

## *Visitor Survey in Vlora Bay and Karaburun-Sazan MPA*



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## 1. Introduction

The study for the assessment of tourism in Vlora Bay and Karaburun-Sazan MPA (Marine Protected Areas) from the tourists view is part of the project SEA-Med (Sustainable Economic Activities in Mediterranean Marine Protected Areas). It is focused on tourism sector and aims to give us some data about the tourist's point of view for different issue related to the quality of touris products and service offered in the area.

All the data collected in the field will help the stakeholder's involve in this process to develop sustainable nature based tourism in the marine protected area in way to create a proper environment for tourism development in the area.

This project in Albania has two year under implementation, and is focused in Vlora Bay and Karaburun-Sazan Marine Protected Area and is our study place, which include Vlora and Orikum Municipalities, more specifically in Uji i Ftohte, Jonufer, Radhime and Orikum.

First, we must define what we mean by "tourism" before proceeding with further analysis. Tourism is a social, cultural and economic phenomenon which entails the movement of people to countries or places outside their usual environment for personal or business/professional purposes. These people are called visitors (which may be either tourists or excursionists; residents or non-residents) and tourism has to do with their activities, some of which imply tourism expenditure<sup>1</sup>.

The reason for developing this study is that tourism is an important factor that influences directly and indirectly the development of the economy in this area. Tourism is the leading sector in Vlora region economy as well as the main catalyst of economic growth<sup>2</sup>. As such, it affects the natural environment, population and even to tourists themselves.

Recently we have seen some development in tourism sector, but that is mainly focused on beach tourism, overshadowing and none developing other natural and cultural assets that this area possesses. However, even this form of tourism is seasonal, therefore there is evidently an urgent need to improve the seasonal spread of tourism<sup>3</sup>.

What should be the aimed is the establishment of sustainable tourism, which is realized through the development of other assets of tourism, increasing the interest in cultural attractions and nature based activities, which are available and accessible throughout the year, not only in the summer season.

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<sup>1</sup> *Compendium of Tourism Statistics of UNWTO 2007-2011;*

<sup>2</sup> *UNDP Art Gold 2 Albania Programme, June 2011. Strategic Plan of Vlora region: "The Zero Emissions Territory". Final Document;fq 3*

<sup>3</sup> *United Nations Albania Tourism development international, June 2010. Albania Culture Marketing Strategy. MDG achievement found;*

Marketing is one of the most important ways through which the promoting the area and the extension of the tourist season can be achieved. *Marketing* is the practice of connecting people's demands with a supply of goods and services<sup>4</sup>. The main tools for promotion are, website, catalogues, brochures, travel agencies, social network etc.

Ecotourism is also a form of tourism developed in the area, mainly in Llogara Park. There are some nature based tourism taking place today in this park, like mountain climbing, hiking, jumping parapeding, surveillance of wild birds, etc. but that still remains much to do in this area. The growth of interest in sustainable tourism and ecotourism reflects a rising tide of social concern about the quality of the natural environment and the effects of tourism<sup>5</sup>.

In way to have a genuine tourism, provision should be taken offering tourists the best products and high quality services, because it is not enough only "the hospitality", which is an value of of Albanian people culture and is provided free, now we talk about another step of development, thats of "tourism industry", which is just in the beginning phase in Albania and need some help, in order to develop the in the same as in other neighboring countries Greece, Croatia, Montenegro, etc., that are in advance in this economy sector and receive considerably income from this sector, even more in some of these countries is the main contributor to the economy.

The direct contribution of Travel & Tourism to GDP in 2014 was ALL82.3bn (5.9% of GDP). This is forecast to fall by 2.1% to ALL80.6bn in 2015. This primarily reflects the economic activity generated by industries such as hotels, travel agents, airlines and other passenger transportation services (excluding commuter services). But it also includes, for example, the activities of the restaurant and leisure industries directly supported. The direct contribution of Travel & Tourism to GDP is expected to grow by 4.1% pa to ALL120.4bn (6.2% of GDP) by 2025<sup>6</sup>.

Therefore, sustainable and responsible tourism development in this area, will bring economy improvement not only in the region of Vlora, but would affect the economy of the entire country. Environmental sustainability can be the key to trigger economic growth (especially in the tourism sector) without compromising natural assets, but rather using environment as an opportunity to pursue an innovative development model<sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> Paul F. J. Eagles, Stephen F. McCool and Christopher D. Haynes Adrian Phillips(2002) *Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas Guidelines for Planning and Management*. IUCN fq 97;

<sup>5</sup> Paul F. J. Eagles, Stephen F. McCool and Christopher D. Haynes Adrian Phillips(2002) *Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas Guidelines for Planning and Management*. IUCN fq 13

<sup>6</sup> *Economic Impact of Travel & Tourism in Albania, the report of World Travel & Tourism Council; 2015*

<sup>7</sup> UNDP Art Gold 2 Albania Programme, June 2011. *Strategic Plan of Vlora region: "The Zero Emissions Territory". Final Document;fq 17*

To achieve this, it is important that local authorities and stakeholders collaborate together, in order to increase the quality of tourism products and services that this area offers. This will increase the number of tourists in Albania, which means improvement of the income and welfare for the community.

This study aims to bring statistical information about different elements of tourism in the area as accommodation, transport, various cultural and social activities, nature based activities, and the way this information is received by them.

One of the most important aspects of this study is the acquisition of data regarding to the nature based activities that take place in the marine protected area and the Bay of Vlora, as well as the information that tourists have about them.