

## Promoting Sustainable Tourism in Coastal Cities and Their Hinterland : The Case of Turkey's Bodrum Peninsula

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### INTRODUCTION

*Throughout the world, coastal zones provide the ideal conditions for housing, recreation, agriculture, industry, transport and communications, and, consequently, socio-economic development has been more rapid in coastal zones than in any other geographic part of the world (van der Plas, 1993). This has, however, generated increasing friction between the natural dynamics of coastal zones and the various demands of the humans who exploit them. Coastal use has become the subject of conflicting claims from multiple user groups, with many incompatible uses and large vested interests at stake. Coastal zone management is thus fraught with difficulties. Some of the conflicts that emerge in the coastal zones of the world are resolved through the operation of the market. For others, there is no mechanism through which resolution can be found, and so conflict persists. The popular tourist destination of the Bodrum Peninsula in Turkey is thus not alone in facing ongoing conflict and difficulties in the resolution of complex issues in coastal development.*

*Integrated coastal zone management development on the Bodrum Peninsula is urgently needed because at present the zone is being fundamentally altered. Land use characteristics have been greatly modified and continue to change. In relation to this, environmental quality has also changed.*

*Turkey, in general, is becoming more and more important as favourite holiday destination for Western and Northern European tourists. Prices are low, and Turkey still offers rather unspoiled beaches, beautiful natural landscapes and fascinating historical sites. Among these resorts, the Bodrum Peninsula has become one of the most important. Located at the juncture of the Aegean and the Mediterranean Seas, the region has experienced a burst of growth in tourism over the last 10 years. These tourist areas are mainly concentrated along a narrow coastal belt, where recent developments have resulted in significant changes in the natural and cultural landscape.*

*As a consequence of the seasonality of the tourist industry on the peninsula, the population explodes annually from its permanent 57,000 inhabitants in the winter to approximately 350,000 residents during the peak summer season. Many tourists come to enjoy the beaches and the sun as well as the nightly entertainment, which is fast becoming a trademark of Bodrum. This rapid increase in population creates enormous pressure on the existing physical and social infrastructure. While the limited capacity of the physical*

*infrastructure is sufficient for the resident population, it becomes largely inadequate during the peak tourist season.*

*Tourism development on the peninsula is concentrated in the city of Bodrum itself and its hinterland. In the early 1970's, before the development of the tourism industry, people migrated from Bodrum because of its then high level of unemployment. Agriculture was unable to meet the basic needs of families. However, with the development of tourism, a reverse in this migration pattern has occurred; tourist development has given many farmers the opportunity to sell their land for tourism purposes and to change their occupation from farmer to employee within the tourism sector. Nevertheless, there is still a labour shortage, and labour for the construction of houses and for the hospitality industry must be recruited from far away towns such as the cities in Eastern Turkey.*

### **SUSTAINABLE TOURISM WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF INTEGRATED COASTAL ZONE MANAGEMENT**

In order to cope with this situation and to ameliorate its worsening trend, it is necessary to approach the conflict situation of environment versus man on Bodrum Peninsula through the concept of sustainable tourism within a planning framework of integrated coastal zone management. As a basis of evaluation of the existing planning system and as a reference point for any new approaches to management, a definition of integrated coastal zone management can be formulated specifically for Bodrum Peninsula as:

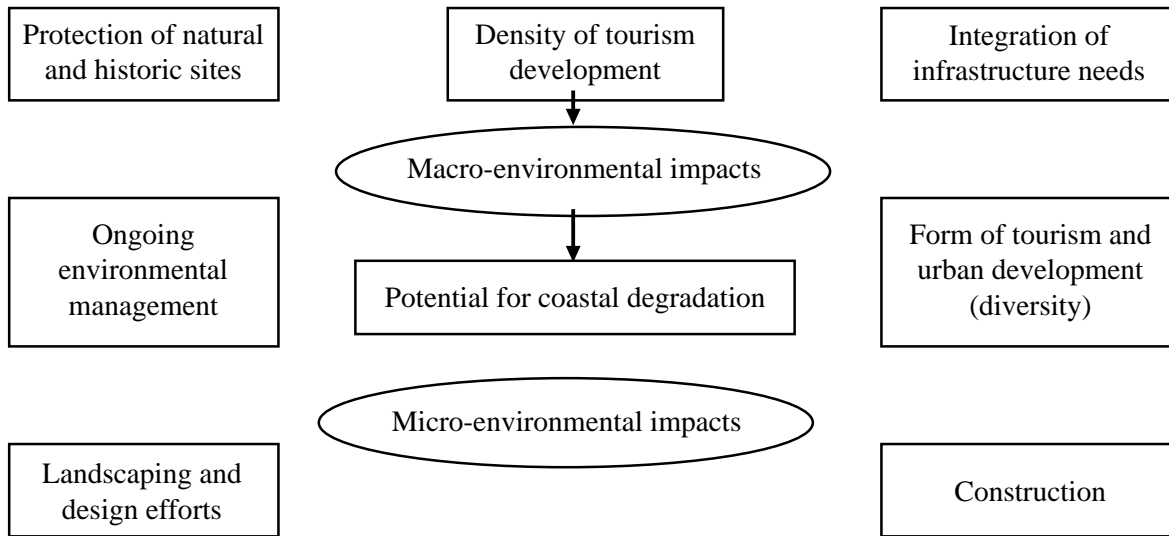
A stakeholder process for coastal resource management consisting of the legal and institutional framework to ensure that development planning and management integrates environmental and social goals, with the participation of those involved to achieve a sustained yield of economic and environmental services from the coastal zone.<sup>1</sup>

Integrated coastal zone management attempts to resolve land-use conflicts on one hand and to protect coastal environmental resources on the other. (See Figure 1 for a summary of the factors affecting environmental impacts in Bodrum.) Balancing the interests of various development sectors (horizontal integration) with those of different institutions in society (national government, local authorities, the private sector and NGOs via vertical integration) is a key element of successful integrated coastal zone management.

Integrated coastal zone management gives important roles to specialized agencies, both at national and local government levels, to research institutions, to users and owners of the coastal zone and to the general public. The key to success is incorporating the long-term interests of as large number of stakeholders as possible (Sorensen and McCreary, 1990).

<sup>1</sup>The basic elements of this definition are:

- The safeguarding of resources for subsequent generations;
- The assurance that integrated coastal zone management is a stakeholder process;
- The consideration of both environmental and economic goals;
- The consideration of both planning and ongoing management; and
- The institutionalization of coastal zone management in existing organizations and laws.



**Figure 1.** Factors affecting Environmental Impacts on the Coastal Zone of Bodrum Peninsula.

### ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS OF BODRUM CITY AND ITS HINTERLAND

The main cause of the problems associated with environmental degradation on the peninsula is the uncontrolled growth of the tourist industry; with specific reference to the secondary or vacation houses of mostly non-resident Turks, and to the elaborate facilities for mostly international tourists. Tourism in the city and its hinterland has two main features: (1) the almost exponential recent growth of the tourist population; and (2) the uneven spread of this influx throughout the year, with most tourists visiting the area in July. Proper tourist population projections have proved devilishly hard to develop, and urban and tourism planning, so necessary to the long-term health of the peninsula, has been quite inadequate. As a consequence of this lack of planning, uncontrolled urbanization has led to negative impacts such as:

- The loss or change of traditional values in the rural and urban areas due to the land use change and changes in occupation from farming to tourism;
- The destruction of natural flora and fauna and the forests<sup>2</sup>;
- The inadequacy of the physical infrastructure due to seasonal overloading, which results in a degradation of the quality of life;
- The disappearance of urban green areas<sup>3</sup>;
- The loss of agricultural land due to the growth of secondary houses;
- The damage to historical sites;
- The pollution due to the debris and fugitive dust resulting from construction activities and untreated water, which is discharged directly into the sea; and
- The increased quantity of solid waste, which is a major cause of marine and coastal pollution.

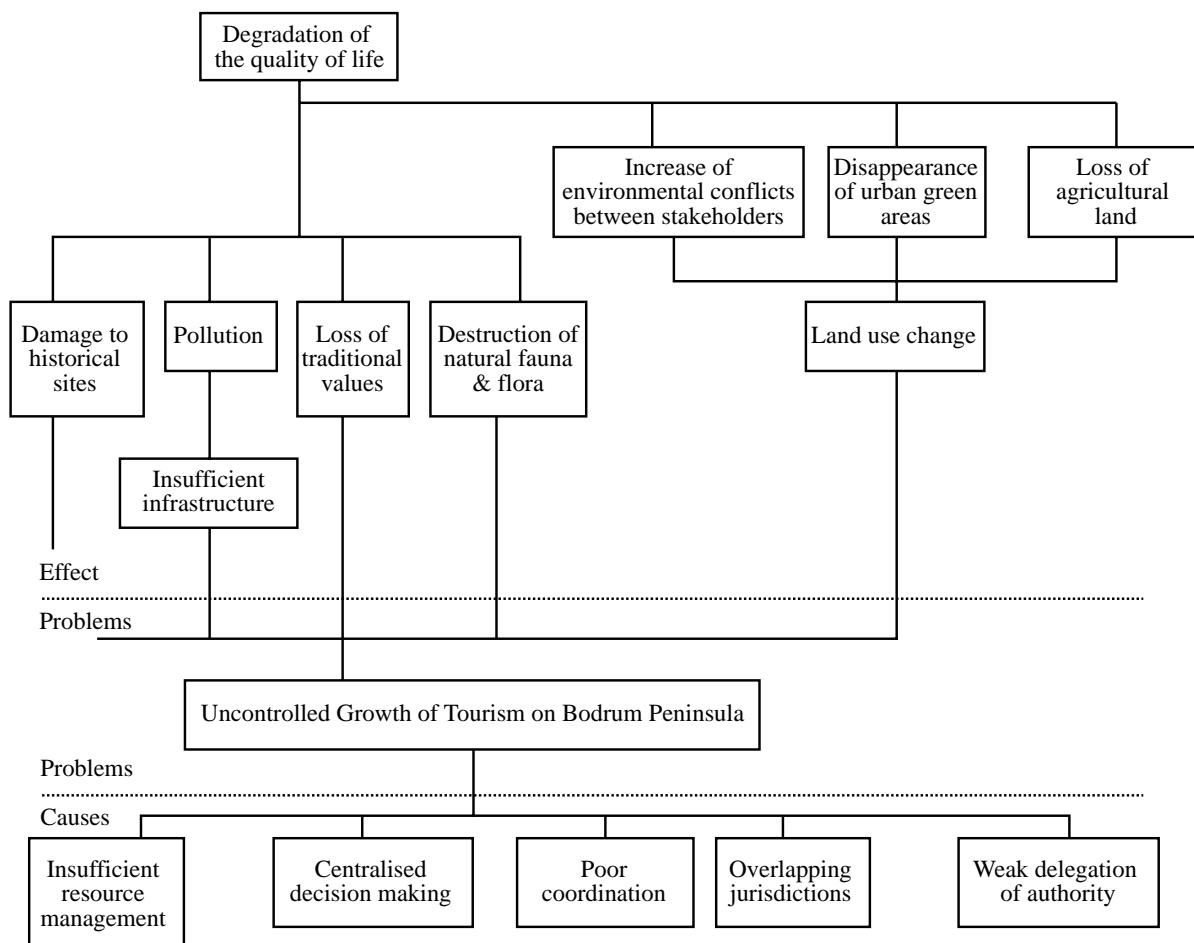
<sup>2</sup> Particularly important is the fact that out of a total world population of 400 monk seals, only 100 remain in the coastal zone of Yalikavak Town, one of their major habitats.

<sup>3</sup> Undoubtedly, if this pattern continues, the long-term picture is of a peninsula with very little remaining green space.

The extreme seasonality of the tourism of Bodrum Peninsula hinders the efficient utilisation of physical and social infrastructure. Water and sanitary systems can only be utilised efficiently during the peak season, while during the low season, even the minimum capacity necessary to operate the systems cannot be met. This creates difficulties regarding investment and does not motivate private individuals to invest in sanitary facilities, thereby producing negative consequences for the environment.

The institutional structure of Bodrum Peninsula is dominated by the presence of national ministries. Some of the serious problems related to this, which are summarised in Figure 2, are:

- An overly centralised decision-making structure;<sup>4</sup>
- Poor coordination among institutions;
- Overlapping jurisdictions; and
- A weak delegation of authority from the national to lower governmental levels; and
- Poor resource management.



**Figure 2.** Problem Analysis at Different Levels.

<sup>4</sup> In Turkey, local governments have no direct influence on the land use master plans of their own jurisdictions.

## **GENERAL STRATEGY**

Conceptions of tourism vary by stakeholder, and arriving at a common vision for all is a very difficult, but necessary process in order to preserve the character of the peninsula. Therefore, common interests among the stakeholders should be emphasized and exploited, while differences minimized. Key words in the process of coming to a common vision are the “involvement” and “participation” of all stakeholders. A common vision of peninsular tourism development should converge on the sustainable use of resources, so that sustainable tourism is defined here as:

... the integration of social, economic, political and ecological resources to develop and promote tourism on the Bodrum Peninsula carefully and wisely. This would link the natural and man-made environments to the peninsular ecosystem’s natural recovery capacity and historical heritage through the involvement of all stakeholders.

The strategy, then, for developing sustainable tourism on Bodrum Peninsula requires a planning framework of integrated coastal zone management. Such a strategy, and one which embraces this vision, has five elements: the promotion of local capacity and authority; the promotion of balanced tourism; the linking of the natural and man-made environments; the preservation of the peninsular ecosystem’s natural recovery capacity and historical heritage; and the involvement of all stakeholders. Each of these is treated in more detail in the following paragraphs.

### **Promoting local capacity and authority**

The definition suggests that to regulate and integrate all aspects related to the development of tourism, there should be a combined effort of all concerned parties. In order to facilitate the discussions and guide the decision-making process, umbrella organizations have to be formed, both on the international and local levels. The actions required include:

- The creation of an autonomous tourism authority, the Turkish Tourism Board, with the participation of the relevant local and national (Ministry of Tourism) governments, as well as other key stakeholders, in order to manage the development of the tourism industry nationally;
- The creation of an autonomous local authority, the Bodrum Tourism Board, with the participation of the local and national governments and key-local stakeholders, in order to manage the development of tourism on the Bodrum peninsula; and
- The involvement of the Union of Municipalities in tourism planning in such a manner as to guarantee that the interests of all municipalities are considered. The Union of Municipalities should be delegated the necessary authority to implement the plans that are developed

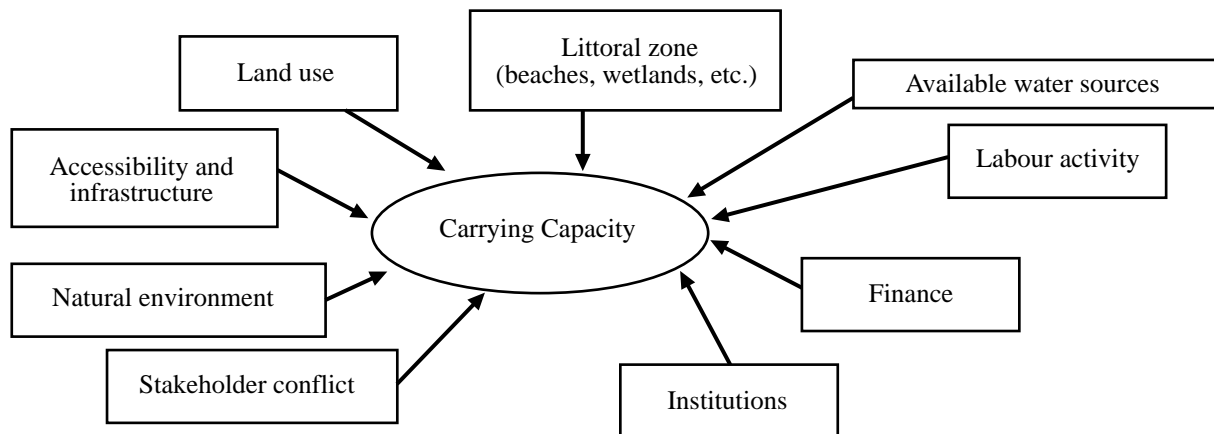
### **Promoting balanced tourism on the Bodrum peninsula**

The number of people during the “peak” creates many environmental problems. In order to reduce the peak and simultaneously increase revenues, the current spread of tourists coming to the peninsula should be altered from “summer” season to “all season” tourism. At the same time, the accommodations for tourists should be used more efficiently. A specific

measure is to reduce high seasonality through the diversification of tourist activities. This would include, for instance, promoting Bodrum as an archaeological dive centre, publicizing agro-tourism revolving around capers and olive trees and introducing eco-tourism.

### Linking the natural and man-made environments

Nature preservation and archaeological site protection do not imply automatically sealing the sensitive sites off from tourism development. However, there are clearly pressures placed on their carrying capacity as Figure 3 summarizes. The natural and historical environments can, nevertheless, be considered as tourism assets that can be used and exploited. In order to create win-win situations, however, an explicit link between tourism and preservation should be established in the master plan and specific measures outlined. The above diversification approach might fit very well into the European concern for preserving both historical and natural resources, with promotion and marketing strategies aimed at that region encouraging tourists to visit significant archaeological and natural sites.



**Figure 3.** Limiting Factors of Carrying Capacity.

### Preserving the peninsular ecosystem's natural recovery capacity and historical heritage

Natural resources are increasingly strained due to tourism development, and in order to relieve the strain, several measures are proposed. First, the capacity of the ecosystem, with regard its supply and the demand for it, should be determined. The demand is based on the following three factors:

- The ratio of domestic to international tourists;
- The average length of stay of each of the tourists; and
- The average occupancy-rates of accommodation.

In order to alleviate the pressure on the city and hinterland's natural recovery capacities and on their historical heritage, the current urban planning strategy and building regulations should be revised. A complete construction halt of secondary houses should be introduced, as should the demolition of those that have been built illegally. Higher urban housing density

should be allowed, which would alleviate pressure on natural and agricultural land.<sup>5</sup> Tourist activities should be encouraged to concentrate in designed areas, and the multi-purpose use of secondary houses should be stimulated.<sup>6</sup>

### **Involving all stakeholders**

When all stakeholders are involved in the development of this strategy for sustainable tourism, a common base for action among all stakeholders is created and their active participation promoted. Many and frequent meetings and hearings at which the specific interests of the various stakeholders can be expressed in a transparent way are required so that consensus can be developed, trade-offs explored, conflicts resolved, and a unified vision finally attained so that specific steps can then be taken in order to achieve it.

## **SCENARIO APPROACH**

The strategy discussed in the previous sections can now be summarized as including the following five elements:

- Improved capacity and authority of local institutions;
- Tourism diversification and increased seasonal spread;
- Promotion of situations in which all interests profit;
- Alleviation of pressure on sensitive areas; and
- Participation and involvement of all stakeholders.

It must be stressed, however, that the development of such a strategy is by no means certain. Consequently, the following section outlines several scenarios that reflect the alternative paths the future could take, as well as the likely consequences of each, in order to demonstrate further the essential nature of a sustainable tourism strategy within a planning framework of integrated coastal zone management for the future development of the city of Bodrum and its hinterland. The four scenarios that are presented here are based on the following assumptions and principles:

- The development of the tourist industry on the peninsula is a recognised fact; it will develop and expand further towards its limits;
- The number of tourists visiting the peninsula is reflected by the number of beds;
- The projections of scenarios 1, 2, and 3 are descriptive in nature and have no scientific basis; their foundations should be investigated further. The projections of scenario 0 are based on data from the Iller Bankasi of 1996, including an annual population growth rate of 3.6%; and
- All scenarios are projected until the year 2030.

<sup>5</sup> The objective should be the development of a more compact city, even allowing high-rise buildings/hotels in a central zone.

<sup>6</sup> For example, they could be rented to tourists during off-peak seasons by a business run as a private or public venture. This requires a pilot study, the results of which would determine the idea's acceptability to secondary homeowners and the municipalities. It is necessary to look here at international experience with semi-private organizations that maintain and manage the rental of private houses for tourist purposes.

Moreover, as Figure 4 shows, the four scenarios that have been produced incorporate each of the given elements (i.e., institutional development, tourism diversification, promotion of win-win situations, alleviation of pressure and participation) to some degree, ranging from not at all, to their maximum extent with the “ideal” scenario.

Scenario	0	1	2	3
- Institutional development	-	+	+	+
- Diversification	-	-	+	++
- Win-win situation	-	-	-/+	+
- Alleviation of pressure	-	-/+	-/+	++
- Participation	-	-	+	+

**Figure 4.** Scenarios.

The **Uncontrolled Growth Scenario** (Scenario 0) is the scenario based on the present institutional setting of the peninsula, along with the uncontrolled growth of the tourist industry. This scenario is what will likely occur if no action is taken. It foresees continuous growth and high seasonal peaks, with no restrictions, no coordinated planning and weak local government.

The tourist industry remains focused on the “Beach-Sea-Entertainment” package, thus creating an enormous flow of young tourists during the summer period. The expected number of beds in 2030 will increase 7.5 times to 530,000. During the off-season period, however, Bodrum Peninsula is hardly visited by tourists. The number of secondary houses will continue to grow, despite the present efforts to stop new co-operatives. They will instead be diverted to newly established municipalities, which are eager to have a piece of the wealth, thus contributing to an increase of secondary houses to a level of 280,000 beds.

During the peak season, the problems regarding environment and public health will become increasingly difficult to handle, as will capacity problems regarding physical and social infrastructure. Virtually all natural and historic sites along the coast will be lost through their occupation by hotels or secondary houses. All open spaces between settlements are also likely to be filled up. The monk seal population at Yalikavak becomes extinct under this scenario.

The institutional landscape remains unchanged. Local government remains weak and without power to resist the national level pragmatic desire for foreign currency. The co-ordination among the seven municipalities that are projected for Bodrum city’s hinterland on the peninsula will remain troublesome, and the existing Union of Municipalities will split into two organisations representing old and new municipalities. NGOs and other organisations remain on the sideline without any influence or chance to participate.

The area also becomes economically even more dependent on the tourist industry; and although the local economy thrives in the Turkish context, the financial inputs for health and necessary social and physical infrastructure become a heavy burden on municipal budgets. The peninsula becomes flooded with seasonal labour as well. Finally, with Scenario 0, it is unclear when the limits to growth will be reached.



In stark contrast to the Uncontrolled Growth Scenario, the **Sustainable Growth Scenario** (Scenario 3) is the scenario in which all required conditions have been fulfilled to attain sustainable tourism development. Although tourism can by itself never be sustainable, the development of the tourism industry meets, in the ideal case, the necessary economic growth targets to sustain the level of prosperity. However, it does not exceed the limits set by natural and socio-economic resources.

While the focus will still be on beach loving tourists, diversification of entertainment is achieved at a level where the summer season peak does not exceed 190,000 beds. Due to active marketing in Western European countries, tourists come to the peninsula for trekking over foot trails established throughout the peninsula, as well as for fishing, for diving, and for visiting cultural and historical sites. The peninsula also becomes known for its health resorts.

The municipalities succeed in limiting the growth of secondary house settlements, and, in some areas are even able to reduce their numbers. In 2030, the number of secondary houses once again reaches the level of 1998.

In addition, with this scenario, some natural and cultural areas are restored to their state prior to the invasion of Bodrum Peninsula by tourism. All natural and historical sites are effectively protected. Open areas expand, and the monk seal population increases and spreads slowly over the peninsula.

The social and political infrastructure can also easily handle the more or less constant flow of people. The water supply and sanitation systems are efficiently designed (no over dimensioning) and function properly.

The Union of Municipalities succeeds, moreover, in withstanding the pressure of the national government and manages to change the Territorial Master Plan in favour of limiting growth and conserving local resources. The local population is very active in the decision-making process, and it pressures and supports the local governments in their efforts to sustain the quality of life as well as the natural environment.

Due to more even spreading out of the flow of tourists over the whole year, the total number of tourists per year equals or exceeds the number in Scenario 0. The expenditure patterns of the tourists, however, are considerably different, with more money being spent on local commodities. The total employment declines, but to a level at which all local people are still employed. Seasonal labour, on the other hand, declines considerably.

Clearly, these two scenarios provide polar opposites of the future of Bodrum and its hinterland on the peninsula. The remaining two scenarios lie between them and reflect situations that might be expected to have reasonable chances of occurring. Scenario 1, the **Controlled Growth Scenario**, describes the developments that are likely to take place when the growth of tourism is still extensive but controlled by the institutional environment, while with Scenario 2, growth stabilises at a certain level, but tourism is still too high for the scenario to be characterised as sustainable as defined earlier in this paper. Of these two middle scenarios, the second, the **Active Controlled Growth Scenario**, or Scenario 2, foresees positive changes on the Bodrum Peninsula, without being unrealistically idealistic. It is, therefore, specified in some detail below.

This scenario is characterised by initial tourism growth that is relatively uncontrolled. However, due to improved and effectively enforced legislation and coherent, integrated coastal management policies, tourism development gradually stabilises. The level at which this occurs is set by a combination of restrictive policies and the tourism market.

The tourism industry gradually moves from the currently prevailing “Beach-Sea-Entertainment” package to other forms of tourism, e.g., trekking, yachting, eco-tourism and “health tourism.” The changes do not reach as far as the idealised Sustainable Growth Scenario, but the difference between the flow of tourists during the peak season and the low season is considerably less. The number of hotel beds stabilises at 250,000 in 2025, and the number of beds in secondary houses stabilises at 200,000 by 2020.

Under this scenario, restrictive policies prohibit any new development of secondary houses or tourism facilities in the Turkish government specified first- and second-degree nature and archaeological conservation areas. In certain third degree areas, limited tourism activities are allowed in order to support the tourism diversification outlined above. In some of the conservation areas, the rehabilitation of historical villages into trekking lodges, the preparation of footpaths throughout the peninsula for trekking, or the development of historical sites into profitable and attractive tourist areas for eco-tourism, are approved on a case by case basis.

The municipalities of the peninsula succeed in effectively co-ordinating matters of mutual interest, while local NGOs and other interest groups actively participate in the discussions regarding environment and economic (tourism) development. The decentralisation policy becomes effective, and responsibilities related to planning and budget allocation are delegated to the municipalities. The Union of Municipalities has substantial influence in the preparation of the Territorial Master Plan.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The first major, and obvious, conclusion of this paper and the scenario analysis undertaken is that uncontrolled tourism on the Bodrum Peninsula must be stopped if the environment and quality of life of the city and its hinterland are to be preserved. Thus, tourism must be far more sustainable, and this is possible to a meaningful extent, as Scenario 2 demonstrates.

Solving the problem of uncontrolled tourism, however, will ultimately require developing further the institutional capacities of the municipalities of the Bodrum Peninsula as well as the institutions of the pertinent stakeholders at local and national level. This institutional strengthening will assist the area in avoiding its current destructive path as described above by Scenario 0.

There are a number of possible measures in this regard, which would assist in controlling this growing and spreading tourism. These include intensifying the coordination among municipalities, as well as developing structures such as an autonomous tourism authority. Both of these measures are critical in facilitating this important process of institutional strengthening. Specific examples of these measures involve the strengthening of

the existing Union of Municipalities, as well as the creation of a national or local authority whose mandate would be to encourage the use of secondary houses for tourist rentals and, basically, to be an oversight institution to ensure that tourism is developed in a far more sustainable way.

In addition, the diversification of tourism products on the Bodrum Peninsula is found to be highly feasible and the basis upon which tourism growth may be controlled. The peninsula boasts a number of landscapes, which make this possibility highly viable. These include natural, marine, historical, religious, agricultural and, most importantly, cultural landscapes. With these diverse landscapes, it would be highly effective if agro-, aqua-, and eco-tourism could be developed. By identifying and marketing these niches effectively, the Bodrum Peninsula would be able to develop year-round tourism and disperse tourists. They would be directed to particular municipalities on the peninsula catering to the specific niches. The objective is to control the peak influx of tourists. For example, the peninsula has amazing underwater archaeological treasures and marine life. If the sport of diving were developed, the international community of divers, who travel to good dive sites regardless of air temperature or time of year, could be attracted. This approach has been pursued by countries in other regions, such as the Maldives and the Cayman Islands, with success.

The idea of all the measures proposed here is to create a situation where all profit from well planned sustainable tourism. Not only the tourism industry, but also the people and environment of the peninsula would profit. Such a win-win situation is achievable only through the participation of all stakeholders. Wherever possible, discussions on how the peninsula should be developed should be conducted in a transparent way, making obvious to all the interests of the various people involved. It is the intention of this paper that the scenarios presented here, and their detailed analysis in the report on which this article is based (Edelman et al., 1998), contribute to the national and local debate on how to implement a practical and sustainable level of tourism development. The Bodrum Peninsula is a delicate coastal zone, and the scenarios can frame the discussions by assisting all stakeholders in determining the path of development that they wish to take and in suggesting the costs and benefits of their choice. This, then, will help in creating a vision for a sustainable future, which can then be implemented through a consolidation of all initiatives.

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