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# **The Cultural and Tourist Policy Dimension in City Marketing: The Case of the Olympic Municipality of Nea Ionia, Magnesia, Greece**

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## **Abstract**

*Culture and tourism have been used extensively in a variety of initiatives that concern urban regeneration, by using particular promotional strategies and tactics in the context of city marketing. The contribution of culture and tourism must be related to the conformance and 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 urban cultural identity and image, the contribution of citizens to achieving a better quality of life, and the construction of a city's competitive advantage in order to attract tourists, inhabitants and investors.*

*This paper investigates the cultural and tourist policy dimension in city marketing, using as a study area the Olympic Municipality of Nea Ionia in the Prefecture of Magnesia in Greece. The data are derived from the INTERREG IIIC CultMark (Cultural Heritage, Local Identity and Place Marketing for Sustainable Development) project that was in operation in five European places locations (Nea Ionia - lead partner, Chester-UK, Rostock/TLM-Germany, Kainuu-Finland, Pafos-Cyprus) between 2004 and 2006.*

**Key words:** *city marketing, cultural and tourist policy, CultMark project, Nea Ionia/ Magnesia/ Greece*

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## 1. Introduction

The identification of culture as an important factor in urban development constitutes a research area that has been attracting growing interest, especially in the last two to three decades (Dziembowska-Kowalska and Funck, 2000; Kong, 2000; Scott, 2000; Barnett, 2001; García, 2004; Gibson and Stevenson, 2004). The development and implementation of particular cultural policies and actions, connected with the necessity of cities to face the socio-economical changes, has affected their internal and external environment at a micro- and macro-economic level (Deffner and Metaxas, 2003).

The use of cultural policies as tools for urban development and competitiveness has 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 contributing towards a city's identity and external image (Pratt, 1997; Deffner, 2000; Kong, 2000; Lennon and Graham, 2001; Hesmondhalgh, 2002/ 2007; Hesmondhalgh and Pratt, 2005;). Culture has been used extensively in a variety of initiatives that concern urban, and especially economic, regeneration, by using particular promotional strategies and tactics in the context of city marketing. The existence of a sustainable and effective cultural economy is based on the capacity and the knowledge of the cities' internal actors to create particular plans of action, by evaluating which fields of implementation of cultural policies could become a competitive advantage in a given time period. This argument is also reinforced by Kneafsey (2000; 2001), who claims that 'the cultural economy consists of strategies that transform local knowledge into resources available for the local territory'.

The contribution of culture must be related to the conformance and the implementation of tourism, as well as urban policy actions, the focus on the satisfaction of the needs and demands of the potential target markets (including tourists), the enforcement and promotion of the cultural identity and image of the cities, the contribution of the citizens towards achieving a better quality of life, and to the construction of a city's competitive advantage (Deffner and Metaxas, 2003). The international experience shows various cases of regions and cities, mainly in Europe, that support their competitiveness through cultural development (Friedrichs and Dangschat, 1993; Alden and Da Rosa Pires, 1996; Sjøholt, 1999; Waitt, 2000; Carriere and Demaziere, 2002; McCann, 2002; Van Aalst and Boogaarts, 2002). Table 1 presents some additional cases of cultural and tourist policies implementation.

Table 1: Cultural and tourist policies implementation

Cases	Focus	Reference
<i>Adelaide Festival (Australia)</i>	The impact of the festival on the city and the people of Adelaide was as important as the impact of the city and the people on the festival itself. The Adelaide Festival was based on the event management process in order to build an international awareness.	Brown and James, 2004
<i>Wine tourism events in Apulia (Italy)</i>	The primary goal focused on the analysis and the evaluation of particular events and the role of festivals in the cultural and tourism development of the region.	Novelli, 2004
<i>Rotterdam (The Netherlands)</i>	A key factor in the development of the urban tourism product in the plan of Rotterdam's effort to become the 'European City of Culture' for the year 2000 was the examination of the potential role of the traditional local museums.	Jansen-Verbeke and van Rekom, 1996
<i>Bradford (UK)</i>	Bradford designated as a tourism pole an area 15 minutes away from the city centre, which included a number of museums such as the National Museum of Photography Film and Television, the Colour Museum and the National Millennium Heritage Centre.	Hope and Klemm, 2001
<i>Pamplona and Holstebro (Spain)</i>	The main goal was to generate a new market in the tourist sector. In the case of Pamplona, the city's authorities managed to create a distinctive marketing position with global recognition. In the case of Holstebro, the town council decided to make a serious investment in a cultural strategy, in order to improve the environment and facilities and to attract people from higher educational background.	Kotler et al, 1999

Sources: Deffner and Metaxas (2003); CultMark Project - International Experience Report (June 2004)

In this context, the paper investigates the cultural and tourism policy dimension in place marketing, using as a study area the Olympic Municipality of Nea Ionia in the Prefecture of Magnesia in Greece. The paper analyses how place marketing could become an effective tool for a city's competitiveness in the field of culture and tourism. The data are derived from the INTERREG IIIC **CultMark** project (**Cultural** Heritage, Local Identity and Place **Marketing** for Sustainable Development), which was in operation between 2004 and 2006. This paper uses data from primary and secondary market research that was conducted amongst local experts as well as tourists and visitors.

## 2. City Marketing and City Competitiveness

The relationship between city marketing and city competitiveness has received much attention, especially during the last decades in Europe, with regard to urban development (Ashworth and Voogd, 1990; Kearns and Philo, 1993; Kotler *et al*, 1993, 1999; Gold and Ward, 1994; Ward, 1998; Avraham, 2000, 2004; Wu, 2000; Ulaga *et al*, 2002; Urban, 2002; Warnaby *et al*, 2005; Kavaratzis and Ashworth, 2007). Most of the existing approaches tend to examine these two issues separately, presenting city

marketing as a strategic process, but as something less interesting in the overall process of local economic development and without any empirical investigation of the impact of city marketing on urban development (Bradley *et al*, 2002; Metaxas, 2002; Metaxas and Kallioras, 2003). Lovering (1995: 117) argues that place marketing constitutes the core function related to local economic development and the promotion of a place's investment actions, in order to acknowledge and support their images in their external environment.

The competition between places or cities has been related to dramatic changes in the distribution of economic power. According to Lever and Turok (1999), places do not compete like commercial enterprises, but compete in order to increase their attractiveness to the potential target markets (mobile investments, tourism, mega events, specialised human resources). According to economic geographers (Cheshire and Gordon, 1996; Cheshire, 1999; Cheshire and Magrini, 1999), territorial competition has been identified as a procedure in which units are activated and operate at regional economic level, seeking to promote this economy as a 'location' for the development of economic actions in competition with other territories. They are mainly orientated towards the fact that local development policies are produced by local decision-makers, in order to influence a city's selection process by potential investors. However, the development policies with the lowest influence and importance are those related to the city's direct promotion and advertisement.

Although the significance of city marketing is supported by a variety of successful cases, especially in the fields of culture and tourism, it is questionable as a procedure, since it manifests some significant weaknesses: the analysis of a city's internal environment, the correct identification of the potential target markets, the development of particular strategies aimed at the satisfaction of the expectations of the potential target markets, as well the existence of a methodology to measure place marketing effectiveness. A further disadvantage is the unjustified control of the effectiveness of the planning and the implementation of development policies exerted by local authorities (Metaxas and Petrakos, 2004).

The sustainability and effectiveness of cultural marketing policies is based on the development and implementation of particular and distinctive strategic actions, in which culture is acknowledged as a 'production field' of urban economic development (Bloomfield, 1993), and cultural industries as 'production systems' (Pratt, 1997). Thus, attention must be given to the capacity and 'know-how' of urban cultural development experts to 'use culture as a tool' through the cultural management process, by checking the weaknesses and strengths of each city's cultural environment, focusing on the analysis of each sector in order to construct the appropriate development climate, mainly through the evaluation of the anticipated profits for urban, economic and cultural development (Deffner and Metaxas, 2003). Additionally, the cultural approach to place marketing can contribute to the sense of place (Murray, 2002).

This paper presents city marketing as a strategic process based on a combination of strategic planning approaches (Ashworth and Voogd, 1990; Kresl and Singh, 1995, 1999; Kotler *et al*, 1999:107). The existence of local authorities and decision makers with high level of 'organising capacity' (Van den Berg *et al*, 1997; Van den Berg and Braun, 1999) is crucial for the planning and implementation of effective promotional policies and actions, especially in the fields of culture and tourism. Thus, place marketing could become an effective tool for urban development and competitiveness.

### 3. The CULTMARK Project

CultMark (Cultural Heritage, Local Identity and Place Marketing for Sustainable Development) is an INTERREG IIIC project. The lead partner is DEMKA (Municipal Enterprise for Planning, Construction and Development of Nea Ionia Magnesia, Greece) and the other partners are local authorities and/or organisations from Chester (Britain), Kainuu (Finland), Rostock/ TLM (Germany), and Pafos (Cyprus).

CultMark applies a place marketing strategy with a cultural approach. This means that it emphasises the cultural dimension of marketing, as well as the promotion of the cultural resources of each place, both of these in connection with the planning of demonstration actions. The implemented demonstration actions for Nea Ionia are: the promotion of the Silk Museum, the Olympic City image (2004 football group games) and the legacy thereof, local cuisine / gastronomy ('tsipouradika'), Asia Minor traditions, painting, hosting a Rock and Blues festival.

The main aim of CultMark is to create a final successful image for each city / region partner, as well as the study area as a 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.<sup>1</sup>

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1 The scientific support of CultMark was provided by the Laboratory of Tourism Planning Research and Policy (LATOUPREP), Department of Planning and Regional Development, University of Thessaly. The

## 4. The Case of Nea Ionia, Magnesia, Greece

### 4.1 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 transport and a high level of communication infrastructure in the sectors of transport and energy.

The urban agglomeration includes the municipalities of Volos, Nea Ionia, Iolkos 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 during the last three decades. The economy of the city is based on the industrial and the service sector.

An important advantage in the attempt to establish Nea Ionia's tourism development is the construction, because of the 2004 Olympics, of a modern, organised and large (both in size and potential) sports centre based at the Panthessalikon Stadium sports centre, and the gratis international promotion of the city. This constitutes a comparative advantage over other cities which, 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);
- the promotion the great arched Mycenaean tomb in the 'Kazanaki' area, which could become the 'heart' of a visited archaeological site;
- the promotion of the local cuisine.

### 4.2 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 on 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 the

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director is Alex Deffner, Assistant Professor of Urban and Leisure Planning, and the members are Nick Bogiazides (Adjunct Assistant Professor), Pashalis Arvanitidis (Adjunct Lecturer), Theodore Metaxas (Adjunct Lecturer), Christos Liouris, Penelope Melidou, and Christina Vlahopoulou. Sections 4.1.-4.5. are based on the Cultural Sector Report (2005) which was elaborated by P. Arvanitidis (mainly), C. Liouris and P. Melidou.



enhancement of competitive advantage, whereas the least significant effect is seen in the creation of an entrepreneurial climate and the attraction of foreign investment into the city.

*Table 2: Contribution of cultural sector to economic development (Likert scale - 1: lowest, 5: highest)*

<b>Factors of contribution</b>	<b>Nea Ionia</b>
Constitution of the main axis of city participation in European programmes for culture	2.7
Reduction or minimisation 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 Project - Cultural Sector Report (June 2005)*

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

Nea Ionia is moderate with regard to the specific cultural elements that give an advantage to a city. Most of the specified factors are seen as not particularly important, apart from the existence of private and public cultural organisations with an active role in the planning and implementation of cultural activities, which are perceived to support the cultural sector to a moderate degree. Furthermore, the attraction of investments and European funds seem to be quite advantageous factors, but seem unable to create, on 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 at a very low level (Table 3).

Nea Ionia focuses on cultural development, but the major contradiction is that it presents a strong cultural historical background with weak current facilities and an even weaker cultural environment. The main focus seems to be on specific cultural events and projects, even if these factors attract a low score as advantages (Table 3). 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 on each occasion the demands and expectations of cultural tourism. This creates the

necessity for public and private organisations to be appreciated as the top advantages 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' (see Section 4.5) has positive impacts for economic development and competitiveness.

*Table 3: Factors that constitute advantages of the cultural sector (Likert scale - 1: lowest, 5: highest)*

Factors	Nea Ionia
	3.2
The existence of private cultural organisations with active participation in planning and implementing cultural activities	2.7
The existence of public cultural organisations with active participation in planning and implementing cultural activities	2.3
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	1.8
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 specialised work force in cultural organisations	1.7
The existence of strong commercial activities (businesses that focus on the production of cultural products)	1.5
The existence of graduate or postgraduate programmes on cultural studies	1.3
The existence of theatres and/or operas with worldwide fame	1.2
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
<b>Average</b>	<b>1,8</b>

*Source: CultMark Project - Cultural Sector Report (June 2005)*

#### **4.4 Defining the vision of the city**

Nea Ionia envisages a city that is economically robust, socially balanced and pays due respect to both the natural and the cultural environment. Experts deem 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 sports infrastructure (mainly developed for the 2004 Olympics), constitute some of the main assets of the place (Cultural Sector Report – June, 2005).

Regarding the factors that contribute to the accomplishment of the city vision, there are two that score highly: 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 and the universities and citizens, in the context of a cooperative marketing strategy, is absolutely crucial in order that the vision of the city may be satisfied. Finally, the ability of local authorities to adopt and implement innovative policies presents quite a high degree of importance.

*Table 4: Factors that contribute to accomplishment of vision (Likert scale -: 1: lowest, 5: highest)*

<i>Factors</i>	Nea Ionia
The participation to specific European development programmes in cooperation 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>	3.0

*Source: CultMark Project - Cultural Sector Report (June 2005)*

### 4.5 Defining the image of the city as a ‘final provided good’

Nea Ionia, according to almost 85% of respondents, has a strong cultural identity based on its historical heritage. Whether or not it currently carries any significant reputation, such identity can effectively support the creation of an attractive city image. The image of Nea Ionia comprises 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, it strives to become modern and economically 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%)

**Table 5:** Factors related to the image (%) [Likert scale - 1: lowest, 5: highest]

Factors	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Quality of urban aesthetic	0.0	22.2	33.3	33.3	11.1	100
The attractiveness of the natural environment	0.0	11.1	11.1	55.6	22.2	100
Capacity of the city to provide open and green spaces	0.0	0.0	44.4	44.4	11.1	100
Capacity of the city to have clean public spaces	0.0	44.4	11.1	33.3	11.1	100
Local people hospitality	0.0	11.1	22.2	66.7	0.0	100

Source: CultMark Project - Final Provided Good Report (December 2004)

As regards policies, experts agree that none of those suggested is implemented to a high degree. Of the six with medium implementation, the one that scores the highest is the creation of a website for a specific event that takes place in the city (although on this there is quite a divergence of opinion among respondents). The other five are the creation of a website for the city, the production of city image guides, the development of particular actions and promotional packages for specific target markets, the participation of the city in European culture-related networks, and the promotion of the city’s image through links with other cities and countries. The policies that are marginally implemented are the availability of sponsorship packages, the adoption of strategic marketing or public relations plans, and the active participation of city actors in the development of common strategies and tactics for the promotion of the city’s image.

The combination of the traditional and modern image is also supported by the responses of tourists (Final Provided Good Report-December 2004). 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%).

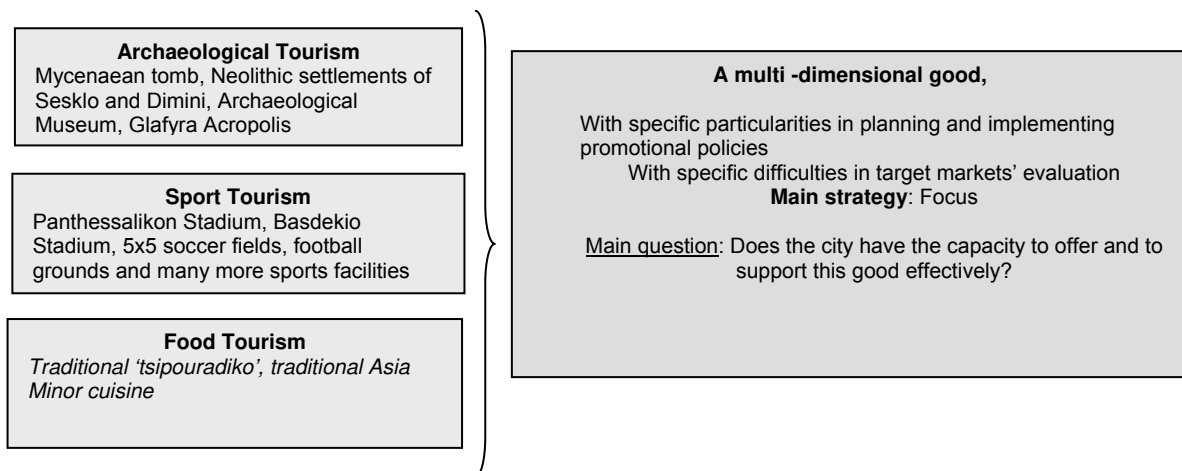
Table 6: Visiting criteria (%) [Likert scale - 1: lowest, 5: highest]

Criteria	1	2	3	4	5	Total
The historical/ cultural character of the city in general	11.7	21.7	23.3	23.3	20.0	100
The city has very 'distinctive and famous' characteristics to visit and see	11.9	18.6	22%	28.8	18.6	100
The city provides the opportunity to develop various alternative types of tourism focusing on sustainable development	10.0	11.7	13.3	33.3	31.7	100
The city provides a high level of tourism facilities which satisfies my needs and demands	5.1	33.9	25.4	23.7	11.9	100
The city combines both a modern and a traditional image which is internationally acknowledged	1.8	24.6	22.8	42.1	8.8	100
The city constitutes an 'attraction pole' by itself	1.7	10.2	18.6	44.1	25.4	100
The very good information that I had for the city	7.3	21.8	21.8	36.4	12.7	100
Because Greece is a famous tourist destination	11.4	22.7	20.5	20.5	25.0	100

Source: CultMark Project - Final Provided Good Report (December 2004)

Combining the results of Tables 5 and 6, 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).

Figure 1: Shaping the final provided good of Nea Ionia



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 specific promotional policies and, consequently, specific sub-promotional channels, but it offers the opportunity for a multi-dimensional good. Correlating this argument, with the aforementioned low degree of promotional policies implementation, the support of this good is getting quite difficult, but it is also a great challenge for the city of Nea Ionia. The creation of specific promotional packages would be a very good move, but it depends on the identification of the particular tourism markets that Nea Ionia wants to appeal to.

## **5. The Current Capacity of Nea Ionia to Promote and Support its Image**

The level of competitiveness of Nea Ionia as a 'multi-dimensional tourist destination' depends on a variety of important factors which the city has to take account of in order to achieve the required level of awareness and competitiveness. In this section, the analysis focuses on the current compatibility of Nea Ionia's capacity with an international model, concerning the effective implementation of a Strategic Place Marketing Plan in the case of tourist destinations (Cooper et al, 1993/ 2004; Buhalis, 2000). Table 7 presents the factors that relate to the international standards, the main development axes and the appreciation of tourists and local organisations concerning the capacity of Nea Ionia to satisfy and meet the existing demand in the global tourism market. It is assumed that each factor has a total score of 100%. The last column presents the total capacity level of Nea Ionia.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> The questionnaires 4a and 4b are survey questionnaires (closed questions and Likert scale 1-7) to domestic and foreign tourists (Sample: 66 individuals) and local organisations (sample: 20 individuals) from June to September 2004. The groups of criteria that have been evaluated in Nea Ionia are as follows: a) hotel accommodation, b) rented rooms, c) transport and telecommunications, d) information services, e) customer services, f) urban safety and social services, g) image of the city, h) leisure facilities, i) general satisfaction. The total number of criteria is 34.

Table 7: Compatibility of Nea Ionia capacity with the international standards

<i>Factors</i>	<i>Axes</i>	<i>Local Associations</i>	<i>Tourists</i>	<i>Final</i>
Total attractiveness-Distinctive character of the area	Natural environment, urban aesthetic, distinctive character, culture and heritage, special events	Very high (4 and 5)	High (4 and 5)	HIGH
Accessibility-Efficient connections	Systems and communications and accessibility axes in the area, connections with the surrounding areas	Quite Low to Medium (2 and 3)		MEDIUM
Needs, services and satisfaction (especially tourist facilities)	Accommodation, satisfaction of basic needs	Medium (3)	Medium (3)	MEDIUM
Additional activities during the period of staying	Available packages of types of tourism (cultural, leisure etc).	Quite Low to Medium (2 and 3)	High (4)	MEDIUM
Supporting services - Social services	Banks, hospitals, telecommunications, post offices, information centres, etc.	Medium (3)		MEDIUM

Source: CultMark Project - Final Provided Good Report (December 2004)

Nea Ionia has, in general, a medium level of capacity – something that is logical since there is not a specific city marketing office that has responsibility for the planning, evaluation and the effective control of the city's promotional policies and actions (Final Provided Good Report, December 2004). The existence of this office could increase the level of the city's capacity in the selected sectors of development. In order to have an effective provision of a multi-dimensional good, this office has to recruit a specialised workforce and has to be the link between the public and private sector in the decision-making process regarding promotional policies and actions.

In order to provide and support its image at European or international level, Nea Ionia has to improve its capacity. This is not easy, since the level of capacity is related to the ability of the local authorities and policy makers to increase the city's awareness, to promote the city's participation in international tourism and cultural events, to exploit all the valuable resources of the city, and to adapt and, consequently, plan and implement a flexible and strategic city marketing plan.

## 6. The Proposed Steps of the City Marketing Pilot Plan for Nea Ionia

The City Marketing Pilot Plan (CMPP) is based on the City Marketing Pre-Plan (CMP-P) and aims to become a guideline for the effective implementation of the City Marketing

Final Plan (CMFP). The CMPP has a strategic character, based on the identification of the most appropriate promotional methodology and policy that provides the opportunity for Nea Ionia to examine and evaluate some first results of the implementation of place marketing policies and actions. The most important is that the CMPP has to take place in a particular temporal horizon (410 ‘working days’) and during this period actors, marketers and policy makers have to collect and evaluate valuable information that is related to the development, or the change, of the CMPP structure, either as a whole, or in its separate parts. The CMPP is based on the Strategic Image Management (Kotler *et al*, 1999: 160), and always has as a starting point the identification of a city vision and the primary urban development objectives that have to be satisfied. The structure of the CMPP is presented in Tables 8 and 9.

Table 8: The structure of the City Marketing Pilot Plan (using primary data)

<b>Steps</b>	<b>Method</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Sources</b>
The identification of the potential target markets	Questionnaire 4a and 4b	Propose the appropriate target markets for Nea Ionia.	Promotional and Distributional ‘Maps’ Report (December, 2004)
The selection of the appropriate strategies	Questionnaire 4a, 4b and 2 (Target markets)	Identify tourism services provided by Nea Ionia. Identify promotional policies that are implemented by local actors.	Strategies and Tactics Report (June, 2004)

Table 9: 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 as well as development objectives of Nea Ionia to the local policy makers.	City Marketing Pilot Plan - Nea Ionia (December 2005)
The implementation of Critical Path Analysis method	To provide a technical tool, based on project planning, by putting the Place Marketing Pilot Plan into a specific temporal horizon, identifying the primary and secondary actions per phase.	City Marketing Pilot Plan - Nea Ionia (December 2005)
The implementation of the ‘8ps’ model by Morrison	To present and propose a marketing mix model related to the effective promotion and support of the image of Nea Ionia as a final provided good.	City Marketing Pilot Plan - Nea Ionia (December 2005)
The development of a Communication Process	Local policy makers and planners have the opportunity to check the weaknesses of each step and each tactic in order to re-design or to re-construct the main strategies by using alternative ones.	City Marketing Pilot Plan - Nea Ionia (December 2005)



## 7. Evaluation of the City Marketing Pilot Plan for Nea Ionia by the Local Experts

The first step of the proposed implementation of the CMPP was to estimate the appreciation of local experts (sample: 20 individuals) regarding the impact of the proposed methodology (as reflected in the City Marketing Pre-Plan) on urban development and competitiveness.

The view of local experts' as to the impact of the CMPP on Nea Ionia's capacity to organise and implement specific actions are summarised in Table 10. Most respondents deemed that the implementation of the CMPP will predominantly enhance the city's ability to successfully organise special events, carry out specific development projects, elaborate particular development strategies and implement innovative policies and actions. Furthermore, the CMPP is expected to have a substantial impact in terms of supporting both the development and management of collaborations and partnerships taking place, not only between the city and other places, but also within the city itself (e.g. public-private partnerships). The effect of the CMPP on the ability of the city to elaborate alternative scenarios for action, to spot opportunities for advancing its position in the global competitive environment, to efficiently promote itself on the international scene, and to increase its entrepreneurial capacity, is also rated highly.

Table 10: CMPP and organisational capability (Likert scale – 1: lowest to 7: highest)

<i>Areas of impact</i>	Nea Ionia
Improve the place's capacity to host and organise effectively special events	6.3
Help the place to implement specific development projects	6.3
Improve the place's capacity to develop particular development strategies	6.3
Improve the place's capacity to implement innovative development actions	6.2
Help the place to efficiently manage partnerships and cooperation with other places in order to establish common objectives and interests	6.1
Promote the development of partnerships between actors (e.g. local authorities, enterprises and citizens)	6.1
Promote the development of linkages / networks of cooperation with other places	5.8
Help local authorities to efficiently manage partnerships	5.8
Improve the place's capacity to develop alternative scenarios for action	5.8
Help decision makers to check opportunities for taking advantage of, and to avoid threats in an international competitive environment	5.7
Make place's promotion strategy more efficient at the international level	5.7
Increase the place's entrepreneurial capacity	5.6
<b>Average</b>	<b>6.0</b>

Source: CultMark Project-City Marketing Pilot Plan Nea Ionia

As regards the particular factors which determine the effectiveness of Nea Ionia's CMPP, the local experts provide a slightly different ranking (Table 11). The formation of a clear vision for the place is the most important determinant, followed by the local authorities' capacity to organise and implement innovative actions and by the development of the place's image as a 'final provided good'. Next in the ranking come: representation of all interests, support of the place marketing process by all key actors, flexibility on the part of the CMPP to adapt to changes, incorporation of the PMPP in other strategic instruments (such as the Public Relations Plan), and the existence of a strong local identity.

*Table 11: Factors determine the effectiveness of Nea Ionias' CMPP*

*(Likert scale-1: lowest to 7: highest)*

<i>Factors affecting PMPP</i>	Nea Ionia
Identification of the vision of the place	6.3
Capacity of local authorities to plan and implement innovative and competitive actions	5.9
Development of the place's image as a 'final provided good'	5.9
Representation of all key actors' interests (including social groups)	5.7
Support of a place marketing process from all key local actors	5.4
Flexibility of the CMPP and its ability to adjust to changes occurring within and outside the place	5.3
Incorporation and connection of the CMPP with other strategic actions and instruments (such as a Public Relations Plan)	5.1
Existence of a strong place identity	5.1
Cooperation between various actors (private and public)	4.9
<i>Existence of a specific Place Marketing Office</i>	4.8
<b>Average</b>	<b>5.5</b>

*Source: CultMark Project -City Marketing Pilot Plan Nea Ionia (2005)*

Local experts strongly believe that the implementation of the CMPP will primarily support the implementation of Nea Ionia's development objectives and the enhancement of its capacity to provide innovative tourism and cultural services. Its economic impact will predominantly be in the labour market, with increasing employment opportunities, while its effects on the competitive position of both the local enterprises and the city as a whole will be considerable. As regards the effects of the CMPP on Nea Ionia's capacity, it is deemed that it will enhance the latter's ability to successfully organise special events, to carry out specific development projects, and to develop particular development strategies. As far as the factors that reinforce the development of an effective CMPP are concerned (both in general terms and with

regard to the specific city), experts rank highly the formation of a clear vision for the city and the development of this image as a 'final provided good'.

## 8. Main Difficulties of Policy Implementation

The proposed plan has the following difficulties as far as policy implementation is concerned:

Conformance and performance. Planners and policy makers have to understand that the plan's conformance and the plan's performance are two different things. Conformance primarily concerns the examination and the evaluation of the internal and external environment of a city, on the condition that it has clarified the kind of image that it wants. Performance concerns the policy-making process, referring to the ways, means and methods on which this plan is based. Furthermore, this phase also concerns the control and the feedback procedure of each separate action.

Representation of common interests. This difficulty relates to the attitudes of a city's internal dynamics and groups (public sector, enterprises, citizens), facing, on the one hand, the city's development process and, on the other hand, their private interests. A city's development is a common aim and it requires common actions and partnerships amongst all the city's forces, especially when the city has a weak identity or has no identity at all.

Local authorities' entrepreneurial capacity. This issue has to do with the ability of local authorities to implement policies, to exploit development opportunities, to develop partnerships with the private sector and to contribute effectively to the policy-making process.

Positive city image is a continuous process. The creation of a positive (attractive and competitive) city image is a continuous process, based on strategic planning, by examining, each time, not only all the promotional actions that the city has implemented, but also their impact on the city's internal and external environment. The major difficulty is to maintain a positive image for a long-term period.

Selection of the appropriate promotional means. The city planners and policy makers should evaluate all the available promotional means in order to select those with the greatest effectiveness. The effectiveness of a promotional mean has to do with the selected mean, but also with the character and the dynamism of the message. The most powerful combination is the transmission of a clear and strong message through a well-known transmitter.

'What kind of image does Nea Ionia want?' A general approach to a city's image could become ineffective. As long as the city's image has been identified as a 'good', the

question is if this good is for any specific target market. City planners have to take into account 'what kind of image the city wants' and then evaluate the means, the methods and the strategies in order to effectively address the appropriate target markets.

## 9. Conclusion

The main purpose of the paper was to analyse the conditions under which the process of city marketing can become an effective policy tool for urban development and competitiveness. Nea Ionia, Magnesia, Greece, was used as a case study. The city should try to support a multi-dimensional image, based on the tourist promotion of cultural heritage, sport and local cuisine. Nea Ionia could become competitive through the implementation of a city marketing policy based on strategic planning. Thus, a City Marketing Pilot Plan, with particular development steps and actions, has been elaborated. The proposed plan uses primary and secondary data, from local authorities, experts and tourists/visitors in order to evaluate the most appropriate policies and actions for Nea Ionia.

The plan also analyses the evaluation of local experts concerning the impacts of the CMPP implementation for the city. This could have positive impacts on urban development, especially in the fields of culture, tourism and sport, i.e. the three main aspects of leisure (the fourth being entertainment, which can also be included since it incorporates eating). The crucial point is that city marketing needs a high degree of local authority capacity in planning and implementing marketing actions. City marketing is also a cooperative process, and in order to be successful, Nea Ionia's internal forces should develop partnerships and common actions.

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