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International Master in Sustainable Tourism Development:

Cultural Heritage, Environment, Society

**Master Thesis**

**South Laconia**

**Sustainable Tourism Destination**

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## **Abstract**

This master thesis in the context of the *International Master in Sustainable Tourism Development: Cultural Heritage, Environment, Society* is analyzing the approach of the complex of South Laconia to become a sustainable tourism destination. In particular, the South Laconia is referring to the municipalities of Monemvasia and Elafonisos. Influenced by the experience of growing up in this small region, found a great opportunity to research this issue and approach the destination from a sustainable parameter.

South Laconia is a destination with a great potential to grow sustainably through tourism development. The challenges are various but the natural and cultural resources could help to overcome the difficulties and focus on the positive aspects of the destination. Local identity is the key to success, while talking to a multi-dimensional environment.

By this thesis are given specific directions and proposed suggestions that have to be implemented in order to have a successful strategic destination plan. The proposal is based on a reliable literature review, destination analysis of resources and assets and a primary research conducted by the use of questionnaire. The proposed suggestions have as a goal to diversify and improve the region of South Laconia as a brand name and create a competitive advantage for the destination.

## Introduction

From the theoretical and analytical perspective, many Greek destinations are going through a phase of mature mass tourism and so is the case with the coastal zones. South Laconia is one of the few destinations in Greece and in particular in Peloponnese that have not been greatly influenced by mass tourism.

Tourism is a competitive economic activity and as a result, the destinations must keep up-to-date with high standards, such as high quality of services and amenities. This practice will result in a differentiation from competitive tourism destinations, which will favor the whole area. Reshaping the area's tourism identity on a sustainable perspective is crucial and O.T.A will play the significant role of DMO in Regional Unit of South Laconia. There is an urgent need for common tourism strategy based on the quality of inhabitants' life and the authenticity of the destination. By authenticity the original identity of South Laconia is meant to be promoted and amplified.

In more detail, the *first chapter* of the thesis presents a literature review on definitions, terms and meanings of tourism as an economic activity, sustainability, tourism in Greece, a conceptual approach of destination, analysis of the Destination Management Organizations (DMOs), and how a sustainable tourism destination can be created.

The *second chapter* provides an analysis of the South Laconia. In particular, the municipality of Monemvasia, including the regions of Monemvasia, Vatika and Kyparrisi and the municipality of Elafonisos. An analysis of the region's resources is conducted such as architecture, museums, attractions, arts and literature, religion and gastronomy.

The *third chapter* examines tourism in South Laconia. Initially, the history of the tourism evolution, references to resources and human resources and a SWOT Analysis. Lastly, are examined the problems and difficulties of the region and why sustainability is considered necessary for the future development.

The *fourth chapter* presents the research done on the thesis. The methodology was conducted through a questionnaire followed by data analysis.

Finally, *the fifth chapter*, presents the proposals for future sustainable tourism development, policies, assessment process and conclusions.

## **1. Literature Review**

Literature review is analyzed in this chapter. In this part, significant concepts are analyzed in order to form an overall image of sustainability, tourism and destinations. Consequently, the formulation of a sustainable tourism destination is the prerequisite for the sustainable development in tourism sector.

### **1.1. Sustainable Development**

Sustainable development is a process of change in which exploitation of resources, the direction of investment, the orientation of technological development, and institutional change are all in harmony and enhance both current and future potential to meet human needs and aspirations (WCED, 1987). This definition is established and promoted to the great extent from the UN during the last thirty years, but sustainability as a notion emerged two centuries ago.

The discussion about sustainability sparked in middle of 18<sup>th</sup> century, when Malthus and William Stanley Jevons faced the problem about resources scarcity. Since then, many concerns about the limitation of resources have been expressed, especially, about natural resources and species loss because of population rise (Baker, 2016). Its interpretation stems from an anthropocentric approach and ends up to a more eco-centric one for every human activity in society and technology. For achieving such a long-term process, policy formulation is the key to success and the engagement of government is prerequisite.

The last decades, the UN focuses on sustainable development making declarations and organizing forums, conferences and various informative activities to enlighten human societies about this new context, otherwise the negative consequences will follow not complying with these guidelines and principles. The concept of sustainable development offers a framework to integrate environmental policies and development strategies. Rich and poor countries must integrate this concept on their strategic plan and allocate it properly to regional and local level in order every inhabitant become aware of the concept and its intention. From time to time, the engagement of human beings in the concept of sustainability is obvious. In order to understand the whole context of sustainable development, priority must be given to the needs of both present and future generations (Brundtland, 1987)

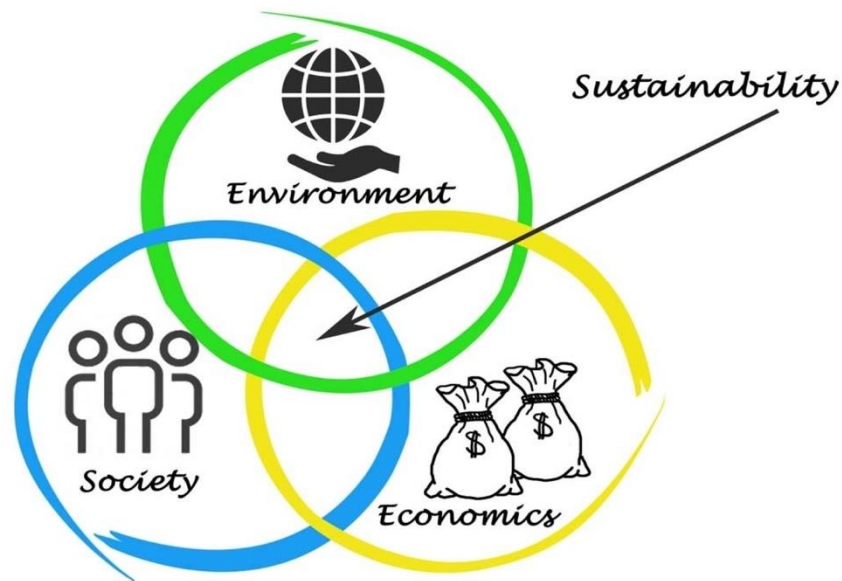
Sustainability is a long-term goal and needs strategic plan with targeted actions. Due to the complexity of multi-dimensional context, the definition of sustainability has a three-level approach, which contains the pillars of environment, society and economy (Ekins, 2000)

The social dimension is related to human mores and values, relationships and institutions. The impacts on the social structure are produced by imbalances in terms of per capita income derives from external investments.

The economic pillar concerns the allocation and distribution of scarce resources. In that approach, on environmental issues there are often conflicting interests of local or external groups which seek quick profit in short-term activities. It is also needed within the ethics of sustainability.

The environmental dimension is based on the long-term development without the depletion of resources. Through this pillar, a decision-making policy is built to protect the physical landscape and natural resources. As a result, it involves both the contribution of society and economy that affect the environment and natural resources (Ioannides, Apostolopoulos & Sonmez, 2001)





Europe faces a period of transformation as the global system moves on. EU is making a great effort to promote growth strategy based on sustainable development with goal to burrow through that radical changes smoothly. The core value of that strategy is to involve all scientific fields in the process by giving to each an important role to be committed. As a result, three priorities for growth have set, smart, sustainable and inclusive. Smart growth means developing an economy founded on knowledge and innovation. Sustainability is about using available resources in a more efficient, greener and competitive economy. As for inclusive growth, EU is willing to foster a high employment economy bye enforcing the social and territorial cohesion. (EUROPE 2020, 2010)

The UN have the endeavor to establish a global sustainable development, establishing a shared blueprint, among its members, for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future. In 2015, all the UN Member States adopted the blueprint and committed to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The core of the Agenda is the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are an urgent call for action by all countries-developed and developing- in a global partnership. Goals address global

challenges, such as poverty, inequality, climate change, peace and justice. It is important to be achieved all by 2030 (UN: Sustainable Development Goals)

Solidarity towards nature and towards people is a key to activate people to rediscover the concept of acting gratuitously for the sake of future generations. This dynamic concept can be used in every scientific field that claims for a holistic sustainable development, such as tourism sector.



*Sustainable Development Goals*

## 1.2 Tourism

Based on UNWTO's definition, tourism is a social, cultural and economic phenomenon which entails the movement of people to countries or places outside their usual environment for personal or business/professional purposes. These people are called visitors (which may be either tourists or excursionists; residents or non-residents) and tourism has to do with their activities, some which imply tourism expenditure (UNWTO,

Glossary). Moreover, as a tourist is considered the visitor (domestic, inbound or outbound), if his/her trip includes an overnight stay.

In addition, two other important definitions in the sector of tourism are domestic tourism and international tourism. Domestic tourism refers to a traveler visiting a destination in his/her country of residences for at least 24hrs but less than one year for the purpose of recreation, holiday, sports, business, conventions, study, visiting friends or relatives, health, mission work, or religion (Smith, 1989, p.20). International tourism comprises inbound tourism plus outbound tourism, that is to say, the activities of resident visitors outside the country of reference, either as part of domestic or outbound tourism trips and the activities of non-resident visitors within the country of reference on inbound tourism trips (UNWTO, Glossary).

The notion of tourism has its origins in ancient times, when the movements in Egypt had cultural (i.e. organized trips to Pyramids) and commercial aspirations and health and sports intentions in Greece (i.e. Ancient Olympic Games). During the Roman times, the first infrastructure was emerged by constructing roads for safe journeys and some kinds of hotels, which were classified according to the wealth of visitor. The intensity in tourism activity occurred between 15th and 19th century, during Grand Tour period. There were journeys for the English rich people who were willing to meet other cultures and visit mostly monuments and museums. The main destinations were Italy and France and later on, Greece and Middle-East.

Tourism, as it is known today, was formulated at the end of 19th century and early 20th century, after the first industrial revolution. The 1950s is considered a milestone due to the massive development of leisure, especially summer tourism. The reason for such a development was the extension of the employees' vacation time. Thanks to Léon Blum, the three-time Prime Minister of France, who established the first ever summer vacation in history. From 1980 till 2019, tourism has become the biggest sector of exterior development in the world.

In the last decade, there has been a revolution in tourism, which is based on transforming a framework without focusing on massive tourism and 4Ss (sun-sand-sea-sex). The tourism product is enriched with different sub-products, known as SIT (Special Interest Tourism). Thematic tourism activities that transform and enhance the initial motives of tourist by focusing on experiential tourism. Through experiential tourism, the tourist is willing to be part of the local community, interact and live like a local. For example, the tourist wants to collect moments, impressions and small unique adventures and at the same time being acquainted with cultural heritage, traditions, architecture, gastronomy, landscape and all the elements that combine the blend of each destination.

### **Tourism in Greece**

In Greece, between 1950 and 1965, there had been a general belief that the country's economy had to be based on industrial activity and almost nobody wanted to deal in tourism. In 1965, the State started considering tourism as an essential sector for the Greek economy and created a concrete suggestion to develop tourism. The challenges were myriad, no previous infrastructure, no private investments and many industries bankrupt. Besides, during this period, it is noticed the biggest wave of immigration from Greece to foreign countries (Germany, Belgium etc.). It was also the years that Xenia hotels constructed with public funding.

From 1965 till 1985, even when Greece was under dictatorship (1967-1974), the tourist flows increased because of initiative of charter flights and the introduction of all-inclusive packages by tour operators. These reasons emerged the need for the construction of airports all around Greece (Athens, Salonika, Rhodes and Heraklion). Rapid increase also happened due to massive tourism which offered the option of hotels down to the sea, such as in Corfu and Chalkidiki.

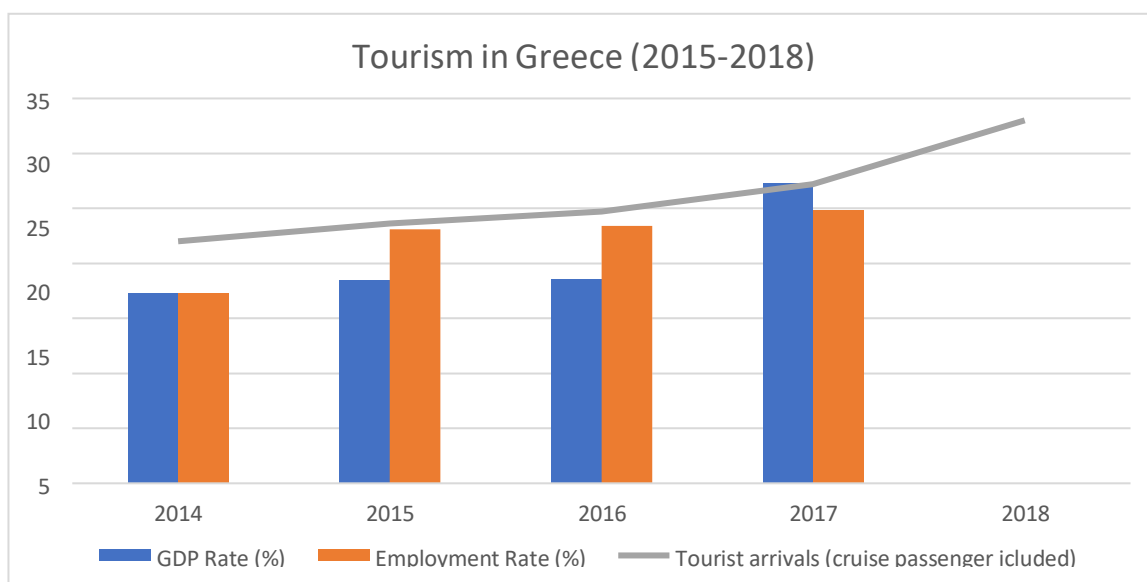
Since 1985, many things have evolved regarding the infrastructure, the legislative context and the contribution of tourism in the Greek economy. As the numbers show below, Greece has become a very touristic, competitive country in global market. The characteristic of

Greek tourism evolution is the *paradox of Greece*. According to this paradox, the 85% of tourism businesses belong to Greeks and they are family-run. Moreover, this evolution has also improved female employment as the numbers are really high at a national level. On the contrary, challenges, such as a heavy concentration of tour operators and tourists at specific destinations still exist. This creates a major problem to the destinations, as a result of overtourism lately. Another alarming phenomenon experienced especially in agricultural regions like South Laconia is the shifting of an active agricultural force to new openings in tourism industry. The economic factor, multiplier, shows that in agriculture if it is spent 1€ it gives back 0.5€, but in tourism if it is spent 1€, it returns 1.5-4€.

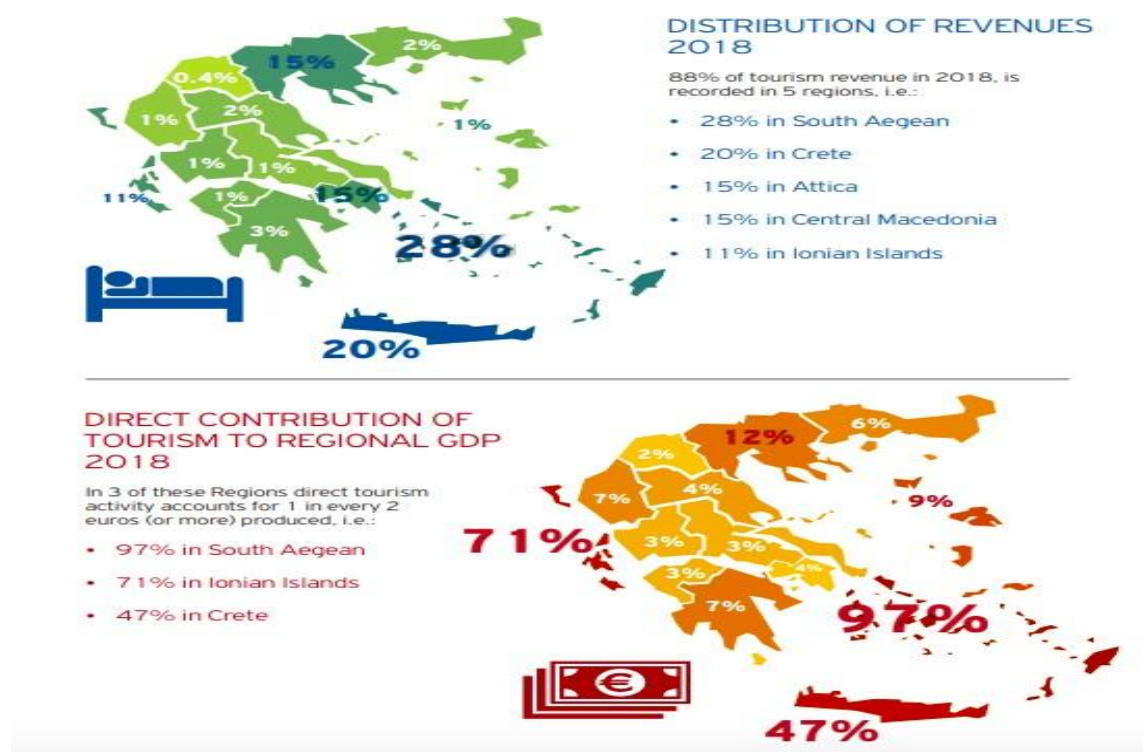
The last five years were significant for the national economy, considering that Greece has been facing an economic crisis since 2008, when the MOU period started and the Economic Adjustment Program was signed. An increase in tourism rates has happened since then, but this increase is not based on a state or local strategic tourism development plan, but in a series of coincidences that have occurred in global tourism market, such as the increase of low-cost flights and the tendency of more frequent trips abroad. Furthermore, the contribution of tourism to the Greek economy is substantially greater, as the official figures ignore the black or informal economy (para-economy), estimated to be higher (Buhalis, 1998).

Figure	Annual Value			
	2008 (MOU signed)	2016	2017	2018
GDP contribution	16.8%	18.6%	27.3%	30.9%
Employment contribution	18.7%	23.4%	24.8%	25.9%
Employment	854,400	860,315	934,599	988,600
International tourist receipts	11.6 b	12.7 b	14.2 b	15.6 b
International tourist arrivals	15.9 MN	24.7 MN	27.2 MN	30.1 MN
Average per capita tourism expenditure	730 €	514 €	522€	520€
World market share	1.7%	2%	2%	-
European market share	3.3%	3.1%	4%	-
Seasonality (July-August-September)	50%	56%	57.3%	54.%
Hotel capacity	715,857 beds	788,553 beds	806,045 beds	798.650 beds

*Tourism figures in Greece (SETE, 2014)*



*Tourism in Greece (2015-2018)*



*Contribution to regional development (INSETI Intelligence)*

### 1.3 Destination

According to (WTO, 2007), destination is a physical space in which visitor spends at least one overnight. It includes tourism products such as support services and attraction, and tourism resources within a day's return travel time. It has physical and administrative boundaries defining its management, and images and perceptions defining its market competitiveness. The destination appeal and experiences are shaped by attractions, amenities, accessibility, human resources, image, and price. Destinations usually include businesses, administrative bodies, local people and visitors (Coban & Yildiz, 2019). As a result, destination is a system that contains all the elements below:

- tourism attractions (natural and cultural resources)
- services
- accessibility

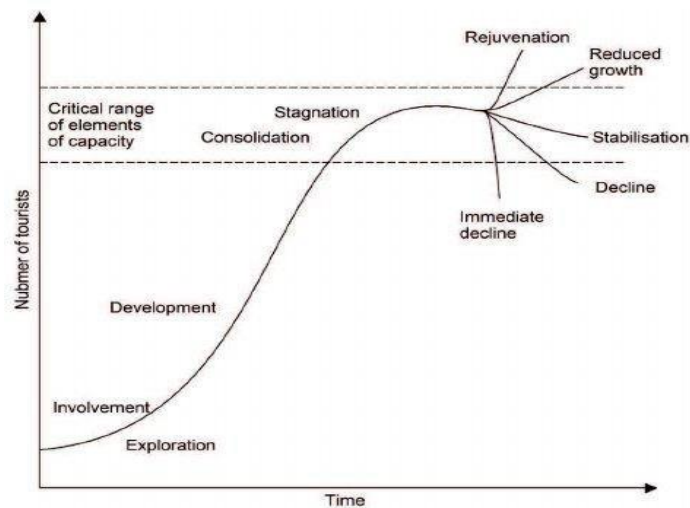
- system of stakeholders
- economic context
- image of a place
- participation of the inhabitants
- tourists

A successful destination, according to (Buhalis, 2000), must contain the *6As of tourism destinations*, which are:

1. Attractions: natural (i.e. waterfall), artificial (i.e. theme park), and/or cultural (i.e. festival).
2. Accessibility: transport systems consisting routes, terminals and public transport.
3. Amenities: services facilitating stay, accommodation, catering and leisure/activities.
4. Available Packages: 'intermediaries to direct tourist attention', i.e. information center.
5. Activities: which motivates tourist visitation to a specific place.
6. Ancillary Services: which are secondary to tourist needs (i.e. banks, postal, medical, etc.).

The satisfaction of the tourists and the natural resources of the destination are strongly related. The tourist attraction level reduces, when irreversible damage happens to natural assets of the destination. The preference of tourists for a destination is shown through the tourist area cycle of evolution. The cycle describes the change process of a destination from the early exploration and involvement stages, to finally the stagnation. Every tourism destination has a limit to its growth and the stagnation stage implies that this limit has been achieved. The situation that prevents from growth is known as carrying capacity and represents the static zone of a destination in the scale of development (Butler, 1980).





*Cycle of evolution for tourist area*

Defining destination management, there are different approaches of what this process is all about. The first one considers that Destination Management is the process of leading, influencing and coordinating the management of all the aspects of a destination that contribute to a visitor's experience, taking into account the needs of visitors, local residents, businesses and the environment (Coban & Yildiz, 2019). Besides, destinations are created by a set of products and resources which include many stakeholders. Thus, the coordination of these stakeholders' efforts is of great importance. It is also emphasized the importance of destination and its complexity which might be because of the complexity of the relationships between stakeholders.

### **1.3.1 Destination Management Organizations (DMOs)**

Every destination in order to work perfectly and be managed professionally, needs a Destination Management Organization (DMO). In a basis, DMOs are non-profit organizations, charged with representing a specific destination and helping the long-term development of communities through a travel and tourism strategy. It is usually a

membership organization bringing together the local government (Municipality and Regional authority) with businesses that rely on tourism and strive for revenue (WTO, 2004).

The context of DMOs is complex and combines different scientific fields, mostly managerial, for one goal, the tourism development. The tasks of DMOs are presented below:

- marketing, promotion and publicity of destination
- administration of a Destination Management System
- provision of business support and advice
- development of new tourism products and packages
- encouragement in partnerships towards destination management
- Stakeholders management
- economic development by raising revenue, income and streams
- creation and management of specific tourism projects
- representation of destination tourism industry

The main financial sources of the DMOs are from state funds, local government financial support, indirect taxes (i.e. hotel taxation), membership fees and income from promotional campaigns.

The key element that could make a DMO successful is to develop a destination development model by engaging all the stakeholders to have an active role not only to the execution of the plan, but also on the stage before, during the decision process. While establishing this model, it is necessary to determine what resources the region possesses and how they should be emphasized in order to advance ahead of the competition and if necessary, DMOs should brainstorm with stakeholders to create possible solutions. In the brainstorming, it is vital to listen to every idea with no judgment and build new ideas on each idea (Coban & Yildiz, 2019).

Considering all these above, DMO's roles are divided in two important pillars, the external destination marketing and the internal destination management in order to manage the destination effectively and efficiently.

## 1.4 Sustainable Tourism Destination

Sustainability approach considers society and culture as different pillars for effective analysis. In this case, in the social approach the levelling-off in the behavior of local inhabitants is added and in the cultural, the enhancement of the value of unique traditions, history and folklore for which the competition is at a minimum. Attention is required in case of improving the local identity by focusing on tourism, because it may lead to the infiltration of exogenous cultural elements that will harm the authenticity of image and lifestyle in local society (Ioannides, Apostolopoulos, & Sonmez, 2001). Furthermore, sustainability rests on active citizen participation, without a host society's active participation in the planning process, sustainable development strategies cannot be effective. (McCool & Stankey, 1999)



*Sustainable tourism Development*

Development is a process that can be steered towards sustainability. So, there is a huge gap between economic profitability and adaptation to the environment in order to create an economically and environmentally sustainable destination (Aronsson, 2001). It is time to focus on a more sustainable tourism development in order to continue having great results in numbers, but also providing prudent experiences to tourists.

The success of sustainability in destination derives from knowing the main concerns that could harm the sustainable tourism development. As socio-economic concerns are supposed to be the labor shortages, the excessive hikes in property values and the overall rising cost of living, especially in places that very attractive as destination. The socio-cultural concerns are defined as increasing incidents of crime and vandalism and breakdown of cultural norms.

The continuous increased movement of people has led to increase of numerous and various problems. Tourism is one of the major reasons for that mobility. The environmental problems in respect of other two aspects are more crucial and most of the times irreversible. Referring to some of those are the aesthetic pollution as a result of over-development (i.e. urban environments and coastal zones with tense construction), threatened natural resources like fauna, flora, fresh water supplies and agricultural lands addressing to biodiversity loss and climate change and loss of open spaces.

According to UNWTO, the rapid increase of tourism in the next 10 years is inevitable. Considering the advantages that tourism can offer globally to the societies, it is a great opportunity that increase. On the contrary, what is going to happen with the numerous consequences of the phenomenon. The solution given by researchers is to focus on the transformation of tourism product. As a result, responsible tourism is the key for succeeding that transformation smoothly. Destinations, through responsible tourism will be prevented from that unpleasant effects. On the tourism bibliography, the notion of responsible tourism is referred as alternative tourism or special interest tourism (SIT), but the need now is to establish that form of tourism as the main activity and not as an alternative solution. So, the politically correct notion to be used is responsible tourism.

Responsible Tourism was defined in Cape Town in 2002 alongside the World Summit on Sustainable Development. Responsible Tourism is about making better places for people to live in and better places for people to visit. Responsible tourism by definition is tourism that minimizes negative social, economic and environmental impacts and generates greater economic benefits for local people. The great challenge of succeeding the aforementioned

goal is based on prerequisites that are not preexisting and simultaneously making up the ultimate goals of responsible tourism. In case of overcoming that challenge and achieving the goals, responsible tourism activities lead to long-term sustainable development (Tsartas P, 1996). Some of the characteristics referred above, are:

- the conservation of natural environmental resources and assets
- the concurrent development of all different sectors of economy
- the constant feedback to reinforce the employability and local productivity through innovative and developmental initiatives
- the conservation of the dynamic equilibrium between the various elements and the norms that comprise the social structure
- the search of methods and techniques that contribute to an autonomous, lucrative and self-sufficient local economy
- the augmentation of active participation of inhabitants in the processes of planning and configuring activities for achieving the developmental goals

Responsible tourism is applied to destination by using different special interest tourism forms based on the destination resources and assets, such as marine tourism, cultural tourism, religious tourism and ecotourism. A combination of four or five different SITs and massive tourism in specific guidelines would bring to the destination a remarkable sustainable tourism development.

## 2. South Laconia analysis

Laconia is a historical and administrative region of Greece located on the southeastern part of the Peloponnese peninsula. The word laconic —to speak in a blunt, concise way—is derived from the name of this region, a reference to the ancient Spartans who were renowned for their verbal austerity and blunt, often pithy remark.

With the exception of a 30-year interval of Venetian Rule Laconia remained under Ottoman control until the outbreak of the Greek War of Independence of 1821. Following independence, Sparta was selected as the capital of the modern prefecture, and its economy and agriculture expanded. With the incorporation of the British-ruled Ionian Islands into Greece in 1864, Elafonisos became part of the prefecture. After World War II and the Greek Civil War, its population began to somewhat decline, as people moved from the villages toward the larger cities of Greece and abroad.

The regional unit, Laconia, is subdivided into five municipalities. These are:

- Sparta
- East Mani
- Eurotas
- Monemvasia
- Elafonisos

South Laconia is referring to the municipalities of Monemvasia (including the region of Monemvasia, Vatika and Kyparissi) and Elafonisos.

In this chapter, the elements of the destination, such as location, natural environment, cultural environment and stakeholders that influence its image, are analyzed.

## **2.1 The Municipality of Elafonisos**

### **The region of Elafonisos**

Elafonisos is a small Greek island in South Laconia. It lies off the coast of Cape Malea and Vatika.

The population is between 300 and 350 during the winter but increases dramatically in the summer months. During July and August the number of tourist visitors reach over 3,000 per day (bringing with them some 1,600 cars). Many people visit the island for its light coloured, sandy beaches. Among the most well-known of its beaches are Sarakiniko, Fragos (Simos) and Panagias Nissia, all filled with blue-green waters.

Elafonisos is by far the largest inhabited island in the Peloponnese archipelago, and the only one that is a separate municipality. There are also some archaeological discoveries to explore on the island and in the surrounding waters. The main church of the community is Agios Spyridon which is built on a tiny separate piece of land which is connected by a bridge over shallow waters to the rest of the island.

In antiquity, Elafonisos did not constitute an island but a peninsula with the name "Onou Gnathos" (Donkey's Jawbone) according to Pausanias. Just off the coast of Elafonisos lies the archeological site of Pavlopetri, a sunken city dating back to the early 3rd millennium BC and thought to have been claimed by the sea around 1000 BC.

The rich cultural history of Elafonisos, its central position for the route of ships on the Eastern Mediterranean and the natural and archaeological richness make the island one of the most important places to visit. With its large number of unique beaches with crystal clear blue waters, which is hard to find in such a small area, it is a unique destination. At the same time, its unique flora, with the protected Kedros tree, the numerous temples of the wider region, Byzantine and younger, its gastronomy with emphasis on seafood and its mild climate convince the most demanding visitor for its choice.

The beaches and the sea of Elafonisos make it an ideal destination for authentic and alternative holidays in Greece, almost all year round. Its enchanting scenery with its own colors and aromas, with its own beauties and contrasts, offer a unique and unforgettable experience to the visitors. The hospitality infrastructure meets the necessary but also the most demanding standards of every visitor, while the food you find on the island is based on local gastronomy for the most demanding and extends to the more traditional Greek, and not only, cuisine.

## **2.2. The Municipality of Monemvasia**

### **2.2.1. The region of Monemvasia**

Built in the shadow of the rock on which the medieval fortress town stands, the new town of Monemvasia has become a lively tourist destination in its own right. A large variety of hotels, restaurants and cafe bars attract thousands of visitors year round. This imposing mass of rock that looms above the Laconian coastline is linked to the mainland by a narrow causeway and bridge, to which the town owes its name (“moni emvasi” which means “only access”). Monemvasia is about 300 km from Athens and 25 km from Molai. In summer there is a connection by sea with Piraeus, some 84 nautical miles away.

### **Places of Interest**

#### **Monemvasia Archaeological Collection**

The archaeological collection of the fortress of Monemvasia is housed in an old mosque in the main square in the lower town, opposite the town cathedral of Elkomenos Christos. This small museum contains artefacts chiefly found during work to repair the monuments and surface exploration carried out over the past decades. The collection consists mainly of architectural sculptures and ceramic objects used in daily life.



There are two main groups of antiquities.

A) stone sculptures consisting mainly of architectural members or individual elements from the built environment, dating from the early Christian period (4th-7th centuries AD), the Byzantine period (mid 7th-15th centuries) and the Post-Byzantine period (15th-19th centuries).

B) Ceramic and other small objects used in daily life, household objects or personal items, also dating from the Early Christian period until the later years of the Turkish occupation.

A compass construction containing a map of the fortress in the middle of the museum directs visitors to the various exhibits.

### **Velies Folklore Museum**

The Velies Folklore Museum was founded by the Aghia Paraskevi citizens' association. It is situated beside an age-old plane tree and a spring in Velies, two landmarks that are closely linked with the village's history. A few decades ago this was the heart of the village, where the locals would meet to draw water, bring their animals to drink and to do their washing.

The citizens' association also restored the spring and the surrounding area, which along with the platform and terraces on the museum roof are the scene of many cultural activities.

The old spring, which used to provide a constant supply of water from its five taps, was mentioned by the poet Yiannis Ritsos, who used to spend his childhood summers in Velies. Its exhibits include a variety of household and agricultural implements, traditional costumes, embroideries, textiles and other handcrafts among the many other objects from times past.

## **Talanta watermill**

A plentiful supply of water in Talanta kept the town's 11 watermills busy for decades and provided a good living for the townspeople. Thousands from the surrounding region used to come there to grind their wheat. The water was channeled as far as Plytra on the coast. Even the town's name is an indication of its former wealth (talanta is an ancient word for a unit of weight and for a monetary unit).

The mechanisation of milling led to the abandonment of the water mills and their eventual collapse.

Eventually however, through the efforts of the village cultural association, one of the former mills was restored in 2006. Every Sunday the millstone is set in motion again to give visitors a taste of what was once a way of life. The flour ground from local varieties of wheat is also on sale. The mill is situated in an idyllic setting, known to locals as Paradisos, of shady plane and walnut trees and shrubs, running water and rocks sculpted by the flow of water.

## **Fortress town of Monemvasia**

The Byzantine fortress town of Monemvasia, the "stone ship" referred to by the poet Yiannis Ritsos, stands sentinel on the southeastern coast of Laconia, ready to take its visitors on a historic journey back through the ages.

Castles, walls, old mansions, narrow cobbled lanes, churches, low arches and vaults, coats of arms, imperial marble thrones, Byzantine icons all give the impression of a town untouched by time.

Referred to variously throughout the ages as the Gibraltar of the East, the Castle above the Clouds, or the Castle of Flowers, among others, it is situated on a small islet linked to the mainland by a causeway and bridge, as if floating on the edge of the Myrtoon Sea.

The single entrance that gives the rock its name (moni emvasia in Greek) is a passageway into its past, beginning in the 6th century AD.

As one enters the main gate of the Lower Town, immediately above it to the left is the birthplace of the poet Yiannis Ritsos. The main thoroughfare, consisting of a narrow cobbled Byzantine street flanked by shops, leads to the main square dominated by an old cannon and the town cathedral, the Church of Elkomenos Christos. Directly opposite the church is a 16th century former mosque now housing the Monemvasia Archaeological Collection.

In all there are 40 churches in Monemvasia, including the Panayia Chrisafitissa, Panayia Myrtidiotissa, Panayia Kritikias, Aghios Nikolaos , Aghios Stefanos, Aghios Pavlos and Aghia Anna, as well as the silver and gold workshop and museum.

### **2.2.2 The region of Vatika**

At the southernmost tip of Cape Maleas is the region of Vatika. The landscape presents striking contrasts; the central mountain range ends abruptly at the tip of the cape, dipping down on each side into coves and beaches that were once the haunt of pirates. A recently restored stone lighthouse stands sentinel at the cape to guide seafarers through what has been known since antiquity as a fearsome passage in bad weather. Around the cape to the west is the calm bay of Neapoli, providing shelter from heavy seas.

Most of the villages in this region were built on the steep mountainside, some of them invisible from the sea, as protection from pirate raids. Their white houses and narrow streets, particularly in Velanidia, are reminiscent of the Aegean islands, with which the local population has always had frequent contact as fishermen and seamen.

## **Places of Interest**

### **Kastania cave**

One of the most impressive caves of Greece can be found near the village of Kastania on the southern tip of the Peloponnese, just minutes away from Neapoli. The route follows the winding mountain road leading to the forest-covered eastern slopes of Mt. Parnon.

Rich in density and variety of shapes, colors and figures, Kastania Cave is classified as second of its kind in Europe. Nature needed three million years to create this fantasyscape with its unparalleled décor and numerous impressive formations. Standing out among the numerous attractions of the cave are geological rarities such as discs, flat stalagmites, eccentricities and elicitites.

### **Petrified Forest of Aghios Nikolaos**

The petrified forest on the coast not far from the village of Aghios Nikolaos is included in the Aegean Geological Monument Atlas and justly claims its place in Europe's Geopark Network. At the coastal settlements of Aghia Marina, Korakas and Spitha, these fossils bear silent witness to their long-lost time. The findings in the Aghios Nikolaos are unique in Europe and of major scientific interest as the result of an original limestone petrification.

This work of nature is the result of the interaction of many geological phenomena over millions of years and is now a Geopark, having been cleaned, desalinated and stabilized, individual items having been restored or reconnected. However, protecting them from damage, particularly from human activities, remains a challenge.

## **Pavlopetri**

The submerged town of Pavlopetri is situated in shallow water in the islet of Pavlopetri, opposite the island of Elafonisos. The architectural remains of this prehistoric town, visible at a depth of about three meters, were discovered in 1904 by Fokionos Negrís. In 1967 the famous oceanographer Dr. Nicholas Flemming of Southampton University visited the site and subsequently published the first survey of the submerged settlement.

The site was first occupied in 3500 BC, making it one of the oldest known submerged cities in the world. The buildings, spread over six hectares, were divided into smaller rooms and in some cases had inner courtyards. At least six prehistoric roads were traced. The submerged architectural remains continue southwards to the islet of Pavlopetri, on top of which the remains of walls and archaeological artefacts are still visible.

Pavlopetri occupied a prominent prehistoric place in the southern part of the Maleas promontory and was one of, if not the most important ports in the southern Peloponnese as it monitored shipping from the ports of southern Laconia to the Aegean and the western Mediterranean. The narrow channel between Elafonisos and Kythera was one of the most important shipping lanes in the Mediterranean, enabling communication between East and West.

## **Strongyli Lagoon**

Strongyli Lagoon is right next to Pounda beach, opposite Elafonisos and Pavlopetri. It's an important biotope, part of a NATURA 2000 area, a stop-over site for migratory birds and the home of rare flora. An endangered species of cedar tree also survives here. The whole area is a historical and ecological treasury.

## **Beaches of Vatika**

The beaches in the municipal department of Vatika, to the west and east of Cape Maleas are varied indeed.

The northernmost, facing west, is the relatively unknown Marathias. In the bay of Vatika, the turquoise waters of Pouda, Maganos and Neratziona is in fact form one long continuous sandy beach stretching for five kilometres.

Even though in the centre of town, the beach at Neapoli is clean and well-maintained to a degree that earns it a Blue Flag every year. Behind the little port of Palaiokastros is the small protected cove of Ammitsa and further south is Aspes and Rismari. Set in the striking landscape around Aghia Marina are the beaches of the Petrified Forest.

On the western side facing the Myrtoon Sea is Panayia, perfect for cooling off after a visit to the Cave of Kastania, and further south are the beaches around Velanidia.

### **2.2.3 The region of Kyparrisi**

#### **Places of Interest**

##### **Gerakas**

Unsuspecting sailors will be pleasantly surprised as they turn into the port of Gerakas, entering a fjord-like inlet referred to by Pausanias as an excellent port of call. The Acropolis of ancient Zarakas is situated above the modern settlement at the northeastern end of the outlet to the sea.

The tranquillity of the surrounding landscape and the pretty seaside village create a perfect setting for yachts and other craft that find shelter there from all winds. Rooms are available for rent among the fish taverns along the waterfront. The tavern owners are themselves fishermen, guaranteeing freshness at all times of the year.

## **Riechia Folklore Museum**

The Riechia Folklore Museum was established in 1985. Exhibits focus on the culture and history of the surrounding Zarakas region and include agricultural tools, handcrafts, costumes, photographs of social life in times gone by and from the lives of emigrants, along with publications from the period between the two World Wars.

The museum is housed in a two-storey stone building that is a typical example of the architecture of Zarakas.

## **Kyparissi Rock Climbing Area**

Ever since being discovered a few years ago by Greek climbers, the rock climbing area of Kyparissi is now an international destination for enthusiasts of the sport. What is special about it is the combination of the cliffs and superb views over the Aegean Sea as far as the islands of Hydra and Spetses, even Porto Heli, which seem to be at one's feet. On a clear day some of the Cycladic islands (Milos, Sifnos, Serifos or Kythnos) appear like rocks flung down into the deep blue sea.

So far 15 climbing routes have been established, thanks to the voluntary efforts of Greek and French climbers, who say there is a potential for hundreds of routes of varying difficulty. Climbing holidays here are ideal throughout the year. In summer, there is the added attraction of clean pebbly beaches, at other times the network of hiking trails through forests to isolated chapels, historic monuments and cliffs with panoramic views of the open sea.

## **Beaches of the region**

The eastern coastline of the Municipality of Monemvasia is scattered with mostly pebbly beaches around Zarakas and Monemvasia, protected from southerly and southwesterly winds.

In the north of the municipality are the beaches of Aghia Kyriaki, Megali Ammos and Drymiskos at Kyparissi, and Vlychada near Riechia. Close to Geraka is Kochylas, near Aghios Ioannis and Kastraki and the busy Pori.

The beach at Monemvasia's new town is Kakkavos. Swimming is also possible off the rocks at Portelo in the shadow of the Lower Town walls.

Further south are the beaches of Nomia: Ampelakia, Xifias and Aghios Fokas.

## **3. Tourism in South Laconia**

### **Market analysis**

Market analysis is really important part of the DMO. After an extensive research of specific elements, the actors of DMO have an overall image for the destination and what it goes well or wrong. Through market analysis, the data are collected is about human resources, stakeholders, an analysis about strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT Analysis) for the destination and are mentioned important problems that have been considered.

### **3.1 Human resources**

Over the past years, the aggregate average labor force participation rate in South Laconia has barely changed when a significant percentage of capable and qualified human resources



are into the labor force. Despite the acceleration in population aging the area over the past decade, aggregate labor force participation rates show divergent trajectories. Headline numbers also hide strikingly different shifts in the labor force attachment of different groups of workers; participation has increased among prime-age women and, more recently, older workers, but it has fallen among the young and among prime-age men. Changes in national labor market policies and institutions may also reflect the evolution of societal and cultural attitudes toward work that influence observed trends in labor supply beyond their impact on policies.

In South Laconia both scientific and labor force is heavily qualified inside and in the suburbs of the area, while a large scale of area's young population is actively searching of job opportunities away from the area, as well as the majority of Greece young's population. As a result, there is a large decrease of active working population, higher unemployment rates and unspecialized labor force.

### **3.2 Stakeholders**

A great challenge that DMOs is responsible to confront is the coordination not even the institutions are part of the process, but also other stakeholders who are involved in the process of destination management, such as local people and NGOs. As stakeholders are defined the actors which may have a direct or indirect role in managing a destination and a destination's management could have an impact on many people and organizations (Sternberg, 1999). The stakeholder analysis is needed to represent clearly all the actors of the process and give them specific roles and responsibilities. As primary stakeholder are considered those who are dealing with destination management and as secondary those who they experience the destination for limited time (Coban & Yildiz, 2019)

South Laconia's stakeholders are various and their motives and influence are differentiated from actor to actor. Below, there is an analysis of stakeholders and their importance on planning and implementation of the tourism destination process.

### **3.2.1. Primary stakeholders**

1. *Region of Peloponnese* is the key factor in the process of DMO, which also has the majority of its shares. Regional governance is the authority, which is responsible for the development of its territory by capitalizing on EU and State funds and also prioritizing which infrastructure and campaign must be done. Moreover, its obligation is to understand the needs of the area and planning according to them. But, to succeed that there is a big need of collecting and tracking data and statistics for different aspects of the destination.
2. *Municipality of Monemvasia* and *Municipality of Elafonisos* are the second most important factors. They are the authorities that managing the issues of the area and its resources. Municipalities have mostly administrative role and not managerial that much, because they connect local society with Regional and State authorities.
3. *E.O.T.* and basically *Regional Branch of E.O.T in Peloponnese* and in particular, in Laconia. The main responsibility of that organization is to manage the tourism activity on a destination and either supervising the DMO about big projects or advising upon the KPIs of destination, current trends and tourism marketing activities.
4. *Associations and federations of tourism businesses* are the OSEED in Laconia, the Chamber of Laconia and the Hotels Association of Laconia. Chamber of Laconia has the key role among the association because it connects the tourism business with businesses in other sectors. OSEED and Hotel Association are responsible to transmit the tourism education to the tourism industries but also informing them about the current and future trends. They are part of a national network that are able to influence the tourism market and formulate it.
5. *Cultural and other NGOs.* The non-governmental organizations are responsible to turn into actions the intangible principles, traditions and values that pulsate the area. Cultural NGOs aim to address and promote the cultural dimensions of South Laconia through relevant activities and projects. Their main point of interest is to maintain the artistic and folklore tradition of the area, its cultural heritage. They usually face

sustainability problems, due to the lack of appropriate housing and sufficient monetary contribution coming from the annual membership fees. In addition to this comes the low level of economic management since the most attached members of the associations lack of master knowledge and have not enough support by the responsible local authorities of the region. Apart from the cultural NGOs are also environmental and sports clubs that play an important role on the social tissue.

6. *Community members.* All the inhabitants of the area who are living permanently or seasonally there, have the major influence on the identity of the destination. As a result, they have to be involved from the planning process till the execution of the strategic development model. They can give a different perspective and also educate them to interact with tourists. This point is very important because there is not discussion for slow tourism and sustainable destination without the engagement of tourists with the local society.

### **3.2.2. Secondary stakeholders**

1. Tourists are part of the secondary stakeholders because even if they play an important role for destination, they are not responsible for its strategic plan or how the destination will be developed.
2. Region of Peloponnese. The Regional authority of Peloponnese is an actor with whom there is a need to have strong and collaborative relations, because the road system, the highways are the ways to reach the area, has been constructed, managed and maintained by this government.

### 3.3 SWOT Analysis

<i>Strengths</i>	<i>Weaknesses</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• easy access by car (low cost access)</li><li>• high number of cultural activities (especially during summer)</li><li>• many active cultural organizations</li><li>• well-organized Marine in Monemvasia</li><li>• Kythera island is relatively close</li><li>• great combination of natural and cultural landscape</li><li>• multi-insularity→safety in sailing</li><li>• safety in a good level</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• lack of tourism assessment to identify its impacts</li><li>• seasonality (June – July – August)</li><li>• no airport or big port</li><li>• low number of activities and organized experiences provided</li><li>• lack of official DMO by local and regional government</li><li>• bad waste management, no recycling</li><li>• lack of tourism report system and no official statistics for the regions separately</li><li>• no well-trained labor force</li></ul>

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<i>Opportunities</i>	<i>Threats</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• second-home phenomenon</li> <li>• counterurbanization phenomenon in the big cities → young people are moving back to live and work</li> <li>• EU funds for agriculture</li> <li>• EU funds for alternative tourism activities</li> <li>• The position of the area in Greece (the southeastern destination of coastal Europe)</li> <li>• global demand for diverse tourism products, apart from 4Ss</li> <li>• Connection with Kythera island and Crete island</li> <li>• Hydroplane port</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• scarce water resources</li> <li>• tourism unemployment in low season</li> <li>• earthquakes</li> <li>• landslides in coastal zone during raining days</li> <li>• high garbage production</li> <li>• marine pollution by agricultural and residential waste and boat sewage</li> <li>• fires</li> <li>• floods</li> <li>• poor quality of services</li> </ul>

### 3.4 Problems in destination

The destination of South Laconia faces crucial problems according to the standards of being a sustainable tourism destination, such as accessibility and seasonality. The last years have been actions for improving those standards.

### ***Accessibility***

The accessibility of the destination is governed by a variety of influences including the frequency, ease and quality of automobile, air, bus, train, sea access; aviation regulations; visa requirements etc. The transport system also plays a major role considering safety concerns, comfort levels and journey time (Dwyer & Kim, 2010).

The area is generally is considered accessible as destination. The internal road system of the area is not the greatest but there have been many improvements in order to have an easy access to small villages and settlements.

### ***Seasonality***

It is a fact that seasonality is a phenomenon that characterizes many regions and islands of Greece. It is a main characteristic not only in the Peloponnese but generally in the Mediterranean area. Specifically, South Laconia is considered part of it. Tourism in the region begins timidly in the mid of May and culminates in July and August mainly. As a result, most businesses operate seasonally, and the area is almost deserted during the winter months.

One of the goals of sustainable development is to combat this phenomenon as it negatively impacts not only the residents but also the area itself. Creating a strategic plan aiming to focus on activities for all over the year, would have the opportunity to develop separated from the phenomenon of seasonality.

### **The necessity of sustainability**

Analyzing above all the important elements of the destination and its natural and cultural resources, it is obvious that there is a great need for sustainable tourism development. The tourism movement of “slow tourism” is the way that South Laconia should be developed the next decades. Slow tourism is a trend to come against mass tourism or fast tourism development that creates several irreversible problems. Through slow tourism, the visitors have the opportunity to experience and connect with the local society and its essence (Tsartas & Lytras, 2017).

#### **4. Research Methodology**

The study technique is based on the below-mentioned questionnaire.

A questionnaire is a written list of questions that people are asked in order to gather information. The questionnaire is classified as quantitative method since it comprises only closed questions that belong to the quantitative research technique of social research. The steps in the approach as well as the data outcomes are discussed below.

The current study's purpose is to contact tourism actors in the area of South Lakonia in order to gather information about the area's tourist situation.

There are four research goals:

- Assess if the tourism product of South Laconia could be enhanced through alternative forms of tourism
- Understand to which alternative activities should focus on succeeding the sustainable tourism development of the region
- Examine what problems would create obstacles in tourism development
- Provide information about a key issue for the tourist season, that might be affected by whether the businessmen and members of the local authorities are permanent residents in the area

##### **4.1 Participants' Profile**



In the current study, 58 people from the tourism businesses, as well as officials from regional and local governments and cultural NGOs from the area of South Laconia, took part.

28 males (48.28 percent) and 30 females (51.72 percent) responded to the survey.

The participants ranged in age from 18 to 73 years old. In particular, 28 individuals (48.28 %) were between the ages of 39 and 54, 16 (27.59 %) were between the ages of 23 and 38, 12 (20.69 %) were between the ages of 55 and 73, and just 2 (3.44%) were under the age of 22. According to the participants' educational levels, 13 of them (22.41 %) have completed secondary education, 6 (10.34 %) have a college degree or a job training certificate, 20 (34.48 %) have completed higher educational institutions (University), 12 (20.69%) have a master's degree, 2 (3.45 %) have a Doctor of Philosophy, and 5 (8.62 %) have chosen the option of other.

Considering the fact that people who participated in the questionnaire have origins from South Laconia area, the 74.14 % (43 participants) answered “yes”, while the 25.86% (15 participants) answered “no”. On the other hand, the 32.76% (19 people) still lives in the area of Laconia, but the 67.24% (39 answers) do not live permanently in the area all the yearlong.

When it comes to the category of businesses and organizations, the percentages of the answers are 2 (3.45 %) O.T.A., 1 (1.72 %) Associations and Chamber and 6 (10.35 %) Cultural Organizations. Additionally, 49 (84.48 %) tourism enterprises, of which 39 (79.60 %) are rental homes, 4 (8.16 %), other touristic businesses such as rental vehicles and boats, and 6 (12.24 %) F&B businesses.

The research also looked at the essential elements of enterprises and organizations, such as the municipality of establishment, the number of years the business has been in operation and the number of people employed. According to the division of Municipalities, 36 (62.07 %) out of 58 businesses and organizations are based in the Municipality of Monemvasia, 17 (29.31%) of them located in Municipality of Elafonisos and 5 (8.62%) of them located in other areas of South Laconia.

Given that 1-5 people work in 41 (70.69%) businesses, 6-10 people in 11 (11.25%) businesses, >15 people in 5 (8.62%) businesses, and 11-15 people in just 1 (1.72%) firm, it is obvious that the area consists of small-medium enterprises, which in Greek reality means family-run businesses. The duration of organizations and businesses operating in South Laconia vary, with the bulk of them having been open for over 15 years (53.45%), while the rest have been open for 1-5 years (12.07%), 6-10 years (18.97%), and 11-15 years (15.51%).

## **4.2 Procedure**

Multiple materials were employed in the current study project to analyze sustainable tourism in terms of stakeholder contribution in South Laconia.

First, participants' gender, age, education level, permanent residency, municipality, and characteristics, such as whereabouts, persons employed, years of operations, and category of business, were all questioned. Closed type questions with several category choices were employed for this purpose. Following their responses to these questions, participants were asked to complete closed questions for sustainable tourism and alternative activities, as well. In total the questionnaire consists of 15 closed questions.

The questionnaire distribution process was to find important people who could locate property owners willing to respond. The questionnaire was sent via a link to the online questionnaire on Google forms as well as printed material, which was aimed primarily at restaurants and taverns. The distribution began on January 20<sup>th</sup> and ended on February 15<sup>th</sup> by email services. Due to low-season period, it was not possible to find many property and F&B service owners. As a result, only 58 questionnaires received back. Cultural organizations and OTAs, on the other hand, were approached via social media and phone calls. What was noticeable during the questionnaire gathering was that secondary stakeholders and these who do not make decisions were willing to assist and supply information in that case, especially after being contacted by phone, whereas the authorities and those in decision-making positions had limited time to participate in the research.

### 4.3. Questionnaire

1. Φύλο \*

☐ ΑΝΔΡΑΣ

☐ ΓΥΝΑΙΚΑ

☐ Άλλο: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Ηλικία \*

☐ < 22

☐ 23 - 38

☐ 39 - 54

☐ 55 - 73

☐ > 74

3. Μορφωτικό επίπεδο \*

☐ Δευτεροβάθμια Εκπαίδευση

☐ Ανώτερη εκπαίδευση (ΙΕΚ, Κολλέγιο κτλ.)

☐ Ανώτατη μόρφωση (ΑΕΙ/ΤΕΙ)

☐ Μεταπτυχιακές Σπουδές

☐ Κάτοχος Διδακτορικού διπλώματος

☐ Άλλο: \_\_\_\_\_

4. Θεωρείτε πως η περιοχή της Νότιας Λακωνίας (Δήμος Μονεμβασίας και Δήμος Ελαφονήσου) έχουν δυνατότητες ανάπτυξης εναλλακτικών μορφών τουρισμού; \*

- ☐ ΝΑΙ
- ☐ ΟΧΙ
- ☐ ΔΕΝ ΞΕΡΩ | ΔΕΝ ΑΠΑΝΤΩ

5. Έχετε καταγωγή από τη Νότια Λακωνία; \*

- ☐ ΝΑΙ
- ☐ ΟΧΙ
- ☐ ΔΕΝ ΞΕΡΩ | ΔΕΝ ΑΠΑΝΤΩ

6. Ζείτε μόνιμα (χειμώνα - καλοκαίρι) στην περιοχή; \*

- ☐ ΝΑΙ
- ☐ ΟΧΙ
- ☐ ΔΕΝ ΞΕΡΩ | ΔΕΝ ΑΠΑΝΤΩ

7. Σε ποιον Δήμο της Νότιας Λακωνίας εδρεύει η επιχείρησή ή ο οργανισμός στον οποίο εργάζεστε; \*

Επιλογή ▼

8. Πόσο προσωπικό απασχολείται στην επιχείρησή ή στον οργανισμό που εργάζεστε; \*

- ☐ 1-5
- ☐ 6-10
- ☐ 11-15
- ☐ >15

9. Πόσα χρόνια δραστηριότητας έχει η επιχείρησή ή ο σύλλογός σας; \*

- ☐ 1-5
- ☐ 6-10
- ☐ 11-15
- ☐ >15

10. Κατηγορία επιχείρησης \*

- ☐ ΟΤΑ - Οργανισμός Τοπικής Αυτοδιοίκησης (Δήμος, Πνευματικό κέντρο και Περιφέρεια)
- ☐ Επιμελητήριο, Μαρίνα Λευκάδας Μουσεία, Σωματεία επιχειρηματιών
- ☐ Ξενοδοχείο, ενοικιαζόμενα δωμάτια ή διαμερίσματα, βίλες κτλ.
- ☐ Άλλες τουριστικές επιχειρήσεις (τουριστικά γραφεία, ενοικίαση σκαφών, αυτοκινήτων κ.ά.)
- ☐ Επιχείρηση μαζικής εστίασης (εστιατόριο, καφετέρια κτλ.)
- ☐ Πολιτιστικοί σύλλογοι, Περιβαλλοντικές οργανώσεις κτλ.
- ☐ Άλλο: \_\_\_\_\_

11. Ποια είναι τα πιο σημαντικά προβλήματα που εμποδίζουν την περιοχή να εξελιχθεί σε βιώσιμο τουριστικό προορισμό; \*

- ☐ Οδικό δίκτυο - Κυκλοφοριακή συμφόρηση
- ☐ Προσβασιμότητα σε ΑμεΑ - έλλειψη υποδομών
- ☐ Ασφάλεια και αστυνόμευση
- ☐ Έλλειψη νέων επενδύσεων
- ☐ Παράνομη επιχειρηματική δραστηριότητα
- ☐ Υποδομές υγείας
- ☐ Διαχείριση απορριμμάτων
- ☐ Φυσικά φαινόμενα (π.χ. σεισμοί, πλημμύρες)
- ☐ Ρύπανση θαλασσών
- ☐ Άλλο: \_\_\_\_\_

12. Σε ποιο επίπεδο πιστεύετε βρίσκεται η ποιότητα του τοπικού τουριστικού προϊόντος; \*

	1	2	3	4	5	
Πολύ χαμηλό	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Πολύ υψηλό

13 Ποιες μορφές τουρισμού πιστεύετε πως μπορούν να αναπτυχθούν στην περιοχή, εκτός από το κλασικό μοντέλο του καλοκαιρινού μαζικού τουρισμού (ήλιος-θάλασσα); \*

- ☐ Πολιτιστικός τουρισμός (cultural tourism)
- ☐ Θρησκευτικός τουρισμός (religious tourism)
- ☐ Τουρισμός εκδηλώσεων και φεστιβάλ (event and festival tourism)
- ☐ Γαστρονομικός Τουρισμός - Οινoturισμός (gastronomy and wine tourism)
- ☐ Αγροτουρισμός (agritourism)
- ☐ Οικοτουρισμός - Τουρισμός υπαίθρου (ecotourism - rural tourism)
- ☐ Τουρισμός κρουαζιέρας (cruise tourism)
- ☐ Θαλάσσιος τουρισμός (coastal and marine tourism)
- ☐ Άλλο: \_\_\_\_\_

14. Η επιχείρηση ή ο οργανισμός που εργάζεστε είναι η κύρια δραστηριότητά σας; \*

- ☐ ΝΑΙ
- ☐ ΟΧΙ, απασχολούμαι και σε άλλο αντικείμενο του ιδιωτικού τομέα.
- ☐ ΟΧΙ, εργάζομαι και στο δημόσιο τομέα.

15. Ποιες εναλλακτικές δραστηριότητες θα μπορούσαν ενισχύσουν την βιώσιμη τουριστική ανάπτυξη της περιοχής (π.χ. hiking, ποδηλασία, καταδύσεις, ιππασία, θαλάσσια σπορ κ.ά.); \*

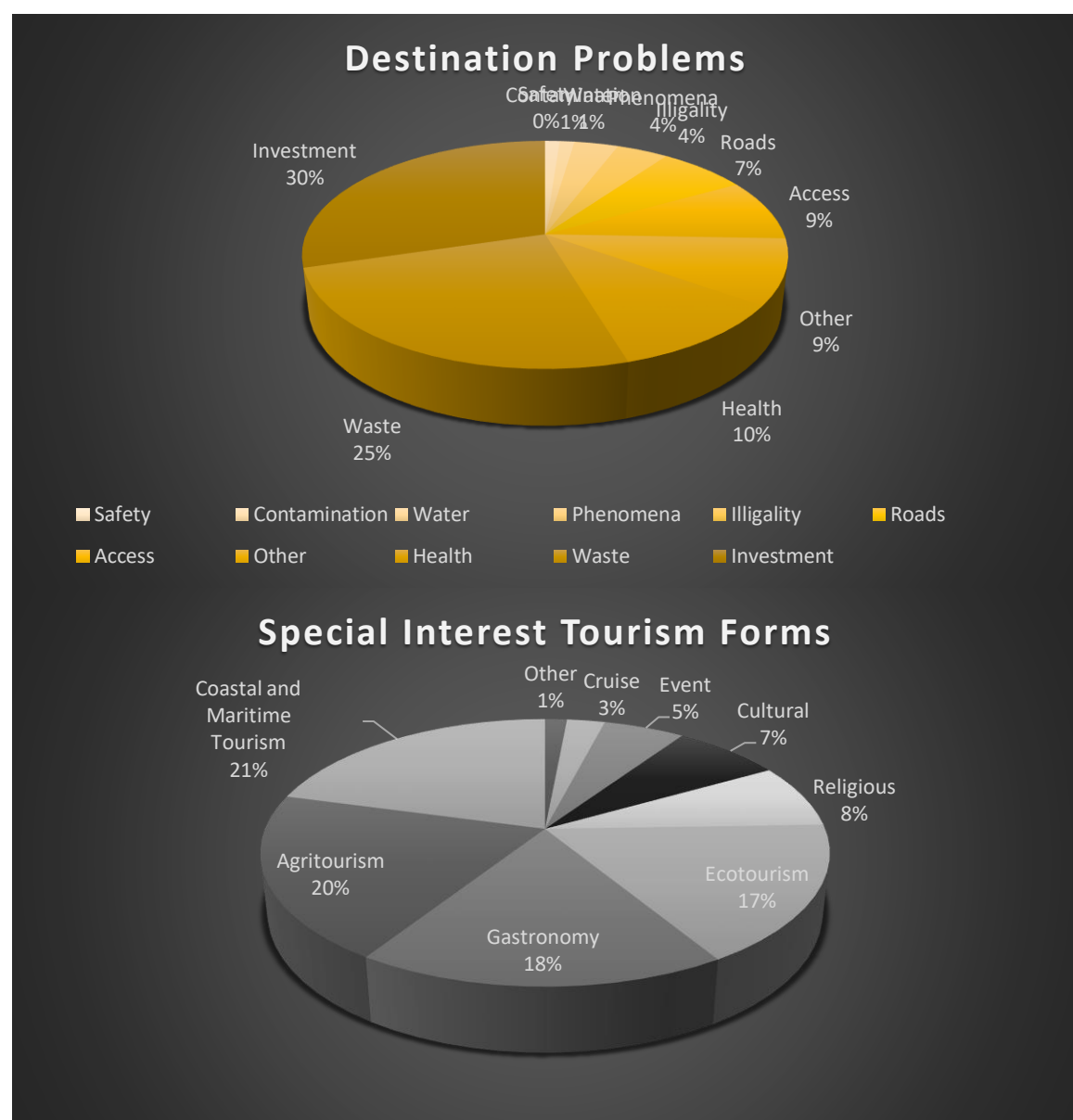
Η απάντησή σας \_\_\_\_\_

#### 4.4. Data Analysis

First of all, questionnaire had the scope to give information about the quality levels of the local tourism product. Participants believed that the tourism product of South Laconia is medium to low considering different variables. For this question was used Likert scale, which showed that the 51.72% of participants were neutral, 20.69% and 8.62%

thought that it is low and very low, respectively, while 12.07% have the opinion that the quality is high and only the 6.90% answered very high.

On the contrary, destination currently faces some challenges that slow down the sustainable tourism development of the South Laconia. Waste management (25%), lack of investments (30%), health system (10%), accessibility (9%), road network (7%) and generally illegality (4%) are the main problems that destination confronts, according to the responses of the participants. There are also other reasons (9%) that influence this development.



The four main forms of special interest tourism that participants selected for the destination development are coastal and marine tourist (21%), agrotourism (20%), gastronomy (18%) and ecotourism (17%). As secondary options they selected religious tourism (8%), cultural tourism (7%), event tourism (5%) and cruise tourism (3%). Finally, participants proposed activities that could organize and implement by local actors, such as hiking, diving, sailing, watersports and during winter months gastronomical events and wine tasting seminars.

## **5. South Laconia: Sustainable Tourism Destination**

The biggest challenge in reshaping the tourism product of South Laconia destination is how the restructure could success to combine development towards competitiveness and sustainability. Below, it is presented an analytical proposal by focusing on four special interest tourism forms, which are considered the essential for achieving the decrease of seasonality and the attraction of more qualitative tourists.

### **5.1 Proposal**

Firstly, there is a great need for DMO establishment for South Laconia destination. It is time for a strategic development plan considering the natural and cultural resources and assets. The second need is policy creation and implementation with specific guidelines in order to protect and preserve destination's various landscapes. Not only the literature review, but also the destination analysis shows that the involvement of stakeholders could give to the destination an extra point to differ from the competitive tourism market.

The idea of creating *Municipal Cultural Centers* has been mentioned before in several conferences and meetings, but now it is high demand to organize and establish this concept.



The centers' role and responsibilities are:

- organizing events in a more concerted way under a collaborative spirit of all stakeholders
- make synergies among the stakeholders for various projects
- renovating and elevating the use of former elementary schools that every village used to have and now are abandoned
- establishing small libraries and conservatory – focusing on folklore dancing, music and choral performances – for the local communities to have the opportunity to be engaged with the literature and arts

The sub-Cultural center will bring the advantage to the destination to attract more and more not even tourists but also permanent residents.

Taking into consideration the proposed idea above, in the region of South Laconia there is a great gap on tourist management. There is not any organization to provide tourists the essential information for the destination or some recommendations on what to do during his/her stay. As a result, the proposal of this current thesis is to establish a *Tourist Office* concept, under the leadership of the sub-cultural centers. In these Offices every village would have its information center that would belong to the main management of the municipality. The main responsibilities are going to be the collaborative network of tourism businesses, the information and the reception of tourists, the area's promotion implementation and the control of illegal tourism activity.

#### **5.1.1 Destination nexus**

The model that South Laconia destination needs to use is the destination nexus. By this model, the DMO is analyzing the resources and focuses on four or five special interest types through which is capitalizing its natural and cultural resources to attract more and more people and in different period of the year. In the case of South Laconia, based on the research above, the focused SITs are ecotourism, CMT, cultural tourism and marine tourism.

The success of this nexus is contributed by mass tourism but under specific guidelines and destination policy.

### ***Ecotourism***

Ecotourism is the form of special interest tourism that is based on the nature and the ecosystem. The ecosystem is the system where various life forms – species of fauna and flora – interact and be developed by living in a common environment (Komilis, 2001).

Ecology is the science which analyze these relationships and interactions. Through ecotourism, the activities based on the notion of sustainability are accomplished not only by economic development but also protecting and promoting the natural and cultural resources and assets.

According to (Ceballos-Lascurain, 1996), ecotourism is defined as an environmentally-responsible travel activity in unspoiled natural landscapes, with aim to experience and appreciation of the nature and its assets. Ecotourism includes various of activities focused on a great range of different environmental resources. The experiences through these activities are divided in two categories: the first category is the direct experiences, in which the tourist actively participates in various activities. On the other hand, the indirect experiences or substitutional activities are defined the experiences the tourist does not take active role in the activities but he/she takes pleasure in observing the fauna and flora of the landscape.

The different types of ecotourism depend on the characteristics of the specific lands or areas. The first type is connected with the first category of experiences and related with not only adventure travels which are demanding physical stamina, such as passthrough chines and gorges, but also outdoor activities in unspoiled landscape. The observation (photo-shooting), identification and apprehension of the distinctness of wildlife is also part of the first type of ecotourism. On the contrary, the second type is more anthropocentric and it is about meeting and experiencing local societies by participating on their everyday activities and events. Farm tourism which is part of agritourism can be also considered as ecotourism

type, because the individual is able to experience nature in a different aspect by visiting ecomuseums and botanic gardens or staying in a farm or a ranch (Komilis, 2001).

Based on Mowforth & Munt (2003), Ruschmann (1992) and Budowski (1992) the types of ecotourists are separated into categories (i) based on their knowledge and the intensity of their activity, and (ii) based on physiographical characteristics. According to their activity, there are three types of tourists:

- rough tourist, individual who select intense and adventurous activities in the landscape
- smooth tourist, the one who observes and apprehends the natural environment, mainly through traveling and excursions
- specialist, he/she travels for either educational reasons or hobbies

Analyzing (Ballantine & Eagles, 1994), tourist presents some significant physiographical characteristics, such as:

- environmental ethic
- urgency feeling to be active in order to preserve the environment
- self-encouragement is the way of being active
- orientation is characterized of bio-centric aspect and not anthropocentric
- fighting to protect the wildlife in the environment are going to visit or have connected before

In the case of South Laconia, there is a great potential to develop such a SIT tourism. Before starting promote strategically the DMO this form of tourism, there is a strict legislative context, in which the consequences of no respecting the environmental resources and assets would be enormous. The promotion has to be targeted to audience that are willing to participate by protecting the natural landscape. The development must be under the slow tourism and not focusing on rapid development from year to year.

Generally, some important points for ecotourism activities:

- The best period is Spring and Autumn, because during summer the weather is quite warm and may be difficult to enjoy the footpaths and the natural sceneries.
- The footpaths in South Laconia are numerous.
- Due to a remarkable number of dogs, snakes, scorpions and bees, there is a great need for DMO to inform the ecotourism visitors about them and how to protect themselves in any case. Moreover, it could be a good idea to train the local inhabitants in case of emergency how to react and provide the first aid.

### **Coastal and Marine tourism**

Coastal settings have always been important for human societies. They have formed a basis for settlement and transport and have provided access to an important food source. In addition, these settings have been valued locations for recreation, and travel to coastal areas for leisure has been a common trend throughout human history (Orams & Lück, 2013). In the past four decades the use of marine ecosystems and adjacent coasts for recreation has mirrored the massive growth of tourism as a global phenomenon of the late twentieth century. Initially driven by the sea, sand, and sun desires of citizens from northern latitude developed nations, who sought to escape the winter, coastal settings in warmer tropical and subtropical climates have been synonymous with mass tourism development. While beach-based holidays at hotels, resorts, and clubs provided near-shore marine recreational opportunities, the trend towards more diverse and geographically remote coastal and marine tourism (CMT) destinations did not begin until the last two decades of the twentieth century.

The marine tourism is considered as specialized form of tourism which demands knowledge and protection of marine landscape. Apart from the sea and the coastline, other forms of sea navigation are also included in marine tourism, such as yachting and cruises (Mira & Mylonopoulos, 2005). Technology has also had a major influence on this growth as the

invention of new ways of getting on, in, and under the sea has provided new opportunities to utilize previously inaccessible locations. Important examples include the self-contained underwater breathing apparatus (scuba); robust, safe, and relatively affordable vessels (kayaks, surf-craft, boats, personal watercraft), and new activities which harness the wind and/or waves (kiteboarding, windsurfing, wakeboarding). (Orams M., 1999), (Lück, 2014).

In theory, preservation and development goals are nicely balanced in sustainable tourism development. In the practice of management, we find these goals are mixed in government portfolios in different proportions, depending on the abundance and status of the resources at stake, potential tourism and other demands, and the designs for living of traditional peoples. Complicating matters, we discover that the formal names of individual marine protected areas (e.g. national park, sanctuary, biosphere reserve) are not consistently associated with ranges of human uses and intensity levels permitted. Keenly aware of this terminological problem, M. Carolyn Stewart focuses on institutional variability. Borrowing from the vocabulary of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and National Resources, Stewart shows that idealized types of marine conservation regimes differ by ethic, objectives, and regulations. This conceptual contribution is augmented with references to regimes throughout the Pacific (e.g. in the Philippines, the Galapagos Islands, New Caledonia, Australia) which endorse marine tourism in different ways, and a practical discussion of the importance of community involvement in the management endeavor (Miller, 1993).

Regarding coastal tourism, most activities include the development of second homes and seaside resorts, the pattern of construction is likely to cause damage to the coastal environment. Houses, resorts, hotels, and other hard infrastructures contribute to shoreline changes, water pollution, deteriorate fresh water catchment that leads to seawater intrusion and solid waste. Over the last few decades, the tendency to build new tourism facilities and infrastructure in the fragile coastal zone is still growing. Tourism activities in the waters, such as diving, snorkeling, swimming and other water tourism activities, pose a threat for the coral reef ecosystem and decrease the live coral coverage, resulting in a decrease of its function. The physical function of coral reefs is as a wave damper while the

ecological functions to provide environmental services for other ecosystems (Tegar & Gurning, 2018).

On the contrary, yachts which represent the largest segment of marine tourism - are responsible for high levels of water pollution (due to waste disposal practices) as well as air pollution (mainly due to gas emissions of cruise ships). At the same time, other marine tourism activities (such as daily trips, underwater fishing, etc.), due to the spatial pattern they follow (close to urban environments and as close as possible to the shoreline), also contribute to the degradation of coastal waters, especially those found close to cities (Tegar & Gurning, 2018).

There are numerous activities depending the criteria that every activity is taking place in order to categorize them have to analyze the types of CMT. The types are:

- Coastal tourism
- Submarine tourism
- Marine natural tourism
- Marine cultural tourism
- Marine sport tourism
- Yachting
- Cruise tourism

South Laconia have many prospects for further development to their marine tourism. Its flagship location in combination with the region's unique waters are of great value for future sustainable investment. The yacht category is high income tourism type which can be further developed, providing the region with tourist promotion and advertising and at the same time openings for future investments. This particular category has the potential to evolve and not only take place during the summer time but all year round, developing a type of marine event tourism, educating and consulting stakeholders from all over the world.

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Municipality</b>	<b>Kind of CMT</b>	<b>Period for interest</b>
Surfing ( Punda Beach )	Monemvasia	coastal tourism	Spring-Summer-Autumn
Windsurfing ( Neratzionas Beach )	Monemvasia	coastal tourism	Spring-Summer-Autumn
Water sports	Monemvasia & Elafonisos	coastal tourism	Spring-Summer-Autumn
Scuba diving	Monemvasia & Elafonisos	submarine tourism	Spring-Summer
Pavlopetri Museum	Monemvasia	marine cultural tourism	Spring-Summer
Yachting Facilities	Monemvasia & Elafonisos	yachting	Spring-Summer-Autumn
Daily tour boats	Monemvasia & Elafonisos	yachting	Spring-Summer-Autumn

*Coastal & Marine tourism activities in South Laconia*

Coastal and Marine tourism is very important for South Laconia to diversify as destination. In order to achieve this, there is a strategic planning by marine experts who would capitalize on the opportunities of the natural environment by protecting it in cases of crisis. The proposals for that section have to be considerable by DMO :

- Based on the novel of Karkavitsas, could be organized a marine cultural route representing *The passage of Kavomalias* as the novelist wrote. An adventure on the coastline of the region it could be a great experience for people to admire it.
- Even if it is general belief that cruise tourism is an appropriate form of CMT and it may be enable the destination with more visitors, there are many gaps not only in the planning on how the destination will handle such a big inflow, but also the current infrastructure is not the essential to provide the services are demanded by cruise tourists.

## Cultural tourism

The twenty-second session of the (UNWTO) General Assembly in Chengdu, China (11 to 16 September 2017), adopted the following definition for cultural tourism:

*Cultural tourism is a type of tourism activity in which the visitor's essential motivation is to learn, discover, experience and consume the tangible and intangible cultural attractions/products in a tourism destination. These attractions/products relate to a set of distinctive material, intellectual, spiritual and emotional features of a society that encompasses arts and architecture, historical and cultural heritage, culinary heritage, literature, music, creative industries and the living cultures with their lifestyles, value systems, beliefs and traditions.*

Cultural Tourism is that type of tourism activity in which the main motivation of the visitor is to visit cultural sites in order to learn, discover and experience the cultural heritage of each tourist destination. These cultural attractions relate to a group of distinct material, intellectual, spiritual, and emotional characteristics of a society that includes arts and architecture, historical and cultural heritage, gastronomic heritage, literature, theater, music, photography, creative arts and cultures. their values systems, beliefs and traditions. Cultural tourism includes cultural heritage areas / sites and activities that have been inherited and preserved from the past, referring to other epochs, achievements and



lifestyles. It is distinguished by material (cultural heritage buildings, architectural sights, world heritage sites, national and historical monuments), intangible (literature, art, philosophy, folklore, singing), cultural and artistic attractions (sights), cultural heritage with historical faces. Cultural thematic route is the set of natural or artificial attractions based on a specific thematic framework. Themes can provide education and recreation at the same time. Cultural event - festival - folklore. As such, any organized activity of the tourist contributing to a personalized and authentic experience, with all kinds of active involvement or involvement with the arts, heritage or special features of a place or a thematic / cultural event (Ministry of Culture and Sports).

Cultural tourism has a long history, and with its roots in the Grand Tour is arguably the original form of tourism. It is also one of the forms of tourism that most policy makers seem to be betting on for the future. The World Tourism Organization, for example, asserted that cultural tourism accounted for 37% of global tourism, and forecast that it would grow at a rate of 15% per year. Such figures are often quoted in studies of the cultural tourism market but are rarely backed up with empirical research (Richards, 2003).

In theoretical terms, the relationship between tourism and culture illustrates that the current cultural tourism market represents the latest phase in a long-standing process of convergence between culture and tourism (Richards, 2003). In the past, culture and tourism were being separate spheres of social practice, undertaken by distinct social groups at specific times. As (Urry, 1995) has noted, however, the barriers between culture and tourism are disappearing as a result of two parallel processes: The culturization of society and the culturization of tourist practices.

One reason why cultural tourism is a useful development tool for so many regions are the fact that every place has culture it can develop - unlike the development of beach tourism, which requires at least a coastline. The plentiful supply of cultural objects can also create major funding problems relating to the upkeep of historic structures and cultural venues. The solution to the funding problem may also be seen in the development of cultural tourism (Richards, 2003).

South Laconia, as a cultural tourism destination has every opportunity to promote in the best possible way its traditions and customs. As mentioned above, the organization committee needs to implement a serious strategic management plan conducted by all stakeholders on the area and before they can make such a move, they should be able to host future cultural tourists. Festivals, customs, traditions, gastronomy festivals and architecture should be the first priority for the DMO's strategic planning, because cultural sector is manageable all over the year and could play important role for developing a yearly destination. The museums and archeological sites of the destination could also play a role for the strategic planning, but not a main one. This is noted due to the fact that other competitive destinations have stronger cultural resources as these, so South Laconia could not be competitive destination.

There are lots of improvements that must happen in order to create a high-standard cultural tourism. There is a great potentiality that South Laconia have upon their cultural activities and mostly on Intangible Cultural Heritage.

### **Religious tourism**

It is estimated that there are approximately six hundred million national and international religious and spiritual voyages in the world, of which 40% take place in Europe and over half in Asia. According to (UNESCO), 60% of the world's population practices a religion and these believers form the demographic base of religious tourism.

Religious tourism is a type of tourism exclusively or strongly motivated by religious reasons. This is one of the oldest forms of tourism. It can also be referred to as faith tourism or spiritual tourism. People go on religious holidays to confirm, deepen or reflect upon their faith. They would like to: connect personally to a holy place, better understand and appreciate a religion, feel free from worry and find peace and meaning in life. Some examples of religious tourism activities are religious tourist attractions, pilgrimages, monastery visits and guest stays, retreats and faith-based camps, religious conventions and

rallies, leisure (fellowship) and vacations. According to UNWTO, Religious tourism is one of the fastest growing segments of the travel industry. The UNWTO estimates that 300 million tourists visit the world's major religious sites each year (one fourth of all international tourist arrivals) and that 600 million national and international religious voyages are undertaken annually. This growth in religious tourism brings an unprecedented potential to foster inclusive and sustainable development – creating jobs and livelihoods, allowing infrastructure and investment and stimulating local culture, crafts and food. This not only helps communities value their unique cultural and religious contribution, building pride and self-esteem, but can increase economic opportunity and build the foundations for peace. Religious tourism can also promote a culture of peace by encouraging intercultural and interfaith dialogue and understanding. Common values of tolerance and co-existence can be shared and promoted alongside pilgrimage principles of sacred hospitality, openness and welcome to the stranger.

*Religious tourism is a key agent of peace. It is a transformative force that breaks down cultural barriers and builds bridges between people, communities and nations. Leveraging the growing interest in religious tourism is crucial in building cultural dialogue, mutual understanding and peace.* – Taleb Rifai, Secretary-General, (UNWTO)

Religious tourism in its current form is a relatively new phenomenon, having emerged as a result of the decline in religious practice, secularization of societies, the growing popularity of trips by car or bus and, in some countries, the reduction in the practice of traditional pilgrimages (Santos & Da Graca , 2003). The term religious tourism embraces a category of travelers between pilgrims and tourists on the one hand (Cohen, 1998), and between pious and pleasure travelers with knowledge-based motivation on the other hand.

*Religious Tourism:* Religious Tourism is the set of all tourist activities related to traveling by individuals or organized groups to places, places and monuments of religious importance for reasons of religious, cultural, educational and informational interest.

*Pilgrimage Tour:* All the above activities when centralized or pilgrimage, and / or religious services / events, and / or worship service.

Religious tourism or otherwise pilgrimage tourism is one type of tourism which includes visits of tourists - pilgrims to places of religious interest such as monuments, churches and religious graves. However, it should not be judged by a strict theological criterion because groups of people who do not belong to one are also seen to be interested religious group. It is a fact Pilgrimage has always been a motive for organizing or touring excursions and attracted people of different nationalities and solar spectrum (mainly certain senior citizens). The attractiveness of travel It was mainly due to either the religious or the historical value of the monuments, while past religious events that took place in various ways places became the reason for the increase in tourism in these places. Modern tourism, therefore, owes much to the religious tradition and is critical further features of destinations such as historical events, landscapes, architecture of residential wealth etc.

The economic impacts of religious tourism are various:

- Increase of employment
- Development of proper infrastructure
- Increase of revenue tax
- Improvement of road network
- Health and welfare infrastructure
- Lengthening the tourist season
- Revitalizing the local economy

Religious tourism has been gaining ground and its audience keeps on increasing rapidly. The division of the audience group is an essential factor to categorize the needs and the preferences of each group. Furthermore, religious tourists could be a problem-solver towards the seasonality affecting South Laconia.

South Laconia having a wide range of religious attractions, there is a great opportunity to be considered as a religious tourist destination. In order to achieve thus, DMO and O.T.A.

should take seriously into consideration how to reach tourists from all over the world to come and visit destination's religious heritage. Cooperation with foreign organizations and religious denominations can ameliorate the inflows of tourists with religious interest, who would like to experience the Islands' religion and religious traditions.

### **5.1.2 Policies, Standards and Guidelines**

It is important to adjust the guidelines of Agenda 21, as it was presented in Declaration of Rio (1992) by strengthening and appropriate coordinating mechanisms for integrated management and sustainable development of coastal and marine areas and their resources. Consultation is required by involving the academic and private sectors, non-governmental organizations, local communities, resource user groups, and indigenous people to ensure the prosperity of local communities (Agenda 21, 1992). It is proposed through a specific process of Forum about the sustainable tourism development in South Laconia to engage local society and influence all the stakeholders to make a commitment upon implementation of the development agenda.

This agenda must be conducted and applied for sustainable tourism in the region but through localized Codes of ethics and Policies, otherwise having just a plan will not yield any change in the mindset and attitude of locals upon sustainability. These Codes must contain regulations for changing the society lifestyle. A tourism sustainability assessment has to be identified and how the assess is going to be for the destination and its sustainable development. Some approaches for destination sustainability assessment are the identification of various dimensions and key indicators in order to create a control system, while the evaluation of this outcome is the most crucial part of the process.

## Conclusion

In the context of crisis and deep global economic and social transformation which affects the tourism sector to its full, it is the right time for the local authorities and government to take the responsibility to engage local society, entrepreneurs, organizations and every stakeholder for adopting a sustainable tourism development mindset and making them adhered to a clear strategic program with specific actions for sustainability, conservation and development.

Striving for sustainable tourism development, there is a matter of preserving the current landscape, the existing natural, socio-cultural, economic and technological resources and aspects to safeguard the continuity of human-race existence (Tsartas P, 1996). The seasonality issue is going to be competed through cultural and religious tourism and using ecotourism and CMT to provide high quality services and experiences to tourists.

To sum up, the changes that need to be done are:

- **policy-making:** in which landscape protection will be achieves by new forms of responsible tourism, eliminating seasonality and establishing internal management tools to audit every environmental and cultural analysis
- **marketing improvement:** new tourist packages creation is needed in order to compete the foreign competition
- **technological innovations:** innovations for strategic resources allocation are needed in order to avoid the depletion of them, new techniques are also essential to modernize and promote human exploitation activities, i.e. agriculture and fishing

All the changes have as a goal to diversify the offering tourism product of South Laconia from other similar ones and create a competitive advantage for the destination.

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