

## SUSTAINABLE TOURISM – A DYNAMICS METHOD FOR DESTINATION PLANNING

### Community approach: A case from south of Albania

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#### **Abstract**

*The main aim of this paper is directed in exploring alternative and sustainable tourism not only as one of the main sector of Albanian Economy, but as a planning tool from the community approach view. All the master plans, dynamics processes that involve the local and national sustainable development must be a very good combine of community, development and tourism. This paper combine and include firstly, a detail analysed of an case from south of the country and, secondly, an analyse based on questionnaires.*

**Keywords:** Sustainable development, tourism, community.

**JEL Classification:** H70, L83, Q01

#### **1. Introduction**

One of the main results of studying, researching, and developing tourism as a potential sector in Albanian is that “*Albania is recognized as a tourism destination at the Mediterranean coast and has a competitive position in the international tourism market*” (Hall; 1999). Sustainability and awareness of environmental issues are major part of the every study and tourism development strategy in Albania. There are a lot of reasons explaining this strategy, and how the management must be driven in the way of sustainability.

In Albania, efforts to make tourism a more sustainable option and planning tools, also, must focus on a community development approach. But an analysis of differences between the traditional community economic development and the community tourism development, in the case of Albania, clearly shows that tourism continues to be driven by levels of the government rather than community interests.

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## **2. Literature Review**

### **Understanding the concept**

The concept<sup>1</sup> of sustainable development—development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generation to meet their own needs—in the tourism industry is provided by Holden, 2000. In respect of sustainability the whole tourism sector must be developed and managed in a way that it does not damage the natural and socio-cultural environment and this is the responsibility of the world-wide tourism industry. (Holden, 2000)

The term “sustainable development” gained greater attention as well, following the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), June 1992. At the Earth Summit, a programme for promoting sustainable development throughout the world, known as Agenda 21, this term was adapted by participant countries. Agenda 21 is an action plan, laying out the basic principles required to progress towards sustainability at the local level. It envisages national sustainable development strategies involving local communities and people in a bottom-up approach to development rather than the top-down approach, which has typically characterised national development. Sustainable development is not a fixed state of harmony, but rather a process of change in which the exploitation of resources, the direction of the investments, the orientation of technological development, and institutional change are made consistent with future as well as present needs (WCED, 1987:9).

### **Literature debate**

The United Nation Environmental Program (UNEP) slightly expanding on this issue and adopted a definition as follow: “Sustainable development is improving the quality of human life while living within the carrying capacity of supporting ecosystem....if an activity is sustainable, for all practical purposes it can continue forever.”

In the relation to the development of tourism, the World Tourism Organisation (WTO) defined sustainable development as that “which meets the need of present tourist and host regions while protecting and enhancing opportunity for the future?” It is envisaged as leading to the management of all resources in such way that economic, social and aesthetic needs can be fulfilled while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, biological diversity and life support systems (Holden et al;2000,pp161-182).

Furthermore, Butler (1998:27) argues that the tourism industry has adopted sustainability for three reasons, economics, public relations, and marketing. Tourism must offer products that are in harmony with the local environment, community

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<sup>1</sup> Introduced by the World Commission on Environment and Development in the Brundtland Report in 1987.

attitude and cultures; so that, this becomes the permanent beneficiaries and not the victim of tourist development.

Five main goals of sustainable tourism are the following:

- To develop greater awareness and understanding of the significant contributions that tourism can make to the environment and economy;
- To promote equity and development;
- To improve quality of life of the host community;
- To provide a high quality of experience for the visitor; and
- To maintain the quality of the environment on which the foregoing objectives depend

### 3. Introduction in the Case

#### **Achieving Sustainable Development using Tourism**

From 1992, with the favourable political conditions, Albania has become a new tourist destination in Europe providing a unique opportunity for the development of tourism in full harmony with the natural and human environment. The country's nature and ecology allow for the possible development of all kinds of tourism.

Albania has begun to develop a framework for addressing the environmental problems that have arisen during the last decade. Public education about conservation, pollution controls, and recycling is limited. And the government has focused most of its resources on economic growth rather than environmental concerns. However, in the early 1990s several environmental interest groups were established, and the government created a committee to educate the public and offer solutions to environmental problems.

One of the priorities of the environmental strategies and National Environmental Action Plan (NEAP) has been the establishment of the respective legal framework, an important instrument for the application of the environmental policies in the country. In the period 1997-1998, major legal documents such as the Constitution and the amendments of the law on 'Environment Protection' were developed. Specific articles of the Constitution, sanction the aims of the state for a "... healthy and ecologically suitable environment for the present and future generation, a rational exploitation of forest, waters, pastures as well as other natural resources, based on the sustainable development principle".

Joining the international community in its concern over the degradation of the environment, Albania is party to international agreements (*Agenda 21*) concerning biodiversity, climate change, and wetlands. According to the Ministry of Environment, the urban-water-supply system is plagued by problems. Infiltration from parallel sewer lines causes periodic cross contaminations of the water supply.

*Albania has a basic potential for tourism.* It has an attractive coastline, cultural inheritance, regions which are not polluted through all the country. There are long sand beaches and it has a hot summer with sun shining days. Mountain region

offers greater possibilities for niche tourism activities. So many national parks and other natural sources offer ecological experiences (see appendix 2). New hotels built recently offer good accommodating conditions according to the best international standards. Albania has a Mediterranean climate that changes from coastal zones to northern and eastern zones. Summer is hot and the average temperature is over 39°C. During the winter, the mountain zone is covered by snow. Albania has more than two hundred sunny days after Spain. Although, according to the Ministry of Tourism, there are identified two main zones—(i) coastal zone, along the Adriatic and Ionian sea, and (ii) Interior zone, along the mountains and lake—so-called “important zones for tourism”.

Albania currently is experiencing important political and social changes, namely Albanian land ownership of priority tourist development zones. To achieve long-term conservation management and land use in balance between public private of many competitive activities such as agriculture, fishing, tourism, housing and urbanisation phenomena, a system of planning needs to be carried out. New concepts and approaches will be implemented for the management of coastal areas.

The first steps are the most important ones. For this reason, the Government has organised the study of these zones to restitution the ex-owners. Some specific decisions and rules will be drawn up in order to protect the special protected areas, natural parks and monuments, zones with landscape and archaeological value. For this reason a legal network compiled a Law for “Priority Tourism Development Zones”, “The strategy of tourism development in Albania”, a Law for “Protection and Conservation of the Albanian Environment”, the “Law of Planning” (Ministry of Environment).

Both the former Communist government and new administrations have harvested timber in vast quantities (Hall, D; 2000). Albania reportedly has one of the highest rates of biodiversity loss in Europe. As a result, many forests are degraded, wildlife is threatened, and farms have taken over land once forested. The effects of past deforestation, livestock grazing, and flooding have contributed to a rate of soil erosion that exceeds the natural process of new soil production. The extraction of oil and minerals has also created environmental problems, contaminating air, soil, and groundwater, particularly in central Albania. Soil erosion is a serious concern in Albania. Human activity (e.g. dredging of the rivers for construction materials wood cutting, mismanagement of terraces, overgrazing) is accelerating the problems and producing severe consequences (MoE).

Albania’s varieties of wetlands, lagoons and large lakes also provide critical winter habitat for migratory birds. Some of the 30 percent of the European plant species and 42 percent of the European mammals can be found in the country. Grow of the Albanian environmental NGO community, are promising development to solve the problem. The creation and enlargement of the coastal, tourist and fishing ports as well as the industrial and commercial regions in the respective tourist zones are realized by the master plans of the development of the tourist zones.

Tourism activities in and around protected area can have both positive and negative impacts on local people and environment. Tourism can benefit a national park or other protected area by serving as a financing mechanism, with direct revenues from use fees and taxes used to protect biological resources and maintain natural areas. Intangible benefits can include increased awareness of the support for the purpose and role of protected areas by both local communities and tourists if the tourism is important to the local or national economy, it may encourage authorities to manage and maintain protected areas more effectively benefiting tourist, local economy and the environment.

*Albania now has an ideal opportunity to become one of the main Europe's leading Ecotourism Destinations*, with an image of a safe environment, unpolluted by the tourist. The unspoilt coasts, in particular, must be preserved: low building will be allowed, in general, of 1-2 storeys which blend well with the surrounding environment. The conception and compilation of the tourism development strategy and the policies that will be implemented for this purpose are aimed at realising long-term tourism in harmony with the environment.

### **The Social and Political changes and the restructuring of landscapes**

Because Albania remained isolated from the rest of Europe until the early 1990s, tourism in Albania was left totally undeveloped. During that period a very small number of foreigners entered Albania, even they were thoroughly screened by Albanian secret services and kept under strict surveillance. Tourism generally was considered as an evil capitalist notion. Seaside and lake resorts consisted of a small number of hotels that were used mainly for foreign communist leaders. The so-called Labourer's Holiday Camps that offered self contained accommodation for workers during summer time and were appointed by local party leaders, and specific designated areas with small villas used by Albania's party elite. At that time considering the limited number of holiday makers and the large amount of control on them the beaches were clean and relatively quiet.

Nowadays, this image is totally different. Although, there are not many foreign visitors, there are many Albanian Kosovo visitors that visit Albania especially seaside resorts of Durres, Shengjin and Vlora. According to INSTAT, 70.000 Albanian Kosovo visited Albania during summer months in 2004.

Private buildings mushroom every day and laws of urbanisation are being ignored all the time. Old "Labourer's Holiday Camps" have been bought by upcoming businessmen and have been turned into modern hotels. The old resort for Political Bureau members in Durres is turned into a NATO base staffed by Italian soldiers, and is still surrounded by a long fence topped with coils of barbed wire and dotted with towers manned by armed guards. On the side of the road sellers of towels, inflatable, sunglasses, bananas, umbrellas, sun block and cold drinks form an unbroken line that lies many miles long<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> The Guardian, Monday August 11, 2003.

About the same time a similar “intellectual café” opened in the old town of Gjirokaster, only a short distance from where a monumental statue of Enver Hoxha had stood till August 1991. In this café the visitor could sit and look out over the city below while listening to Wagner or Bach and drinking local wine. Inside the little café was an old bookcase crammed with selected works of once banned hidden, under Hoxha’s very nose, in the cellars of Gjirokastra<sup>3</sup> (Holland, J; 2000).

### Tourism Areas Management Plans

The management plans of every tourism area, or specific small destinations which will be used for tourism purposes will be drawn up following consultation with local communities and interest groups.

### **Aims and Objectives of Case Study**

This case has the principal aims which will consist as follows:

- To preserve the character and qualities of parks, areas, etc., for future generations in a sustainable way;
- To promote sustainable forms of agriculture, educational use and tourism in and around the tourism areas (small tourism destinations), and thereby contribute to the regional economy and the community;
- To unite the local communities and interest groups involved with the tourism areas behind a single programmed action.

The management plans offer an assessment of the principal cultural and environmental assets; identified the main external (regional) issues that threaten the areas and the internal issues that still hamper effective management. During the years, still the tourism areas in our country, include here national parks, the old archaeological site, or every tourism area, are still very much dependent on the service infrastructure (small car park, restaurants, shops, etc). The infrastructure urgently needs to be developed to meet the demands of existing visitor numbers, and to allow for future growth.

*Every management plan and its policies are aimed at meeting the economic and social needs of the local communities and promoting the sustainable use not only for tourism but also for sustaining the agriculture (farming and fishing), the academic research, the education.*

In particular they aim to ensure that the tourism area meets the following communication and management objectives:

#### ***Communication:***

- To inform visitors of the *cultural values* associated with parks, sites, areas, etc, and through this, the importance of Albanian *cultural heritage* to the history of the Mediterranean;

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<sup>3</sup> Vickers, M., Pettifer, J. (1999) From Anarchy to a Balkan Identity Albania.

- To inform visitors of *the environmental value* of the areas and what they can do to help improve their environment in general
- To promote the *conservation* of the areas.

### ***Management:***

- To *manage visitors* in the areas in a way that enhances their visit and uses those small destinations to their full potential;
- To manage the areas in *a sustainable way* which ensures the long-term preservation of its resources;
- To *ensure local community* participation and benefit in the tourism areas development procedure.

### **Management of Butrinti National Park - Applying Sustainable Alternative Types of Tourism in Butrint**

The promotion of sustainable eco-and archaeological tourism in Butrint National Park and in south of Albania is part of the World Bank pilot project. The attention of the CEU<sup>4</sup> was drawn to Butrint's potential as a focus for the development of sustainable tourism. Butrinti has been inhabited since prehistoric times. In 2000, Albania's government declared Butrinti's 11.2 square miles a national park, which draws thousands of visitors annually. BNP<sup>5</sup> has also been on the world Monument Watch list of 100 Most Endangered Sites since 1996.

Many cultural activities including the Miss Albania contest, concerts and festivals are regularly held at an ancient theatre on the site that seats 1,500. The World Bank has been implementing a park management project for Butrint to address institutional capacity issues in this sector.

The project aims at fostering the sustainable economic development of the regions, while improving conservation and vaporisation of the Albania natural resources and cultural heritage through an innovative approach. It supports the development of local capacity for community based eco-tourism and it promotes the regions as a major environmentally pristine and culturally rich tourist destination. The program aims at transforming the land use limitation of the Park into an opportunity to create new resources that represents the single most important tourist asset in the Saranda region. The challenge is to exploit this asset for the benefit of the local economy. The goal is not just to bring new visitors to Butrint but have the current visitors visit the site.

Important steps were taken in 2000 to safeguard the Butrint site and the beautiful surrounding countryside. However, it is vital that the BNP administration should be given the legal powers to prevent unplanned building and activities such as

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<sup>4</sup> Commission of the European Union.

<sup>5</sup> Butrinti National Park.

fishing with dynamite in the area of National Park. The Butrint Foundation is particularly concerned that the planned road from Konispoli, on the Greek border, to Saranda should not run up the eastern side of the plane of Butrint, where it would do irremediable damage to the environment, but should follow the route to the east along the Vaghalati Valley out of sight and sound of Butrint. The Management Plan contains an important section on the environment. The BNP area offers a variety of habitats and rare species of flora and fauna. The Butrint Foundation has recently obtained generous funding from the Oak Foundation, which will enable the continuation of the work on the Management Plan and make a start on environmental conservation in the area of National park.

Several national and international events are organized; visitors can attend and learn about culture, tradition and preservation efforts. Since the year 2000 a National folk festival named “Magic flute Concert” has been organized with participants from various regions of Albania. Tourist can experience the music, look at colourful costumes from different regions and learn about the rich history.

The international theatre festival ‘Butrinti 2000’ is an important international event that is held in Butrint on the stage of the 2400 year old theatre. Performances from theatre of mainly Mediterranean countries, in their respective languages, add a special flavour to the ancient city of Butrint. It certainly makes BNP memorable for visitors and destination of culture diversity among the best. *The Park is now the single most important tourist asset for the Saranda region and arguably for Albania as a whole.*

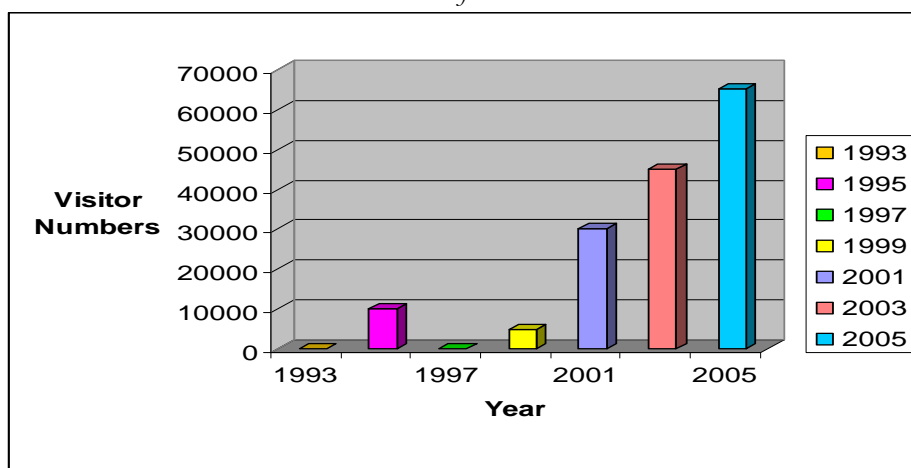
#### **4. Data Analyses of the Case Study**

The archaeological park of Butrint has been open to visitors since the early 1970s. The site was one of a number of designated places visited by:

- *Independent travelers* were rare, as special permissions were required to travel to the site, located close to the Greek border.
- *Organized tours of foreign visitors* were sent to Butrint and Saranda but were highly regulated in what they could do and see. Since the early 1990s and the end of the socialist period, the numbers of visitors to Butrint has increased significantly (see Table 1.1) and the visitor profile has changed.



Table 1.1.: The Evolution of Statistical Data in Butrinti Park



So, from the analyse it seems that the *main conclusions* here are:

- The improvement of Albania tourism in general, from qualifies and quantity point of view changed the strategic direction of the Government and Local Public. So, from the moment that tourism is considered one of the main sector of Albanian Economy for the further decades, tourism will lead the national and local economy;

- There are noted big challenges in evolution and dynamics of markets, number of visitors, the structure of expenses, the duration of a trip, and the main purposes of trip;

- The number of tourists, visitors that visit Butrint is growing and there is a tendency to grow further in the future;

- This is due to the presentation of Butrint in Region, improvement of Images of Albania in world, etc.

In order to answer the research question “*Has the use of a tourism strategy on the Albania been of benefit for sustainable development,*” 20 random quantitative sample surveys (see Appendix 1) were carried out on the sea side area.

The survey, in simplistic terms can be split into 5 sections:

- Respondents attitudes towards tourism development;
- The perceived economic benefits;
- The affect on land;
- The future prospects.

The survey contained only closed ended questions. This was done to aid data analysis. However, the data produced will have a frame of reference imposed on it where the participants has had to make a choice between a number of given options. Respondents are shown a series of statements and asked to indicate, using a scale, the extent to which they agree or disagree with question.

## Methodology

This paper is done through the questionnaires. The first stage of analysis consisted of using a percentage breakdown by answer to each question. This enabled the analysis of attitudes to specific aspects of tourism on the Albania, highlighting what the majority felt. This data was then categorised into three groups using the formula (% of population) to represent perceived environmental, social and economic effect of tourism.

In the survey the scoring method was done as follows:

- Agree;
- Unsure;
- Disagree.

## Introduction on Analyse

The development of tourism in Albania has begun since 1929 with creation of Royal Motor Tourist Club. In that club, the main goal was visiting for business purposes. The tourist offer in that time includes 13 rest areas and 27 hotels. The demand of foreign visitor in that time was in limits 1-1.5 percent of population number. The major part of tourist was from neighbour countries like Italy, Greece, Bulgaria, Rumania, etc.

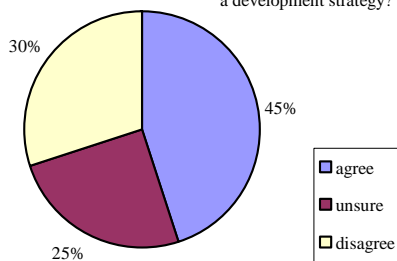
The expansion of tourist after 1997 was not for pleasure but it was grown up journey's activities. The growth of room's number compare with bed's number signify that the number of rooms is grown up about 10% and beds 30% (see the tables)

In summary, we can conclude that:

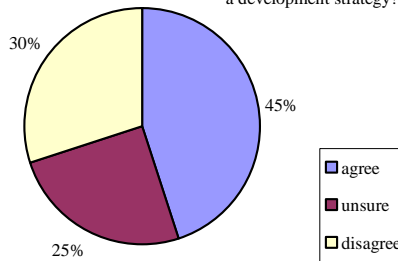
- Based at the above data, results a extension of hotel's number, specially at private sector, the ***demand is concentrated in activities regarding business;***
- Favourably geographical position, attractive beaches, lakes and mountains are typically for Albania;
- ***Primary destinations*** for tourists were Durres, Vlore, Shengjin, Pogradec and Shkodra, and for business tourists were Durres, Tirane, Vlore, Korce and Shkodra.

Result Presentation

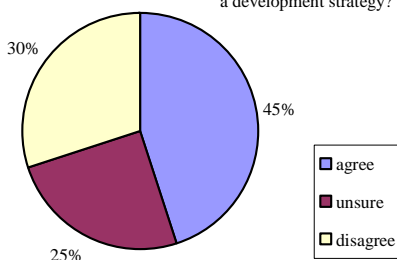
Are you in favour of the use of your land for tourism as a development strategy?



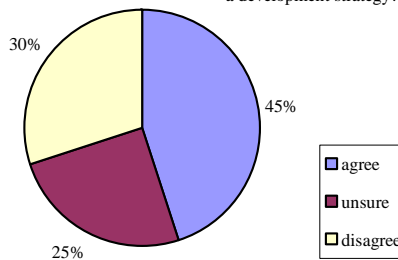
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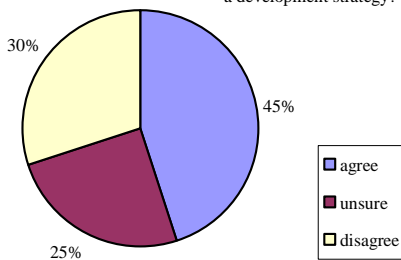
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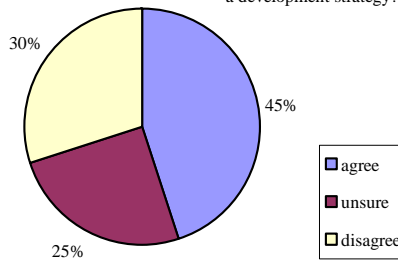
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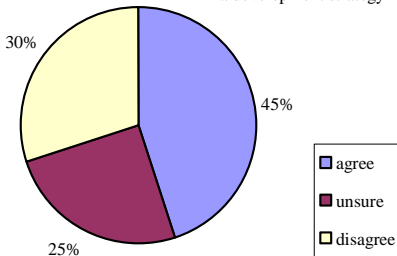
Are you in favour of the use of your land for tourism as a development strategy?



Are you in favour of the use of your land for tourism as a development strategy?

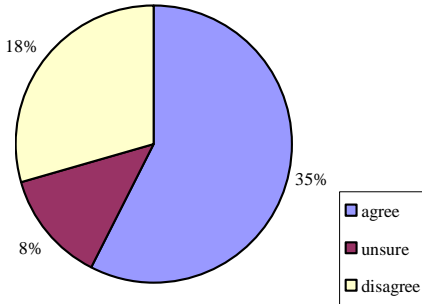


Are you in favour of the use of your land for tourism as a development strategy?

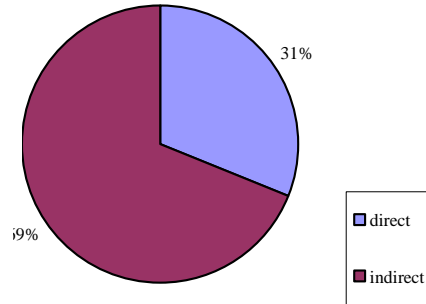


Result Presentation (continue)

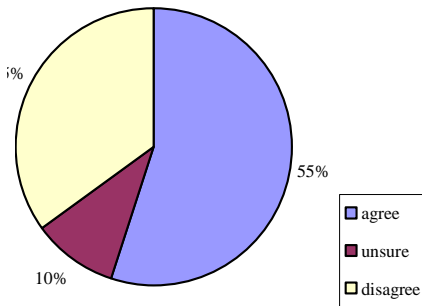
Tourism in the park has increased economic opportunity for you?



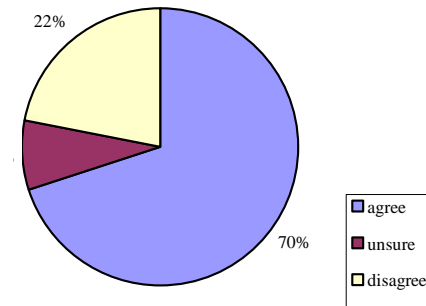
If yes is this from direct or indirect employment?



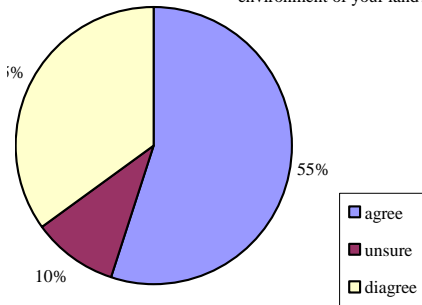
The increased economic income from tourism has increased social facilities?



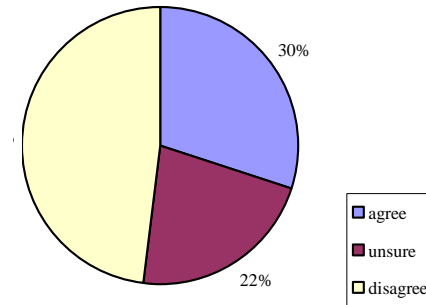
This is a good way of earning money from your land?



A large increase in tourism will badly affect the environment of your land?



Tourism has increased your land rights and ability?



## Discussion

Tourist inflow to Albania in years has been diverse: from 280 tourists in 1956 up to 40 thousand in 1995. But compared to the Mediterranean neighbour countries, the number of tourist coming to Albania is quite small. Thus, the number of tourists in 1960-1990 consisted only 1.6 percent of the tourists in Greece or Yugoslavia in 1989. In 1980, in Albania there were fewer tourists than tourist enterprises in Greece. After 1990, Albania saw an increase of the foreign tourists. In the centre of such movement, the same as before, were cities, what is linked with the fact that the cities are those which can fulfil the needs and demands of tourists.

At present, the tourism sector is one of the priorities for development of the country, from which is expected a profit of about 420 million U.S. dollars per year, or about 15 percent of GPD. One of the main characteristics of the market sector in the field of tourism services (restaurant, hotels) in our country is the strategic importance given by the government through the different programs.. This is for the fact that development of the tourism service affects the increase of GDP as an promotion for development of other industries, which are linked and contribute to its development.

### *a.: Ecotourism in Albania - Bane or Benefit?*

Ecotourism offers such alternative sources of income to local people, as developers or through employment. In Albania, there are small enterprises run by local people that are the most typical ecotourism operators. There is no policy of heavy taxation and compulsory damage insurance that developers would have to pay for each tourism development site. This is considered as favourable, at the moment, because it gives small ecotourism developers *a clear advantage* compared to large-scale local and international mass tourism investors. It is important that proper environmental impact assessments are done and taken seriously, and to help traditional users benefit from the non-consumptive use of the same resources that they had been collecting before. Otherwise, conflicts between local community and tourism developers will be inevitable.

The urban-water-supply system in Albania is plagued by problems. In addition, infiltration from parallel sewer lines caused periodic cross contaminations of the waste supply. Monitoring is conducted for the same fifteen physical and chemical parameters. National Water Strategy is drafted in 1996, but not yet adopted by the government.

Untreated sewage from beach hotels is among the most serious threats to coastal environments. Technologies that minimise pollution and environmental damage are costly and non-existent in Albania. Official policies and criteria for approving investment plans and building regulations are often biased.

A variety of important products entered the Albanian market, rapid population growth, urbanization, and a boom in construction put new significant stress on an already weak waste management systems. There are no properly managed dumpsites or incinerators, no waste reduction targets, and no monitoring programs to date. Actually, in Albania, the urban solid wastes are disposed in open dumps only.

The industrial and hazardous waste management is a serious problem as well. In many cases, these wastes are stored without adequate safeguards and monitoring systems. Industrial and urban wastewaters are discharge directly into surface waters, without any treatment.

Today Albania has one of the highest rates of biodiversity loss in Europe. Deforestation, soils erosion, uncontrolled land use, and pollution. All of these activities are rapidly destroying precious resources. Unsuitable levels of hunting, fishing, and grazing are also threatening diversity. Thirty-six percent of the country's vertebrate species are endangered or threatened. Efforts are made to establish protected areas. Six percent of the country is set-aside for this purpose. Unfortunately, even the biological integrity of these areas is compromised several times by legal activities also; monitoring of these zones is inadequate and management plans do not exist.

The Albanian Government regard tourism as the best and quickest way to create desperately needed jobs and a measure of prosperity in south-western Albania. There is no doubt that the Corfu model of mass tourism tempts some officials. However, as they become better informed on the nature of modern tourism, there is growing recognition of the importance of the conservation of Albania's environmental and cultural heritage, both for its own sake and as the foundation for ecotourism.

The first UNESCO mission to Butrint, in 1997, was prompted by the Butrint Foundation in response to press reports that the site had been looted during the disturbances of that year. Organisations like the Butrint Foundation can play an important role in the conservation of sites like Butrint, even in turbulent times, by lobbying national governments and cooperating with international organisations like UNESCO.

*The marine tourism* can increase the economic value of coastal resources in Albania, and thus promote greater awareness and appreciation of resources that were traditionally taken for granted and often believed to be inexhaustible by local communities. The marine tourism market may attract big and small local investors with little previous interest in marine resources, and increase political support for coastal conservation.

Like many other emerging destination, Albania's transition towards *mass-market tourism* has been associated with increasing environmental stress. Issues that require attention include conservation of coastal habitats especially beaches, improvement to seawater quality and the management of waste. At the moment, wastewater treatment is almost non-existent in Albania.

Additionally, the *increasing urban pollution*, the *lack of investments in municipal infrastructure*, and the *community's weak environmental attitude* are serious problems and detrimental to the country's image and tourism potential.

There is an opportunity for the all-inclusive sector to be the driving force of the introduction of environmental management in the local tourism industry. It is essential that the government revisit its strategies regarding environmental management and tourism development and reconciles its economic and environmental policies. The full implementation of the NEAP<sup>6</sup> and the development of a STP<sup>7</sup> should contribute to *reduce environmental impacts* and help to *insure that the tourism industry will enable positive socio-economic advancement of the host population*.

### ***b.: Butrint: A World Heritage Site***

Although the Butrint owners still feel that there is room for an expansion of the tourist market, this feeling has seemed to develop into understanding of the need to *manage tourism in a sustainable way*.

The members of the Butrint Board have played a major role in the recent-developed Plan of Management (POM). This (POM) consists of a zoning system covering both land and sea aiming to support commercial and tourist activities while protecting all cultural and biological values of the area. On land, major aspects of the plan include allowing for a moderate increase in visitor numbers and identifying expanding opportunities for tourism use of the park.

1972	World Heritage List introduced by the UNESCO
1989	Albania ratified the convention of 1972
1990	Butrint was nominated as a World Heritage Site
1991	Butrint's nomination was deferred
1992	Butrint designated as a World Heritage Site
1997	Butrint was put on the list of World Heritage Sites in Danger
1998	Office for the protection of the World Heritage Site of Butrint created
1999	Extension of the Butrint protected zone
2000	Butrint National Park established
2003	Inscribed on the Ramsar
2005	Butrint removed from World Heritage Site in Danger list
	<a href="http://www.butrintfoundation.org">www.butrintfoundation.org</a>

<sup>6</sup> National Environmental Action Plan.

<sup>7</sup> Strategy Tourism Plan.

In 1972, UNESCO, the United Nations' Scientific, Educational and Cultural Organisation, adopted the Convention "Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage," and under its auspices introduced the World Heritage List. Butrint was nominated as a World Heritage Site in 1990 but in May 1991 ICOMOS, the International Council on Monuments and Sites recommended that its inclusion be deferred to await verification of various definitions and plans relating to its protection. By 1992, ICOMOS was satisfied that all the protective requirements were in place and they recommended that Butrint--the intramural area covering 16 hectares--be included on the World Heritage List on the basis of Criterion iii.

*Criterion iii: The evolution of the old natural environment, which led the inhabitants to abandon Butrint at the end of the middle Ages, means that this archaeological site provides valuable evidence of ancient and medieval civilizations on the territory of modern Albania (UNESCO).*

In 1997, the civil unrest prompted ICOMOS to recommend that further action regarding the protection of the site was essential, and Butrint was put on the list of World Heritage Sites in Danger. As a result, a workshop for the definition of the past, the present, and the future of the site was held in 1998, which led to the Albanian Government creating an office for the protection of the Butrint Site. In 1999, ICOMOS asked to extend the buffer zone of the site for fear of uncontrolled tourist development in a small area on the coast. The protected zone was therefore extended under the existing criterion (iii) on condition that the State Party withdrew plans for this development. The establishment of Butrint National Park in 2000 gave the site new legal status and protected an area of 29 km<sup>2</sup>, managed by the appointment of a director.

## **5. Conclusion**

The research work provides a general consideration on the Albanian tourist market, on the tourist offer and demand, making available the presentation of the key problems with which is faced, putting into practice the Albanian tourist potentials, as well as the necessary recommendations on the management of investments, offer and demand, on the manner to reach the equilibrium of the market, and the role of the Albanian market in the regional one.

Parallel to the use of the literature, opinions of the local and foreign tourists have made an important source of information in order to reflect the deficiencies dealing with the offering of the tourist services, ideas about the future and capacities for development of the Albanian tourism and to provide the relevant recommendations.

The aim was to investigate the tourist market in Albania in general and in Butrinti National Park especially. On the main motives of the coming or the visit to the tourist selected destination, resulted that in regard to the kind of tourism developed in those destinations polled, it mainly means the tourist circulation aiming at resting and sun bathing:



1. The desire to spend the holidays in countries of tourist potential, being in the cost line or to the mountainous places;
2. Travels to several places with aiming at visiting and enjoying what such destinations offer;
3. Visits to the archaeological monuments, museums etc;
4. Knowledge about culture, archaeology, monuments and cultural inheritance.

Referring to the present tendencies towards adventurous travels, religious travels, etc., the data shows that the travels for educative and cultural purposes remain still low. In relation to the means used for travel, out of the records resulted that most of the surveyors, sixty percent ( in Durres ) and eighty-four percent in the region of Vlora, had used private cars, which indicates the high level of daily expenditures, too, described below. Trains, ships, and sailing means or ferries were not mentioned as available, the other part had used a bus in the case of the far destination, such as in the tourist region of Vlora, or minibuses in the region of Durres. Approximately seventy percent of the surveyors had come together with their families, twenty-five percent in groups and only five percent were alone. Such a conclusion reflects the chances for development of the family tourism, which was analyzed by the previous heads, too, on the part of the Albanian tourist market. Development of such form of tourism results stable even for the fact of duration in the selected destination. Thus, eighty percent had planned their holidays for ten to fifteen days and the other part, less than twenty percent were daily tourists. Such a figure of the number of the tourists, coming with families and a stay of at least ten days out of at least eighty percent of the interviewed, no doubt indicates once more the tendency in growth of the phenomena and support that must be provided to the development of the family tourism through investments in infrastructure, accommodation, entertainment, etc.

So, about the question how the surveyors were informed about their place of holidays, all of surveyors reflected clearly the fact that tourist infrastructure, organization and the spread of information in Albania is weak. Total lack of publicity and promotion of sale through brochures, magazines, TV, and other means, from tourist offices fail to play their role as mediators between tourists and the tourist destination, so most or all of the surveyors were informed about the places of rest just from their relatives or their friends. Thus, out of four hundred surveyors, only ten percent mentioned the tourist agencies, as mediators to find the place for rest. Not any informing material, such as maps, existed through which the people could be informed about their place of rest, particularly for the South, considered as the very attractive for Albanian tourism.

While the package of holidays becomes a product very standardized, by very small changes between different destinations, the destination or the selected place plays a less important role on the solution the consumer makes and they immediately would substitute their first choice with an alternative destination, if they felt that the first one was becoming quite expensive.

In the case of the interviewed in the Balkan market, they, according to the data, have considered as a probable breaker the unsecured political situation in general in Balkan, which were called very important by 59.1 % of unsecured situation, mainly from 1990 till present, upon the changes in the political course of the parties. The concern on the individual security by 54.5 % is another factor, which is considered as very important.

Relevant to the question *how the interviewed evaluate the most important problems in their tourist destination*, resulted that visitors or tourists have evaluated as very important elements, such as the nice view, the tender climate, and kindness of the people, but at the same time they observe great problems in the tourist infrastructure, potable water and power, cleaning, etc., by defining them as problems or deficiencies of the tourist offer at the chosen destination.

The Albanian Government *analyse and treat the tourism as the best, the most sustainable, and the quickest way to create employment, revenue, and to grow up the contribution in GDP*. There are many areas or zones which are considered *tourist areas* with very importance especially in investment.

Some of the main and important conclusions that we follow up by this study are:

- One big conclusion is regard to the *Models of tourism development in Albania*. There are a lot of alternative tourism models to be followed, there are a lot of strong reasons to follow, maybe, each of them, but of course, we must be sure that not every model brings sustainable development and not every model fit to the actual condition of Albania;

- Based on the analyse and the detailed view of each alternative type of tourism, Butrint should be considered the destination where the *Eco-Tourism, Familiar Tourism, rural Tourism, Culture and Heritage Tourism* will grow up;

- *Residents and rural people involvement* has taken a big challenge the next decades. Butrint is a *very good and rare example* that shows that tourism and community must follow each other and should be in harmony. Also, in Butrint is going to grow *Community Based Tourism (CBT)*;

- Butrint should consider as the place where *culture, heritage, landscape, and community meet each other* in the way that they feed back in a growing GDP, earnings, and employment.

**🚩 The main achievements, so far, in promoting Butrint as site for sustainable tourism;**

After the collapse of the Communist regime, archaeology and conservation in Albania suffered from lack of financial and manpower resources. The Butrint Foundation has provided funds for:

- The conservation of the monuments of Butrint;
- A programme of archaeology at the main site of Butrint and also along the shores of Lake Butrint to the east and south of the main site;
- An archival research programme into the history and archaeology of Butrint.

We have also:

- Raised the profile of Butrint, both internationally and in Albania. In 2000 the World Heritage Site of Butrint was enlarged from a few hectares to 29 km<sup>2</sup> and Butrint National Park set up to manage the site;
- Persuaded the World Bank and the EU to deliver resources to Butrint National Park and the area around Butrint, which has the potential to become the focus for the *development of sustainable tourism*;
- Sought to *promote Butrint as a site for sustainable tourism*.

#### ✚ **The main obstacles that the Butrinti site tourism had to overcome;**

The main problem remains the absence of environmental conservation legislation and planning procedures. Until recently, this problem was exacerbated by the lack of communication between the central government and the local authorities in Saranda and by poor communication among ministries. For example, shortly after the setting up Butrint National Park in 2000, the central government approved projects for hotel development within National Park. Butrint's greatest asset is its pristine quality. Building in National Park or in sensitive areas outside the park represents a real threat.

Butrint is a great asset for Albania in a world in which every tourist destination must seek to differentiate itself from its competitors. In the management plan, the imperatives of development are reconciled with the conservation of Butrint and the beautiful surrounding countryside: qualities that make Butrint an important part of Albania's cultural heritage and a legitimate source of national pride.

*The challenge of Butrint management is to exploit this asset for the benefit of the local economy without spoiling Butrint or the surrounding countryside. This means promoting sustainable tourism and strict controls on the location and type of development.*

Until recently Butrint has not suffered from developmental pressures. However, since 1991 a variety of plans have been proposed for the Saranda region by private groups from Italy, Germany, Kuwait, Malta, and Switzerland.

The proposals (only one of which appears to have involved an Environmental Impact Assessment) include *tourist villages, golf courses, associated roads, and an airport*.

*Albania has an opportunity to attract visitors interested in a new destination and a new cultural experience.*

*Its proximity to established or growing markets (the EU and central European countries) gives Albania a potential advantage in terms of the cost and journey times.*

✚ In further development we must balance the need to look after the *natural and cultural values with the need to cater tourists*. Every simple analyses conclude, at least, that to make sure that the Park remains *environmentally sustainable*. One way doing this is to focus on those options that give visitors a *high quality nature based* experience by targeting those niche opportunities that only this park has to offer.

✚ *Ecotourism* has been identified as a vehicle to finance the protection of the subject area, and at the same time contribute to the local economy, and as a result contributing to the overall wealth of the local community.

✚ The *local community* is able to take advantage of Ecotourism, when the main economic, environmental and politic objectives have been achieved, enabling the gain of social benefits and minimizing the negative factors. *The involvement of local communities not only benefits the community and the environment but also improve the quality of the tourist experience*. These benefits should outweigh the cost of ecotourism to the host community and environment.

✚ Albania can use its resources in term of tourism, much more than it is actually doing, because this is the destination of the future. Some preconditions are necessary to ensure the quality services and products demanded by guests to achieve the targets and realize the application of necessary strategies:

- Sustainable tourism promotion;
- Basic infrastructure realization;
- Clarification of ownership of land and buildings;
- Law enforcement;
- Improvement of statistical information systems;
- Public/ private commitment involvement.

✚ We recommend that it is necessary to *improve the existing infrastructure to make the products' quality and services better to create a positive image for Albanian tourism*. Within the “sun and beach” tourism, Albania is trying to reach a position in the domestic and international travel market as a competitive, value-for-money holiday destination in the Mediterranean Sea.

✚ The Adriatic coast needs structures such as three or four stars graded beach hotels, large scale, international standard business centers, and connections to central reservation systems. The Ionian coast needs structure as well but different ones. It needs resort hotels and villages, on a small and medium scale, low rise, and facilities for water based activities: scuba diving, sailing, surfing, etc.

✚ Albania has very strong points to constructs better *future tourism on sea, nature, culture and in convenient time*. Weaknesses include infrastructure, water furnishing, electrical energy, etc. The most important thing to do, to improve tourism is to minimize weakness and maximize the opportunities. The main purpose in the short-term period is to keep tourist product in competitive levels and different from previous standards:

- Continue the competitive studies for Albania tourist market;
- Improve the accommodation offer;
- Offer tourist package, international and national tourists offers, weekends, etc;
- Improve the quality of present structures;
- Locate the representative offices in national and local standards;
- Create a full legal package for tourism development;
- Include the community in studies and plans.

✚ Finally, we conclude that as any other country in the Balkan region, Albania has tourist potential to appeal to a lot of locals and foreigners alike. Albania offers a rough, but at the same times a charming pure nature with rich biodiversity, long and sandy beaches, an interesting cultural heritage, and a warm and sunny climate. However, with proper access and infrastructure and some of "dressing up the groom" with corresponding marketing activities, the strategic niches can certainly be filled. The tourism development ratio among the tourist countries in region of the Balkan are considered crucial for the long run objective of Tourism in Albania. Thus, Croatia is considered the destination disposing of highest potential in terms of future tourism development and potential. Moreover, Montenegro and, with restrictions, Macedonia are seen as destinations disposing of a certain potential with good perspectives. Bulgaria and Montenegro can strengthen their position with a tourism product of medium quality whereas the other destinations are seen as low budget (quality) destinations with some chances for selected medium quality tourism products. Lack of product and service quality, combined with lack of marketing activities should be considered the main problems of destinations on the Balkans.

✚ The biggest obstacle should still be considering the bad image of Albania for future tourism development. The uncertainty of the political situation in the Balkans, connected with unfavourable value for money, outdated supply (especially in the hotel sector), unreliability of local partners and lack of cleanliness are further major obstacles for a positive tourism development.

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