What Went Wrong:
Tourism Development on the Island of Lefkada, Greece.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The ability to holiday anywhere in the world has become an essential part of modern professional life. Projections show that by the end of this decade tourism is expected to become the world's leading industry. Today's mass tourism, however, is not just a movement of people going from one place to another but the accompanied mass displacement of communities, its impact on traditional communities, and the involvement of large business co-operations in this process.

Lefkada is one of the seven Ionian islands, situated off the western coast of Greece. Lefkada's assets such as climate, physical environment, and cultural heritage, had a positive influence on the development of tourism on the area. Over the last two decades, international tourist arrivals have recorded a massive increase, mostly due to the promotion of package holidays. Thus, Lefkada has become a popular tourist destination and therefore faces serious problems with the protection of its resources and position. Therefore, describing and analysing the tourism development on the island of Lefkada from a sustainable tourism perspective is necessary to see whether this development is on a sustainable path.

General information on tourism and sustainable development were obtained through literature studies and Internet search while the data for the case of Lefkada were obtained through informal meetings and interviews that took place on the island of Lefkada during the summer of 1999. The interviewed persons were chosen to reflect different (tourism) actors, perceptions concerning the tourism development in both a historical and a current perspective.

The principles of sustainable tourism development that have been encountered important in order to designate whether the development occurring on the island is sustainable or not are the following: 1) Using Resources Sustainable, 2) Reducing over Consumption and Wastes, 3) Maintaining Diversity, 4) Integrating Tourism into Planning, 5) Supporting Local Economies, 6) Involving Local Communities, 7) Consulting Stakeholders and the Public, 8) Training Staff, 9) Marketing Tourism Responsibly and 10) Undertaking Research.

After analysing the reality of the situation in relation to the sustainable development concept and principles addressed earlier, the main conclusions drawn were the following: Lefkada's present tourism development is at the consolidation stage (i.e. the rate of the increase of visitors has declined, though the total numbers are still increasing) leading to a stagnation and a decline stage, unless immediate action takes place by both the local authorities and the tourism industry. The main drivers of this development has so far been the tourism industry and more specifically the tour operators. The idea that still exists on the island is that the area is benefited considerably by the marketing network of the tour operators. What has not been realised so far is the tour operator's influence on consumer choice that gives them the opportunity to switch sales to destinations that are more profitable to the company. No barriers to that development were identified. Finally, the transfer of labour from traditional industries (such as agriculture) to tourism and its related industries, due to the opportunity of larger earnings from tourism, has also been identified. The abandonment of agricultural areas results in the die out of the countryside and its related agricultural activities, i.e. olive peaking, wine making etc.

In other words, sustainability in Lefkada has so far been of low priority compared with the short-term drive for profitability and growth. The main reason for this was identified to be the small amount of specifically trained officials familiarised with the concept of sustainable development. Furthermore, a limiting factor in the effective implementation of policies was identified to be the fragmentation and overlapping of responsibilities of the various public agencies. However, since tourism is one of the island's largest industries, Lefkada has the potential to bring about sustainable development. What is needed is the concept of sustainability to become familiarised by the Lefkadian society. Only then, concerted action from the local governments and all sectors of the industry will secure long term future tourism development.
1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 THE GROWTH AND IMPACT OF TOURISM INDUSTRY

The origins of tourism extend back to the time of the ancient Greeks. However, tourism did not occur on any large scale until the Industrial Revolution, when affordable travel provided by the railways, combined with paid holidays offered by employers to their employees, stimulated the development of seaside resorts in Europe and the United States catering for the new middle class (Pearce, 1981). By the outbreak of the First World War, tourism had developed from a domestic to an international phenomenon. The two wars stimulated the development of airplane technology, and hence of air travel. In the post-war period, tourism grew into a mass industry. Modern mass tourism has its origins in the affluence of the industrialised nations of the West and the Asia Pacific region and the associated increase in disposable income and leisure time (Cochrane, 1994). The development of tourism has also been closely associated with advances in transport technology (Pearce, 1981), cheap oil, and the entry of multinational companies to the tourism industry (Hunter and Green, 1995).

As a result of technological advancements and improvements in telecommunications, tourism has become one of the fastest growing industries today. A sixteen-fold increase in tourist arrivals has, for example, occurred from 1950 to 1990. By the end of this decade tourism is expected to become the world’s leading industry with a further projected increase in tourist arrivals of 50 per cent (Mowforth and Munt, 1998). The World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) claims that travel and tourism is already the world’s largest industry, contributes 5.9 per cent of the world GNP, provides 7 per cent of global employment, and grew by 260 per cent between 1970 and 1990 (WTTC, 1991).

Global tourism is expected to continue to expand because people are beginning to discover more and more destinations, and the travel industry is becoming more and more organised. The ability to holiday anywhere in the world has become an essential part of modern professional life in the wealthy world. Not surprisingly, the growing middle class in the middle income economies of the world are also increasingly keen to participate in this pursuit of hedonism. The potential for more growth is, therefore, great. The questions that can, therefore, be asked is whether the planet can sustain such a growth and whether this practise of current tourism is suitable for us to pass down to future generations as a model of economic development which will guarantee them a source of income without the destruction of the environment from which they make it.

Today’s mass tourism is not just the movement of people going from one country to another but the accompanied mass displacement of communities, its impact on traditional communities, and the involvement of large business co-operations in this process. The reality is one of many negative effects. These negative effects are the results of lack of proper attention paid to the conditions necessary for sustainable tourism.

A critical attitude towards the negative effects of tourism on the culture of others and the environment has to lead to a creative effort to enter into dialogue, especially with those who are adversely affected by this process more than others. The complex nature of social change and the accompanying processes of modernisation, industrialisation, and economic development have thus to be the context in which tourism must be understood.

1.1.1 Tourism Development in Greece

Greece’s assets such as its climate, physical environment, and archaeological and cultural heritage, undoubtedly had a positive influence on the development of tourism in the country. Over the past two decades international tourist arrivals have recorded a massive increase, mostly due to the promotion of
package holidays. The steady upward trend continued until the early 1990s when it was disrupted by the Gulf War (12.6 fall in 1991) (EC, 1995). Recovery, however, was rapid as the number of arrivals increased by 15.2% between 1991 and 1992. The number of foreign tourists rose from 5 million in 1980 to 9.5 million in 1992 (average annual increase of 7.1%) (EC, 1991).

The Greek economy is marked by a chronic and steadily growing merchandise trade deficit. Although tourism receipts do not entirely cover the deficit, they compensate for a larger part of the merchandise trade loss (from 21.8% in 1990 to 58% in 1992).

An analysis of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) reveals that domestic tourist expenditure (money spend by the Greek residents on tourism) is 5-10 times higher than inbound tourist expenditure. In 1992 tourism represented 10% of the total GDP, compared with 8.5% and 8% for Spain and Portugal respectively (EC, 1995). According to these estimates Greece ranks highest among the Mediterranean countries for tourism.

1.1.2 Tourism in Lefkada

The focus of this study is the island of Lefkada. Lefkada is one of the seven Ionian islands, situated off the western coast of Greece. The region of the Ionian Islands is also known as the Heptanese (Heptanese means the seven islands). The region is divided administrative into the four nomi of Kerkyra (Korfu), Lefkada, Kefallinia and Zakynthos and comprises the islands of Kerkyra, Zakynthos, Kefallonia, Lefkada, Ithaki, Paxi and a number of smaller islands. (figure 1) The region is noted for its natural beauty and its long history and cultural tradition. It is also well placed geographically, since it is close to both mainland Greece and Western Europe and thus forms a convenient stepping stone, in particular for passenger traffic between Greece and the West. These are also some of the main factors that have favoured the continuous development of tourism, which has become the most dynamic branch in the region’s economy.

![Figure 1: The Ionian island region.](image_url) Source: Prefecture of Lefkada, 1995.
The nomos of Lefkada is the smallest in the region and in Greece. Its proximity to the mainland has erased its island character, giving Lefkada stronger links with Etoloakarnania than with the other islands. Compared with the rest of the Ionians, tourism started late in Lefkada (mid seventies). Over the last few years, however, Lefkada has become a popular tourist destination and therefore faces serious problems with the protection of its resources and its position - as competition from other destinations grows stronger (WTO et. al, 1996). Unless sustainable tourism issues are addressed in this development, the natural resources of the island will not be safeguard for future generations and the future of the enterprise will not be ensured. Therefore, issues such as creating a brand image for Lefkas, protecting the heritage, environment and tourism trends, have to be amongst the first priorities of the tourism industry. In other words, the tourism industry should be in the business of trying to maintain what has been ‘sold’ to the tourist. The maintenance of environmental quality applies not just to features which attract tourists directly (such as sea, sand, ancient monuments and features of local culture), but also to a wide range of supporting resources which are not ‘sold’ directly to the tourist. For example, fresh water supplies, sewage treatment facilities, other aspects of local infrastructure, and the attitudes of local residents towards tourism development.

1.2 OBJECTIVES

The overall aim of this research is to describe and analyse the tourism development on the island of Lefkada from a sustainable tourism perspective. The specific objectives of the paper are to:

* Define the sustainable tourism development framework.
* Give a snapshot of tourism development on the island of Lefkada.
* Analyse if and how the concept of sustainable tourism is addressed in this development.
* Discuss the potentials of sustainable tourism development.

In order to reach my objectives, the main drivers and barriers for a sustainable tourism development will have to be identified.

1.3 LIMITATIONS

The focus of the paper is relatively tight in two main respects. First, the fact that the paper focuses on the development of sustainable tourism on the island of Lefkada does not allow generalisations concerning Greece as a whole to be made. Second, the environmental impacts of the tourism development on the island will be limited on the answers given by the different interviewees. Additionally, the case study was performed between July 1999 and September 1999, i.e. it was carried out during the peak season. This was reflected in the fact that the tourism industry, as well as the local authority had difficulties in finding sufficient time for the interviews. Finally, the fact that the study was carried out during the peak season might to a certain extend have coloured the discussions.

1.4 METHODOLOGY

The study comprises of a theoretical part, which provides general information on tourism and sustainable development and a case study showing the development of tourism in Lefkada. The theoretical part, which was the initial step of this study, gives a general view on the advantages and negative effects of tourism, identifies the relationships between the different actors of the tourism industry, introduces the concept of the tourist area life cycle, gains understanding of the concept of sustainable development and finally identifies the Greek tourism policies for sustainability. These data were mainly obtained through literature studies and Internet search while the information regarding the policies and guidelines was additionally obtained by informal meetings with both the local and the national department of the environment.
The second step of the study was to gather information for the case study. The data for the case study were mainly based on information gathered through informal meetings and interviews that took place on the island of Lefkada during the summer of 1999 (20\7-10\9). The interviewed persons were chosen to reflect different (tourism) actors, perceptions concerning the tourism development in both a historical and a current perspective. Therefore, the local community, and the tourism industry were interviewed. More specifically, since the nomos of Lefkada is divided administratively into six municipalities and one community, where the main co-ordinating unit is the prefecture, Lefkada’s prefecture was chosen to be the main interviewed body. Apart from that, the municipality of Lefkada was also interviewed as well as the centre of culture and tourism and the tourist police. Finally the vice president of the hotel association was also interviewed. There have also been numerous informal meetings with the local department of the environment, the statistical service and the tourists. From the above it is clear that the availability of data were limited by the answers given by the chosen interviewed bodies. If time was sufficient, all the municipalities would have been consulted, as well as the majority of the tour operators and tourists would have also been interviewed.

The interviews that took place during this study were not structured. The main idea for the non structured interviews was to see whether the different interviewees were going to address any sustainability issues or concerns on their own, without being asked. In cases were no such concerns were addressed, the interviewer was then asking the relevant questions. Another reason for carrying out non structured interviews was the intention to gain a friendly feeling between the interviewer and the interviewee. Many of the informal meetings were established in order to get any secondary data on the climate and land characteristics of Lefkada, were the statistical service and the local department of the environment were contacted. As the author has been visiting Lefkada on and off for the last 23 years, a great part of the findings discussed has been based on personal knowledge and experiences. However, the inputs from the interviews and from the discussions with the various practitioners was mainly meant to increase the author’s awareness of tourism development in Lefkada, as well as to reduce the dominance of the author’s own perception of how tourism development has been evolved in Lefkada over the last years.

The final step of the study was to compile and analyse the data collected from the literature study, the data search and the interviews, in order to draw concluding remarks and provide some suggestions for future tourism development in Lefkada.

1.5 OUTLINE

In the chapters that follow, a multidisciplinary approach to the subject of tourism development is given. Chapter two attempts to broaden the conceptualisation of sustainability and trace its relationship to the process of environmental, societal and economic development. Any policy regulations in terms of tourism development addressed by the Greek government are also presented in this chapter. Moreover, current and future plans and policies on sustainable tourism development are presented. Chapter three looks at the case study of Lefkada. The natural and artificial environments together with the historical tourism development in Lefkada, are described. Chapter four discusses the role of the different stakeholders in promoting sustainable tourism development and analyses the situation on the island today, in relation to the sustainability concept developed in chapter two. Finally chapter 5 summarises the main findings regarding the current situation of tourism development on the island demonstrating ‘what went wrong’ during this development. Finally, this study ends by stating what tourism in Lefkada should look like in the future by suggesting different measures that could be applied by the local community.
2. TOURISM AND SUSTAINABILITY

2.1 CHAPTER DEFINITIONS

Before addressing the issue of tourism development and sustainability, it is important to give some definitions of the most used terms of this chapter: tourism and environment.

The dictionary definition of *tourism* is "the activities of tourists and those who cater for them", while a *tourist* is "a person who makes a tour, especially a sightseeing traveller or sportsman". The World Tourism Organisation (WTO) considers tourism to be any form of travel that involves a stay of at least one night but less than one year away from home. Therefore, the WTO definition includes business travel and visits to friends and relations, but not day-trips. However, for the purpose of this study, tourism is generally considered as domestic or international travel for leisure or recreation, including day-trips.

Throughout the whole report, the word *environment* encompasses both the natural and the socio-cultural environments as well as the economic environment.

2.2 ENVIRONMENTAL COSTS AND BENEFITS OF TOURISM

Ecological Costs and Benefits of Tourism

Small islands, like Lefkas, are often especially attractive tourist destinations because of their beaches, sea-life, scenic beauty, sunny climate and friendly resident population. However, small island environments are highly vulnerable to negative impacts of development. Excessive and badly planned tourism development, for example, affects the physical environment of such islands.

Impacts can result from the activities of tourists and from the construction and operation of tourist facilities and services. Impacts arising from tourism are difficult to assess, partly because of their diversity in range and in type. Impacts may be short or long term, direct or indirect, local, national or global, positive or negative (Hunter and Green, 1995). The major difficulties associated with the assessment of tourism impacts (Roe et al., 1997) include:

* tourism involves a number of linked activities, making it difficult to distinguish impacts arising from individual activities;
* activities undertaken by tourists may also be pursued by the host population, making it difficult to separate the impacts arising from tourism alone;
* environmental change occurs naturally, making tourism-induced change more difficult to quantify;
* a lack of baseline data with which to compare post-development conditions;
* tourism often has indirect and cumulative impacts which are more difficult to identify and assess;
* some impacts only become apparent in the long term; and
* environmental components are inter-linked, so a tourism activity which impacts on one aspect of the environment may produce an indirect impact on another.

The nature of any disturbance caused by tourists will depend upon its predictability, frequency and magnitude. The impact is also related to the type of tourist as much as to the type of activity or level of tourist development. Tourists are not homogeneous, and there have been a number of studies of tourist typologies which illustrate a sequential change in the type of visitors to a particular site, beginning with a stage of "explorers", and ending with "mass tourists" (Cochrane, 1994). A classification of tourists based on their holiday objectives and requirements for facilities is shown in table 1.
The majority of the tourist types presented on table 1, tend to be attracted to particularly fragile areas such as coastal zones, mountains and small islands. According to Pearce (1981) four main sources of environmental stress are generated by tourism:

- permanent restructuring of the environment from construction activities;
- generation of waste;
- effects associated with various recreational activities; and
- changes in population dynamics, especially seasonal increase in population and population densities.

In many areas of uncontrolled commercial exploitation, many hotels have been built where their architectural design does not fit with the surrounding cultural or scenic environment. Yet, the effects of such development are not solely scenic, since the waste and sewage from these developments are often discharged unprocessed, into the rivers and the seas of the holiday areas. Additionally, pool tourism development has also resulted in destroying natural environments, the long term benefits of which may not have been properly evaluated. Marshlands have, for example, been drained to create tourist marinas. The construction of supporting infrastructure such as roads, water and electricity supply, sewage and waste disposal systems will also have an impact on the environment as will the demand for various inputs (e.g. water and energy) in the operation of tourism services.

Unlike most other developments, tourism also increases the demands on local infrastructure and services. These may include transportation, water and energy supplies, waste collection and treatment and health care facilities. Increased demand often occurs with significant seasonal peaks, thus resulting in serious implications for local residents when demand exceed capacity (Roe et. al., 1997). Tourism can also generate large quantities of solid waste. This has significant implications for all holiday areas and especially for small islands which have only limited areas suitable for landfill or limited waste disposal infrastructure. Use of water for showers, swimming pools and decorative fountains means that tourists can account for four to eight times more water per day than residents (Roe et. al., 1997).

Pollution is another serious problem of tourism development. It is often difficult to distinguish pollution resulting from tourism from other sources. However, there are many examples where tourism makes a significant contribution to the total pollution load of a given area. Sewage pollution particularly is recognized as a major negative impact of mass tourism (Hunter and Green1995). Many tourist facilities, and associated industries, discharge waste water directly into the sea or lakes with little or no treatment. Cruise or pleasure craft can add to this problem through oil spills, ballast water and sewerage (Roe et. al., 1997). Whereas the impacts of water pollution are usually restricted to a well-defined area, air pollution can have much further reaching (if not global) effects.

**Table 1: Classification of Tourist Types.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Typical Characteristics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Explorers</td>
<td>Individuals requiring no special facilities. Low budget. Includes bird-watchers, trekkers and climbers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Backpackers</td>
<td>Limited budget. Use local facilities. Often excluded from visiting remote areas because of expense.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Interest Tourists</td>
<td>Dedicated to particularly hobby and prepared to pay to indulge it. Require specialist services such as safari guides. Travel in small groups.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Interest Tourists</td>
<td>Prefer group holidays, wealthy, require good facilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mass Tourists</td>
<td>Prefer large groups, need good facilities, high priority is comfort.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In many cases wildlife has also been severely disturbed. The Ionian islands, for example, and especially the island of Zakynthos, hosts the highest number of Sea Turtles (*Caretta caretta*) in the Mediterranean (Irvine, 1997). Due to extensive and uncontrolled tourism development that has occurred over the last twenty years, the sea turtles are now faced with extinction.

Tourists themselves are also often guilty in destroying the surrounding environment by ignominiously or sometimes deliberately damaging crops, frightening farm and wild animals and bestrew large quantities of garbage over the countryside (Archer and Cooper, 1994). Appendix 1, summarizes the major environmental effects associated with tourism.

If conservation and preservation actions are not considered to be of importance from the hosts’ point of view, it may be questionable as to whether they can be considered to be positive environmental impacts. The negative impacts on the natural environment mentioned above, can only be offset by high quality planning, design and management of the destination areas and by educating both tourists and the local communities to appreciate the environment.

**Social Costs and Benefits of Tourism**

Tourism also generates negative effects on the social environment. The opening of social divisions, for example, between the beneficiaries of tourism and those who are marginalised by it, or of the creation of spatial ghettos, either of the tourists themselves or those excluded from tourism are some examples.

Many sociological problems associated with tourism are related to the degree of intensity of tourism development. In other words, there is a relationship between tourism density and the growth of local resentment towards tourism (Archer and Cooper, 1994). The flow of tourists into a region increases the densities at which people live and over crowds the facilities which tourists share with the local population. In extreme cases local people may be debarred from enjoying the natural facilities of their own country or region. Along the Mediterranean, for example, almost half of the coastline has been acquired by hotels for the sole use of their visitors, and in consequence the local public is denied access to the (Archer and Cooper, 1994).

However, some of the positive impacts include the creation of new skills and technologies by the host population and the improved infrastructure, community facilities and services.

**Cultural Costs and Benefits of Tourism**

The negative impacts of tourism are also seen on the cultural environment. The relationships within a society, the mores of interaction, the styles of life, the customs and traditions are all subject to change through the introduction of visitors with different customs, styles and habits (Mowforth and Munt, 1998). However, there are cases where tourism preserves or even resurrects the craft skills of the population or the enhancement of cultural exchange between two distinct populations (Cooper *et al.*, 1999).

**Economic Costs and Benefits of Tourism**

In spite of all the negative impacts mentioned above, it is the economic advantages that provide the main driving force for tourism development. Some of the advantages include the creation of new jobs and businesses, the additional income of the host population and finally, the opening of new markets for local products. However, this report will focus more on the negative economic impacts of the tourism industry.

The production of tourist goods and services, for example, requires the commitment of resources that could otherwise be used for alternative purposes. For instance if labour is not in abundance, the development of a tourism resort may involve the transfer of labour from one industry (such as agriculture or fishing) to tourism industries, involving an opportunity cost that is often ignored in the estimation of tourism’s economic impact (Cooper *et al.*, 1999). Similarly, the use of capital resources (which are often
scarce) in the development of tourism related establishments precludes their use for other forms of economic development. To gain a true picture of the economic impact of tourism it is necessary to take into account the opportunity costs of using scarce resources for tourism development as opposed to alternative uses.

2.3 DESTINATION STRUCTURE

Having outlined the main positive and negative effects of the tourism industry, it is now time to gain understanding of the relationships between the different actors of the tourism industry. Some of the actors identified are the following: the local communities, the tourists themselves, the tourist facilities and services, the natural and cultural environment of the destination areas and the product quality of the destination areas. In an attempt to identify the relationships between the actors, a causal loop diagram (CLD) was developed which is shown in Figure 2.

![Causal Loop Diagram](image)

**Fig. 2:** Causal loop diagram identifying the relationships between the different actors, the local communities, the tourists themselves, the tourist facilities and services, the natural and cultural environment of the destination areas and the product quality of the destination areas.

Figure 2 demonstrates that as tourism development increases, both infrastructure and the number of tourists increase, resulting on an increase on the pressures on natural and cultural environments. As environmental pressures increase, the competitiveness of the destination area decreases leading to a decrease on the destination prices. As destination prices decrease, local income, investments and product quality decreases leading to a further decrease of the destination prices. Therefore, more tourists are now needed to generate the same revenue than before. This in other words can also be translated into environmental deterioration. Eventually, the deterioration of the environment will result in the decline of the tourist development in the area. However, if the regulations on the destination areas increase (i.e. through governmental/local policies and actions as well as through a more responsible tourism industry marketing) then the pressures on the natural and cultural environment will decrease and the competitiveness of the destination area will increase. Once the competitiveness of the destination area increases, then the destination prices, income, investments and product quality will increase, resulting on a
further increase of the destination prices, a reduction on the tourist numbers and a decrease on the environmental deterioration. In this case, tourism development will not decline but it will rejuvenate.

In few words, what figure 2 demonstrates is that unless regulations on destination areas take place, the tourism development on these areas will contribute to environmental deterioration and that will lead to an eventual decline of tourism in these areas.

2.3.1 Destination Evolution

Having identified the relationships between the different actors of the tourism industry, it is now time to gain understanding of how the system evolves with time. The evolution of tourism has been closely linked to the evolution of destinations and resorts. The evolution of resorts has been mainly driven by transport developments. At the same time markets also develop and change, and resorts have had to respond in this in terms of their tourist facilities and services. According to Cooper et. al. (1999), these ideas are expressed by the Tourist Area Life Cycle (TALC). This states that destinations go through a cycle of evolution similar to the life cycle of a product. Figure 3, shows a hypothetical tourist area life cycle.

![Hypothetical tourist area life cycle (TALC)](image)

Source: Cooper et. al., 1999.

On the exploration stage the resort is visiting by a small volume of explorer-type tourists who tend to shun institutionalised travel. The main driving factor of these tourists entering the destination area, is the destination area’s natural attractions, scale and culture. Tourist volumes are constrained at this point because of the lack of access of the destination areas and the lack of facilities. At the involvement stage, the local communities have to decide whether they wish to encourage tourism, and if so, the type and scale of tourism they prefer. At this point, the local authority is important to establish appropriate organisation and decision-making processes for tourism. By the development stage large numbers of visitors are attracted, at peak periods perhaps equally or exceeding the number of local inhabitants (Cooper, et. al., 1999). By this stage, the organisation of tourism changes as control passes out of the local hands and companies form outside the area move in to provide products and facilities. It is at this stage that problems can occur if local decision-taking structures are weak. By the consolidation stage the rate of increase of visitors has declined although total numbers are still increasing. The resort is now a fully fledged part of the tourism industry (e.g. many Mediterranean and Caribbean resorts). At stagnation, peak tourist volumes have been reached. The destination is no longer considered fashionable since it relays upon repeat visits from more conservative travellers (i.e. general interest tourists and mass tourists) (see table 1). At the decline stage visitors are being lost to newer resorts and a smaller geographical catchment for day trips.
and weekend visits is common. Destination managers may decide to *rejuvenate* the destination by looking at new markets or developing the product. At this point, destination areas seek to protect their traditional markets, while also seeking new markets and products.

From the above it can be understood that the shape of the curve shown in figure 3, will vary for different destinations, but for each destination will be dependent upon factors such as:

* the rate of development;
* access;
* government policy;
* market trends; and
* competing destinations

Each of these factors can delay or accelerate progress through the various stages. Development can be arrested at any stage in the cycle, and only tourist developments promising considerable financial returns will mature to experience all stages of the cycle. The shape of the curve will also change according to supply-side factors such as investment, capacity constraints, tourist impacts and planning responses.

The shape of the curve depicted on figure 3, can also be confirmed by figure 2. The curve going through the stages of exploration, involvement, development, consolidation, stagnation and decline can be depicted by the main loop of figure 2. However, when regulations start taking place in figure 2, then the tourism development of the destination area has the possibility to achieve rejuvenation (fig. 3).

Therefore, the need for a more controlled tourism development is essential for the continuous prosperity of the destination area. The sections that follow discuss the concept of sustainable development as a tool to safeguard the present needs of the destination areas as well as their future needs.

### 2.4 THE CONCEPT OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

#### 2.4.1 General

A major problem affecting the tourism industry is that tourism development and tourism expansion, sooner or later, run up against the law of diminishing returns, because the tourism industry as a whole makes extensive use of resources that scarcely increase. These resources are the cultural and natural environments. A question that can, therefore, be asked is whether tourism and the environment disqualify each other or can coexist.

The need for a renewed relationship with the environment and the recent interest in sustainable development has been building over the last twenty years. Sustainable development is becoming a more recognised term as concern for our environmental future spreads and the topic receives more and more attention from the media. What it is not clear is what the concept involves and how it can be used to tackle the different problems.

Pearce *et. al.* (1989) indicates that the number of definitions of 'sustainable development' run into hundreds. However, the most widely used definition is that of the Brundtland Commission in *Our Common Future*, throughout which runs the theme of sustainable development defined as:

"development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (World Commission on Environment and Development 1987).

The definition set by the Brundtland Commission has been widely accepted and has been reinforced by governments and environmental bodies. The principle of sustainable development is being translated into
action within initiative as Agenda 21 (United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, 1992) and those in the European Union (Commission of the European Communities, 1993). However, the above definition is somewhat general. It is not known, for example, what the nature of future human demand and their available technology will be. Moreover, development has sometimes been confused with the concept of growth. In reality, development has to be sustainable to be classified as development at all, otherwise it is short term growth. Thus, the generality of the term, on one hand, makes the concept all-encompassing, thus facilitating adaptability and flexibility. On the other hand, it allows the principle to be hi-jacked and applied to whatever purpose is thought fit.

However, the concept of sustainability is central to the reassessment of tourism’s role in society. It demands a long term view of economic activity, questions the imperative of continued economic growth, and ensures that consumption of tourism does not exceed the ability of a host destination to provide for future tourists.

2.4.2 The Principles of Sustainability in Tourism

Sustainable Tourism Development

As with sustainable development definition, a number of interpretations on sustainable tourism development have emerged over the years (Hunter and Green, 1995). The main argument ranging in the tourism circles appears to be more about the extent to which eco- and green tourism is sustainable and the management of the resource base to conserve its attractions and allow continued development of the industry, with passing reference to the implications of its growth on local communities’ socio-cultural and economic structures (Stabler, 1997). With the growing sense of urgency and recognition that something must be done to balance the industry’s growth and conservation objectives, more effort is being into identifying the different dimensions of the concept. Thus, a definition that the Tourism Canada group has developed states that sustainable tourism development is envisaged as:

leading to management of all resources in such a way that we can fulfil economic, social, and aesthetic needs while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, biological diversity and life support systems (Murphy, 1994).

According to Prinianaki-Tzarakoleftheraki (1997), sustainable tourism management and development, ‘αξιοποιών αναπτύξη’ in Greek, is defined as:

a philosophy of tourism management and development that strives for a viable tourism that is based on and enhanced by the culture and the environment in the present time and always.

It is also defined as an approach intended to harmonise relationships between tourists, residents, the industry and the environment (Prinianaki-Tzarakoleftheraki, 1997).

Finally, the definition accepted by the European Council is as follows:

Any form of tourism development or activity which respects the environment, ensures long term conservation of natural and cultural resources, and is socially and economically acceptable and equitable (Ministry of Trade and Industry, 1998).

From the above definitions it is apparent that sustainable development is a complex and multi-dimensional concept with interdisciplinary concerns. It is also apparent that if the resource base is degraded then tourism will inevitably decline. The link between ecology and economy is, therefore, evident. There is inevitably no dispute over the need to reduce the consumption of non renewable resources and the generation of waste and pollution for the industry’s future prosperity. In other words sustainable tourism is defined as a model form of economic development that is designed to:
* Improve the quality of life of the community,
* Provide a high quality experience for the visitor and
* Maintain the quality of the environment on which both the host community and the visitor depend.

Given that none of the above definitions are comprehensive, an approach more frequently taken is to examine and assess tourist activities according to whether they satisfy a number of criteria of sustainability (Mowforth and Munt, 1998). These criteria are outlined in table 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUSTAINABLE?</th>
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<tr>
<td>* ecologically</td>
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<td>* socially</td>
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<tr>
<td>* culturally</td>
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<td>* economically</td>
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Table 2: The criteria used for sustainability in tourism.

The environment (the natural and cultural resources), is the basis for attracting tourists. Therefore, environmental protection is essential for the long term success of tourism. Since the link between environmental protection and economy is apparent, the criteria for sustainability presented in table 2 are vital for the fulfilment of the needs of present and future generations.

Central to the concept of sustainability is the idea of carrying capacity. The concept refers to the maximum use which can be made of a site without causing detrimental effects on its resources, diminishing tourist satisfaction levels or generating socio-economic problems for the local community.

Each concept outlined in table 2, is examined below.

**Ecological Sustainability**

According to World Tourism Organisation, tourism development should be compatible with the maintenance of essential ecological processes, biological diversity and biological resources to be ecologically sustainable (WTO, 1993). An important method of assessing environmental impact and sustainability is the calculation of carrying capacities. According to World Tourism Organisation (1993) ecological carrying capacity is defined as:

The level of visitation beyond which unacceptable ecologic impacts will occur, either from the tourists or the amenities they require.

Carrying capacity limits is sometimes difficult to quantify since the limits vary according to season and over time. Moreover, tourists' behavioural patterns, facility design and management, the dynamic character of the environment and the changing attitudes of the host community are all factors contributing to variable carrying capacity limits.

**Social Sustainability**

According to Mowforth and Munt (1998) social sustainability refers to the ability of a community, whether local or national, to absorb inputs, such as extra people, for short or long periods of time and to continue functioning either without the creation of social disharmony as a result of these inputs or by adapting its functions and relationships so that the disharmony created can be alleviated or mitigated. A method for assessing the social impact and sustainability is the calculation of tourist social carrying capacity and the host social carrying capacity (WTO, 1993). According to WTO (1993), tourist social carrying capacity is defined as:
The level beyond which visitor satisfaction drops unacceptably from overcrowding.

Whereas, the host social carrying capacity is defined as:

The level beyond which unacceptable change will occur on the social life of the host population.

According to Mowforth and Munt (1998), some of the negative effects of tourism in the past has been the increasing differences between the beneficiaries of tourism and those who are marginalised by it. If it is assumed that tourism sets up an intrinsically false social division between the server and the served in the first place, it is inevitable that tourist developments will create such divisions. Such effects have, therefore, to be minimised at the point at which they can be excluded.

**Cultural Sustainability**

Even if the society survives, its culture may be irreversibly altered. Culture is a feature of human life, like society and economy. Therefore, the process of cultural adaptation and change is not considered to have a negative effect in all cases. Cultural sustainability simply refers to the ability of people to retain or adapt elements of their culture which distinguish them from other people (Mowforth and Munt, 1998). A method to assess the cultural impact and sustainability is to calculate the *host cultural carrying capacity* which is defined as:

The level beyond which unacceptable change can occur on the culture of the host population (WTO, 1993).

Even a small influx of tourists can have an impact on the culture of the local community. Therefore, emphasis should be placed on the responsible behaviour of the visitor and on the prevention of distortion of the local community.

**Economic Sustainability**

Economic sustainability ensures that development is economically efficient and that resources are managed so that they can support future generations (WHO, 1993). Thus, sustainability refers to a level of economic gain from the activity sufficient either to cover the cost of any special measures taken to cater for the tourist and to mitigate the effects of the tourist’s presence or to offer an income appropriate to the inconvenience caused to the local community visited (Mowforth and Munt, 1998). It may seem, however, as if the other conditions of sustainability are being ‘bought off’ i.e. the economic profitability of tourism activities are great enough to cover the damage done culturally, socially and environmentally.

Nevertheless, economic sustainability is not the only condition of sustainability and should not be seen as one. It is also not a condition which competes with the other three aspects of sustainability. The question of who gains financially and who losses financially often sets the power issue in sharper and more immediate focus than all the other aspects of sustainability.

2.4.3 Concluding Points on the Concept of Sustainable Tourism Development

From the above sections can be deduced that there is no single universally accepted definition of sustainable tourism. However, the definition that will be used in this study is the one accepted by the European Council (see § 2.4.2). According to this study, sustainable tourism development can fulfil economic, social and aesthetic needs while maintaining socio-cultural integrity and ecological processes. It can provide for today’s hosts and guests while protecting and enhancing the same opportunity for the future. But sustainable tourism development also involves making hard political choices based on complex social, economic and environmental trade-offs. It requires a vision which encompasses a larger time and space context than that traditionally used in community planning and decision making.
Thus, the framework for sustainable development to be established by the tourism industry should be based on the following principles (WWF, 1992):

* **Using Resources Sustainable:** The conservation and sustainable use of resources—natural, social and cultural—is vital for the long term survival of the industry.

* **Reducing Over Consumption and Wastes:** Avoids the costs of restoring any environmental damages and contributes in improving the quality of the tourism product.

* **Maintaining Diversity:** Maintaining and promoting natural, social and cultural diversity is essential for long term sustainable tourism.

* **Integrating tourism into planning:** Integrating tourism development into a national and local strategic planning framework and management plans, increases the long term viability of tourism.

* **Supporting Local Economies:** Tourism that supports a wide range of local economic activities and takes environmental costs and benefits into account, both protects those economies and avoids environmental damage.

* **Involving Local Communities:** The full involvement of local communities in the tourism sector, not only benefits them and the environment, but also improves the quality of the tourism product.

* **Consulting Stakeholders and the Public:** Consultation between the local community and the tourism industry, organisations and institutions, is essential in resolving potential conflicts of interest.

* **Training Staff:** Staff training in integrating sustainable tourism into work practices, along with recruitment of local personnel at all levels, improves the quality of the tourism product.

* **Marketing Tourism Responsibly:** Encouraging tourists to visit the destination areas during off-season periods reduces the stress on the natural, cultural and social resources. Marketing that provides tourists with essential information of the environments in question increases the respect towards these environments and improves the quality of the tourism product.

* **Undertaking Research:** Ongoing monitoring by the industry is essential to both prevent and help solve problems.

### 2.5 GREEK TOURISM POLICY FOR SUSTAINABILITY

#### 2.5.1 General

This section looks upon the major national or international law and policies that have been issued or ratified by the Greek government to minimise the impact of tourism development. Moreover, any sustainability issues addressed by either the national or local government will also be included in this section.

#### 2.5.2 Institutions

The Greek Constitution (article 21 §1) states that the protection of both the natural and cultural environment constitutes an obligation of the State. The state owes to take special preventive measures for its preservation. For the implementation of the constitutional order, several laws have been issued. The Ministry of the Environment Physical Planning and Public Works (YPEXODE), is responsible for the protection of the natural environment, while the Ministry of Culture is responsible for the protection of the cultural environment. Additionally, some other ministries like the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Merchant Marine are also taking measures for the protection of the natural environment (Efthymiatou-Poulakou, 1997). Finally, the role of the Hellenic National Organisation of Tourism (EOT), which belongs to the Ministry of Development, is to preserve the natural and cultural environment with the co-operation of local authorities and other relevant organisations (table 3). Among the tourism services that the National Tourism Office offers, are the following (Efthymiatou-Poulakou, 1997):

* operating a reservation system;
* handling tourist complaints;
* licensing and grading of hotels and other suppliers (which include price controls);
programming festivals, events and tours; and
* managing tourist facilities provided either solely or jointly by the NTO, for example, tourist information centres (TICs).

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<td>* Division for Environmental Planning.</td>
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<td>* Division for control of Air Pollution and Noise.</td>
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<td>* Regional and Prefectural Services.</td>
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<td>* General Secretariat for Forests and Natural Environment.</td>
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<td>* Directorate for the Environment and Planning.</td>
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<td>* Council of Hygiene.</td>
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<td>* School of Hygiene.</td>
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<th>Implementation</th>
<th>MINISTRY OF MERCHANT MARINE</th>
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<td>* Division for the protection of the Marine Environment.</td>
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<th>Implementation</th>
<th>HELLENIC NATIONAL ORGANISATION OF TOURISM (EOT) PART OF THE MINISTRY OF DEVELOPMENT</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* Protection of natural and cultural environment in tourist areas.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>* Development of new hotel and restaurant units.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>* Promotion of tourism within Greece and abroad.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* Co-operation with local authorities and other organisations for the implementation of national tourist policies.</td>
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Table 3: Responsibilities of the different ministries on environmental policies.

Environmental oriented units have also been instituted within other ministries and organisations (Efthymiatou-Poulakou, 1997):

a. The ministry of Education has established:
   * The Institute of Environmental Education, responsible for the teaching of environmental matters in primary and secondary education, and
   * Departments of Environmental Studies in old and new universities.

b. The Ministry of Transport has established throughout the country, Technical Inspection Centres for conducting periodical mechanical and emission tests on all types of vehicles.

c. The General Secretariat for Research and Technology, the Public Power Co-operation (DEH) and other national research centres, are supporting projects on biomass, solar, wind and geothermal energy sources.

d. The Ministry of National Economy formulates and co-ordinates the finances concerning environmental policy at national and regional levels - as it does for individual sectoral policy finances.

The local institutions that play a significant role on the implementation of the national legislation are the prefectures and the municipalities. Lefkada’s prefecture comprises of six municipalities and one community. The prefecture belongs to Ionian Islands region (which includes all the islands of the Ionian Sea) and the region’s capital is the island of Corfu.
In a few words, the monitoring of tourist developments is essentially carried out by the Greek National Tourism Organisation, in co-ordination mainly with the Ministry for the Environment, Physical Planning and Public Works, and also with other competent authorities at the national, regional and local level.

As far as the international community is concerned, a number of international conventions have been signed by the Greek government, many of which have been ratified and constitute part of the Greek law (YPEXODE, 1997a).

The European Community (EC) has paid attention on the protection of both the natural and cultural environments (EEA, 1995). The main reason for this attention is the fact that the European Community from an early stage, has realised the importance of the protection of these environments. These environments comprise the main sources of tourism in Europe and this is of great importance to the European Community.

More specifically, the maintenance of environmental quality in Greece comprises a decisive factor for tourism development as well as for any tourism existence in the country. For these reasons, an important element of this project is to examine the different measures that have been issued from the government, for the protection of the natural and the socio-cultural environments. These measures are also part of Lefkada’s legislative framework.

2.5.3 Legislation

Greece does not have a long legislative history directly related to the field of environmental protection, though there are some specific legislative acts dating back to the 1930’s.

Article 24 of the 1975 Constitution in force, referring to the civil rights for clean and balanced environment, is considered to be a major turning point. According to this article, the protection of the environment is recognised as a vital problem of this era that has to be faced, through - among other measures - a whole system of specific legislative acts (Efthymiou-Poulakou, 1997).

The most important Greek legislation related to the environment in its broader sense is the law of the Protection of the Environment (Law 1650/1986), which is a frame law, covering all environmental fields and aspects (Efthymiou-Poulakou, 1997). The law of the Protection of the Environment is divided into three sections. These are the following:

**Section One:** Includes measures on development activities and resources. From this section, the measures that have to do with tourism are the following: Measures for Tourism 1986. Under this measure, zoning of touristic areas, on the basis of their infrastructure and the need for environmental protection are stated. Another measure covered in this section is the measure on Location of Touristic Installations (Presidential Degree of 1988). This measure includes also provisions for minimum distance from the coastline.

**Section Two:** Includes measures for the protection of the environment against pollution. These are measures on water pollution control (law 1739/87), air pollution control (Law 1327/1983), noise abatement (Presidential Degree 85/91), solid waste management (Ministerial Decision 4954/1424/64, and amended in 1986) and finally toxic and dangerous waste management (Ministerial Decision 18186/271/88, amended in 1991).

**Section Three:** Includes measures for the protection of nature and the landscape. These are measures on protected areas and natural parks and the conservation of indigenous flora and fauna species (Presidential Degree 67/1981).

Moreover, the law on the Protection of the Environment has a special section on the protection of forest areas with measures on forest fires and replantations (Efthymiou-Poulakou, 1997). There is also a section on touristic installations and their impact on the forest areas.
Finally, one of the most important measures that have been taken while implementing the 1650/1986 law, is the Presidential Degree for Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for industrial installations (Presidential Degree 1180/1981), which makes the preparation of an EIA necessary for all development projects (YPEXODE, 1997a). The types of impacts covered by the EIAs include the natural environment (water, land, air), the living organisms (humans, flora and fauna) and the built environment (monuments and buildings). The EIAs are publicly debated at the Prefectural Councils, with participation of NGOs and all social partners.

More specific policies on tourism development are the following (YPEXODE, 1998):

1. The Ministerial Decision 538866/spec. 135 NTO (797/B/87), in which specific areas of Greece are declared as Areas of Controlled Tourism Development, and parts of them are declared as "Saturated Tourist Areas" aiming to control tourist development and upgrade the developed tourist destinations.

2. The Development Incentives Law 2601/98 which enhances the modernisation of operating tourist units, the conversion of traditional listed buildings into hotels, as well as investments in environment protection projects and in the use of renewable energy sources.

In an attempt to preserve the cultural environment, the government has issued different laws such as: the law of Antiquities (Law 5351/1932) and the protection of special categories of buildings and works of art dating after 1830 (Law 1469/1950) (Efthymiou-Poukakou, 1997). Some other measures include the declaration of religious icons dating to the end of the 19th century, as needing special State protection (Ministerial Decision 4411/1968), and the declaration of ecclesiastic monuments dating between 1453 and 1830, as historical preserved monuments.

2.5.4 Greek National Policy for Sustainable Development

Since the Earth Summit in 1992, Greece has started to adopt its strategic policy framework towards sustainable development. The environmental protection requirements are integrated into the implementation of key development sectors. This is achieved either through the implementation of the EC policy (e.g. Fifth Environmental Action Program) or through national measures (YPEXODE, 1997b).

The Greek Ministry of the Environment Physical Planning and Public Works has developed a National Co-ordination Mechanism for Sustainable Development, in order to mobilise the interest and involvement of the competent Ministries and other public sectors and to co-operate with all relevant groups (YPEXODE, 1997a). This mechanism stresses the fact that in order to develop sustainable ways of living and to design and manage the cities towards sustainability, sufficient powers should be given to the local level and that local authorities are given a solid financial base.

The Ministry for the Environment, The Ministry for National Economy and the National Statistical Service are involved in the elaboration of indicators of sustainable development (YPEXODE, 1998). There has also been an effort to establish an overall policy on data collection and a framework for information at the national level, where integrated environment and development information are collected. In 1993, a National Network of Environmental Information was established with the main task to enhance the function of environmental services and improve the promotion and development of national and EC policies on environment and development.

Granting Aid for Sustainable Development

In granting aid Greece has to abide by severe constrains both because of limited resources and budgetary reasons. Today, roughly 75% of Greek aid is channelled through multilateral programs of International organisations (such as MAP/UNEP) and the European Commission. The remaining 25% concerns bilateral aid granted by ministries and other state institutions as well as through NGOs (YPEXODE, 1997a). The
financial aid for tourism development that Lefkada received since 1994 is through the Community Support Framework. The financial instruments used so far are the following (EC, 1999):

* The major funds for promoting regional, economic and social development in the Union: the Structural Funds (i.e. the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)).
* The European Social Fund (ESF).
* The European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund (EAGGF) and
* INTERREG II
* Leader II

2.5.5 Programmes and Activities Related to Sustainable Tourism Development

Some programs that have been initiated since the Earth Summit in 1992, are the following:

The Environmental Program of Greece for the period 1994-2000 aims at addressing the major environmental problems of Greece as well as at creating the infrastructures for the efficient management of the Greek environment in the 21st century (YPEXODE, 1997a). In addition the Program reflects the commitment as well as the efforts of the Greek Government to link development to environment, in a manner which will support the implementation of the development policy of Greece, while at the same time safeguarding the environment and the physical resources. The Environmental Program of Greece includes also specific - thematically or geographically oriented - programs, aiming at resolving major environmental problems.

The action program 2.2 ‘Protection of the Marine Environment’ of the Operational Environmental Program (OEP) of Greece is one of the thematically oriented programs, aiming at developing the needed infrastructure capacities for the treatment of oil spills in ports and marine areas (YPEXODE, 1997). The program is considered essential for the protection of the extended seas of Greece as well as of the 16000km of coastal zones. Other action programs like the 3.1 program of ‘Management and Protection of Biodiversity’ aims at providing the knowledge and the facilities for monitoring, protecting and managing the flora and fauna species. Other programs of the Operational Environmental Program include the environmentally sound management of solid and toxic wastes and the protection of the quality and supply of freshwater resources.

The Operational Environmental Program of Greece is supported by both national and community funding. National funding stems from the country’s budget and is also complemented by a special levy which is applied on gas. Income from the levy is invested on projects with potential to rectify the environment, or to allow the study of environmental problems for which no immediate answers can be provided (YPEXODE, 1997). Community funding comes from the Structural Funds as well as from the Cohesion Funds.

The legal framework of the Operational Program of Greece are the National Law 1650/86 for the protection of the environment, EC environmental regulations and directives and the obligations of Greece with respect to International environmental agreements and Conventions (Efthymiatou-Poulakou, 1997). The program is based upon the sustainability principle, the polluter pays principle and the precautionary principle and the principle of joint responsibility.

Additionally, various programmes are carried out under the Community Support Framework (CSF), at the National and Regional Operating Programmes (Ministry of National Economy, 1998).

The Community Support Framework (CSF) is the country's largest development programme. It was planned by Greece and is being put into practice with the joint funding of Greece and the European Union (EU). It covers the period 1994-1999 and is the largest part of the "2nd Delores Package" (Pachtas, 1998). Corresponding development programmes are also being implemented in other countries of the European
Union, with the aim of reducing the inequalities between them. The programmes and projects taking place today in Greece are funded by the Community Support Framework and have the aim of:

* Developing the Greek economy.
* Creating new jobs.
* Improving the quality of life.

The subprogram **Ionian Islands Community Support Framework** is aiming at developing the endogenous resources of Ionian Islands, combining tourist development, support for agriculture and environmental protection. The community finance (62.26%) is provided by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the European Social Fund (ESF) and the European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund (EAGGF) (YPEXODE, 1998).

The program’s main measures are as follows (YPEXODE, 1998):

* Environmental improvements and sustainable tourism development.
* Support for agriculture and development of rural areas, by means of selective measures to provide development alternatives to tourism.
* Improvement of living conditions and communications between the islands.
* Human resource development.
* Reinforcement of local development.

Additionally to the Ionian Islands program, **Tourism Culture** also operates under the Community Support Framework program (YPEXODE, 1998). This is a multi-regional operational program aimed at supporting tourism and related cultural activities, by remedying specific weaknesses in the Greek tourist sector. This program is pursued in synergy with the Ionian Islands program.

Since Lefkada’s landscape is covered by high mountains (more than 1000 m high), sustainable mountain development is of great importance. The measure 1.2 of the subprogram **Tourism of the Community Support Framework**, promotes sustainable tourism development focusing in particular on establishing the infrastructure for the development of mountainous, and therapeutic, cultural, and ecological tourism, based on the natural and human resources of each area (YPEXODE, 1998).
3. THE CASE OF LEFKADA

3.1 HISTORY AND CULTURE

3.1.1 History

Island, is a word that can barely fit Lefkada, since the peninsula is separated from the mainland with a mere 20m wide ship canal, which was dug by the Corinthians back in 640 B.C., when they came to colonise the place. The island of Lefkas or Lefkada or Lefkadia owes its name to the steep white cliffs on its southernmost cape, Lefkata (figure 4). Here is where legend states the poetess Sappho took her own life because of her thwarted love for Phaon (Prefecture of Lefkada, 1995). The first traces of life on the island date to 8000 years before the birth of Christ. Important settlement findings near Nydri, from around 2000 B.C., bear witness to a unique culture, related to the one on the continental shores opposite.

The Leleges, the first inhabitants, were defeated by the Cephalonians and Laertes, the father of Odysseus. In fact, according to the archaeologist Dorpfeld, Lefkada can claim of being the Homeric Ithaca.

During the 7th century B.C. Nirikos, south of the town of Lefkada, was one of the largest Greek towns. The island was present at the Naval Battle of Salamis, at the battle of Plataia, in the Peloponessian War against the Spartans and it also participated in the campaign of Alexander the Great and resisted the Romans in the 3rd century B.C (Prefecture of Lefkada, 1995).

During the Byzantine period, the island was incorporated into the Despotate of Epirus. In 1293 it was claimed by Count Orsini who built the fortress of Ayia Mavra (figure 4) for protection from pirates. This was followed by the long period of the Venetian occupation and the struggle against the Turks who conquered the island in 1503 and stayed for 180 years. In 1684 Lefkada returned to the Venetian rule and was granted a rudimentary constitution and acquired a state of organisation. Later it fell into the hands of the French briefly and the Lefkadians were strongly influenced by the liberal ideas of the French Revolution. The British appeared in 1810. Structural works were build during that period as well as the first anti-seismic edifices. The Lefkadians fought with all the means at their disposal in the Greek War of Independence of 1821. The island was unified with Greece in 1864 along with the rest of the Ionian Islands. It began its economic recovery in 1960 and during recent years tourism has offered a great deal to its development.
3.1.2 Culture

Lefkadians received many influences from the Venetians, experienced the Turkish yoke and English hegemony, but retained their Greek elements more than the rest of the Ionian Islands due to their close connection to mainland Greece.

Lefkada gave birth to two great national poets, Aristotelis Valaoritis and Angelos Sikelianos. Another famed Lefkadian, Lefkadios Hearn, son of a Greek mother and an English father, was a leader in the spread of Japanese culture and proclaimed the national poet of Japan.

Figure 4: The map of the island of Lefkada.
The traditional customs of the island have been preserved up to the present. These include the evening stroll along the flagstoned square in the town, the meetings at the cafes and the special way in which the great feasts of Orthodoxy are celebrated: Christmas, Epiphany and Easter. Each August the traditional Lefkadian wedding is revived in the village of Karya. Music has played an important role in Lefkadian life since old days. The mainland element stands out in folk music and dances, but there are also numerous influences from the West in the cantadas, the operas and the ‘coronas’. In 1850 Lefkada was the first place in all Greece to acquire its own Philharmonic. Additionally, Lefkada, every summer, hosts the Folkloric Festival which is part of the Festival of Literature and Art and at which folk dancing groups from all over the world can be seen. Finally, weaving and embroidery constitute yet another example of superlative Lefkadian craft. Already by the beginning of the century, their fame had spread beyond the borders of Greece.

Lefkada city also hosts 5 museums. Details of Lefkada’s museums are found on box 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Museums of Lefkada</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Archaeological Museum:** Located in the town of Lefkada. Most of the exhibits came from the Dörpfeld collection as well as from excavations that took place in several areas on the island. The exhibition includes ceramics, sculptures, pottery and many other finds belonging to various eras.

**Orpheas Club Folk Museum:** The collection includes many interesting objects from the island’s rural life and occupations, such as traditional dresses, agricultural tools, woven furniture, home handicraft tools, folk art etc. In the museum somebody can see a replica of the interior from a traditional house of Lefkada.

**Public Library:** Housed in a unique neo-classical building. In the library there is a collection of very old books, manuscripts and icons belonging to different Byzantine periods.

**Heramoglios Library of Lefkada:** It is located in Marka square and contains old books, paintings and maps, that their subject is exclusively the island of Lefkada.

**Museum of Old Memorabilia:** Exhibited there are objects belonging to the closer past of Lefkada.


### 3.2 CLIMATE AND LAND CHARACTERISTICS OF LEFKAS

#### 3.2.1 Climate

The island has a Mediterranean climate: temperate and pleasant. It is characterised by generally high rainfall, moderate winds, high temperatures during the summer months and high atmospheric humidity (table 4). Lefkada is also suitable for winter holidays because of its mild climate. Ice and snow are rare though rain is more common (table 4).
Table 4: Letkada's climate (average rainfall, temperature, humidity as well as average number of days of frost snow and hail per month).

3.2.2 Natural Environments

A) Terrestrial Environments

55% of Lefkada's total land area is covered by pasture land and 35% by arable land (National Statistical Service, 1993). However, the island is covered by a small forest area (3% of the total land area). The main reason for this is the fact that, over the years, the forests in Lefkada have been logged for timber, or cleared for farms, and ranches. Skaros mountain, for example, used to have an oak forest that has now been declined mainly due to farming activities that occur there.

Most of the remaining forest areas consist of pine trees, cypress trees. The major threat of these forest areas are forest fires which generally occur during the summer months. Another factor that has recently influenced Lefkada's forest area is tourism that has offered a great deal of development. The building, for example, of road networks and structural works have caused land instability and erosion.

However, Lefkada is in general, an island of rich vegetation, many green valleys and cultivated plains. The plain of Lefkada's city, situated on the north part of the town, is a site of special natural beauty. Additionally, individual cypress trees, sycamore trees and rush plants can be seen everywhere on the island. Many more rare and beautiful kinds of plant life are also found on the island like peony plants (*peregrina* and *mascula*) (National Statistical Service, 1993).

The largest part of Lefkada's land is mountainous, the highest peak being Stavrota at 1,182 m (see figure 4). Lower mountains set off from the central mountain mass and fall abruptly into the sea, forming sheer and rocky cliffs. Narrow plateaus in the mountains and the valleys lower down, at various heights, the largest being Vasiliki, make for impressive alterations in the landscape.

West of Lefkada is the large tectonic rift in the Ionian. The great depth of the sea and the sheer western cliffs of all the Ionian Islands are due to this. Lainaki, Achlada, Sikero, Skaros, Megali Rachi and the Lefkata peninsula are the haughty rocky shores here which form the natural backdrop to a uncommon, wild beauty.

Because of the continuous alternations in the landscape, Lefkada is an island of special ornithological interest since it host a variety of birds of prey.
B) Wetlands and Coastal Environments
There are six wetlands that have been characterised in Lefkada (planning department and P.E. Lefkada’s 798/31-3-1993) (National Statistical Service, 1993). Table 5 shows their basic characteristics.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Height (m)</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ayia Mavra’s Salt-marsh</td>
<td>Marsh Lagoon</td>
<td>North east of Lefkada town.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lefkada’s Salt-lake (lagoon)</td>
<td>Marsh Salt-lake</td>
<td>North of Lefkada town.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salt-marsh of Alexandros</td>
<td>Salt-marsh</td>
<td>South east of Lefkada town.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karya’s Lake</td>
<td>Shallow lake</td>
<td>East of Karya village.</td>
<td>320</td>
<td>There is usually water from October until March.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vlycho Cove</td>
<td>Closed bay with inflows of running waters. Marsh</td>
<td>South west of Vlycho village.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lake of Marandochori</td>
<td>Lake</td>
<td>= 1.5 km north west of Marandochori village</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5: The wetlands of Lefkada.

Except of the tiny lake in Marandochori and the shallow impermanent lake of Karya’s valley, the rest of the wetlands are found by the coastline.

The lake of Marandochori, found 1.5 km north west of Marandochoti village, is of unsurpassed beauty, a small sanctuary of about 1 acre which contains important species of fowl. Eagles and other birds of prey nest in the area and are considered to be important indicators of the state of the environment. The lake water is used for irrigation. The bird sanctuary is in a good condition and is used for educational visits.

The salt lake in the town of Lefkada is the largest body of water on the island and borders with the large bird sanctuary of the Amvrakikos Gulf which is part of the Ramsar agreement (Prefecture of Lefkada, 1995). Each year this area plays host to large flocks of fowl consisting of rare species that nest there. Many winged inhabitants are present at the salt lake’s bird sanctuary such as white herons, swans, wild ducks and wild geese (National Statistical Service, 1993). The sanctuary is also of interest of its flora, which has become an object of particular study.

Many coastal wetlands or parts of them are used as aquariums. These aquariums can sustain semi-intense aquiculture without loosing their characteristics as wetlands.
C) Marine Environments
There are many underwater meadows in the area north of Gyra where their depth is estimated to be between 20-25 m (see figure 4) (table 6) (National Statistical Service, 1993). These underwater meadows are of a great importance on the nesting and reproduction of fish and they must be protected against fishing.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Height (m)</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lefkada’s</td>
<td>Underwater</td>
<td>North of the island</td>
<td>from 0 to 25</td>
<td>Keeps the sandy beaches found in Gyra (north of the island) together.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cove</td>
<td>meadows</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6: The underwater meadows of Lefkada.

3.3 RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT
The size and the structure of the residential areas on the island, up until the beginning of the 20th century, are closely connected to their character. Most of the villages are well hidden in the interior, in ravines (Alatro, Charadiatiko), behind heights (Englouvi) or in forests (Syvros) (see figure 4). These places are all well chosen in order to satisfy their basic needs (e.g. water), to protect themselves from extreme climatological conditions and finally to protect themselves from pirates. During this period the means of transport and cultivation were the animals (mainly donkeys and horses) and therefore, the agricultural areas that were placed around the villages were of small radius. The villages around the shore were very few and small (Vasiliki) and are generally built on steep land so they will be able to defend themselves. The narrow, labyrinthian lanes (‘kantounia’) were built to confuse the pirates.

The collapse of the traditional mountainous agricultural economy, intensified after the Second World War. Because of the bad socio-economic conditions found all over Greece (because of the civil war), people were made to abandon their mountainous villages and migrate to urban areas or emigrate elsewhere (National Statistical Service, 1993). This was the period when the island’s population started to decline.

Nowadays, the prefecture of Lefkada (administrative division) comprises of the island of Lefkada, Meganisi, Kalamos, Kastos, Sparti, Madouri, Scorpidi, Scorpios, Thilia, Petalou and Kythros. The total area of Lefkada’s prefecture is 439 km². Of these, 277 km² are mountainous regions, 64 km² are semi-mountainous and only 15 km² are plain regions (National Statistical Service, 1993). Its population comprises of 21254 inhabitants (1991 data) (Prefecture of Lefkada, 1995). Finally, the settlements comprise 7% of the prefectures land area.

The prefecture’s small size and weak economy did not allow the formation of more than one urban centres. The town of Lefkada is found on the north-eastern tip of the island and it is very close to the shores of the mainland. It has a population of 6404 persons (1991 data) and corresponds to 30.13% of the county’s population (Prefecture of Lefkada, 1995).

The remote position of the town compared with the rest of the villages, together with the slow means of transport that were present until the beginning of the 20th century, lead to the creation of small market towns. Karya is one of them found in the central plateau, Ayios Petros found on the south-west part of the island and Vasiliki found on the south part was an important import-export harbour (see figure 4).

Tourism, has also played an important role on the reformation of the residential structure of the island. Over the last few years, many coastal villages started to spread all around the island. On the contrary, many mountainous villages have decreased in population and some of them have been totally abandoned.
The community of Alexandros is a characteristic example of that. The coastal residential area of Nikiana was built up when the villages of Alexandros and Kolyvata started to decline in population (see figure 4). During the decade 1981-1991, Nikiana increased in population by 20% and more, while Alexandros declined by 85.7% of its initial population and Kolyvata by 66.7% (National Statistical Service, 1993). This example indicates the abandonment of the mountainous villages and that of the agricultural society, while it shows the increase of the coastal residential areas where tourism activities increase (figure 5).

Similar phenomenon, but not as intense, has also been observed in communities with no mountainous residential areas. During 1981-1991, Nydri had an increase in population by 16%, while the residential areas of Rachi and Dimossari that are 1-2 kilometres further inland from Nydri had an increase of just 1% (figure 5).

However, figure 5 also indicates that on the north mountainous part of the island, there has also been an increase in population between 1981-1991. The main reason for this increase has also been driven by tourism. The biggest mountainous village (Karya) is located in this area and is considered to be a well preserved traditional mountainous village. For this reason many tourists visit the village as it offers both hotel and self catering accommodation.

The figures above are indicative to the fact that 62% of the country's population live in coastal areas. Four out of five Prefectures are located on the coast, covering a total area of 100.278 km², accounting for 76.03% of the total land (YPXODE, 1997a).
Future Projections
Coastal areas and tourist resorts are likely to experience significant population increases in parallel with wide fluctuations in number of residents from season to season in the coming years. It is estimated that 62% of the total population live in urban areas while in 2025 urban population is expected to represent 79% of total (YPEXODE, 1997a). In spite of an increase of both coastal population in general and of coastal urban population in particular, density will still remain low when compared to other Mediterranean countries (UNEP, 1996).

However, the rapid developments of the last few decades bring alarming evidence of environmental degradation. The irreversible effects in some locations call for a revision of practices and policies towards the basic principles of sustainability.
3.4 TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

Comparing with the rest of the Greek islands, tourism started late in Lefkada. Many people believe that this is due to the strong resistance movement (it was considered to be a ‘communist island’) that was developed on the island after the Second World War and lasted until the end of the Dictatorship (1974).

Tourism started by the mid 70’s, and the first tourists were Greeks coming from the surrounding towns of the mainland like Ioannina, Arta and Agrinio. By that time, there were also some foreign tourists coming mainly with their own means of transport. Until the beginning of the eighties, the only hotels present were found in Lefkada’s town. They were also a few rooms to let, found elsewhere on the island. However, the total amount of beds on the island was limited. Additionally, they were no tour operators or travel agents operating on the island.

Between 1980-82, the first ‘tourist packets’ arrived. The first group that arrived was from Switzerland. The Swiss were part of a rambling society. The tour operator bringing them on the island was called Germoli and was co-operating with Yannoulatos travel agency which was the first travel agency on the island. The first hotel, outside Lefkada’s town, was built in 1984 (Alexandros Hotel, Nikiana). The next travel agency, All Seasons, co-operated with many more tour operators like Apollo, Grecia, Sunvil, Cosmar, Spies and Manos. There are now 27 travel agencies working on Lefkada and the number of hotels has been grown up to 57 (1998 data).

The tourist development has been mainly concentrated on the east coast of the island. This is mainly due to its special geomorphology (many small beaches and bays, the presence of a cluster of islands like Scorpios that belongs to Aristotelis Onasis and Madouri that belongs to Aristotelis Valaoritis). On the south part of the island the most important tourist attraction is Vasiliki. Many surfers gather there every year since Vasiliki’s beach is considered to be among the 10 best beaches in the world for surfing. Finally, on the western part of the island, the mountains form steep cliffs where long, white sandy beaches are formed. The most important tourist attraction on the west, is the coastal village of Agios Nikitas.

Hotel Development

The hotel business in Lefkada is dominated by small family-owned operations, which have developed hand-in-hand with the tourism sector. According to the General Secretary of the Region (1997), until the year of 1995 there was no first class hotel present on the island. The number of hotel beds had been grown up to 2155 and the majority of the hotels belonged to third class. 65% of all hotel beds (1394 beds) have been added during the last decade 1986-95. The rest of the hotel beds were added during 1975-85 (32% or 691 beds). This trend can be seen in table 7.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PERIOD</th>
<th>HOTEL BEDS</th>
<th>PERCENTAGE (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>before 1975</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975-85</td>
<td>691</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986-1995</td>
<td>1394</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2155</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7: An increase of the number of hotel beds over the last twenty years.
Source: General Secretary of the region (1997)

Until the year of 1998, a few more hotel units have been created and therefore the total number of hotel beds has been grown up to 3074 (instead of 2155 in 1995). More details on the hotels, the number of hotel beds and the class that each hotel belongs can be found in Appendix 2.
According to Appendix 2, not only there is one first class hotel in Lefkada, but there is also no hotel unit of LUX category (1998 data). A characteristic of the hotel units is that they are all of a small scale (the average number of beds is 54). On the east coast, Nydri has the largest number of hotel beds (579 beds), Perigiali comes second with 428, and Nikiana third with 388. Agios Nikitas has the largest number of hotel beds on the west coast (469 beds), and Vasiliki has the largest number of hotel beds (394) on the south coast.

**Self-Catering Accommodations, Apartments, Rooms to Let**
Self-catering accommodation is an important and varied component of the lodging sector in Lefkada. Essentially, what such properties have in common is a combination of accommodation and the facility to prepare food on a personal basis. Self-catering accommodation may be rented as part of a vacation package, through an agency or independently direct from the owner.

According to EOT, the majority of the rented rooms were built during the last fifteen years. Today, there are 7250 rented rooms (number of beds) on the island that work according to EOT regulations (the majority of them are third class rooms) and there are about 50% more rooms that work illegally, i.e. they are not registered in EOT. Most of the rooms to let are small family businesses.

The largest number of beds (both hotels and rooms to let), are found in Nydri with 1862 beds. The majority of the beds belong to rented rooms. Only a 10% of them belongs to the hotels of the area. In Nikiana there are 1355 beds (26% of them are found in hotels). On the southern part of the island, the biggest tourist attraction is Vasiliki with 1721 beds. On the west part, the biggest tourist attraction is Agios Nikitas with 446 beds.

**Camping and Caravan Sites**
An important component in the domestic and international tourism of many countries as well as of Lefkada, is that where visitors bring their own accommodation in the form of tents, caravans or trailers. The majority of international tourists coming to Lefkada with their own accommodation are Italians and Germans.

Lefkada has six camping and caravan sites registered under the EOT regulations and can be seen on figure 3. Table 8 shows the different camping places as well as the total number of tents and caravans that each camping can hold.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Camping Area</th>
<th>Total No. of Tents and Caravans</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dessimi Beach</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Episkopos Beach</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kariotes Beach</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poros Beach</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Santa Mavra</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vasiliki Beach</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total No. of Places</strong></td>
<td><strong>353</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8: Camping areas around the island of Lefkada.
Source: Tourist Police

**Tourist Development**
According to Mr. Kondilatos (the vice-president of the Lefkadian Society of Hotel Owners), domestic tourism started to increase, in Lefkada, during the mid seventies, while international tourism started in the eighties. However, data on how many tourists (both domestic and international) arrive on the island per month were first recorded in 1994. These data include those staying in hotels and camping areas. There are no data on tourist arrivals previous to that date. Table 9 shows the tourist arrivals (both domestic and
international) per year starting from 1994. A more detailed table, showing the tourist arrivals per month is shown in Appendix 3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PER YEAR</th>
<th>DOMESTIC ARRIVALS</th>
<th>DOMESTIC OVERNIGHTS</th>
<th>INTERNATIONAL ARRIVALS</th>
<th>INTERNATIONAL OVERNIGHTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>5682</td>
<td>49508</td>
<td>11462</td>
<td>15992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>30409</td>
<td>84635</td>
<td>13910</td>
<td>88983</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>28763</td>
<td>81407</td>
<td>11352</td>
<td>63860</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>33096</td>
<td>106096</td>
<td>31033</td>
<td>113047</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>31931</td>
<td>95434</td>
<td>29608</td>
<td>92699</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>12942</td>
<td>43279</td>
<td>8648</td>
<td>51591</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9: Arrivals and overnights of domestic and international tourists staying in hotels and camping.
Source: Tourist Police.

The arrivals and overnight stays in rented rooms, are not included on table 9. According to tourist police, the data presented on table 9 do not represent the true number of tourists that actually arrive on the island. A reason for this is the fact that such data have not been collected from all the hotels of the island. Moreover, the data sometimes arrive late and the arrivals of one month, are usually included in the next one. The tourist police believes that the false of the data can be up to 50%.

Another factor that contributes against the accuracy of data is the fact that the majority of the Italian tourists visiting the island, have not been included on table 9. According to the tourist police, the majority of them comes by either car or caravan and only a very small amount of them book rooms in hotels. The ones coming by caravan they camp and the ones coming by car they usually rent a room. However, a substantial amount of those coming by car, sleep in their car during the night, and therefore they never get registered.

In a few words, it is very difficult to estimate the total number of tourists that arrives on the island per year. This is because the data that exist cover only some of the hotels and the camping areas. It is also very difficult to see a trend in tourist development on the island, since the first data started to be collected in the middle of 1994. Any estimates can only be made by the local people in Lefkada and they are based on their opinion i.e. whether their rented rooms were full on one year and they were half full on another.

However in Appendix 3, a trend can be noticed, were the majority of the arrivals and overnight stays are concentrated during May-September. During the rest of the months, the tourist arrivals are very few. Domestic tourism is higher during those months compared with the international one. In general, the domestic tourism is a bit higher than the international. It can also be seen that the busiest month of the year -for both domestic and international tourism- is August. However, for domestic tourism, the difference is higher with regard to the rest of the months, than for the international tourism.
4. ANALYSIS

4.1 GENERAL

The analysis that follows aims at addressing the current situation of tourism development on the island of Lefkada, in relation to the sustainability principles outlined in chapter 2 (see § 2.4.3).

4.2 THE GROWTH IN MASS TOURISM

4.2.1 Life Cycle Analysis

The initial stage of tourism development in Lefkada that was covering the period up until the beginning of the eighties, was characterised by individualists that had a strong interest in the special character of the island (see figure 3). During those days, tourism constituted an additional source of income for the Lefkadians that were mainly involved in agriculture and fisheries.

The number of tourists visiting the Mediterranean tripled from 54 to 157 million between 1970 and 1990 (WTO, 1993b). In Greece this number grew six-fold (EEA, 1995). Therefore, the tourism industry had to look for ‘new islands’ in Greece in order to attract this increasing demand of travelling. That is how mass tourism started to appear in Lefkada. Lefkada was presented as a new, genuine and unspoilt Greek island. By that time the tourism development jumped from the exploration stage to the involvement stage (see figure 3). The number of tourists started to increase and the pressures placed on the public sector to provide infrastructure and institute controls increased too. However, the results obtained from the interviews showed that no sustainability issues or capacity limits were addressed by the local community during this period. The involvement stage lasted up until the mid eighties.

By that time large numbers of visitors were attracted, mainly during the peak periods (May-October). As most of the travel agencies were established on the island, the organisation of tourism changed in the way that it passed out of the local hands. Companies outside the area moved in instead to provide products and facilities. Tourism development had therefore jumped to the development stage (see figure 3). Control in the public sector was also affected since regional and national planning became necessary to ameliorate some of the problems. During this stage the new facilities built to cater for the increasing number of tourists changed Lefkada’s character as their architectural design did not fit with the surrounding cultural or scenic environment. Tourism also increased the demands in local infrastructure and services.

The Present Situation

Today, Lefkada belongs to the consolidation stage (see figure 3). The rate of the increase of visitors has declined, though the total numbers are still increasing. However, most of the problems generated by the tourism development are still unsolved. The increased demands on local infrastructure and services during the peak months result in serious implications for local residents and ‘guests’ when demand exceeds capacity. The biggest problems identified are the problems of waste management, water supply and sewage pollution.

Lefkada, to the largest extend, gets water from the river Louros found on mainland Greece. However, some areas still have water supply problems in Lefkada since the construction of pump units has not been initiated in some of them yet.

Moreover, waste collection and treatment is a problem in Lefkada mainly because of its small size. Currently, there is only one waste dump found outside the city of Lefkada, however, the construction of another one is vital. A proposed second landfill site has been an area outside the mountainous village of Karya (fig.4) (Regional Development and Administration Centre, 1999). However, there are some
problems of initiating the construction of the damp site there, since the residents of Karya strongly oppose to it. In addition, there are no recycling facilities available in Lefkada making the problem even bigger. The minimum waste management facilities on the island, generate a great impact on the environment. Not only the smell during the hot summer months can become unbearable if the garbage are left uncollected, but the presence of garbage (especially those from the construction industry), found outside most of the villages, in ravines and river beds, pose a negative impact on the scenic environment. The large quantities of garbage found throughout Lefkada’s landscape also poses a threat to human health since the water systems get contaminated. It is not rare that increased amounts of gypsum are found in many water samples.

Finally, the problem of sewage leakage from many facilities and households, is a big problem especially during the summer months. This is a problem mainly on the east part of the island, where most of the tourist facilities are located, and where no biological treatment plant exists. The marine environment around the area of Nydri, for example, has shown some cases of increased pollution (fig. 4) (General Secretary of Ionian Island’s Region, 1997). Nydri-Doukato and Nydri-Madouri are some such examples. The special geomorphology of that area (the presence of small bays and the presence of a cluster of islands) will enhance this problem in the near future and will cause negative effects on both the environment and tourism. Some specialists say that the construction of a biological treatment plant is within the local authority’s plans for the next five years, but no written documentation, on this issue, exists. Therefore, it is still not known when the construction of such facility will get initiated. The plans for the construction of a biological treatment plant in Agios Nikitas (west part) have already been initiated.

However, the increased tourism development that appeared over the last few years, has some positive effects on the local community. As more and more tourists were arriving on the island, more and more local people started to get involved in the tourism sector (i.e. in hotels, restaurants and shops). By the beginning of the nineties, the majority of the locals were either directly, or indirectly involved in the tourism business. Therefore, the gradual increase in tourism is connected to the gradual increase of the local income. Prior to that, the island’s economy was poor and its population was declining. It is now expected that its population will start to increase again (National Statistical Service, 1993).

According to the National Statistical Service (1993), tourism together with agriculture and fisheries constitute the main sources of income for the Lefkadians. The fact that the majority of the tourist areas on the island, are still legally characterised as agricultural areas is another indicator that tourism in Lefkada is a new socio-economic phenomenon. Therefore, agriculture and fisheries are no longer the main sources of income for the Lefkadian society, as the latest National Statistical survey still indicates, but they have been substituted by tourism as well as the construction industry.

The gradual abandonment of the agricultural land started to appear by the beginning of the nineties (Thermou-Kopsida, 1999). It is indicative to mention that during the last decade, the majority of the cultivated fields got abandoned and the fields that were left fallow for 1-5 years increased by 50% (Thermou-Kopsida, 1999). In addition, the picking up of olives during the winter, started to decline since the people do not have the need of the additional income offered by the oil production any longer. The involvement of the locals during the picking up season, has been substituted, to the greater extend, by the involvement of the Albanian immigrants. Therefore, the government has still not succeeded in a more harmonical distribution of income per sector. In a few words, sustainability in Lefkada has been of low priority and it has been developing in relation to the roots followed in figure 2 (§2.3).

**Future Projections**

The are two scenarios for future development depended upon what role the local authority will play to mitigate the problems outlined before.

**Scenario 1:** If the local authority will not address any capacity constraints or sustainability principles, then according to Cooper et. al. (1999), the next step of the development will be the stagnation stage following
by the decline stage. At stagnation stage peak tourist volumes will be reached and Lefkada will no longer be fashionable. It will instead rely upon repeat visits from more conservative travellers. The extensive facilities that were built, are to a large extend no longer used. This results in a decline of the prices and eventually of the product quality. A representation of this scenario is seen in figure 2. At that point Lefkada should look to revitalise visits by seeking new markets, re-positioning the resort or finding new uses for its facilities.

Scenario 2: If the local authority addresses sustainability principles and capacity constrains and at the same time develops the product by looking at new markets will achieve rejuvenation (see figure 3). According to Cooper et. al. (1999) business, conference and special interest tourism (i.e. agri-tourism, eco-tourism, specially designed tourism for old people, athletic tourism etc.), help to stabilise visitation, may combat seasonality and reduce dependence on declining market segments. More details on this new market approach will be presented below.

4.3 THE BARRIERS AND DRIVERS OF TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN LEFKADA

4.3.1 Background

Tourism destinations comprise a mosaic of different groups termed stakeholders. In every destination as well as in Lefkada, there are several stakeholders which have a wide range of both compatible and conflicting interests. These are presented below.

* Lefkada’s people (local) are the most important stakeholders as they live and work on the island and provide the local resources to visitors. Issues of social carrying capacity, involvement with the local community in decision taking and making sure that tourism does not bring unacceptable impacts upon the local people and their home are important to consider.

* Tourists are looking for a satisfying experience, through properly segmented and developed products. They want high quality service and a well-managed and organised service.

* The tourism industry is to a large extend responsible for the existing development of tourism and seeks an adequate return on investment. The industry can be divided into the global players, i.e. tour operators and the niche players, i.e. local enterprises. The tour operators are multinational, well resourced with capital, expertise and power. On the other hand, the local enterprises are small family-based enterprises, lacking capital, expertise, qualified human resources and influence on the island’s development.

* The public sector sees tourism as a means to increase incomes, stimulate regional development and generate employment. The public sector is an important stakeholder, often taking a co-ordinating role.

If tourism is to be incorporated into a country’s development plan it must be organised and developed according to a strategy constructed on sound foundations. These foundations should take account of the co-ordination of the tourism related sectors, and the supply and demand of the tourism product. The process of development planning involves a wide cross-section of participants who may bring with them goals that are conflicting.

It is indicative to mention that no barriers were identified above since there are no pressure groups present on the island. Therefore, tourism development in Lefkada is at the hands of those promoting tourism i.e. the indigenous people (Lefkadians), the tourists, the public sector (e.g. the local authorities and the Greek National Tourism Office (EOT)) and finally the tourism industry (e.g. tour operators and local SMEs).

4.3.2 The Lefkadians

Since the majority of the population is either directly or indirectly involved with tourism, the Lefkadian income increased. Prior to that, Lefkada’s economy was not sophisticated and therefore it was frail and non-adaptable to any changes (Cooper et. al., 1999). In other words, tourism distorted the allocation of
resources quite drastically and set up importation habits that may be difficult to break in the future. The main economic problems associated with the tourism development in Lefkada are the following:

* migration from rural to urban areas; and
* the transfer of labour from traditional industries (such as agriculture) to tourism and its related industries.

Additionally, since most of the tourism industries are family businesses, the majority of people working on these are the older people of the family. As the family system is still quite strong in Greece, the younger people of the family live with their parents until they get married. Since their parents fund them, they do not have any incentive to find a job on their own. The ones working, are usually employed during the summer months and stay at home for the rest of the year.

The majority of the farmers involved in agriculture are old people. The young family people are rarely involved with agriculture. Since the abandonment of agricultural land has increased over the last years, and since the old people that are currently involved with agriculture will soon be too old to work in it, a problem arises on who is going to continue working with agriculture in the near future. Therefore, the Department of Agriculture has recently launched a program called ‘the young farmers’ on which young people under forty years old are encouraged to participate in agricultural activities (Thermou-Kopsida, 1998). Initially, the young farmers are getting a grant from the government in order to set up their agricultural business. This program is expected to increase the young people’s participation to some extent.

Moreover, tourism has created social differences between the Lefkadians themselves, i.e. between those being involved in the tourism business and those not being willing to get involved in it. However, the Lefkadian culture has in some ways adapted elements of its culture to the new conditions and situations created by tourism. For example, the tourism industry in Lefkada has preserved and resurrected many of the craft skills like weaving and embroidery.

4.3.3 The Tourists

On an attempt of getting the tourists’ perception of the tourism development in Lefkada a small number of informal meetings with foreign tourists were conducted. The main findings of these meetings have been that Lefkada is facing problems with safeguarding its resources. Many of the tourists identified that Lefkada is facing many environmental problems. For example, the lack of any waste management practices have been identified by the majority of the tourists. In many cases, Lefkada was characterised as being a ‘dirty’ island with streets and beaches full of garbage. Many tourists were also complaining about the presence of tar on the beaches. There have also been many complaints with the smell resulting from the leakage of sewage into the sea. However, the majority of the tourists were satisfied by Lefkada’s climate, food and drink.

Additionally, the characteristics of the tourists who visit Lefkada are an important factor in determining Lefkada’s social, cultural as well as environmental impact. The environmental impacts resulting form the activities of tourists are dependent upon the different tourist types (see chapter 2, §2.2). As well as the social and cultural impacts are concerned, tourists who belong to the mass or charter groups are more likely to have a greater social impact than those who belong to the explorer, backpacker and special interest tourists (see table 1). According to Cooper et. al. (1999), the former tends to demand Western amenities and bring their culture with them without adapting to the local norms and customs. Whereas, the latter tend to be far more sympathetic towards local customs and traditions and actively seek them out of their vacation experience.
However, the majority of the tourists visiting Lefkada are Greeks. The Greeks, as opposed to the international tourists are aware of the special character of the island that they are visiting and they are also more aware about the history and the local customs and traditions. Of the international tourists, the majority belongs to the mass or charter group and therefore their impact is the highest on the local community. Moreover, this is the group of tourists that needs good facilities and comfort and they, in some ways, drive the development on the island, through their impact on tour operators. The tour operator’s impact on the development of tourism on Lefkada is discussed in one of the following subsections.

4.3.4 The Public Sector

As it has already been mentioned above (§4.3.1), the public sector’s role is to encourage tourism development and generate employment at a regional basis. Even though the national bodies aim at addressing the main policy framework in terms of tourism, the regional or local authorities deal with specific issues that affect the area of Lefkada. Therefore, the focus of this study will be placed on the role of such authorities in stimulating sustainable tourism development on the island of Lefkada.

The Local Authority

The local authority’s involvement in the tourism sector plays a major role on how this sector is being developed on the island. Since the region of Lefkada is divided into 6 municipalities and one community, it is difficult and out of this paper’s interest to see how tourism development is carried out in each municipality. The co-ordinating unit of all municipalities as well as of the community, is the prefecture of Lefkada.

The prefecture’s tourism department is a new department. It was formed in April 1999. After a meeting with the director of the tourism department, Mr. Athanitis, the prefecture’s main involvement in the tourism sector is through the development programs that are carried out under the Community Support Framework (see chapter 2, § 2.5.5). The planning of the program is designed by the region of the Ionian Islands where representatives of every prefecture take place. Each representative suggests different development programs that are needed in its area. In order the programs to be accepted, they have to be approved by the European Community’s grant schemes. Once they are accepted they form part of the region’s development programs (or five year plans), that are carried out every five years. Figure 6 shows the money allocated to the different regions in Greece. It is indicative to mention that the Ionian region receives the smallest amount of money (figure 6).
The Ionian Island's regional program for the year 1994-1999 states that the main economic development carried out on the region is through tourism. Therefore, the main objective of the regional development program has been the improvement of the quality of tourists entering the region, as well as the increase of their amounts. In order to achieve their aim, the regional development programs where focused on the improvement of infrastructure and the environment as well as the promotion of the cultural and monumental heritage.

The focus on the primary sector has been the promotion of small scale interventions that constitute viable development schemes, as opposed to tourism, that act as additional income solutions. Special attention has been paid in the promotion of aquaculture.

Another target, of the development program, has been the improvement of the quality of life of the region's residents, so that the population, in the small islands, would stabilise. Moreover, the communication systems as well as the transportation should be enhanced so that the feeling of isolation, that promotes population decline, should minimise.

The Tourism Plan
More specifically, the tourism development program for the year 1994-1999 appoints zones of tourism development, saturation zones, incentives for environmentally sound investments, public awareness and promotion campaigns, education projects and vocational training in order to make the tourism of the region competitive to the international market. However, the measures that have been suggested are limited to the following areas (General Secretary of Ionian Island's Region, 1996):

1. **Transportations:** Improvements on the infrastructure of land and marine transportations. More specifically, new roads will be built, some old ones will get repaired, special attention will be paid in road safety and new marinas will be built.
2. **Improvement of the Environment:** This measure includes improvements in water supplies and sewage systems, construction of biological treatment plants, physical and town-planning, as well as waste collection and treatment techniques.

3. **The Promotion of Cultural and Architectural Heritage:** The expanding of existing or the construction of new museums, the reparation of monuments, historical buildings or buildings with special architectonic interest, will attract tourists and contribute to the promotion of alternative forms of tourism.

4. **Infrastructure for Alternative Forms of Tourism:** This includes the construction of new ports for the promotion of sailing tourism, coastal area reformation, forest and cave development and the construction of conference centres.

It is indicative that the word ‘sustainable’ is not mentioned in the regional tourism development program at any point. The phrase used instead is that of ‘rational tourism development’. The philosophy behind the notion of sustainable development is not discussed by the development program. Therefore, issues like using resources sustainable, reducing over-consumption and wastes, maintaining diversity, integrating tourism into the local planning etc., have not been discussed in the program. Mr. Athanitis, for example, was not familiar with the concept. It is clear that the main aim of the program has been to increase the amount of tourists entering the region. A way of succeeding this is, as it is mentioned, by the improvement of the existing infrastructure and the promotion of cultural and monumental heritage of Lefkada. No projects on capacity constraints, for example, have been initiated. As a result, the development programs that have been completed in Lefkada for the period 1994-1999 include projects mainly on the development of the road network, expansion of pavements in tourist areas, construction of small ports in several coastal areas, improvements on water supply networks in some areas and construction of new museums as well as the reparation of some historical centres. Another project that was initiated under the development project is that of the promotion of tourism on the island. At the moment, the prefecture is involved with the production of a video tape in order to advertise Lefkada in Greece as well as abroad.

In discussing with Mr. Athanitis, there are no clear future projects been discussed at the moment. In addition, the regional development program for the period 2000-2006 has not been initiated yet. The major reason for this delay is that the grants have not been allocated, yet. However, as it has already been mentioned, the construction of a biological treatment plant will get initiated, sometime in the near future. Moreover, in an attempt to improve the communication systems with the other Ionian islands, as well as with the rest of Europe, a suggestion that has been encouraged by the hotel owner’s association in Lefkada, is to build a marina in Vasiliki. By building this marina, Lefkada will be the first Ionian Island to get connected with Italy by boat. The implications of this connection, to the island’s development will be many, since the only connection that exists with Italy is that with Patra and Igoumenitsa (north mainland, opposite Corfu). On a question on whether this project will be carried out, Mr. Athanitis thinks that such a project will not be easily funded by the existing EC grant schemes and that it will take some time before it gets initiated.

The prefecture will also soon acquire machines for cleaning the beaches. Finally, it wants to become part of the Blue Flag awareness campaign, since the blue flag has become a symbol of environmentally sound areas as far as organised beaches or marinas is concerned. However, in order the Lefkadian beaches to get acquired the blue flag, a number of criteria have to be implemented by the local authorities such as (YPEXODE, 1997b):

- Environmental Education and Information
- Environmental Management
- Water Quality
- Safety and Services

Environmental education and information, has so far been very limited in Lefkada. Most of the environmental programs that have been carried out are about the promotion of agri-tourism. The term
means: different tourist activities of a small scale that are carried out in agricultural areas by people working with agriculture and these activities are either on a family or an association level (rooms to rent within the agricultural house or next to it, pension, etc.) (Thermou-Kopsida, 1998). This type of tourism development is promoted on mountain, low density population agricultural areas in an attempt to increase the quality of the people’s life by increasing their income and by enhancing the development of the area. Funds are allocated to such local areas by the local authorities. In Lefkada, there are currently 16 agri-tourism units working, with 5 rooms in each one of them and also 3 family restaurants (Thermou-Kopsida, 1998). Since this type of tourist activity is of small scale and has a low environmental impact, it can act as an additional source of income for the local population. Therefore, the development of agri-tourism activities in Lefkada will probably reduce the rate of abandonment of the agricultural land that is occurring during the last ten years.

The National Tourism Office of Greece

EOT’s role has been concentrated on the promotion of both international and domestic tourism development in Greece (Efthymiatou-Poulakou, 1997). According to YPEXODE (1998) it has also recently started to participate in several actions or projects like:

* product diversification;
* promotion of alternative forms of tourism;
* participation in various forms of European initiatives and pilot projects;
* public awareness;
* participation in planning of better control systems of land use at the national and regional levels;
* promotion of strict legal framework for building tourist venues after elaboration of environmental impact studies;
* co-ordination of actions with various NGOs in promoting eco-tourism; and
* incentives in tourist business by investing in environmental friendly projects;

EOT has offices all around Greece. However, there is no office or a tourist information centre (TIC) present in Lefkada. The nearest EOT office is found in Patra (northern part of the Peloponnese). It is therefore clear that its impact on the tourism development in Lefkada is minimum. Moreover, according to the tourist police, the office in Patra seems to always be very busy since they hardly respond to the tourist police’s requests.

The Tourist Police

The main role of the tourist police is the protection of the tourist against illegal actions taken by various tourist businesses. Another aspect of the tourist police is to improve tourism by improving the tourist services offered to the tourist. However, the tourist police office in Lefkada serves more as a tourist information centre because of the absence of an EOT office. Therefore, the tourist police is also the one that carries out the work of managing the tourist facilities and handling out tourist complaints. However, according to the tourist police, the institution will no longer function in a few years time. Tourist police’s role will be carried out by the local authorities instead. Therefore, in the near future, the local authority’s role in terms of tourist’s satisfaction as well as control on the local businesses will increase.

4.3.5 The Tourism Industry

The tourism industry is comprised by the intermediary sector (i.e. tour operators, travel agents), the accommodation and the attractions sector. These sectors are all discussed in the following subsections.

The Intermediary Sector

The role of the intermediaries is to bring buyers and sellers together, either to create markets where they previously did not exist or to make existing markets work more efficiently and thereby expand market size (Cooper et. al., 1999). For travel and tourism, intermediation comes about through tour operators or
wholesalers assembling the components of the tourist trip into a package and retailing the later through travel agents, who deal directly with the public (Vellas and Bechere1, 1995).

By making markets, travel intermediaries bestow benefits on both producers, consumers and the destination. The benefits include the following (Cooper et. al., 1999):

* Producers are able to sell in bulk and so transfer risk to the tour operator, though wholesalers do attempt to cover themselves by including release clauses in agreements. These may vary from four or more weeks to seven days.
* Suppliers can reduce promotion costs by focusing on the travel trade, rather than consumer promotion which is much more expensive.
* By being able to purchase an inclusive tour, the traveller can avoid search and transaction costs in both time and money.
* Consumers gain from the specialist knowledge of the tour operator and the fact that the uncertainties of travel are minimised.
* Tourist’s gain is in lower prices. In some destinations in the Mediterranean, wholesalers are able through their buying power to negotiate discounts of up to 60% off the normal tariff.

A schematic diagram of the structure of the distribution channels is shown in figure 7.

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Figure 7: Structure of Distribution Channels.
Source: Cooper et. al., 1999.

Among the intermediaries, the main focus will be placed on the role of tour operators in promoting tourism in Lefkada. These are the following:

1. From the UK: Manos, Sunworld, Sunvil, Unijet, Cosmos, Kosmar, First Choice, Sunworld Sailing, Sunsail, Simply Ionian, Sailing Holidays, Club Vasiliki, Wildwind, Mark Warner, Inspirations, Direct Greece, Travelux, Shockwave, Mountain Beach, Sapphire, Adventure Holidays, Neilson, Skorpios Boat Charter, and JMC.
2. From Sweden: Apollo, Always, Spies.
3. From Denmark: Tjaereborg and Spies.
4. From Norway: Saga Solreiser.
5. From Italy: Olympia and Comitours.
6. From Holland: D Tours, Evenements.
7. Others: Reise laden, Suntours, Reiseveranstaltungen.

According to the tour operator’s list, not many German tour operators are visiting the island compared with the rest of the Greek islands. The main reason for this is that the operation of tour operators in general, is constrained by conditions of access and the extent of tourist infrastructure (Cooper et. al.,
Even though Lefkada is connected with the mainland by a bridge, its access is limited mainly because of the operation of a small airport (Aktio) 30 km away of the city of Lefkada on mainland Greece. According to Mr. Kondilatos, the airport is of small capacity and there are no planes landing on the airport after 22.00 p.m. Moreover, since the tourist infrastructure on the island is limited to a few middle class hotels offering few facilities, German tour operators tend to prefer more organised resorts that some of the big Greek islands offer, like Crete, Rhodes, Kos etc.

However, the tour operators preparing packages for Lefkada are so far the main drivers of tourism development on the island. Mr. Kondilatos, for example, who is at the same time the owner of Alexandros Hotel (see appendix 2), was asked by Apollo to built a swimming pool by the hotel’s bar. By that time (end of the eighties), there were very few hotels with swimming pools in Lefkada. Nowadays, almost every one of them has one. Therefore, the tour operators design products that match the demand of the target market and create packages by negotiating the required services with the suppliers (Vellas and Becherel, 1995).

The type of contracts used by the tour operators are the following: allocation or guarantee. An allocation contract operates on a sale or return basis with an appropriate release date (Cooper, et. al., 1999). This type of contract is usually negotiated with medium grade hotels in Lefkada like, for example, Alexandros, where opportunities for re-sale are generally easier. The risk is thus transferred from the tour operator to the hotelier. In turn, the hotelier covers the risk by making contracts with several operators and quoting variable rates. With a guarantee contract, the wholesaler agrees to pay for the beds whether they are sold or not. Such a commitment naturally brings with it a cheaper rate than an allotment and is commonly applied to self-catering properties for the purpose of obtaining exclusive contracts.

Criticism of the tour operators usually comes from destinations. In the case of Lefkada, however, no criticism really occurs (from any stakeholder), since people believe that the area is benefited considerably by the marketing network of the tour operators. In many cases though, the tour operator’s specialist knowledge allows them to influence consumer choice and so gives them the opportunity to switch sales to destinations that are more profitable to the company (Cooper et. al., 1999). Areas like Nydri, for example, that are almost totally dependant on package tourism, tour operators have the power to extinguish tourism development from Nydri in order to develop in other areas more profitable.

However, because of Lefkada’s position - being closely connected with Western Europe - there is still a substantial number of tourists coming independently (i.e. Italians and Germans) and establish themselves in other areas, mainly along the east coast. However, the amount of tourists coming independently is decreasing year by year, whereas the package tourism is increasing (pers. com. with the Tourist Police). In other words, the tourism industry in Lefkada is still characterised by short term perspectives as the local agencies attempt to handle the growing demand of tourism. Sophisticated planning, management and interpretative techniques are therefore needed to be adopted, to provide both a welcome and a rich experience for the tourist while at the same time ensuring the protection of the destination.

The Attractions Sector
Attractions are an integral part of the tourism product. Tourist attractions in Lefkada can be grouped into natural and artificial. The natural include the landscape, climate, vegetation, forests and wildlife (see chapter 3, §3.2). The artificial are principally the products of history and culture (see chapter 3, §3.1). However, for most attractions to survive and flourish, other elements of the tourism product must also be on offer to support the attraction and to provide the tourist with the necessary supporting infrastructure.

With regard to tourism development, over the last years, Lefkada’s community has been involved in an interest of generating local economic activity and employment in the region. Such a policy, however, together with the increasing amounts of tourists entering the island, increased the amount of stress on both the natural and artificial environments in Lefkada. This resulted in a situation that can be depicted by
figure c (Cooper, et. al., 1999). Suppose that the local economy of Lefkada was positioned at A some years ago, when the desire was to increase employment (figure 8). Until now, this policy has been achieved by trading off employment against environmental quality, and therefore, has been a movement from stage A to stage B. In other words, Lefkada’s attractions, at the moment, are in danger because of the short term thinking and planning of the local community. However, the concept of sustainable tourism development argues that economic development and environmental quality are not mutually exclusive events (see chapter 2, §2.4). Therefore, by changes in technology to improve the use of resources, controlling waste and managing visitor flows to prevent damage to non-renewable tourism resources, it is possible to reach a position such as C (see figure 8).

![Figure 8: The concept of Sustainable Development. Source: Cooper et. al., 1999.](image)

**The Accommodation Sector**

Accommodation is a necessary component in the development of tourism within any destination that seeks to serve visitors other than day trippers (Vellas and Becherel, 1995). The quality and range of accommodation will both reflect and influence the range of visitors in Lefkada. As such, achieving the appropriate balance of accommodation to meet Lefkada’s strategic tourism development objectives is of a challenge.

Hotels are undoubtedly the most significant and visible sub-sector within accommodation or lodging. But this is not the case for Lefkada. The bed capacity of the self-catering accommodation outnumbers that of the hotel sector (chapter 3, §3.4). Additionally, the size of the self-catering accommodation can sometimes be bigger than that of the hotel sector. The main reason for the above is the fact that most of the family self-catering businesses started up by renting half of their house to tourists. As their income increased, they expanded their home by building additional rooms which they rented. Without even realising it, after a few years they had build their own enterprises. In other words, building a hotel in Lefkada necessitates large capital investment as opposed to the self-catering sector. In addition, the latter usually works illegally i.e. without being approved by the National Tourism Office. However, the increase of the self-catering accommodation as opposed to the hotel accommodation indicates that the accommodation sector in Lefkada offers few services and facilities to its guests.

The majority of the hotels are small size middle class hotels (see Appendix 2). According to the General Regional Secretary of the Ionian Island’s Region (1997), the development of a tourist village or a first class hotel with a capacity of 500 beds would demand a land area of 100000 m² and an investment of 3.2 billion drachma. Both the size of the investment and the size of the land are not in favour of such an investment. In order the lodging sector and the tourist quality to be enhanced, the construction of first and
second class hotels should be encouraged by setting up special money lending measures for the case of Lefkada.
5. CONCLUDING REMARKS AND PROPOSALS FOR FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

5.1 GENERAL

This chapter begins with a summary of the findings regarding the current situation of tourism development on the island of Lefkada and aims at demonstrating 'what went wrong' during this development. It ends by stating what tourism in Lefkada should look like in the future by suggesting different measures that could be applied by the local community.

5.2 CONCLUDING REMARKS

Summary of Findings

After analysing the reality of the situation in relation to the sustainable development concept and principles addressed in chapter 2, the main conclusions drawn were the following: Lefkada's present tourism development is at the consolidation stage and most of the problems generated by the tourism development on the island are still unsolved, i.e. waste management, water supply and sewage pollution problems, problems associated with the collapse of traditional mountainous agricultural communities and accommodation problems. Unless, immediate action takes place by the local authorities and the tourism industry, the next step for Lefkada will be to proceed into the stagnation stage following by the decline stage.

The main drivers of Lefkada's tourism development, has so far been the tourism industry and mainly the tour operators. The idea that still exists on the island is that the area is benefited considerably by the marketing network of the tour operators. What has not been realised so far is the tour operator's influence on consumer choice that gives them the opportunity to switch sales to destinations that are more profitable to the company. No barriers on tourism development have been identified, since there are no NGOs working on the island. Finally, the transfer of labour from traditional industries (such as agriculture) to tourism and its related industries, due to the opportunity of larger earnings from tourism, has also been identified. The abandonment of agricultural areas result in the die out of the countryside and its related agricultural activities, i.e. olive peaking, wine making etc.

What Went Wrong

In the previous section the role of the local authorities in promoting sustainable tourism development was discussed. Moreover, in chapter 2 the role of the Greek government together with the role of the international community on tourism development was encountered. Even though sustainability issues have been addressed by both the Greek government and the international community, the notion of sustainable development has not been fully familiarised by the local people and authorities. Only recently, the local authorities started to discuss about rational tourism development through the Regional Development Programs. Even though the regional Development Program for the Ionian Islands appoints zones of tourism development, saturation zones, product diversification and quality, the actions that have been taken so far are concentrated on improvements of road networks and water supply networks. Moreover, the main aim of the local authorities remains that of increasing the tourist numbers instead of promoting sustainable tourism development.

From the above it can be understood that there is a gap in awareness on the notion of sustainability between the government and the local level. Since the mechanism for promotion of sustainable development and the implementation of Agenda 21 is co-ordinated by the Ministry of the Environment Physical Planning and Public Works, the Government on the national level is to be blamed for the reduced awareness on the notion of sustainable development on the local level. However, the Ministry of the Environment Physical Planning and Public Works has only a small staff of specifically trained officials familiarised with the concept of sustainable development making it even more difficult for the concept to
be fully familiarised by the Greek society (Elliniki Etairia, 1998). Therefore, there is a need of familiarisation and updating the ministries’ staff and officers on the notion of sustainable development.

Additionally, although policies and plans on sustainable tourism development exist, to some extend, in every level, they are not effectively implemented. A limiting factor in the effective implementation of policies in Lefkada and generally in Greece, is the fragmentation and overlapping of responsibilities of various public agencies (Elliniki Etairia, 1998). According to Irvine (1997), it is a fact that a great part of regulation has either never been implemented or has become inactive after a short period of implementation. This is usually the case for all plans which aim at land development controls. There is a strong resistance from local land owners, who deny any control over their land. Local policy and decision makers often submit to these pressures.

To conclude, the sustainability concept is central to the assessment of tourism’s role in society. It demands a long term view of economic activity, questions the imperative of continued economic growth, and ensures that consumption of tourism does not exceed the ability of a host destination to provide for future tourists. In other words, represents a trade off between present and future needs. Up until now, sustainability in Lefkada has been of low priority compared with the short-term drive for profitability and growth. The main reason for this was identified to be the small amount of specifically trained officials familiarised with the concept of sustainable development. Moreover, a limiting factor in the effective implementation of policies was identified to be the fragmentation and overlapping of responsibilities of the various public agencies.

5.3 THE FUTURE OF TOURISM IN LEFKADA

As tourism approaches and enters a new millennium, futurists have produced many predictions and visions of the way that the sector will develop. According to Cooper et. al. (1999), the one feature that will distinguish the future of tourism from the ‘old tourism’ is the fact that not only rapid change will be evident, but that it will be accepted as inevitable and therefore tourism organisations will need to manage change.

Many tourist futurists have, therefore, suggested that the maturing of the tourism market is creating a new tourist who can be characterised as experienced, sophisticated and demanding (Poon, 1989). This means that the traditional annual family holiday mostly spent in a beach resort may be gradually replaced by multi-interest travel and a range of creative and innovative travel experiences (such as activity, adventure, learning and nature based tourism). These trends will see the relative importance of conventional packaged tours decline in favour of independently organised tourism. The sophistication of the customer will have an impact upon product development throughout the industry; not only there will be an increased requirement for high standards of product design, efficiency and safety, but also the tourist will be more critical of the product and have the experience to compare offerings.

As tourists become more sophisticated, their pressure upon the industry and destination managers to behave in a responsible manner increases. If they do not respond to the customer’s demands, then the destination may be shunned as environmental unacceptable to visit. In other words, if tourism development in Lefkada is to continue and reach the rejuvenation stage (see figure 3), its future development should be planned along these lines.

An alternative form of tourism development that is of a great interest to Lefkada, is the promotion and expansion of the existing agri-tourism programs. The development of agri-tourism not only is of a small scale, and therefore, its impact on the environment is minimum, but it also offers a great experience to the tourist. In addition, it can be carried out during the winter months, and thus, has the potential to reduce the acute seasonal character of tourism in Lefkada. Moreover, the development of agri-tourism will diversify
the income gained per sector and will work against the abandonment of the agricultural land that is now occurring. Thus, there is a great potential in Lefkada to adopt such an alternative form of tourism.

An advantage that Lefkada has over most of the other Greek islands is the fact that a substantial amount of Greek tourists visit the island since it is closely connected with the mainland by a bridge. This, together with its pleasant climate, its rich natural environments and cultural assets, can attract tourists from the surrounding mainland throughout the year (see chapter 3 §3.1 and 3.2). Having in mind that domestic tourist expenditure is 5-10 times higher than inbound tourist expenditure, it is of Lefkada’s interest to attract a higher number of Greek tourists by promoting all year round tourism activities. Moreover, the tourism development of Lefkada can also be directed towards facilitating the increased demand of pensioners for travelling. Pensioners can also be attracted throughout the year, since they are not limited by job commitment. Finally, athletic tourism development is of special interest. Athletic tourism includes climbing, rambling and bicycling (the construction of special paths is needed). Moreover, surfing in Vasiliki bay is of a special interest since the bay is one of the ten best surfing places in the world.

However, the environmental implications of alternative tourism development will depend on how it is planned, implemented, developed and controlled, and not simply on a list of ‘appropriate’ alternative tourist activities, types of alternative tourist or a declaration of policy intentions. What is needed for Lefkada, is that tourism development should be incorporated into the local authority’s planning schemes, where the authority’s goals and objectives should be clearly formulated.

Irrespective of the type of tourism, there is a range of planning approaches that decision makers could employ in an attempt to place tourism development on a sustainable path. An idealised planning framework for the development of strategies for Lefkada is outlined below (Williams and Gill 1994):

* Develop tourism goals and objectives which mesh smoothly with the broader comprehensive plan for the region.
* Create a set of performance indicators reflecting the objectives of tourism development.
* Implement management strategies which direct tourism towards the achievement of the stated goals and objectives.
* Monitor the performance of tourism development with respect to these indicators.
* Evaluate the effectiveness of the management strategies in influencing the performance of tourism with respect to these indicators.
* Develop new tactics for tourism management based upon the monitored effectiveness of the techniques.

The political process identified by Williams and Gill (1994), demands a thorough grasp of the local political situation and the role of the power brokers, and involves a skilful process of conflict resolution and reconciliation. However, such a process is vital for the long term tourism development on the island.

Thus, the tourism industry in Lefkada has a vested interest in protecting the natural and cultural resources that are the core of its business. It has also the means to do so. As one of the island’s largest industries, it has the potential to bring about sustainable development. What is needed is the concept of sustainability to become familiarised by the Lefkadian society. Only then, concerted action from the local governments and all sectors of the industry will secure long term future tourism development.
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(http://mne.gr/english_site/frames_eng/askseeng_frames.html)


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Personal Communications:

Athanitis K.: The director of the tourism office in Lefkada’s Prefecture.

Kondilatos, A.: The vice president of the Lefkadian Association of Hotel Owners and the owner of Alexandros Hotel.

The Tourist Police.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am especially grateful to Mikael Backman for his patience and encouragement throughout my reading for this dissertation.

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**APPENDIX I**

The Environmental Effects of Tourism.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Environmental Component</th>
<th>Tourism Activities</th>
<th>Environmental Effects</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Natural Elements:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Water</em></td>
<td>Disposal of litter and sewage into the sea, lakes and rivers.</td>
<td>Contamination and health hazard to local people and tourists; changes to and destruction of aquatic plant and animal life; loss of aesthetic value.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Release of oil and fuel from recreational vehicles, cruise ships and other boats.</td>
<td>Increasing toxicity in water bodies detrimental to aquatic plant and animal life; contaminated seafood; reduction of water based activities such as bathing and fishing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Increase demand on local water supplies.</td>
<td>Water shortages during peak tourist seasons, with serious implications for local residents when demand exceeds capacity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Atmosphere</strong></td>
<td>Increased travel to tourist destinations by car, ship, plane etc.</td>
<td>Air and noise pollution particularly in peak seasons may result in a loss in recreational value; adverse impact on plant and animal life; increased use in non-renewable fossil fuels; greenhouse gas formation and ozone depletion associated with air travel.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Increase in recreational driving in destination areas.</td>
<td>Structural alteration of plant communities, leaving fewer trees to mature and provide shelter for the site.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Vegetation</strong></td>
<td>Forest clearance for resort construction.</td>
<td>Conflagrations in forested areas; decline in diversity of plant species.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Careless use of fire in forests and parks.</td>
<td>Constant trampling may cause disappearance of fragile species, damage to tree roots; damage to plant habitats, increased soil erosion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pedestrian and vehicular traffic at campsites, trails etc.</td>
<td>Changes in species composition; disappearance of rare species.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Collection of plants, flowers, fungi.</td>
<td>Changes in species composition and inter-species relationships.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Introduction of alien species.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Environmental Component</strong></td>
<td><strong>Tourism Activities</strong></td>
<td><strong>Environmental Effects</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Poaching for souvenir industry.</td>
<td>Reduction of wildlife numbers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wildlife harassment from viewing and photography.</td>
<td>Disruption of breeding and feeding; disruption of predator prey relationships.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Development of highways and trails through natural areas.</td>
<td>Relocation of feeding and breeding areas or even destruction of wildlife habitats and disturbance of wildlife migrations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ecosystems:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Oceanic Islands and Coastlines</em></td>
<td>Construction of hotels, camping</td>
<td>Elimination of plant and wildlife habitats;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
sites, golf courses, access roads etc. interference with breeding habits of wildlife; erosion of beaches and dunes; obliteration of geological features by excavation or water pollution; loss of natural beauty; unsightly urban like development.

**Mountains**

Construction of tourist accommodation, mechanical lifts, power lines, sewage systems, etc. Disturbance of plant and animal life; disruption of soil stability; alteration of drainage system and water run off may result in increased numbers and scale of landslides, rock-fall and floods; visual impacts of scars on the landscape.

Trekking, mountaineering, skiing. Reduction in numbers and diversity of plants and animals; soil erosion, littering.

**Human Environment:**

**Human Settlements**

Expansion of hotel development and associated tourist infrastructure such as restaurants, bars, souvenir shops, etc. Displacement of local people; loss of amenity to remaining residents due to traffic congestion and overloaded infrastructure; increased pollution and noise.

**Historic and Religious Monuments**

Excessive use for tourist purposes. Overcrowding may result in trampling, littering; alteration of traditional use and function; exclusion of traditional users.

Source: Roe et. al. (1997)

**APPENDIX 2**

The hotels, the number of hotel beds and the class that each of the hotel belongs to (1998 data).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AREA</th>
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TOTAL NO. OF BEDS 3074

Source: Tourist Police.

APPENDIX 3

Arrivals and overnights of domestic and international tourists staying in hotels and camping.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>MONTH</th>
<th>DOMESTIC ARRIVALS</th>
<th>DOMESTIC OVERNIGHTS</th>
<th>INTERNATIONAL ARRIVALS</th>
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<td>11462</td>
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JANUARY       | 445               | 889                  | 45                     | 84                      |
<p>| FEBRUARY     | 621               | 1035                 | 59                     | 275                     |
| MARCH        | 1204              | 1924                 | 99                     | 224                     |
| APRIL        | 1731              | 3444                 | 258                    | 505                     |
| MAY          | 1927              | 2903                 | 2118                   | 13013                   |
| JUNE         | 2805              | 5527                 | 2094                   | 14144                   |
| JULY         | 5827              | 20286                | 2860                   | 19696                   |
| AUGUST       | 8694              | 32687                | 3463                   | 22764                   |
| SEPTEMBER    | 3980              | 10554                | 2284                   | 15345                   |
| OCTOMBER     | 1613              | 2504                 | 543                    | 2470                    |</p>
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<th>DOMESTIC OVERNIGHTS</th>
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Source: Tourist Police.