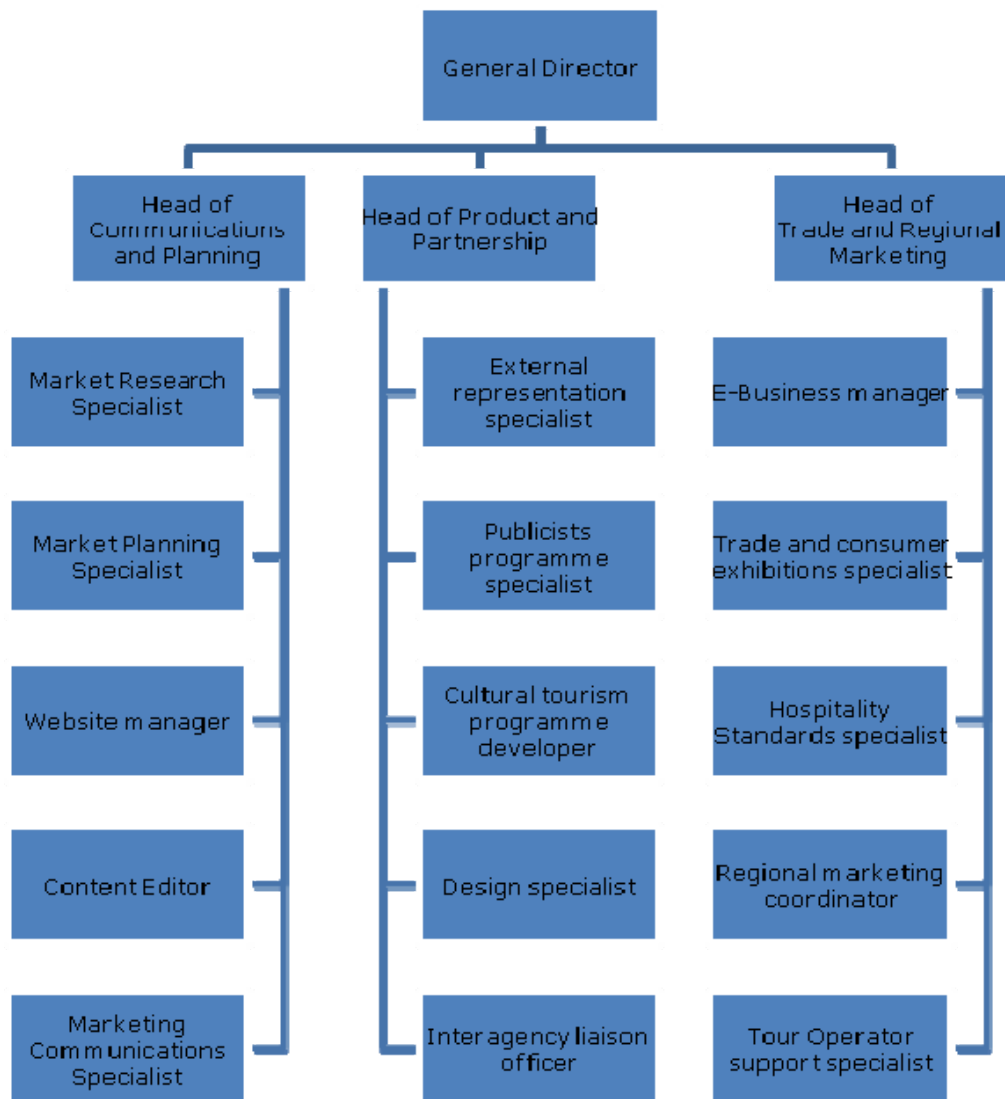
Although the coordinating committees proposed above will play a key role in marshalling a full set of public (and some private) resources to implement many core elements of the strategy, the central focus on the tourism benefits of cultural marketing strategy implementation prescribe that a better-resourced and more professional NTA is indispensable. In 3.2 above we have identified a number of weaknesses in the current structure and resourcing which need to be addressed. The primary recommendations we make in this regard are as follows

- General Directors, while having a strong tourism and/or marketing experience, should be appointed for a minimum of three years but preferably five years.
- Oversight of the agency should in the first instance be the responsibility of a Board of non-executive Directors. Plans and programmes, including, as necessary, the expansion and contraction of functions should in the first instance be agreed by this Board. While the Minister would continue to have the final authority to approve plans, the detailed process involved in securing Board approval should lead to a streamlining of the final sanction. The Board composition should be a mix of public and private sector, with directors possessing strong international business experience wherever possible.
- Divisional Directors, together with the key specialists supporting them, need to have, or be trained to develop, strong relevant specialist skills. In this regard they also need to have an agency-specific employment status and not liable to be reallocated at short notice to another Ministry or institution
- The NTA must possess the professional ability, including well-trained research and planning staff to develop its own Marketing Plans, and not be subject to ad hoc interventions from Ministries. It must decide the content of professional communications rather than have these subject to veto by local interests with minimal understanding of how communications need to be tailored to the needs and expectations of discerning foreign audiences.
- The private sector (trade associations etc.) should be formally involved in NTA through advisory committees which have a strict remit to cover B2B issues(Trade or Business to Business Marketing).
- Human resource development must become a key priority for the senior management and Board. The NTA should, via the development of a very professional working style, become a training ground for young tourism specialists who will be sought after by internationally focussed private tourism businesses.

- Linked to the previous recommendation, the NTA must use every opportunity to keep itself updated on market trends internationally and the operational responses employed by other NTAs. Seeking membership of the European Travel Commission (ETC) should be an immediate priority for the NTA as this would give it access to joint marketing in overseas intercontinental markets (e.g., the U.S.A). It can provide an umbrella within which regional cooperation (e.g. with Montenegro or other adjoining member States) can be organized on an equal footing. Equally importantly, the training and upskilling opportunities consequent on involvement with ETC's specialist sub-groupings such as the Market Intelligence Group and the Market Technology Network provide an essential and low cost route to continuous professional development for NTA staff.
- The skills expected of specialist NTA staff, together with the key objectives for the positions they occupy need to be set out in clearly defined Role Profiles.
- The NTA must have the ability to guide the promotional activity of local governments in the tourism sphere. The cultural marketing strategy requires all active administrations to be "on message" regarding the image of Albania communicated while visitors are in the country, in addition to an integrated strategy for external marketing. This will only happen if the NTA has some budgetary influence over these local administrations, perhaps by being the source of "matching funds" for any expenditure they incur in the publications or wider promotional sphere, and if a staff resource is clearly allocated to this.

In implementation terms, the above recommendations ought to be accompanied by the elaboration of a more detailed organizational structure for the NTA. We conclude by showing how this might look in organogram terms.

Tale 4 - Proposed new Organizational Structure



There is, of course, a need to also provide support functions, such as Finance, Office Administration and Legal compliance and Board support. The positioning of various specialisms within the three operational divisions illustrated above is not intended to be a rigid prescription; a small number of the specialist functions could equally well work in another Division than that in which they are shown. The more essential point is that the implementation programme needs the presence of at least this minimum range of specialist operation functions within the NTA.