
MARINE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY. CASE STUDY OF THE SARONICOS GULF MARINAS, GREECE

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Abstract

The coastal region development should be accomplished under the umbrella of sustainability, bearing in mind the specific ferrying capacity of the area. The concept of a holistic approach should be applied, in an effort to establish and conserve a healthy business in a well being environment. In the present study, the Saronicos gulf marinas (in Greece) are studied and compared, according to their effectiveness to correspond to high quality standards, respond to consumer needs and preserve the environment.

Keywords : Pollution, Aegean Sea, Coastal Management.

The coastal region is a fragile and complex ecosystem with a variety of land uses. Sustainability emphasises the interdependence of social and economic development as well as environmental protection. Marine tourism is one of the extremely growing today's industries and it is incorporated in the recent EU Marine Policy [1]. Improper marina operations and maintenance activities have the potential for environmental degradation. The marina ecosystem receives a variety of pollutants [2, 3] from activities such as re-fuelling operations, boat maintenance and boat cleaning, while domestic wastes and other discharges produced on board, as well as water runoffs from the parking, maintenance and repair areas have a strong potential to enter the water basin with its limited water circulation. On the other hand, marine tourists, as typical consumers, ask for high quality standards, such as a healthy coastal and marine environment. Trying to sustain long-term profit, improved competitiveness, continuous growth and enhanced employment rates, the marina industry has begun to embrace the need to promote clean boating, clean facilities and clean operations. For a sustainable marina's development, adverse impacts on water quality and disturbances to wetland should be minimized, animal and plant habitat conservation should be promoted and land use policies aiming to a healthy environment should be established.

Studying the Saronicos gulf marinas, based on information provided by the facility owner/manager and a representative number of users, it is obvious that most of them do not offer high quality standards services. A boat supplies shop, that could promote environmental friendly goods, a boat maintenance and repair facility, a technical support of electronic devices facility and a repairs supply shop are absent, apart from one case. Public education for pollution prevention, and relevant publicity are rare. There is a need to establish a list of economically achievable measures to control the addition of pollutants to coastal waters. In all of them, apart probably from one case, the best management practices should be applied in order to eliminate, control and reduce environmental pollution, bearing in mind that for a marina's appropriate management scheme, the business availability is strongly related to the environmental health. Research is continued trying to identify a marina that, through best management practices adoption, has already resulted in positive economic benefits. That will be of great help in an effort to persuade marina's decision makers to make the required environmental changes. In other words, findings will act like economic tools, helping marinas to meet their environmental responsibilities.

References

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