Project Title: Development of Common Cultural Tourism Destination in the Strandzha (Yıldız)-Sakar area based on archaeological and historical objects

Sustainability Report for Thrace Megalithics and Cultural Tourism

Introduction

With their rich historical, cultural data, archaeological sites that bear the marks of human life are sources of information for the past. Conservation of archaeological assets is crucial for preserving city culture and developing sustainable settlements.

The archaeological sites in the world are threatened by forces such as population growth, development, urbanization, pollution, tourism, vandalism and looting. Site management planning emerges as a critical element not only for the protection of this heritage, but also for addressing such issues as tourism and sustainable development. (Teutonico and Palumbo, 2002).

The preservation and management of archaeological sites is a very important aspect of modern archaeological research. No field project stands outside the use of archaeological resources in contemporary society, and physical and intellectual access is the primary concern. The balance between current and future uses is a vital part of deciding around any archaeological project that is often complicated by political, social and economic considerations and the concepts of "sustainability". The theory and practice of archaeological site management includes reasons such as site selection for conservation and / or imaging, participatory planning, decision making authority, management and conservation approaches of a site, preventive protection, technical approaches to site conservation, interpretation strategies. sustainable tourism etc.

The Istranca Mountain range is the dominant physical feature of Turkish Thrace, which starts from the Catalca area, continues parallel to the coast of the Black Sea and is connected to the Rhodope massive. Its peak, the Mahya, reaches a height of 1031 metres. On its south-

western side, the Istranca Mountain consists of gentle slopes. On its north-eastern side, the ridge throws out an almost continuous series of spurs and hills close to the Black Sea

Historical buildings, archaeological sites and abandoned open spaces are under the risk of physical deterioration or redevelopment, and represent a loss of opportunity to revive structures that contribute to the identity and social traditions of a community. Today, many tourist regions are experiencing a massive visitor flow, which can lead to intense management challenges, deterioration of visitor experiences and general site conditions, especially during peak periods. (http://sdt.unwto.org). The region of Thrace is not yet a region that has such a busy tourist movement. So the depreciation of the zone due to the tourist movements is not very high. This causes both the advantages and disadvantages for the region.

All forms of tourism must be included within the framework of sustainability, including mass tourism and special interest segments. The archaeological heritage is the main document of human activities in the past. Therefore, it is imperative that the archaeologist and other scientists study and interpret it fort he benefit of present and future generations. Cultural and archaeological resources integrity must be protected and conserved while their values are being presented and transmitted to current and future generations. There is a great need and an important challenge to manage these areas in the context of increasing tourism activity. The preservation of archaeological and historical heritage should be based on the effective cooperation of experts of many disciplines. It is also necessary to cooperate with government officials, academic researches, private or public entrepreneurs and the public. Historical and archaeological sites can be regarded as the touchstones in the process of developing sound and sustainable policies to enhance the relationship between tourism and heritage. As is known tourism trails and thematic routes can be based on both tangible heritage (hotels in historic colonial period buildings) and intangible values (mythological characters in popular literature).

Sustainability – Sustainable Tourism

Sustainability can be defined as "a socio-ecological process characterized by the pursuit of a common ideal. An ideal is by definition unattainable in a given time and space. However, by persistently and dynamically approaching it, the process results in a sustainable system. The concept of sustainability relates to the continuity of environmental, economic, cultural and social aspects of a place" (Parker, 2017: 77).

Sustainability is at the center of support for the sense of authenticity in tourism.

Experiences can be improved when substituted for facts, and they can also lead to potentially harmful appetites for visits following real things: intact authentic areas intact with repair or rejuvenation. The sense of authenticity of a tourist is indirectly linked to sustainable tourism; existential maximization is limited historically based on the authenticity of the sites that "feels" that it increases the likelihood of repeated visits.

According Repiso (2008) "Tourism is increasingly being regarded as a positive force for the preservation of nature and culture; its contributions should bring about benefits for the host community and provide its members with significant resources and incentives to look after and maintain their Heritage.The strategic alliance between culture and tourism refers to the use of the concept of Sustainability as a linking concept between these two areas in terms of planning and management. On the basis of this general concept, this report adheres to the notion of Sustainable Tourism, regarded as a conceptual and operative basis that allows for a sustainable use of heritage assets".

The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO, 2004) has set the guidelines for sustainable tourism development and sustainable management practices based on social, economic and ecological aspects.

Sustainable Reporting and Recommendations

And also;

- Tourism agencies and companies can raise awareness about the protection of the heritage to sustain long term business operations.

- Travel agents need to give more publicity to protection, especially through guide training to address and control harmful behaviour by visitors. They need to be aware of issues so that they can inform visitors.

- There could be language training programmes to assist the local people better communicate with visitors from abroad.

- Specific features about the sites need to be presented to bring it into a wider context historically or geographically.

- Modern technology should be constantly reviewed for opportunities to improve the presentation of the places to visitors.

- Walking and trekking along the extensive stairs and pathways could be better facilitated and promoted to more energetic visitors. Developing walking programmes might increase the length of stay.

- Signs are placed on the walking route.

- There are many ways to communicate and interpret heritage values to tourists through information provided before, during and even after the trips, using modern technology, such as Internet, printed and electronic media, visitor centers, guides, interpretive signs and trails, among others. Communication and interpretation has to represent heritage values in an appropriate and educative manner, suited to the needs and level of knowledge of different tourist markets and groups. Interpretation services can serve to educate tourists about heritage values, provide business opportunities for local residents (e.g. guides, souvenirs), and help controlling visitors in order to avoid damage to the sites.

Sustainable tourism development can be applied ecologically sustainable, economically and ethically and ethically appropriate. In particular, it respects the fragile environmental balance that characterizes many tourism destinations in environmentally sensitive areas; and a long-term perspective.

The different declarations of principles for sustainable tourism can be summarized as following (UNESCO, 2013);

- **"Enhancing the well-being of communities:** Sustainable tourism development supports and ensures the economic, social and cultural well being of the communities in which tourism takes place".

- **"Supporting the protection of the natural and cultural environment:** Sustainable tourism allows the use of natural and cultural resources for gaining economic profit while at the same time guaranteeing that these resources are not deteriorated or destroyed. Additionally, tourism is expected to be a driving force with regard to the establishment or the enhancement of nature protection and the maintenance of cultural values".

- **"Recognizing product quality and tourist satisfaction:** The quality of tourism products offered by a region is a key factor for the economic success of tourism. It is

not only characterized by material criteria like the quality of transport, accommodation and food, but also by non-material criteria like hospitality or the quality of experiences".

- **"Applying adaptive management and monitoring:** To ensure that tourism is developed in a way which is ecological, economic and socially sustainable, adequate management and monitoring must be established, following the basic principles of sustainable use of resources"

Economic: Tourism is recognised as being a primary tool for the reduction of poverty. In addition tourism can generate forms of direct and indirect economic opportunities for all layers of host communities.

Souvenirs representing old ages like Dolmen, Tumulus, etc. can be produced and offered for sale.

Environmental: to foster the long-term sustainability of these sites.

Thanks to sustainable tourism strategies, the preservation of historic remains and megalithics in the region will be ensured. The people of the region can be made aware of this issue.

Social:

Revitalization of the historical ages of the region with small theatrical performances for those visiting the region. (For instance, that kind of performances are held in Efes, Turkey)

Near the megalithic remains areas, excavation areas (for example, in the excavation area of Aşağıpınar) can be developed especially for young people and children, and experiential tourism can be developed in the region, and by this means young people and children can gain cultural tourism awareness.

Referances:

1) Teutonico, J.M. and Palumbo, G. (2002). Management Planning for Archaeological Sites, Los Angeles: Getty Conservation Institute.

2) Parker, R. (2017). Essentials of Environmental Science, Second Edition, National Agriculture Institute, USA.

3) UNESCO (2013). Sustainable Tourism Development in UNESCO Designated Sites in South-Eastern Europe. Ecological Tourism in Europe.