

ABSTRACT

ACTION A5

The study aims to examine and assess in detail the Carrying Capacity of the activities taking place in the area of the Municipality of Amyntaio. The results of the Carrying Capacity calculation will constitute input for the specialization of the Municipality's development strategy on a tourism context. The study is divided into three parts. The first part analyzes and evaluates the existing socio-economic and environmental situation of the study area. Through the analysis of the current situation, the main ecotourism development aspects emerge and scenarios for an integrated and balanced tourism development in the area are developed.

In the second part, the maximum number of visitors that the area of Amyntaio can accommodate is estimated and a Development Strategy is developed with the aim to disseminate the socio-economic benefits of the development of eco-tourism. The objectives for the Municipality's tourism development strategy are presented, as they have been concluded through meetings with the Municipality's members. Scenarios for the development of tourism are developed, based on the characteristics and assets of the area and the objectives and priorities of the Region of Western Macedonia. Indicators (environmental, socio-economic, tourist and technical infrastructure, etc.) were identified to facilitate the methodology followed for the assessment of the carrying capacity.

The assessment of the carrying capacity is calculated on the basis of the activities developed in each sub-area identified and can accommodate visitors. The main methodology used was the one suggested by the European Commission and adopted by the Environment Committee titled "Defining, Measuring and Evaluating Carrying Capacity in European Tourism Destinations" (B4-3040 / 2000/294577 / MAR / D2) . With this methodology, both the maximum number of individuals that an area can accommodate is calculated and the development model of the area, proposing different management infrastructures is determined.

Finally, in the third part, the Visitors Management Plan is being developed, aiming at the diffusion of the visitors throughout the study area, encouraging visits beyond the area of Nymphaio and the Bear Shelter. The Plan was based on the results of the Carrying Capacity

study and on input given by the main ecotourism business in the Amyntaio area, as well as on in-situ study.