

Chapter 9

Dive Into the Wreck of Peristera, Greece: A Study of a Collaborative and Sustainable Tourism Development in the Blue Economy Framework

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ABSTRACT

The nexus of the soft tourism development model must serve the concepts of sustainability, resilience, and participation of the destination community. The chapter explores the case study of a diving tourism destination and how it responds to challenges for tourism development and environmental management, promoting natural resources conservation, cultural heritage, and inclusive community well-being. It provides the structural framework of the synergies that realize and the prospects that offered to realize a unique proposal, an expanded tourism product that increases the beneficial impact of tourism both locally and nationally.

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CHAPTER OBJECTIVES

The main objective of this chapter is to explore the possibilities of promoting a model of soft tourism development that combines social, economic and environmental aspects as best practice, prioritizing sustainability and resilience of the destination in times of intense challenges on the global stage. It focuses on the synergies that take place at local and international level and are achieved by moving away from exploitative practices and adopting diversified and inclusive alternative ways of developing tourism, while respecting the carrying capacity of the destination.

INTRODUCTION

1. Sustainable Diving Tourism

The development of diving tourism is a growing international trend that serves marine ecotourism initiatives and pursues objectives of restoration and sound management of the marine environment alongside community development objectives.

As a form of alternative tourism, it includes the coastal community promoting various other forms of soft tourism where synergies are the tool to address economic challenges in the marine environment with social and environmental priorities. The growing interest in the combination of travel experiences that a diving destination can offer is the driving force behind the continued evolution of the diving industry.

Diving tourism is being repositioned as adventure tourism, supporting active marine restoration and playing a critical role in raising awareness among visitors and residents alike for the protection of the marine environment (Kieran, 2021; Brylske et al, 2023).

The main challenge and priority on the international environmental agenda presented in the development of marine tourism is the conservation and sustainable management of marine reserves. The coupling of marine tourism and its development initiatives combines business activities with ecological restoration in marine ecotopes in ways that produce benefits for both the environment and the host community. Focusing on sustainable diving tourism, a model is being developed that integrates coastal management and the transition to practices prioritizing social and ecological restoration. It achieves improved environmental management as a visitor attraction, diversifying the tourism product, reducing seasonality, creating jobs and new income streams and enhancing the role of the community. Productive collaboration between different actors and departments with the government, international organizations and tourism businesses as well as Citizen Science leads to socio-economic benefits and consensual decision-making for sustainability (Ferretti et al., 2023).

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