TOURISM IN PROTECTED AREAS:
THE CASE OF THE NATIONAL MARINE PARK OF ALONISSOS-NORTHERN SPORADES IN GREECE

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Abstract:
The tourist development of Greece began in the ’50s to become one of the main sources of income, both nationally and locally, since many areas are the main source of tourism revenue. The concepts of sustainability and viability of this product and its operation, is being strongly marked recent decades in many conferences, notices, and scientific research. Greece established 30 Management Bodies to integrated management of protected areas belonging to this network. One of the main problems faced by operators in their pursuit of these objectives to be achieved is use of these areas by visitors, whose presence is particularly strong in coastal locations. Meanwhile, tourism trends in recent years have changed, resulting in more and more visitors are directed to areas that retain as much as possible intact their natural environment, which, as already mentioned, has contributed to the development of ecotourism. Comparatively, governments are pushing the parks to make more dynamic the tourism as a means of saving money to make them as independent, sustainable and self-reliant as possible. This results in the Protected Areas at risk of losing their authenticity if not properly managed the tourists from their managers. Others focus on the principles of sustainability and viability and others give concrete forms of tourism in this alternative formula, including for example ecotourism and agrotourism. The benefits anticipated from the influence on the existing tourism development, the development of better relations with local operators and those involved in the tourism sector and a holistic approach in terms of management of the protected area in the field of management. This paper investigates the profile of tourists in the National Marine Park of Alonissos, gets a swot analysis to identify the

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provides and benefits of the region and are proposed a number of items reference the
ecotourism marketing.

**Keywords:** ecotourism, protected areas, National Marine Park of Alonissos

1. Introduction

Greece has long been a site for tourists because of its rich cultural, historical, and natural
heritage. The tourist development of the country began in the '50s to become one of the
main sources of income, both nationally and locally, since many areas are the main
source of tourism revenue.

The country, despite the huge tourist traffic and the big economic benefit from it,
has not achieved the desired increase in the level of services offered and the general
level of infrastructure is excellent. Many of the hotels built in the 60s and 70s have been
modernized.

In recent years, a fatigue of tourists from the classical form of tourism. First, the visitor is more demanding as to the level of service. They may, therefore, areas
attached to the tourist model "Sea - Sun - Beach" without high levels of infrastructure and services to show a drop in demand.

But the demands of tourists for new forms of recreation with more and more
authentic experiences, away from commercialized areas, with a more sophisticated
way, assist the growing environmental awareness, while presented transition from
tourism passive model to a more energetic. This sustainable development called
sustainable tourism, agrotourism, green tourism, cultural tourism or ecotourism best.

Generally, ecotourism through the natural environment is economically efficient,
promote environmental education and manage the natural environment in a
sustainable way. Ecotourism contributes to the integrated environmental management
of a region intervening and shaping the trends and characteristics of local actors,
businessmen, and visitors.

2. The research area

Alonissos region is entirely included in Natural sites, 2000 Corinne habitats. This area is
part and Alonissos-Sporades National Marine Park (GR1430004 of from 1/4/95).

The National Marine Park of Alonissos Northern Sporades (NMPANS) is the
first statutory Marine Park in Greece and the largest protected marine area in Europe.
The purpose of the foundation of NMPANS, which stands out for its great biological, ecological, aesthetic, scientific, educational, and geomorphologic value, the protection, preservation, and management of natural environment area. The Park covers an area of about 2,220 km² a unique combination of terrestrial and marine habitats Mediterranean with hundreds of species of plants and animals, but also important archaeological and historical sites (Facaros & Pauls, 2007).

The area is of particular scientific, educational, and cultural interest, as well as in the area of the Park there are findings from the Prehistoric, Classical, and Byzantine period (shipwrecks, old monasteries and churches). The geographical isolation of the area, the morphology, the limited human intervention and the excellent condition of the natural environment, made the scenery and maritime areas of the Park, an ideal refuge for many endangered species of land and marine flora and fauna (Politikos & Tzanetis, 2009).

Rocky islands of NMPANS with steep cliffs and caves lives and the world's largest population of monk seals reproduced (Monachus monachus); species included in the list of the six most endangered mammals in the world and is considered the most endangered species in Europe (Politikos & Tzanetis, 2009; Trivourea, 2011).

3. The Sustainable Tourism

This great industry called tourism and acting globally, offers development and economic prosperity in many areas but also threatens, as already mentioned the negative effects of the natural environment, identity, and traditions of local populations. The concepts of sustainability and viability of this product and its operation, is being
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strongly marked recent decades in many conferences, notices, and scientific research. The concept of sustainable development or otherwise of sustainability was introduced in 1987 by the World Commission on Environment and Development (UNEP & WTO, 2005), according to referred to as (Mason, 2015)

"The process whereby present needs are met without limiting the possibility of future generations to meet their own needs. »

The main pillars of sustainability are three and concern the economy, society, and environment. According to the World Tourism Organization and the United Nations Environment Program (2005) (United Nations, United Nations Environment Programme, & United Nations, General Assembly, 2005), the reason the nature and dynamics as an important contribution to the economy of each country sustainability in tourism is linked itself while the mode that operates develops a special relationship between the user, the local economy, environment, and the industry itself (tourist agents etc.) characterized interdependent and interrelated. For this reason the most sustainable approach to tourism will not only benefit the above and depending on the above tourism industry itself. The environment, culture and the local community are important tourism products and attract tourists’ reasons. Thus, retaining their value, ensure the viability of tourism businesses and activities, and therefore the long-term functioning of the tourism industry itself. The integration strategy for sustainable tourism development at the international level was performed at the World Conference on Sustainable Tourism in Lanzarote, Canary Island, in 1995. The last major report on this phenomenon and its connection to sustainability was in 2002 in Johannesburg, where he organized Summit on sustainable development (United Nations Environment Programme, 2007).

4. Tourism and Protected Areas

One of the times "stations" for the protection of the natural environment in Europe was the creation of the "European Network of Protected Areas," the most famous NATURA 2000. Greece established 30 Management Bodies (F.D.) to integrated management of protected areas belonging to this network. The management, according to the Ministry of Environment, Physical Planning & Public Works (2003), should aim to preserve and protect biodiversity and ecosystems, the development of mild forms of human activities, the dissemination of the benefits of sustainable management and the involvement of local authorities, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and citizens.
One of the main problems faced by operators in their pursuit of these objectives to be achieved is use of these areas by visitors, whose presence is particularly strong in coastal locations.

Meanwhile, tourism trends in recent years have changed, resulting in more and more visitors are directed to areas that retain as much as possible intact their natural environment, which, as already mentioned, has contributed to the development of ecotourism. The definition of ecotourism in protected areas is given by Svoronou (Svoronou & Holden, 2005) as "...tourism developed in nature, which, unlike mass tourism, does not exceed the carrying capacity of the region, while promoting the protection of natural, initially, and cultural environment and contributes to the local economy and in maintaining cohesion of the social fabric."

There is however skepticism about whether the protected areas by tourists as there should be used UV conflicting interests. On the one hand, the environmentalists want to preserve the natural environment as much as possible intact, the tourism industry wants fewer restrictions in such areas while trying to increase profits, and end users in the region, tourists want to pay less and consume more (EUROPARC Federation Expertise Exchange Working Group Transfrontier Protected Areas, 2001). Comparatively, governments are pushing the parks to make more dynamic the tourism as a means of saving money to make them as independent, sustainable and self-reliant as possible (EUROPARC federation, 2001). This results in the Protected Areas at risk of losing their authenticity if not properly managed the tourists from their managers.

In Greece now are few areas remain without visitors. Protected areas of the country have developed tourism, other strongly, others less. This makes it more difficult to plan for sustainable tourism development because the operator does not receive a range from zero but with already created attitudes, needs and tourist activity that may not compatible with the principles of sustainability and ecotourism.

There are several operators have approached tourism regarding protected areas. Others focus on the principles of sustainability and viability and others give concrete forms of tourism in this alternative formula, including for example ecotourism and agrotourism. The European Union recognizes two major initiatives from reputable organizations that meet the management and development of tourism in areas Natura 2000. (Wearing & Neil, 2009)

These are:
The European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Association developed by the Europarc Federation PAN (protected area network) and criteria European network of protected areas supported to WWF (Worldwide Fund for Nature). The principles and criteria set by the network of Pan parks and the Europarc Federation, to enable a park to
become their member, became the foundation for a different direction to get the development of tourism and visitor management.

More specifically, in April 1999 was introduced in France by the Europarc Federation, an organization for protected areas in Europe, the Statute relating to sustainable tourism. The title of as already mentioned is "The European Charter for sustainable tourism of and was created by the Rio Agenda 21 of 1992 and 6th the environmental action program for sustainable development of the European Union (EUROPARC federation, 2001). Table 1 summarizes the updated data of the Association since October 2002. The benefits anticipated from the influence on the existing tourism development, the development of better relations with local operators and those involved in the tourism sector and a holistic approach in terms of management of the protected area in the field of management. (Buckley, 2002)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principles</th>
<th>Through their satisfaction</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Promotion and protection of natural heritage</td>
<td>Monitoring the impact on plant and animal species while controlling tourists in sensitive areas</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Strengthening actions supporting the preservation of historical heritage, culture and traditions</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Conservation of natural resources</td>
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<td>Encouraging visitors and the tourism industry in their contribution to the conservation of ecosystems</td>
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<td>Improving the quality of tourism - economic experience</td>
<td>Search expectations and visitor satisfaction</td>
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<td>Satisfaction of needs of underprivileged tourists</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Initiatives to control and improve the quality of tourism facilities and services</td>
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<td>Public awareness</td>
<td>The promotion of the region should be through authentic images and conform to specific regional</td>
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<td>Quality in information readily available in and around the area</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Opportunities for education and services that interpret the environment and heritage in with tourists and locals</td>
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<td>Attracting special tourism type</td>
<td>Provision and support actions / events involving the interpretation of environmental</td>
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<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Educational programs for staff of the protected areas, other organizations and tourism enterprises</td>
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<tr>
<td>Protecting and enhancing</td>
<td>Involvement of local society in the planning of tourism management</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Ensuring good communication between visitors, local community and management of protected As a region</td>
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5. Strategy and Marketing For Sustainable Tourism

Although the purpose, namely the Sustainable coastal tourism, it is clear, but there is no fixed way to achieve. Usually, the development of a Strategy and an Action Plan for sustainable coastal tourism is a useful measure that guarantees efficient and coordinated action. It is the best approach if it involved all the main interest groups has a stake in local sustainable development (Jamrozy, 2008).

5.1 Engaging ways the local community in the development of policies for tourism and decisions:

- Organization of workshops, seminars and conferences
- Configuration committees and working groups
- Training
- Interviews and questionnaires for the public or for groups of particular interest
- Advisory Groups
- Public hearings
- Establish a regular "Forum" or "network" with representatives of civil society.

5.2 Some general rules for public participation:

- Informing and educating people about why they should participate.
- Strive for transparency of information.
- Determination of clear limits and standards that meet clear expectations of all participants.
- Installing a good communication system with communication controller definition.
• Valid start to achieve maximum participation - something that can take a long time.
• Variety of people involved and not just particular group representatives.
• Wide view to encourage new people - not only contacting people who had participated at some point in the past.
• Settings relating to the carriage, time and place of the meetings, so they can all attend.
• Since the beginning of the process, should be involved has any interest in the region.
• It is important to provide equal treatment to all participants.

5.3 Follow steps should be done:
A. Analysis of the current situation
For the development of a strategy, a prerequisite is to analyze the existing information and knowledge.

• It should be taken into consideration:
• Development of previous tourism management or related strategies for the specific area (What can be used? Has applied? What sort of lessons can be drawn?)
• Stakeholder analysis (Who is interested in developing sustainable tourism? What are the main actors?)
• Facts and figures of the local educational system, economic and social structure.
• Anecdotal and traditional knowledge.
• The methods for the collection of this information include:
  • Interviews with the affected groups.
  • Distributing questionnaires and gathering them by email, fax or personal delivery, to be a composition of official data and a statistical analysis.
  • Invitation to focus group meetings (e.g. meetings on environmental education, biodiversity management, good governance and fisheries).
  • Search literature at the local library and the Internet.

B. Strategy development
The strategy defines priority themes, all the groups involved, the possible objectives and a set of methodologies to achieve these objectives.

Some of these relate inter alias:
• Conservation of specific coastal landscapes or habitats due to which the region is particularly attractive or is protected by legislation on nature conservation.
Regional development of specific sectors of the economy, which can be connected internally with the tourism sector.

Maximizing local income of tourism investments.

Strengthening the self-determined cultural development in the region.

C. Action Plan

The Action Plan analyzes the steps required to implement the strategy and which address many practical questions like: Which organizations will take up which activities and within what time frame, by what means and resources? (Dowling & Fennell, n.d.)

As actions should be tailored to the needs of the region, so there is a solid action plan for everything. However, the Action Plan usually regards measures concerning the following fields:

**Administration:** e.g. strengthening cooperation between the sectors and promoting cross-sectoral development models. Involvement of local communities in the planning of tourism policy and decisions.

**Socioeconomic factor:** e.g. promote the local food market and construction materials, establishment of local production networks for improved marketing and promotion of goods, development of new products to meet the needs of tourists, etc.

**Environment:** e.g. better monitoring and enforcement of environmental standards (noise, drinking, waste-water treatment, etc.) Recognition and protection of endangered habitats. Creating buffer zones (regional) around sensitive natural areas. Prohibition of environmentally harmful sports in areas at risk. Strict application of Environmental Impact Assessments and Strategic Environmental Assessment on all projects and programs related to tourism.

**Knowledge:** training people involved in coastal tourism about the value of historical heritage, environmental management, training of staff involved in the management of protected areas in environmental interpretation. Enhance environmental awareness of the local population. Adopt a visitors' information program (including environmental information).

5.4 Elaboration of Marketing Plan for Ecotourism

As intermediaries between tourists and tourism service providers, tour operators bring together various services related to tourism, to create a complete holiday package forwarded to consumers either directly or through travel agencies. Each package generally contains accommodation (often including some food service, breakfast), transportation to and from the destination, transport within the destination and events
or activities including excursions and social activities. Tour operators do not always have direct control of the environmental and social impact of these products. However, consumers increasingly require tour operators from whom they made their purchase to confirm that their products not only provide quality and price of money, but also safeguard environmental and social sustainability (Jamrozy, 2008; Pomering, Noble, & Johnson, 2011).

6. The Tourists’ Profile of Alonissos

To help in the ‘marketing research design to be made into another and yet exhaustive level and to have some first conclusions on the level of this design was conducted survey on citizens’ views ecotourism, the profile of the Greek Eco tourists of Alonissos profile (López-Sánchez & Pulido-Fernández, 2016).

The survey was conducted by online questionnaire through the online service for online surveys “KwikSurveys” (http://kwiksurveys.com/) and approached 350 people, of which the respondents showed an interest on ecotourism issues as 203. Judging from that the email of the invitation of interest for participation mentioned the research we can say that half of their visitors interested in such matters of course with all the risk of arbitrary conclusion because many of them indifferent to this invitation.

In conclusion, we could say that the greatest interest in ecotourism issues show women. The predominant age of participants is from 25-35 but calculating and the large proportion of stakeholders from 46-55 could be said to be relatively young age with sensitivities surrounding these issues and relatively mature with relative economic comfort. All are highly educated and with an average annual income of about 18,000 euros in today’s conditions is an income of the new middle class and intend to spend an average amount of about 750 EUR for an ecotourism experience. Go 1-2 times a year vacation in total 1 to 2 weeks, organize their holidays themselves and devote only part of their holiday in contact with nature. Choose a holiday basis of destination, the gang but important is of course the price. During their holidays looking busy but simultaneously distant destinations for peace and relaxation. For selecting priority ecotourism destinations are the nature and the landscape.

38% of respondents had visited and learned Alonissos Island by acquaintances who had visited. NMPANS ‘played a big role in the choice of Alonissos majority of those who believe mainly protects the biodiversity of the region. The beaches and the quiet surroundings are rated highly by visitors. Well, rated the cleanliness, the food, the nature, the touring routes while average rating get prices, accommodation, entertainment and cultural events. Of course bad score get the internal transport and
infrastructure (clinics, banks, etc.), while almost negative access to the island. During their visit, mainly they engaged in swimming, eating, and rested.

The general profile of the potential ecotourists not different from the international respectively although here the allocated income is much smaller. Also, due to custom package not go to the destination but organize the visit on their own. There is ambivalence in the expectations for the destination because most want to rest in a quiet place well-known and several opportunities for fun. Perhaps because choosing the destination by "name" and go in company with diverse interests each. It makes sense in today's time’s plays a big role and the combination of the price to the above.

Alonissos shown to have many positive elements. First has a good reputation (the most visited by friends information) so it can get a good name and to a wider market. It has a park with managerial authority that conclusion seems particularly concerned with information and communication. Besides, the great advantages set forth above, a related problem occurs with values thing to should be studied closely in times of crisis, the accommodation because there are many good hotels and probably there is a problem in the Offer As services and fun because as said above and sensitized tourists want peace and relaxation-nature but combined with good fun. The last but not a problem because the increase of services in this area would alter the character of the island. Of course the biggest problems created by transport, inland because there is no connection to the beaches and the connection to the mainland is lacking and expensive.

7. A SWOT Analysis for Alonissos as Ecotourism Destination

To achieve the purpose, we tried through discussing strategic analysis of opportunities, threats, strengths and weaknesses of Alonissos tourism provide appropriate strategies for developing tourism, by using SWOT technique (Daraei, 2014).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths (internal factors)</th>
<th>Weaknesses (internal factors)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Significant Biodiversity</td>
<td>Strong seasonal product and is directly dependent on the weather during most</td>
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<td>Environment which has not undergone significant human intervention</td>
<td>Grossly inadequate ferry connection particularly with N. Greece.</td>
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<tr>
<td>IMP and Organization Management</td>
<td>Difficulty of access to tourist resources</td>
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<tr>
<td>Financial Destination (relatively low prices)</td>
<td>- Unpaved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospitable local community</td>
<td>- Poor quality asphalt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Usable local resources</td>
<td>Incomplete information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest and rich tourist product for combined activities</td>
<td>Guests arriving at the destination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Events</td>
<td>Poor signage and promotion paths and tourist</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The strengths of Alonissos is the significant biodiversity, quiet environment, the park, relatively reasonable price, ideal for many activities having many usable tourist resources, a fishing destination, ideal for diving tourism, offering good food and hospitality and has a good reputation as a destination. These are internal factors should continue to exist and it mainly depends on the willingness of the local community and enhanced action.

The main weaknesses identified in the great seasonality of the product (1.5-2 months), to poor visibility as ecotourism destination, poor water quality, insufficient transportation access network mainly beaches (taxis only private cars) and the difficulty of access to the Continental country. And since these are internal, system factors are to a greater extent on the will of the local community and institutions to diversify to be changed completely.
Opportunities are external influencing factors should be carefully exploit their coordination with local authorities and the state. The island has enormous development potential development of ecotourism and other alternative forms of tourism (e.g. diving). This must be done to fully exploit the opportunities offered at national and European level and acquire the relevant knowledge and experience in cooperation with other regions will certainly help in this a complete development strategy and marketing plan with what is mentioned in the previous chapter.

The risks largely are imponderables and want special attention, because it may affect any future effort, identify the potential intense competition from neighboring regions, from a possible destruction of the ecosystem, consider some traders’ activity of ecotourism as a source of easy money and considered the destination of any interest by the relevant tour operators. This can be minimized by proper strategy development and marketing, sufficient environmental studies and correct calculation of tourism carrying capacity as mentioned above.

8. Summary & Proposals

8.1 Planning For Implementation Ecotourism Activities
Taking account then it mentioned that ecotourism activity is both feasible and necessary. It seems to have prospects and therefore must be further development (Ceballos-Lascuráin, 1996). For this reason, then listed a series of proposals which can contribute to creating an attractive ecotourism package in areas of ecological interest:

1. Implement an ecotourism policy with respect to physical and our cultural heritage, which reinforces the sustainable economic development.
2. Participation of all stakeholders including the Management Authority of the marine park, the scientific community, non-governmental organizations, the EOT, local agents, etc., in policy formulation, planning, and implementation of ecotourism proposals.
3. Recording and classification of ecotourism product in sensitivity and bearing capacity per area.
4. Hierarchy of ecotourism destinations, while environmental and spatial planning of all actions by destination.
5. Drafting strict standards on infrastructure - superstructure and ecotourism use.
6. Provide incentives and targets for action by local communities.
7. Formation Committee, with specialized staff who will monitor and control the execution of projects not only before but also after use of tourist areas.
8. Activation and sensitization of entrepreneurs and local communities in environmental protection and ecotourism in general learning behavior.

9. Turn on ecotourism issues relevant regional and departmental services, which would have qualified staff with years of experience.

10. Annual assessment of the progress of ecotourism which occurs, for example, projects, tourist number, positive, or negative results from these visits to have a clear picture of the evolution (if any) and possible improvements are forwarded or made promptly the necessary corrections where necessary.

In particular:

11. Mapping of interest (each sector) that exist in the National Marine Park of Alonnisos Northern Sporades, stressing particularly those interests why the site is unique. Description of points of interest that exist in the Park, from all sectors (landscape, habitats, fauna - flora, history, tradition, culture, archaeological sites, coasts, etc.), by the time the year and their mapping to appropriate maps, noting especially those the points that are unique and special characteristics compared with other regions.

12. Recording of existing environmental interpretation infrastructures and their integration into design aimed at comprehensive and integrated networking ecotourism infrastructure required for the most complete tourism and ecotourism promotion and development of NMPANS area.

Identification, description, and mapping of existing ecotourism infrastructure and environmental interpretation infrastructures, with a view to their inclusion in a network required appropriate structures NMPANS. Develop proposals / guidelines / instructions for appropriate infrastructure interventions (paths, bike paths, view positions - observatories, rest stops and information, informative - thematic signs, etc.), or repair - maintenance of existing ones, with their location and the general requirements of these for ecotourism development of NMPANS region, taking into account the needs and possibilities of the protected area and the current situation.

13. Planning alternative routes (land-water) on the distribution of interests in the Park area. The routes will be determined by reference to ensure the non-harassment of wildlife and the general integrity of the objects to be protected.

14. Development Study for the identification and description of all types of tourism that can be developed in the park and visitor categories - tourist, interests which can be met in this area.

15. Investigation of the region display modes and promotion of ecotourism within the protected area, but also to national and international networks.
16. For each class tourism and leisure activities, it is necessary to write certain specifications depending on the sensitivity of the individual zone of the protected area that the pursuit of activities to ensure no disturbance of wildlife and the general integrity of the objects to be protected.

17. Development of integrated tour - tour of visitor programs and definition of leisure activities that can be developed within the National Park area.

18. Creation of a tourist map of NMPANS region, which will include all the necessary information required for other traffic and visitor information, for example:
   - Landmarks for each tourism;
   - Alternative routes (land-water);
   - Positions accommodation and catering outlets;
   - The central access points to the Park;
   - Roads within the park and the main road to park access network from central locations;
   - The hydro-graphic network;
   - Beyond the NMPANS;
   - Areas network at Natura 2000.

19. Create application - navigation map for Smartphone - GPS, which will include all elements of the tourist map and in addition will enable the visitor area by personnel on the Smartphone or GPS available, to determine its position on the map or navigate to the point of interest. Also, by implementing, will enable information for each position of interest, accommodation, or access point.

20. Development of a Local Quality Mark awarded to companies / products / services operating / generated / NMPANS offered in the region, which shows concern for the environment by the side of the business and will offer an additional advantage in area of marketing.

21. Before all this will be a clear and scientifically substantiated strategic development plan should be developed for ecotourism on the island with what are referred to as specifications in the corresponding chapter.
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