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Stefan Stefanov Ivanov

**IMPROVEMENT OF THE INVESTMENT POLICY OF RESORT COMPLEXES
ALONG THE BULGARIAN BLACK SEA COAST**

A B S T R A C T
of a draft dissertation
submitted for the acquisition of the educational and scientific
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A B S T R A C T
Of dissertation

Submitted for the acquisition of the educational and scientific degree “Phd” in
professional field 3.8 Economics Doctoral programme “Economics and
management (construction and real estate)”

SUPERVISOR:

Assoc. Prof. Todor Stoyanov Raychev

SCIENTIFIC JURY:

- | | |
|--|-------------|
| 1. Prof. Stoyan Andreev Stoyanov, Phd | EU- Varna |
| 2. Prof. Stoyan Petkov Marinov, Phd | EU- Varna |
| 3. Prof. Georgi Shinkov Zabunov, Phd | UNWE-Sofia |
| 4. Assoc. Prof Dragomir Jelchev Stefanov | UNWE-Sofia |
| 5. Assoc. Prof. yana Geogieva Stoencheva | UNWE- Sofia |

ALTERNATIVE MEMBERS:

- | | |
|---|-------------------|
| 1. (internal) Assoc. Prof Katya Nedelcheva Antonova | EU- Varna |
| 2. (external) Assoc. Prof Ludmila Mihaylova Mihaylova | RU- Angel Kanchev |

Reviewers:

- 1.
- 2.

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The author is a doctoral student at the Department of Business, Investments and Real Estate at the University of Economics – Varna. The research and the preparation of the dissertation were carried out at the same university.

Author: Stefan Stefanov Ivanov

Title: Improvement of the Investment Policy of Resort Complexes along the Bulgarian Black Sea Coast

I. GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE DISSERTATION

1. Relevance of the Topic

The tourism sector occupies a significant position in the structure of the Bulgarian economy, with its development influencing economic growth, regional development, employment, and investment activity. The resort complexes along the Bulgarian Black Sea coast are of particular importance for the formation of the national tourism product, as they concentrate a significant share of the summer tourist flow and investments in tourism and real estate.

Over the past decades, their development has been characterized by high investment activity and significant changes in the functional use of resort areas. Alongside the modernization of hotel facilities and tourism infrastructure, investment interest in holiday homes, apartment complexes, and multifunctional mixed-use buildings has been increasing. As a result, a tourism-residential structure has gradually emerged, transforming the traditional operating model of some resort complexes.

This transformation creates both opportunities and risks for their long-term development. Residential investments may contribute to attracting capital, establishing a permanent and long-term resident population, developing service activities, and reducing seasonality. However, in the absence of strategic planning and coordinated investment policy, they may generate infrastructure and functional imbalances, overdevelopment, and a weakening of tourism specialization. This necessitates considering investment policy as a strategic mechanism for coordinating the economic, spatial, and functional development of resort areas.

The significance of the issue is further intensified by increasing competition among tourism destinations, changes in consumer preferences, and growing requirements regarding the quality and sustainability of the tourism product. At the same time, although research exists on investment in tourism, tourism destinations, real estate, and sustainable development, the interrelationships between investment policy, tourism-residential transformation, permanent residence, the reduction of seasonality, and the competitiveness of resort complexes along the Bulgarian Black Sea coast remain insufficiently studied.

The relevance of the dissertation research stems from the need for scientifically grounded solutions for managing these processes through an integrated investment policy that combines tourism and residential functions while preserving tourism specialization and taking into account infrastructure and spatial capacity. In this

context, tourism-residential transformation is considered a development trend affecting some resort complexes which, under a strategically oriented investment policy and balanced spatial planning, may contribute to reducing seasonality, diversifying the local economy, and increasing sustainability and competitiveness.

2. Research Object and Subject

The object of the research is the resort complexes along the Bulgarian Black Sea coast, considered as specific socio-economic and spatial systems, with an empirical focus on the resort complex “St. St. Constantine and Helena.”

The subject of the research is the investment policy of the resort complexes along the Bulgarian Black Sea coast under conditions of tourism-residential transformation and the possibilities for its improvement with a view to reducing seasonality and enhancing their long-term competitiveness.

3. Aim and Research Tasks

The aim of the dissertation is, based on an analysis of the factors, state, dynamics, and structure of investments in the resort complexes along the Bulgarian Black Sea coast, with an empirical focus on the resort complex “St. St. Constantine and Helena,” to develop a conceptual model, an assessment methodology, and applied scientific models for improving their investment policy under conditions of tourism-residential transformation.

Achieving this aim requires addressing the following research tasks:
To analyze and systematize the theoretical and methodological foundations of the investment policy of resort complexes and the factors determining its formation and development.

1. To develop a conceptual model and methodology for assessing the investment policy of resort complexes along the Bulgarian Black Sea coast, taking into account the principles of sustainable development and the specific characteristics of tourism-residential transformation.
2. To test the developed methodology through an assessment of the investment policy of “St. St. Constantine and Helena Holding” AD for the period 2019–2025 and to conduct empirical research among owners and residents of residential properties, representatives of the local business community and investors, and experts in the relevant fields.
3. To examine international good practices and alternative spatial planning scenarios applicable to improving the investment policy of resort complexes

along the Bulgarian Black Sea coast.

4. To develop a phased model with an adaptive mechanism and an integrated model for improving the investment policy of resort complexes along the Bulgarian Black Sea coast under conditions of tourism-residential transformation, aimed at enhancing their sustainability and competitiveness.

4. Time Scope of the Research

The principal time scope of the research covers the seven-year period from 2019 to 2025, which enables the dynamics and structural changes in the analyzed investment and economic processes to be traced.

5. Research Thesis of the Dissertation

The dissertation argues that tourism-residential transformation is emerging as a development trend in the resort complexes along the Bulgarian Black Sea coast which, through consistent investment policy, strategic spatial planning, and coordination between the public and private sectors, can be managed as a factor contributing to the reduction of seasonality, diversification of the local economy, more efficient use of infrastructure, and enhancement of long-term competitiveness.

The main research hypothesis is that the formation of a sustainable model of permanent and long-term residence in resort complexes along the Bulgarian Black Sea coast, resulting from a targeted and integrated investment policy, creates conditions for year-round functioning of economic activities, reduction of seasonality, and enhancement of the sustainability of tourism destinations.

The following working hypotheses are formulated to test the main research hypothesis:

First hypothesis. There is a positive relationship between the share of actually occupied residential properties in resort complexes and the level of off-season economic activity.

Second hypothesis. The formation of a permanent resident population stimulates the development of basic and service-related economic activities, thereby contributing to the diversification of the local economy and the sustainability of resort complexes.

Third hypothesis. Resort complexes with a mixed tourism-residential functional structure create conditions for reducing seasonal fluctuations in economic activity, employment, and revenues and for transitioning towards a more sustainable year-round operating model.

Fourth hypothesis. In the absence of strategic investment and spatial planning, the

increasing share of residential construction generates functional and infrastructure imbalances, whereas under an integrated investment policy the same process can become a factor contributing to sustainable development and increased competitiveness of resort complexes.

6. Research Methodology

The methodological framework of the dissertation is based on the systems, functional, and comparative approaches, which make it possible to consider resort complexes as complex socio-economic, investment, and spatial systems characterized by interdependencies between investment processes, spatial development, demographic dynamics, and tourist flows.

To achieve the aim of the research, a set of complementary methods has been applied, including analysis and synthesis, comparative and systems analysis, statistical methods, documentary and indicator analysis, survey and expert methods, and case study research. Their combination ensures the theoretical clarification of investment policy, the empirical testing of the formulated hypotheses, and the development of the proposed author-developed models.

The empirical research encompasses an analysis of statistical and financial-economic data, an examination of investment processes, two surveys—one among owners and residents of residential properties and another among representatives of the local business community and investors—as well as an expert survey among specialists in the relevant fields. The combination of quantitative and qualitative methods enables a comprehensive assessment of investment policy and comparison of findings obtained from different sources.

7. Research Limitations

Despite the effort to ensure comprehensiveness and objectivity, certain limitations of the research should be acknowledged.

First, the limited availability and completeness of statistical information concerning the actual occupancy of the residential housing stock in resort complexes, as well as the lack of a unified reporting system distinguishing short-term tourist use from long-term residence, necessitate the use of indirect indicators, survey data, and expert assessments.

Second, differences in the administrative scope, spatial characteristics, and information availability of individual resort complexes limit the comparability of

some of the indicators examined.

Third, investment activity and tourist flows are influenced by external factors, including macroeconomic conditions, health crises, geopolitical processes, and changes in the international tourism market, which may affect the dynamics of the analyzed processes.

Notwithstanding these limitations, the research approach applied provides the necessary analytical basis for formulating scientifically grounded conclusions and practically applicable recommendations.

8. Dissemination and Approval

The dissertation has been discussed at meetings of the Department of Business, Investment and Real Estate. Three publications (two articles and one conference paper) related to the topic of the dissertation have been published in specialized academic journals and proceedings.

2. CONTENTS OF THE DISSERTATION

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I. BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE DISSERTATION

INTRODUCTION

The Introduction substantiates the relevance of the research topic. The object and subject of the research, the aim, research tasks, research thesis, main research hypothesis, and working hypotheses are defined. The time scope and methodological framework of the research, its limitations, and the information base are also presented.

CHAPTER ONE

THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS OF THE INVESTMENT POLICY OF RESORT COMPLEXES

Chapter One of the dissertation is devoted to the theoretical and methodological foundations of the investment policy of resort complexes. The resort complex as a socio-economic and investment system, the nature and scope of investment policy, the specific features of real estate investment, and the factors determining investment processes in resort complexes along the Bulgarian Black Sea coast are examined successively.

In the first section of Chapter One, the nature of the resort complex as a specific socio-economic and investment system is examined. The main characteristics of resort complexes, their functional organization, and the interrelationships between their tourism, economic, infrastructure, spatial, social, and natural-environmental components are analyzed. It is argued that a resort complex is not merely a mechanical aggregation of tourism facilities and economic entities, but rather a territorially defined and functionally integrated system with a predominantly resort-tourism purpose, whose development is determined by the interaction between its individual structural subsystems.

Based on the theoretical analysis, an author-developed definition is proposed according to which a resort complex is a territorially defined and functionally integrated socio-economic and investment system with a predominantly resort-tourism purpose, formed on the basis of natural resort and recreational resources and comprising interconnected elements of the tourism material base, technical and transport infrastructure, and service activities, whose functioning is aimed at creating and delivering an integrated resort-tourism product.

Particular attention is paid to the investment function of the resort complex. Investment decisions affect not only the development of individual facilities and enterprises but also tourism infrastructure, the quality of the tourism product, spatial organization, the natural environment, and socio-economic processes. Therefore, the effectiveness of investment activity cannot be assessed solely through the financial results of individual projects; it should also be considered in terms of their impact on the functioning and development of the resort system as a whole.

On this basis, investment policy is defined as an integrating management mechanism through which the strategic priorities, investment resources, and interests of stakeholders involved in the development of the resort complex are coordinated. The systemic nature of investment processes substantiates the need to coordinate them with spatial development, infrastructure capacity, tourism specialization, and the sustainability requirements of the resort territory.

As a result of the theoretical analysis, a conceptual model of the resort complex as an integrated socio-economic and investment system has been developed. The model systematizes the main structural components and the functional relationships between them. It provides the conceptual basis for the subsequent study of investment policy and for the development of methodological tools for its assessment and improvement.

In the second section of Chapter One, the nature and scope of the investment policy of resort complexes are examined. Based on the systematization of key theoretical concepts, it is argued that investment policy cannot be reduced to the planning, financing, and implementation of

individual investment projects. Rather, it represents a purposeful process of defining investment objectives, priorities, resources, and mechanisms for their achievement in accordance with the strategic development directions of the resort complex.

The main principles, stakeholders, and areas of investment policy are examined, as well as the interaction between the public and private sectors in its formulation and implementation. The need to reconcile the interests of investors, the tourism business, public institutions, the local community, and other stakeholders is emphasized. Particular importance is attached to the strategic orientation, comprehensiveness, economic efficiency, sustainability, and adaptability of investment policy in response to changes in the internal and external environment.

It is established that the specific characteristics of resort complexes expand the scope of investment policy beyond immediate economic and financial results. Investment decisions should take into account the interrelationships between the tourism function, real estate, infrastructure and spatial development, natural resources, and the socio-economic characteristics of the territory. This implies that the assessment of investment policy should encompass both the outcomes of investment activity and its capacity to create conditions for sustainable and competitive development.

As a result, the investment policy of resort complexes is conceptualized as an integrating management mechanism through which investment resources and decisions are directed and coordinated in accordance with the strategic objectives and functional characteristics of the resort territory. This establishes the theoretical basis for the subsequent examination of the specific features of real estate investment and the factors influencing the investment policy of resort complexes along the Bulgarian Black Sea coast.

In the third section of Chapter One, the specific features of real estate investment within resort complexes are examined. Their main economic characteristics are considered, including high capital intensity, a long-term investment horizon, spatial fixity, relatively low liquidity, and the dependence of value and return on the characteristics and development of the specific territory. These features determine real estate as a significant

component of the investment environment and a factor in the transformation of the functional structure of resort complexes.

The main areas of investment in tourism, residential, and mixed-use real estate are analyzed, together with their relationship to the development of tourism infrastructure and service activities. It is established that, alongside traditional investments in hotels and other tourism facilities, the importance of holiday homes, apartment complexes, and multifunctional buildings is increasing. This expands the residential function and changes the patterns of land use and utilization of resort territories.

Special attention is paid to the dual nature of real estate as both an investment asset and an object of consumption and residence. The actual and long-term use of residential properties creates conditions for the formation of more stable consumer demand and the development of year-round services, while simultaneously increasing the pressure on transport and technical infrastructure, public services, and spatial capacity. Therefore, the effects of residential investment cannot be assessed independently of the functional characteristics and constraints of the resort territory.

The analysis substantiates the need for real estate investments to be integrated into the overall investment policy of resort complexes so that the development of tourism and residential functions is coordinated with the infrastructure, spatial, and environmental capacities of the territory. This provides a theoretical basis for the subsequent examination of the factors determining the investment policy of resort complexes along the Bulgarian Black Sea coast.

In the fourth section of Chapter One, the factors influencing the investment policy of resort complexes along the Bulgarian Black Sea coast are systematized and analyzed. They are considered as an interconnected system of external and internal influences that determine investment activity, the choice of investment areas, and the opportunities for sustainable development of resort territories.

The main factors identified include the macroeconomic environment, the state and dynamics of the tourism market, the investment climate, the

regulatory and institutional framework, infrastructure provision, spatial planning, natural resource potential, and environmental constraints. In addition, the characteristics of the specific resort complex are of significant importance, including the structure and quality of the tourism base, seasonality, accessibility and connectivity, the condition of technical and social infrastructure, investment potential, and the functional use of the territory.

Particular attention is given to the interrelationship between investment processes, spatial development, and changing patterns of residence. The expansion of the residential function creates opportunities for the year-round use of parts of the resort territory and the development of service activities, while simultaneously generating additional requirements regarding infrastructure capacity, spatial regulation, and environmental protection. This necessitates assessing investment decisions not in isolation, but in the context of the overall impact of these factors on the functioning of the resort complex.

The analysis demonstrates that investment policy is formed under conditions of dynamic interaction between economic, market, institutional, infrastructure, spatial, social, and environmental factors. Their systematic consideration provides the theoretical and methodological foundation for the analysis and assessment of the investment policy of resort complexes along the Bulgarian Black Sea coast, undertaken in Chapter Two of the dissertation.

CHAPTER TWO

ANALYSIS AND ASSESSMENT OF THE INVESTMENT POLICY OF RESORT COMPLEXES ALONG THE BULGARIAN BLACK SEA COAST (A CASE STUDY OF THE RESORT COMPLEX “ST. ST. CONSTANTINE AND HELENA”)

Chapter Two of the dissertation focuses on the analysis and assessment of the investment policy of resort complexes along the Bulgarian Black Sea coast, with an

empirical focus on the resort complex “St. St. Constantine and Helena”. The investment environment and tourism potential of the Black Sea resort complexes are examined successively, a conceptual model and methodology for assessing investment policy are developed, and the methodology is applied to “St. St. Constantine and Helena Holding” AD for the period 2019–2025.

In the first section of Chapter Two, a sectoral analysis of the investment environment and tourism potential of resort complexes along the Bulgarian Black Sea coast is conducted. The dynamics of tourism and investment activity, the development of the material base and residential construction, and the differences between individual resort complexes are examined.

The comparative analysis establishes significant differentiation in the scale and dynamics of the material base. The main changes in the bed capacity of the resort complexes under study during the period 2021–2025 are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Dynamics of the Material Base of Resort Complexes along the Bulgarian Black Sea Coast (2021–2025)

Resort complex	Beds, 2021	Beds, 2025	Change, %
Albena	13 705	11 404	–16,8
Duni	3 190	3 916	+22,8
Golden Sands	37 450	42 607	+13,8
MMC – Primorsko	1 527	1 866	+22,2
St. St. Constantine and Helena	6 518	7 875	+20,8
Sunny Beach	54 169	68 638	+26,7
Elenite	2 319	1 276	–45,0

Source: Compiled based on data from Table 3.1 of the dissertation; National Statistical Institute (NSI), author’s calculations.

The data in Table 1 show that the largest absolute increase in bed capacity is observed in the resort complex “Sunny Beach”, followed by “Golden Sands” and “St. St. Constantine and Helena”, while the remaining complexes demonstrate different trajectories of change. The comparison of the material base with indicators of tourism

demand and revenues confirms that the development of resort complexes does not follow a uniform pattern. The differences are determined by the scale and structure of the tourism base, market demand, investment activity, and the opportunities for spatial and infrastructure development.

The analysis also indicates a strengthening of the residential function in the Black Sea territories. Alongside investments in tourism infrastructure, the importance of residential and mixed-use properties is increasing, which is changing the functional structure and patterns of use of some resort complexes. This creates opportunities for expanding year-round economic activity, while also generating increased requirements for infrastructure capacity, spatial planning, and the sustainable use of territorial resources.

The results obtained substantiate the need for investment policy to be aligned with the specific potential, functional structure, and constraints of each individual resort territory and provide the analytical basis for developing the conceptual model and methodology for its assessment.

In the second section of Chapter Two, a conceptual model for assessing the investment policy of resort complexes along the Bulgarian Black Sea coast is developed. The model is based on a systemic understanding of investment policy as a comprehensive management process whose outcomes cannot be assessed solely through the volume of investment and its financial returns.

The model identifies five interconnected dimensions of investment policy: **economic; spatial and planning; tourism; managerial and institutional; and social and environmental**. These dimensions are considered in interaction with the input factors of the external environment and enable an integrated assessment aimed at determining the effectiveness of investment policy, identifying strengths and problem areas, prioritizing investment directions, and substantiating strategic management decisions. The structure and interrelationships between the main components are presented in Figure 1.

An essential element of the model is the continuous improvement cycle, comprising environmental analysis and data collection, assessment of investment policy, management intervention and adaptation, monitoring of results, and subsequent evaluation. Its functioning is based on the principles of systemic thinking,

integration, adaptability, cyclicity, and evidence-based management. Through feedback, the results of the assessment are used to update investment policy and guide subsequent management intervention.

The developed conceptual model provides the methodological foundation for constructing the methodology for assessing investment policy and establishes the link between the theoretical propositions, the assessment system, and the subsequent empirical application.

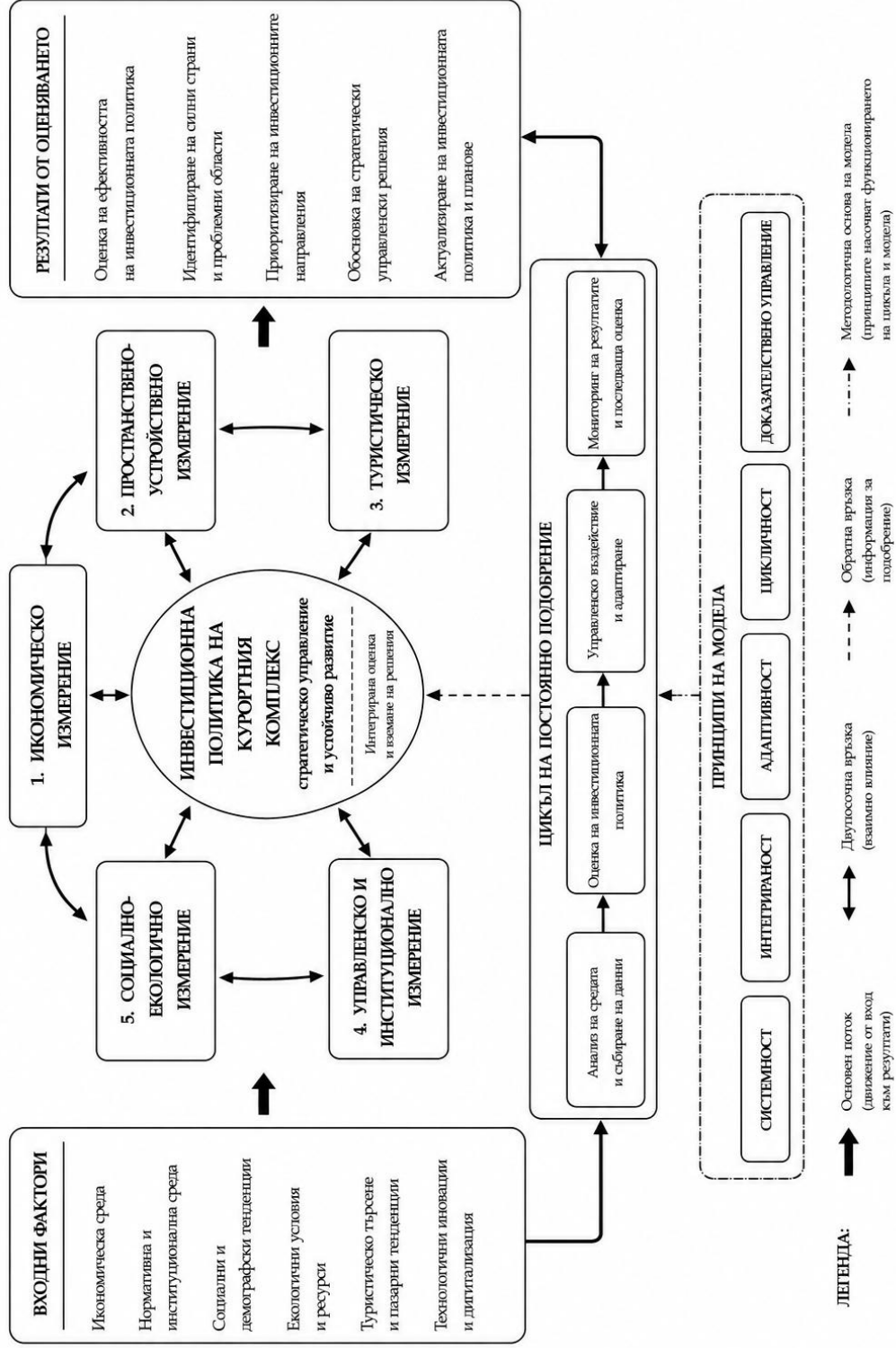


Fig. 1. Conceptual Model for Assessing the Investment Policy of Resort Complexes along the Bulgarian Black Sea Coast

Source: Fig. 9 of the dissertation. Developed by the author with the assistance of AI (ChatGPT/OpenAI).

In the **third paragraph of Chapter Two**, a methodology for assessing the investment policy of the resort complexes along the Bulgarian Black Sea coast is developed, through which the propositions of the conceptual model are transformed into an applicable analytical framework. The methodology ensures the systematic collection and organization of information, analysis of asset structure, investment intensity, capital structure, and operational efficiency, comprehensive assessment and integrated interpretation of the results, and determination of the current phase of the investment policy.

Based on the combination of investment intensity and financial and operational sustainability, four phases are identified: **“Recovery,” “Stabilization,” “Maintenance,” and “Modernization.”** Each phase characterizes a different state of the investment policy and implies corresponding investment priorities and management actions. The methodological sequence for determining the phases of the investment policy is presented in **Fig. 2**.

The methodology enables the results from the individual analytical areas to be interpreted in an integrated manner. Thus, the assessment is not limited to the level of investment activity but also takes into account its relationship with the structure of assets and capital and the operational efficiency achieved. The identified current phase serves as a diagnostic basis for formulating investment priorities and management decisions aligned with the condition of the object under study.

The developed methodological framework provides a basis for monitoring the dynamics of the investment policy and identifying transitions between the individual phases. Its practical applicability was tested through an empirical application to **“St. St. Constantine and Helena Holding” AD** for the period **2019–2025**, presented in the following paragraph.

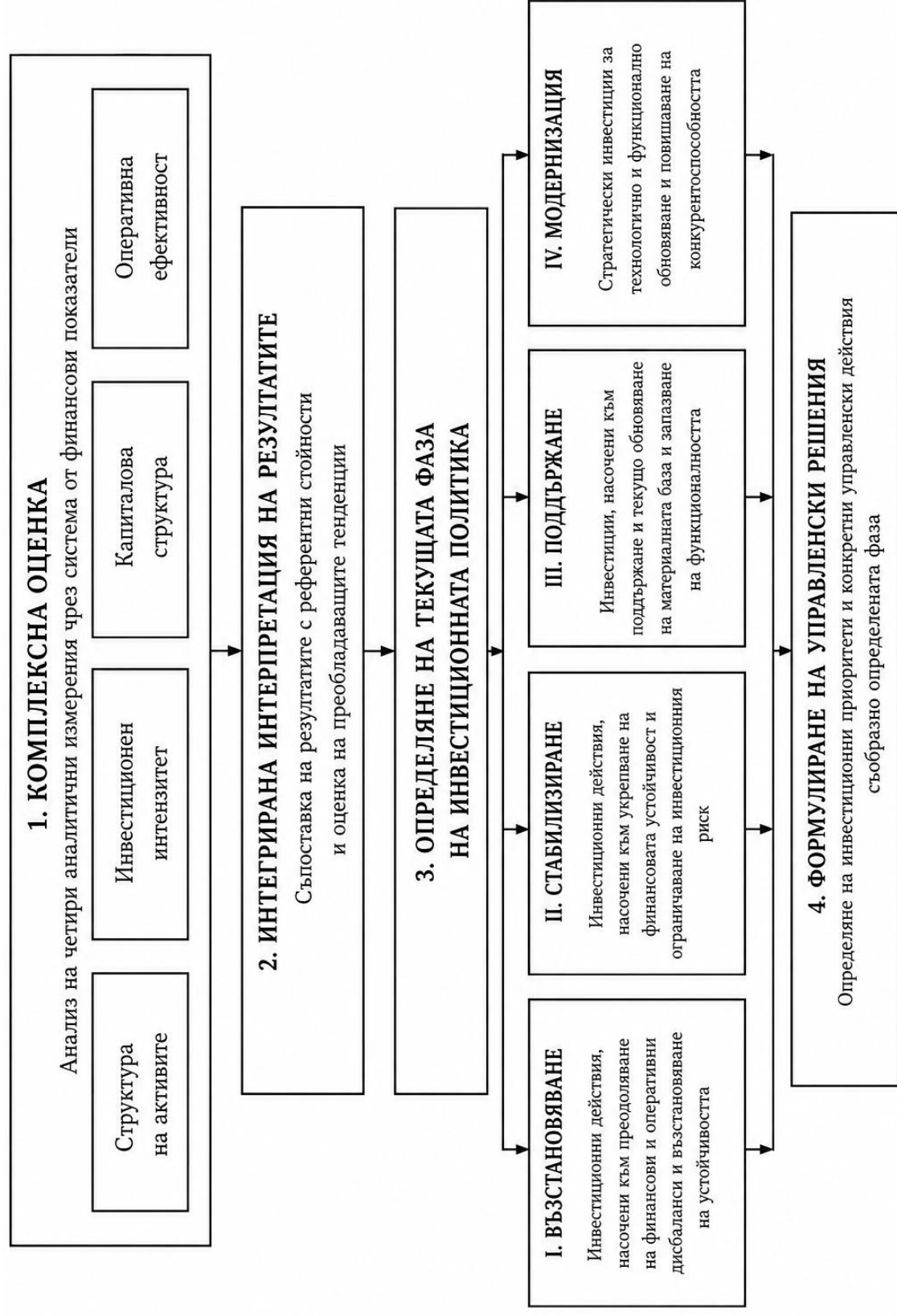


Fig. 2. Methodological Framework for Determining the Phases of Investment Policy

Source: Fig. 11 of the dissertation. Developed by the author with the assistance of AI (ChatGPT/OpenAI).

In the **fourth paragraph of Chapter Two**, the developed methodology for assessing investment policy was tested through an empirical application to “**St. St. Constantine and Helena Holding**” AD for the period **2019–2025**. The analysis covers the structure and dynamics of assets, investment intensity, capital structure, financial sustainability, operational efficiency, and returns, with the results from the individual analytical areas being interpreted in an integrated manner.

The empirical application establishes the preservation of the company’s long-term investment orientation despite significant fluctuations in its financial and economic performance. This dynamic is particularly evident in the indicators of operational efficiency and returns, the key values of which are summarized in **Table 2**.

Table 2

Key indicators of operational efficiency and returns of “St. St. Constantine and Helena Holding” AD for the period 2019–2025

Year	EBITDA, BGN thousand	EBITDA margin	ROA	ROE
2019	3,649	14.9%	0.34%	1.23%
2020	(637)	–4.7%	–2.79%	–9.80%
2021	4,712	19.9%	1.07%	3.62%
2022	19	0.1%	–2.05%	–7.88%
2023	619	1.7%	–1.66%	–7.08%
2024	2,127	6.3%	–0.69%	–1.92%
2025	8,635	21.2%	3.66%	8.87%

Source: Compiled based on data from Tables 42–44 of the dissertation and the consolidated annual financial statements of “St. St. Constantine and Helena Holding” AD for the period 2019–2025; author’s calculations.

The data in **Table 2** show significant fluctuations in operational efficiency and returns over the period under review. Following the negative EBITDA and return indicators in 2020, a recovery was observed in 2021, followed by a renewed weakening of financial and operational performance in 2022–2024. In 2025, a

substantial improvement was recorded: EBITDA reached **BGN 8,635 thousand**, the EBITDA margin **21.2%**, ROA **3.66%**, and ROE **8.87%**.

Comparing these results with investment activity and the structure of assets and capital shows that maintaining high investment intensity does not automatically translate into short-term operational efficiency and returns. This confirms the need for investment policy to be assessed comprehensively through the interrelationship between investment activity, financial sustainability, operational efficiency, and achieved returns.

The integrated interpretation of the results makes it possible to determine the phase of the investment policy in each year of the analyzed period and to trace its dynamics. The empirical application confirms the practical applicability of the developed methodology for the comprehensive assessment and phase-based diagnosis of investment policy and provides an analytical basis for developing the **phase model with an adaptive mechanism for its improvement**.

CHAPTER THREE

OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVING THE INVESTMENT POLICY OF RESORT COMPLEXES ALONG THE BULGARIAN BLACK SEA COAST

Chapter Three of the dissertation focuses on developing opportunities and specific proposals for improving the investment policy of resort complexes along the Bulgarian Black Sea coast. The study builds upon the results of the analysis conducted in Chapter Two and the empirical application of the developed methodology, successively examining international best practices, the spatial-planning and investment characteristics and opportunities for sustainable development of resort complexes, as well as the author's models for adaptive management of investment policy and integration of tourism and residential functions. In this way, the financial and economic, spatial, infrastructural, and managerial dimensions of the investment process are brought together into a system of practically applicable solutions for its improvement.

First paragraph of Chapter Three

In the first paragraph of Chapter Three, international best practices for improving the investment policy of resort complexes are examined, with emphasis placed on the possibilities for adapting them to the conditions of the resort complex **“St. St. Constantine and Helena.”** The analysis is based on the understanding that the effectiveness of investment policy depends not only on the size and structure of capital investments but also on their strategic orientation, spatial organization, functional interconnectivity, their ability to limit seasonality, and their contribution to the sustainable development of the resort territory.

Practices from **Spain, Greece, Montenegro, Croatia, and Portugal** are examined, demonstrating different models for integrating tourism and residential functions, phased implementation of investments, coordination with spatial planning and infrastructure capacity, and cooperation between the public and private sectors. The comparative analysis shows that the sustainable development of resort complexes is based not on the dominance of a single function but on the balanced interaction between tourism, residential, infrastructure, and public components within an integrated development model.

Based on international experience, the following main directions for improving investment policy are identified: integration of tourism and residential functions into a unified investment concept; phased implementation of investment projects in accordance with financial and infrastructure capacity; diversification of the investment portfolio through year-round tourism products; coordination of investments in technical, transport, social, and public infrastructure; monitoring and control of spatial development; and strengthening institutional coordination between the public and private sectors.

Second paragraph of Chapter Three

In the second paragraph of Chapter Three, the spatial-planning and investment structure of the resort complex **“St. St. Constantine and Helena”** is examined, and the impact of alternative spatial-planning scenarios on investment policy is assessed. The analysis covers the ownership structure, the functional designation of the territory, and the investments implemented, establishing the formation of a multifunctional tourism-residential structure and the need for investment dynamics to be coordinated with the infrastructure capacity and spatial-planning constraints of the resort territory.

A predominant share of private ownership and a strengthening of the residential component of investment activity have been established, which expands the opportunities for diversification of the investment portfolio but, at the same time, increases the requirements for technical, transport, and social infrastructure and for coordination between public and private investment interests. The analysis of projects implemented during the period **2018–2022** confirms this trend, showing the predominance of the residential segment both in terms of the number of investments and total gross floor area (Table 3).

Table 3

Structure of investments in hotel and residential properties in the resort complex “St. St. Constantine and Helena” for the period 2018–2022

Type	Total gross floor area (sq. m)	Number of investments for the period
Hotels	71,000	6
Residential properties	150,000	17

Source: Table 53 of the dissertation. Based on data provided by “St. St. Constantine and Helena Holding” AD as of November 11, 2023.

The data show that out of a total of **23 investments** during the period, **17 were in residential properties and 6 in hotel properties**, with residential investments also predominating in terms of total gross floor area—**150 thousand sq. m compared with 71 thousand sq. m for hotel properties**. The identified ratio represents one of the indicators of the ongoing tourism-residential transformation, whereby the traditional tourism specialization is gradually being complemented by a residential function. This creates prerequisites for diversifying investment policy but, at the same time, increases the requirements for infrastructure capacity and coordination between investment and spatial development.

The results of **Survey No. 1 and Survey No. 2** complement the spatial-planning analysis and show a high degree of consistency between the assessments of owners and residents of residential properties and representatives of local businesses regarding the need for balanced tourism-residential development, infrastructure

provision, and coordination of the spatial structure with investment policy. It has been established that the positive effects of expanding the residential function depend on the parallel development of technical, transport, and social infrastructure and on the consistent strategic management of the investment process.

On this basis, two alternative spatial-planning scenarios were assessed: **maintaining the status of a resort complex** and **incorporating the territory as a neighborhood of the city of Varna**. The first provides a higher degree of protection for tourism specialization, the natural environment, and spatial balance, but limits investment flexibility, while the second creates prerequisites for accelerating investment and construction activity and for more intensive use of the territory, but increases the risk of functional imbalance and weakening of tourism specialization.

The comparative assessment of the two scenarios provides a basis for an author-developed third, balanced approach—an **integrated tourism-residential model while maintaining the resort status**. The model combines the preservation of the tourism identity with controlled development of the residential function, aimed at stimulating year-round economic activity, more efficient use of existing infrastructure, and limiting seasonality. The development of the residential function is made dependent on spatial capacity, infrastructure provision, and the maintenance of a functional balance between tourism, residential, and public activities.

Third paragraph of Chapter Three

In the third paragraph of Chapter Three, an author-developed **phase model with an adaptive mechanism** for the diagnosis, management, and improvement of the investment policy of resort complexes along the Bulgarian Black Sea coast is developed. The model builds upon the developed methodology and the results of its empirical application, integrating investment intensity, financial sustainability, and the effectiveness of investment policy into a unified system for assessment and management. Phase-based diagnosis is not based on isolated changes in individual indicators but on their comprehensive interpretation, which makes it possible to account for the dynamic nature of the investment process and the impact of internal and external environmental factors.

The model identifies four investment phases—**“Recovery,” “Stabilization,” “Maintenance,” and “Modernization”**—characterizing different combinations of investment activity, financial sustainability, and achieved efficiency. The phases are not regarded as a mandatory linear sequence but as diagnostic states between which transitions are possible depending on changes in internal indicators and external environmental conditions. On this basis, the model links the diagnosis of the current

state with the selection of management decisions, subsequent monitoring, and feedback, through which the adaptability of investment policy is ensured.

The logical structure and sequence of the main analytical and management stages of the developed phase model are presented in **Fig. 3**.

The quantitative basis of the adaptive mechanism is provided by the developed **Investment Policy Realization Coefficient (IPRC)**, which integrates the assessments of investment intensity, financial sustainability, and the effectiveness of investment policy into a single diagnostic measure. For each analyzed period, its value is determined according to **Formula (1)**:

(1)

Source: Formula (3.11) of the dissertation; author's calculations.

where **[coefficient]** is the Investment Policy Realization Coefficient for period t ; **[component]** is the integral assessment of investment intensity; **[component]** is the integral assessment of financial sustainability; **[component]** is the integral assessment of the effectiveness of investment policy; and **[weights]** are the relative weights of the respective components, the sum of which equals one.

The formation of the integral components requires prior normalization of the included indicators on a dimensionless **[0;1] scale**, ensuring their comparability and subsequent aggregation. Higher values of the integral assessments correspond to a more favorable condition of the respective component of investment policy.

By comparing the value of the **Investment Policy Realization Coefficient (IPRC)** with the diagnostic thresholds **T1, T2, and T3**, the current investment phase is determined—**“Recovery,” “Stabilization,” “Maintenance,” or “Modernization”**—which serves as the basis for selecting the corresponding management strategies, decisions, and actions.

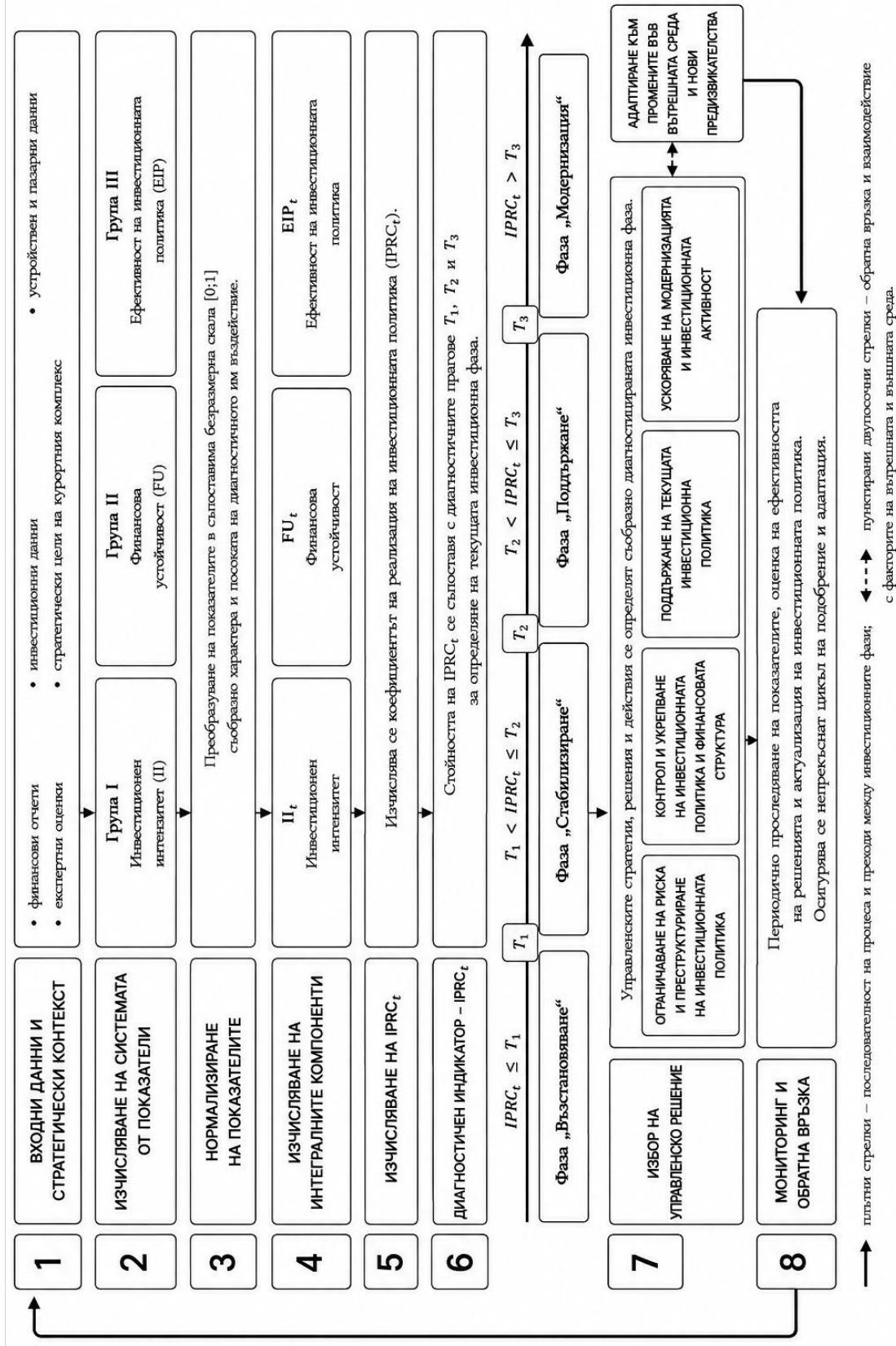


Fig. 3. Phased Model with an Adaptive Mechanism for the Diagnosis, Management, and Improvement of the Investment Policy of Resort Complexes along the Bulgarian Black Sea Coast

Source: Fig. 16 of the dissertation. Developed by the author with the assistance of AI (ChatGPT/OpenAI).

In the fourth paragraph of Chapter Three, an author-developed integrated model for improving the investment policy of resort complexes along the Bulgarian Black Sea coast under conditions of tourism-residential transformation is developed. The model is based on the integrated comparison of four evidence-based components—**the financial and economic empirical application, Survey No. 1, Survey No. 2, and Expert Survey No. 3**—through which the process under study is assessed from financial and economic, social, business, and strategic-managerial perspectives.

The results indicate a high degree of consistency regarding the positive potential of the integrated tourism-residential model. It has been established that an increase in actual permanent and long-term residence expands the year-round consumer base and creates prerequisites for longer operation of service businesses, economic diversification, and more sustainable employment. At the same time, the positive effects do not arise automatically but depend on the alignment between investment activity, infrastructure capacity, spatial-planning parameters, environmental carrying capacity, and the quality of strategic and institutional management.

Empirical support for the identified relationships is provided by the results of **Survey No. 1**, according to which **81.6%** of property owners and residents assess positively the impact of integrating residential functions on the overall attractiveness of the resort complex, with **58.3%** indicating the highest degree of agreement (**Fig. 4**). The results support the understanding of tourism and residential functions as predominantly mutually complementary areas of development.

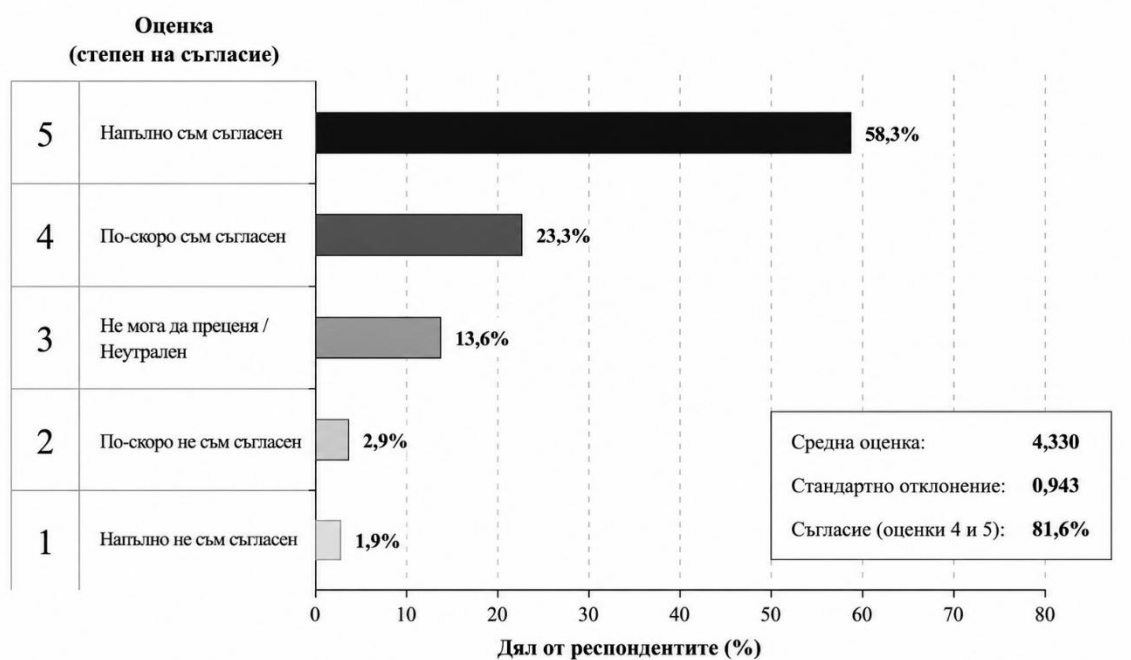


Fig. 4. The integration of residential functions enhances the overall attractiveness of the resort complex.

Source: Fig. 20 of the dissertation; Survey No. 1, Question B1.2; $n = 103$; author's elaboration.

From the perspective of the local business community, this relationship is confirmed by the results of **Survey No. 2**. Overall, **84.3%** of business representatives provide positive assessments (ratings 4 and 5) of the statement that the presence of a permanent and long-term resident population is a key factor that would motivate seasonal establishments to switch to year-round operation, with **72.5%** indicating the highest degree of agreement (**Fig. 5**). The result confirms the role of permanent and long-term residence in generating more sustainable off-season demand and expanding opportunities for year-round operation of local businesses.

The integrated analysis makes it possible to distinguish **three interrelated groups of factors**—territorial and urban-planning, infrastructural, and environmental factors; socio-economic factors; and institutional and managerial factors—the interaction of which determines the opportunities and constraints for the sustainable development of resort complexes. On this basis, investment policy is considered as a coordinated process that combines investment decisions with spatial planning, infrastructure development, public interests, and systematic monitoring of the changes taking place.

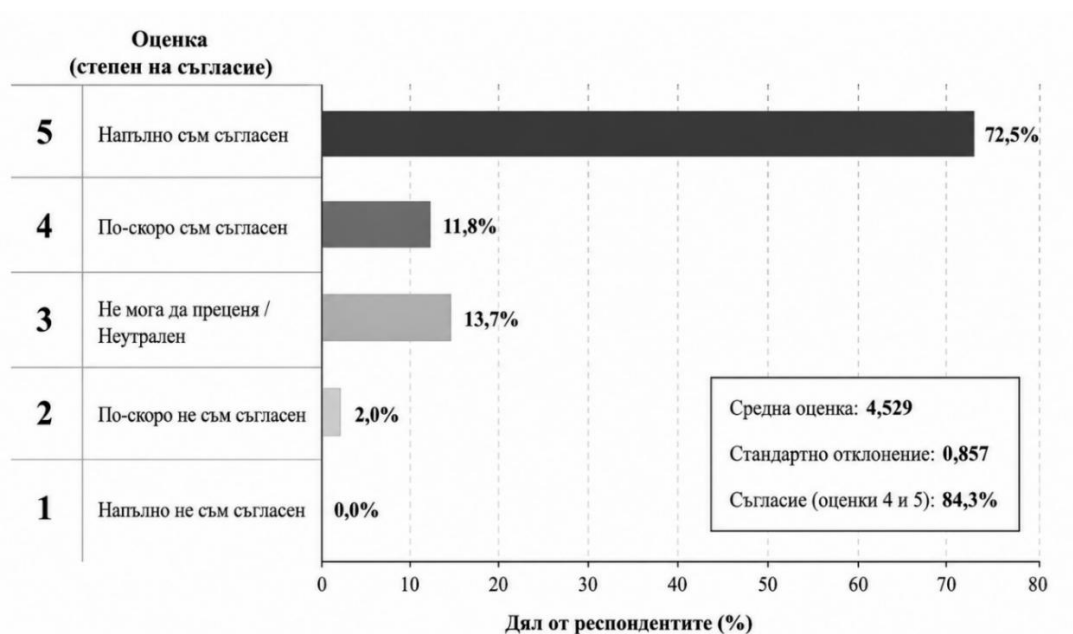
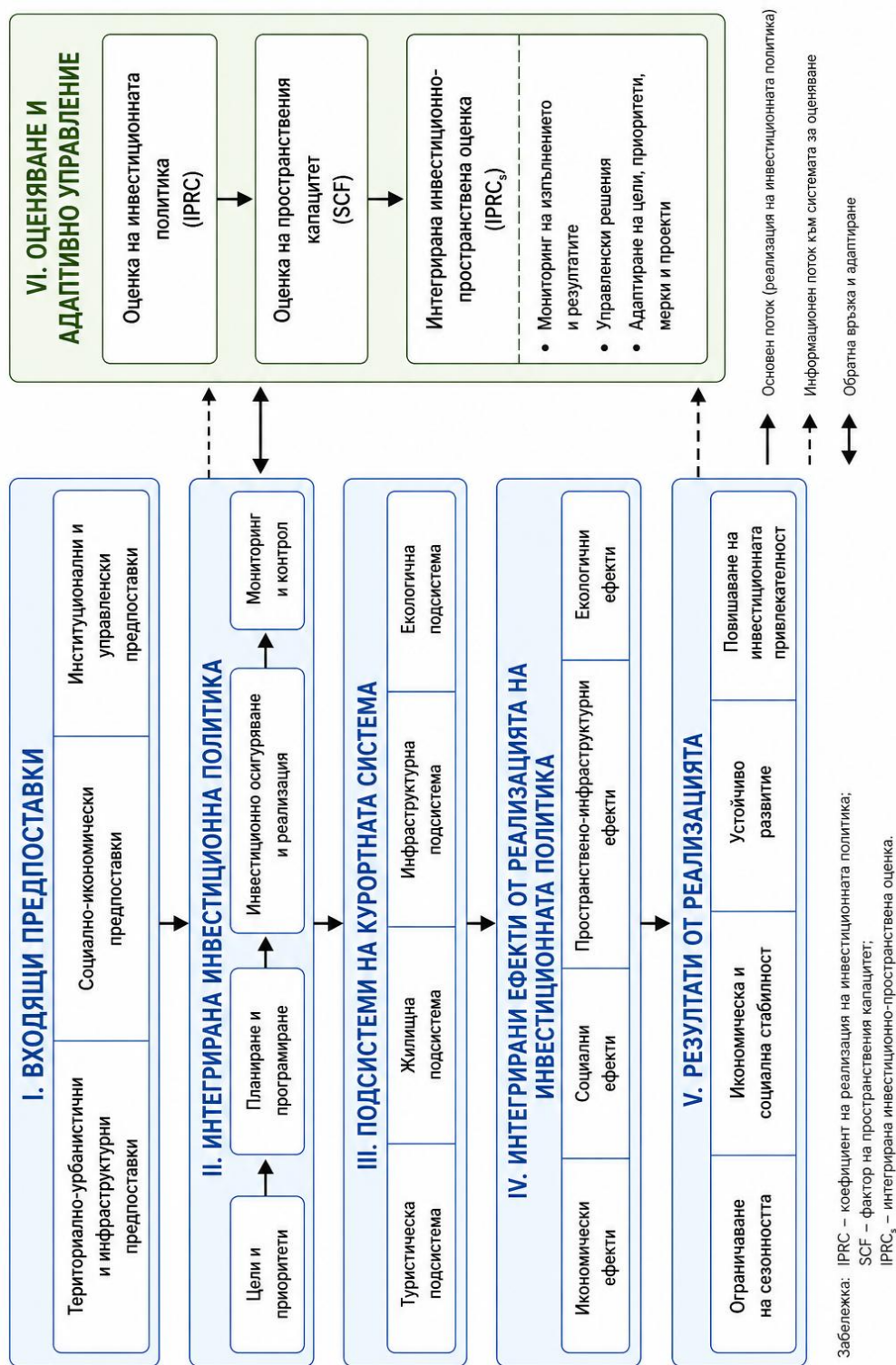


Fig. 5. The presence of a permanent and long-term resident population is a key factor that would motivate seasonal establishments to switch to year-round operation.

Source: Fig. 21 of the dissertation; Survey No. 2, Question B2.2; $n = 51$; author's elaboration.

The identified relationships provide a basis for developing an **author-developed integrated model for improving investment policy**, which brings together the main factors and mechanisms related to its formulation, implementation, assessment, and adaptation. The model incorporates the **input prerequisites, investment policy, the main subsystems of the resort complex, the effects of implemented investments, and the assessment and feedback mechanism**, through which investment priorities and management decisions are adapted to changes in the internal and external environment (**Fig. 6**).



Фиг. 6. Интегриран модел за усъвършенстване на инвестиционната политика на курортните комплекси по Българското Черноморие в условията на туристико-жилищна трансформация

A key element of the model is the independent assessment and adaptive management module, in which the Investment Policy Realization Coefficient (IPRC) is complemented by the Spatial Capacity Factor (SCF). While the IPRC characterizes

the degree of implementation of investment policy based on the system of financial and investment indicators, the SCF serves as a spatial corrective factor that takes into account the spatial planning characteristics, transport accessibility, the capacity of engineering and social infrastructure, the quality of public spaces, environmental carrying capacity, and the functional balance of the resort territory.

The joint application of the two indicators forms an integrated investment-spatial assessment (IPRC_s), through which the degree of implementation of investment policy is assessed in relation to the spatial opportunities and constraints of the specific resort complex:

$$(2) \quad \text{IPRC}_s = \text{IPRC} \cdot \text{SCF}$$

Source: Formula (3.29) of the doctoral dissertation; author's elaboration.

When the SCF value is close to unity, a high degree of correspondence between investment activity and the capacity of the territory is assumed, whereas lower values indicate the increasing significance of spatial, infrastructural, functional, or environmental constraints. Thus, the degree of implementation of investment policy is not interpreted independently, but in relation to the conditions under which it has been achieved.

The resulting integrated assessment is incorporated into the monitoring and feedback mechanism. When deviations from investment objectives or inconsistencies with the capacity of the territory are identified, investment priorities, measures, and projects are updated. In this way, the improvement of investment policy becomes a continuous process of planning, implementation, assessment, and adaptation aimed at enhancing its effectiveness, sustainability, and spatial coherence.

CONCLUSION

The dissertation research makes it possible to conclude that the development of resort complexes along the Bulgarian Black Sea coast is taking place under conditions of significant functional and investment changes associated with the expansion of the residential function, changing patterns of habitation, and increasing requirements for infrastructural, spatial, and environmental sustainability. These processes are gradually transforming the traditional seasonal operating model of some resort

complexes and create a need for investment policy to be considered as an integrated mechanism for managing their long-term development.

As a result of the theoretical and methodological analysis, the understanding of the resort complex as an integrated socio-economic and investment system has been substantiated, within which investment decisions should be coordinated with tourism specialization, spatial development, infrastructure capacity, and the interests of key stakeholders. On this basis, a conceptual model and methodology for assessing investment policy have been developed, enabling its comprehensive examination and phased diagnosis. The application of the methodology to “St. St. Constantine and Helena Holding” AD for the period 2019–2025 confirms its practical applicability and demonstrates that high investment intensity does not automatically translate into improved operational efficiency and returns, thereby substantiating the need for a comprehensive assessment of investment policy.

The results of the survey and expert study provide complementary empirical support for the positive potential of tourism-residential transformation. It has been established that the formation of a permanent and long-term resident population creates conditions for expanding year-round consumption, developing service activities, diversifying the local economy, and reducing seasonality. At the same time, these effects do not arise automatically from the expansion of the residential function but depend on infrastructure provision, spatial planning, environmental constraints, and effective institutional coordination.

The spatial planning and investment analysis carried out shows that the development prospects of resort complexes should be associated neither with the preservation of a purely seasonal tourism model nor with the uncontrolled expansion of the residential function. A more balanced alternative is the integrated tourism-residential model, in which permanent and long-term habitation complements the tourism function and supports the year-round vitality of the territory without displacing its primary tourism specialization.

The developed phased model with an adaptive mechanism and the integrated model for improving investment policy transform the findings into a practically applicable framework for diagnosing, managing, assessing, and adapting investment decisions. Through the joint use of the Investment Policy Realization Coefficient (IPRC) and the Spatial Capacity Factor (SCF), the degree of implementation of

investment policy is linked to the opportunities and constraints of the specific resort territory. In this way, investment policy is considered simultaneously as an economic, spatial, and managerial process in which investment objectives and outcomes are assessed in relation to the permissible level of territorial load and the sustainability of the environment.

The comparison of the results obtained at the different stages of the research provides grounds for considering the main research hypothesis to be supported within the adopted methodological framework and the empirical data used. The results also support all four working hypotheses: a positive relationship was identified between the actual occupancy of residential properties and off-season economic activity; the role of the permanent population in generating demand for basic and service activities was confirmed; empirical support was obtained for the relationship between a mixed tourism-residential structure and the reduction of seasonality; and the need for integrated investment, spatial, infrastructural, and institutional management was substantiated. At the same time, the identified relationships should be interpreted within the limitations of the data used and should not be regarded as unequivocally established causal relationships.

The findings support the thesis advanced in the dissertation that tourism-residential transformation is emerging as a development trend in some resort complexes along the Bulgarian Black Sea coast, the effects of which can be guided through a consistent and integrated investment policy. In this context, the improvement of investment policy should not be equated with maximizing investment activity, but rather with achieving a dynamic alignment between investment objectives and resources, tourism specialization, functional balance, and the infrastructural, spatial, and environmental capacity of the resort territory.

Prospects for further research are associated with applying the developed methodology and models to other resort complexes along the Bulgarian Black Sea coast, expanding the temporal and informational scope of the analysis, and empirically calibrating the Spatial Capacity Factor (SCF) and its interaction with the Investment Policy Realization Coefficient (IPRC). This would make it possible to assess the applicability of the proposed framework to different types of resort territories and to deepen the investigation of opportunities for balanced and year-round development.

In conclusion, the research demonstrates that the sustainable development of resort complexes along the Bulgarian Black Sea coast requires investment policy to be formulated and implemented as an integrated and adaptive process that takes into account the economic, spatial, infrastructural, social, and environmental characteristics of the specific territory. Under conditions of tourism-residential transformation, its improvement requires a balanced combination of the tourism and residential functions while preserving tourism specialization and taking spatial capacity into account. Such an approach creates conditions for investment development to contribute to reducing seasonality, enhancing competitiveness, and achieving more sustainable year-round functioning of resort complexes.

SUMMARY OF THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE DISSERTATION

The following scientific-theoretical, methodological, and practical contributions can be identified in the dissertation:

I. Scientific-theoretical and methodological contributions

1. The theoretical understanding of the resort complex as a territorially distinct and functionally integrated socio-economic and investment system with a predominant resort-tourism function has been further developed. An original definition has been proposed and a conceptual model has been developed revealing the interrelationships among its main structural subsystems and the investment system. The model substantiates the systemic nature of investment policy and its role as an integrating mechanism for the strategic management of resort complex development.
2. A conceptual model for assessing the investment policy of resort complexes along the Bulgarian Black Sea coast has been developed, through which investment policy is considered comprehensively in relation to economic performance, investment activity, infrastructural and spatial development, social and environmental effects, and the competitiveness of the resort complex. On this basis, an analytical framework for the systematic study and assessment of investment development has been established.
3. A methodology for the comprehensive assessment of the investment policy of resort complexes has been developed and tested, based on a system of interrelated indicators and criteria enabling the identification of the state, dynamics, and problem areas of investment policy. The practical applicability

of the methodology was tested through its application to “St. St. Constantine and Helena Holding” AD and the comparison of the resulting financial and economic outcomes with the empirical assessments of the main stakeholders.

II. Practical contributions

4. Key relationships in the process of tourism-residential transformation of resort complexes along the Bulgarian Black Sea coast have been identified and empirically substantiated, relating to the influence of permanent and long-term habitation on reducing seasonality, generating year-round demand, diversifying economic activities, and creating the need for coordinated infrastructural, spatial, and environmental development. The conclusions are substantiated through the integration of the results from the financial and economic application, the two surveys, and the expert study.
5. An integrated model for improving the investment policy of resort complexes along the Bulgarian Black Sea coast under conditions of tourism-residential transformation has been developed, through which the strategic directions and mechanisms for balancing tourism, residential, investment, infrastructural, social, and environmental functions have been systematized. The model provides a practical basis for directing investment decisions toward year-round operation, reducing seasonality, and enhancing the sustainability and competitiveness of resort complexes while taking into account the constraints of spatial capacity.

I. PUBLICATIONS RELATED TO THE DISSERTATION

Articles

1. Ivanov, S. (2023). Identifying Possible Factors Which Affect the Investment Policy of Some Bulgarian Black Sea Coast Resorts. *Economics and Computer Science*, Issue 1, ISSN 2367-7791.
2. Ivanov, S. (2023). Identifying Potential Advantages and Disadvantages of the Presence of Residential Construction in the Bulgarian Black Sea Resort Saint Saint Constantine and Helena. *International Journal of Advanced*

Conference papers

1. Иванов, С. (2022). Фактори, влияещи върху инвестиционната политика на курортите по Българското Черноморие. Международна научно-практическа конференция „Строително предприемачество и недвижима собственост“, Икономически университет – Варна, бр. 1, с. 210-219