

# SUCCESSFUL MODELS OF EXPERIENTIAL TOURISM SUGGESTIONS FOR APPLICATION IN THE GREEK ISLANDS

## THE CASE OF MILOS

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### **Abstract**

*This text, is trying to describe successful examples and adaptations of experiential tourism in an international level. According to specific evaluation criteria two local – scale study areas are contained with forms such as ecotourism, rural tourism, diving, etc.*

*In a second stage this paper discusses the use of available natural and cultural resources for the synthesis of destinations with experiential nature focusing on the island of Milos. It seeks design proposal based on the spatial and cultural features, to formulate a management strategy of the Greek tourism product in the light of personal experience.*

*Finally, these interventions allow the insular Greece to carve a new ‘street’ to integrated tourism activity to support the future development of perspective.*

### **Introduction**

The experiential tourism is a form of tourism in which the visitor is searching for contact with the natural and cultural environment by developing interactive relationship with the identification of areas - tourist destinations. This concept, raises issues such as the predictability of the tourist experience, the redefinition of the experiential experience, the environmental impact of the existing tourism models as well as the development opportunities that are offered. As a result of the conclusions drawn, design application of experiential tourism on the island of Milos is proposed, as a standard application in insular Greece.

The first section clarifies the meaning of the experiential tourism through the causes and the composition of its principles. The second section approaches two areas with a developed experiential tourism profile. The first on the island of Borneo in Malaysia

and the second one in Curacao Caribbean. The third section attempts to deepen the particular problems that islands in the Greece are facing. The fourth section describes the basic principles of the scenario. The fifth section deepens the existing condition of the study area, through a thorough description of the various characteristics. In the sixth section a scenario of the future development of the study area is structured. Finally, the seventh section is consisted of the conclusions of the project.

## Section 1: Experiential Tourism

The experiential tourism not only does it appear as a necessary condition for addressing the negative impacts of the multiannual implementation of mass tourism on both the environment and the society, but also to serve the economic positive aspects of tourism. Its primary principles are environmental awareness, interaction of tourists with the local people and the environment, active participation of the visitor in activities, dominant special motive (nature worship, adventurous travels, sports, touring, environment, acquaintance with the local tradition), rest and recreation, through the search of more complex ways of satisfaction and new experiences and the respect to the protection and enhancement of local identity of each place. Methodologically evaluation criteria were set. In the first stage broader evaluation criteria of the developed tourist areas were set, while in the second different evaluation criteria of selection of the study areas were set.

Evaluation Criteria	Criteria for Study Area Selection
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environmental protection-Rational Management of Natural Resources</li> <li>• Economic Development in accordance with the principles of Experiential Tourism</li> <li>• Social Welfare</li> <li>• Cultural Enhancement</li> <li>• Spatial Integration of Building Infrastructures and Facilities</li> <li>• Responsiveness of the Applied Alternative Tourism Product by the general public</li> <li>• Active Participation of Local People</li> <li>• Developed Tourism Model (planning, policy guidance, implementation strategy)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Different Continent- Geographical Heterogeneity</li> <li>• Geopolitical Location</li> <li>• Islands regions – Development hysteresis compared to the mainland</li> <li>• Similarities to the Greek islands (challenges, capabilities)</li> <li>• Lifting of Seasonality-Lengthening of the season</li> <li>• Richness of Natural Landscapes-Recognized value and Variety of Biodiversity (UNESCO)</li> <li>• Numerous Cultural- Historical Monuments</li> <li>• Interaction of Local Population with tourist activities- Employment-Social activities</li> <li>• Decentralization</li> </ul>

**Table 1.** Selection criteria of study area

## Section 2: Successful Models of Experiential Tourism

In this section the general aspects of the Sabah and Curacao will be presented, the tourism strategy that have been developed and how these data are translated spatially in state scale.

### Sabah

The study area is located on the island of Borneo in Malaysia. The characteristics of this area are shown in Table 2, in detail. At national level, the Sabah is formed by a series of Malaysian Plans which aim to the protection and the promotion of the environment and the economic development using tourism as a linchpin and as a criteria the cultural and environmental impacts. At a state level it exploits ecotourism as a measure of protection of the environment and later it recognizes its broader positive impacts and uses it as its basic development strategies.

SABAH STUDY AREA	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Population: 3.26 million (census of 2010) - increasing trends</li> <li>• Multiracial state</li> <li>• Rich natural environment- Protected areas</li> <li>• Low educational level</li> <li>• Infrastructure (6 airports, 8 ports, problematic road network)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unemployment: low rates up to 5.4%</li> <li>• Poverty: reduction to 8.1%</li> <li>• Dominance of the Tertiary Economic sector: 51% of G.D.P.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Wholesale and retail trade</li> <li>○ Tourism Sector: experiential tourism</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Secondary Economic Sector: 26% of G.D.P.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Constructions</li> <li>○ Mining</li> <li>○ Production of rubber and tin</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Primary Economic Sector: 23% of G.D.P.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ timber, palm oil</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

**Table 2:** Study area-characteristics of Sabah

Tourism activity is shown on map 1 of the state of Sabah.

### Activities

- Cruises in the river
- Nursery propagation
- Jungle trekking
- Night safari
- Participation in villagers activity
- Rafting, Fishing
- Festival, Silviculture
- Nature Walks
- Wildlife watching
- Forest restoration



**Map 1:** Tourism activity of Sabah

## Curacao

The study area is located in Netherland Antilles, Caribbean Archipelago. The characteristics of the area are shown on Table 3 in detail. After the 1990s a specific direction for tourism development is given, with spatial planning tools. The recent master plans put a number of fields of action for the development of tourism having in mind the environment, the economy, the society and culture.

CURACAO STUDY AREA	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Population: 151.339 (2012) –</li> <li>• increasing trends</li> <li>• Rich natural environment- Protected areas</li> <li>• Cultural richness</li> <li>• Unemployment: up to 13% - progressive reduction</li> <li>• Labour force by occupation:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ agriculture: 1.2%</li> <li>○ industry: 16.9%</li> <li>○ services: 81.8%</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Low educational level</li> <li>• Infrastructure (1 airports, 5 ports, functional road network)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dominance of the Tertiary Economic sector: 83.8% of G.D.P.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Trade, restaurants, hotels</li> <li>○ Banking, insurance and business services</li> <li>○ Tourism Sector: sustainable tourism</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Secondary Economic Sector: 15.5.% of G.D.P.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ petroleum refining</li> <li>○ petroleum transshipment</li> <li>○ light manufacturing</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Primary Economic Sector: 0.7% G.D.P.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ aloe, sorghum, peanuts, vegetables, tropical fruit</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

**Table 3:** Study area-characteristics of Curacao

### Activities

- Diving, Rafting,
- Kayaking
- Cycling
- Snorkeling
- Rock climbing
- Rappelling
- Safaris
- Sight-seeing tours
- Festival
- Trekking
- Nature Walks,
- Wildlife watching
- Exploring the Caves
- Horseback riding



**Map 2:** Tourism activity of Curacao

### **Section 3: Existing Situation of the Greek islands**

The condition of the Greek islands is described having taken into consideration their economy, the existing social conditions and the environmental policy that is practiced on them. The dominant problems according to the study of the Greek Society for Local Development and Local Government are the low accessibility, the limited market size and the inefficiency of their insular economy. Also, due to the lack of public services, their cost of provision is very high. Even the limited size of the labour market has led to a low level of training and competence of the residents and to limited opportunities for employment. The fragility of the economy, the lack of jobs and the low educational attainment is still a result of the small penetration of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), as well as the low level of innovation.

On the other hand, the strong points are indeed less, but they may be the cornerstones upon which the development strategy for island regions can be based in 2020. These points are, the high quality of life they offer because of the rich natural and cultural environment. Also the security that they provide, since these areas have not been penetrated by the problems of the big cities. Finally, the diversity of each island, combined with the different cultural identity, are elements that can be the driving forces for its viable development.

The special geopolitical nature and the delicate balance among the environment, society and the economy of small islands of Greece highlight the need to create a new development model, as part of a broader strategy for the integrated development of the insular area. In the present work the construction of a scenario in order to address their weaknesses and the enhancing of the opportunities they offer is proposed.

### **Section 4: Basic Principles of the Case Study Scenario**

Central pillars for the structure of the scenario are the concepts of «Green» and «Blue» policy direction, the Regional Development through which the development of the comparative advantages of the study area is attempted to these directions.

The 'Green' Islands are a global initiative aiming at the transition to zero emissions through the promotion of Renewable Energy Sources (RES) and the creation of new jobs and the production of quality local products and technological innovation. This strategy is based on the development of their endogenous potential and their particular characteristics.

The 'Blue' development is a long-term strategy to support the sustainable development of maritime sectors as a whole. The seas and oceans can be a driving force for the development of the European economy, while presenting significant challenges for the development of innovations and the technological development. This strategy is expected to highlight the contribution of marine resources to the achievement of Europe's sustainable development objectives for 2020 [COM (2012) 494 final].

The basic principles of Regional Development are the equal distribution of the touristic flows in terms of spatial tourist reception units, the elongation of the touristic season, the utilization of tourism resources of the rural and the mountainous area, the regional and local development programs in the light of heterogeneous tourist offer, the spatial location of tourist zones, the formulation of development criteria and planned tourism development, the parallel development of all productive activities. The objective of this work is to design a 'future' on the island of Milos incorporating in it this policy directions.

## Section 5: Study Area\_ Milos

In this section we examine the natural and cultural environment of the area of Milos, population evolution, the local economy and the specificities of the existing transport infrastructure, etc. This island is an island of the Cyclades complex in the Aegean Sea. In detail the characteristics of the area shown in Table 4, while the possibilities are offered in Table 5.

CHARACTERISTICS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Population: increasing trends- gathering at the north-eastern part of the island</li> <li>• Variety of geological elements , Energy stocks (Geothermal)</li> <li>• Rich natural environment-NATURA 2000</li> <li>• Plenty of cultural monuments</li> <li>• Dominance of the tertiary economic sector - wholesale and retail trade-tourism</li> <li>• Tourist activity: settlement concentration on three poles - mass tourism</li> <li>• Secondary economic sector: long tradition - mining - small manufacturing activity</li> <li>• Primary economic sector: declining - occupy 6% of the population</li> <li>• Unemployment: low levels- slight increase between 2001 and 2011</li> <li>• Rising of the educational level</li> <li>• Infrastructure (airport, harbor, functional roads, desalination plant)</li> <li>• Networks settlements old with problems</li> </ul>

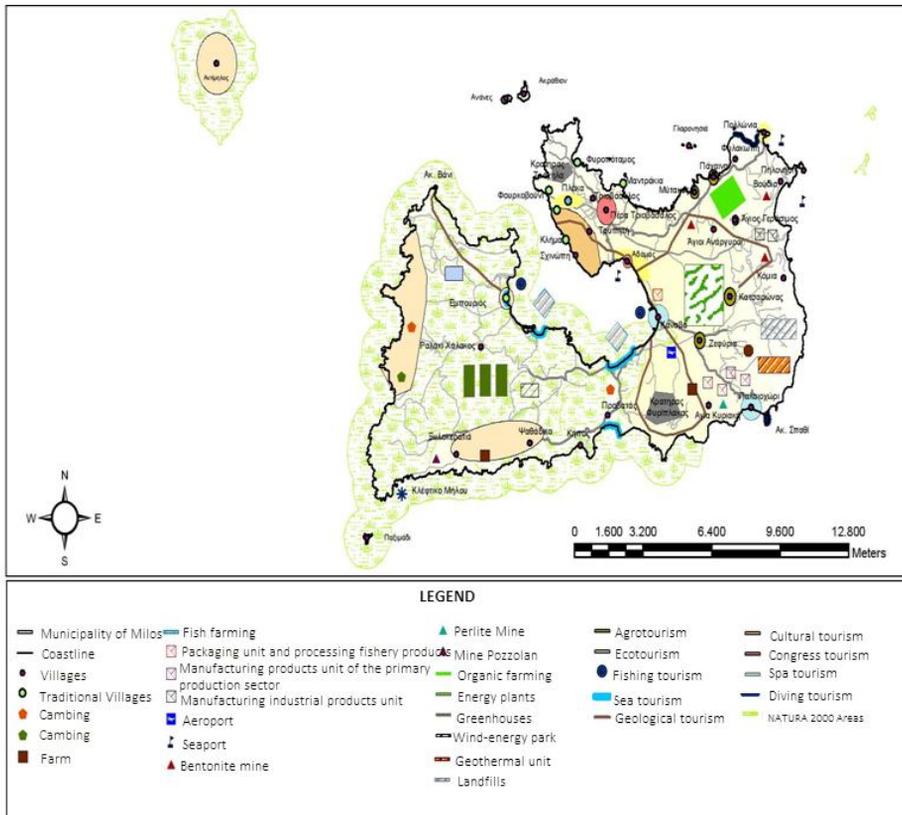
**Table 4:** Study area- characteristics

POSSIBILITIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remarkable tourist destination – great potentials for alternative tourism (medicinal, ecotourism, cultural, maritime)</li> <li>• Natural, cultural resources – insular nature- development perspective for the study area</li> <li>• Network infrastructure / transport- improvement and further development - improving intraregional connections- develop functional relationships between different areas of the island</li> </ul>

**Table 5:** Study Area Possibilities

## Section 6: Application Scenario

The idea of "Green" development is based essentially on the fact of exploitation of energy reserves. The electricity powering the island comes from the wind farm in Koutsonorachi and the photovoltaic park in the north-western part to the cape Vani. Geothermal Unit operates near Palaiochori for heating and cooling of the buildings without environmental burdens.



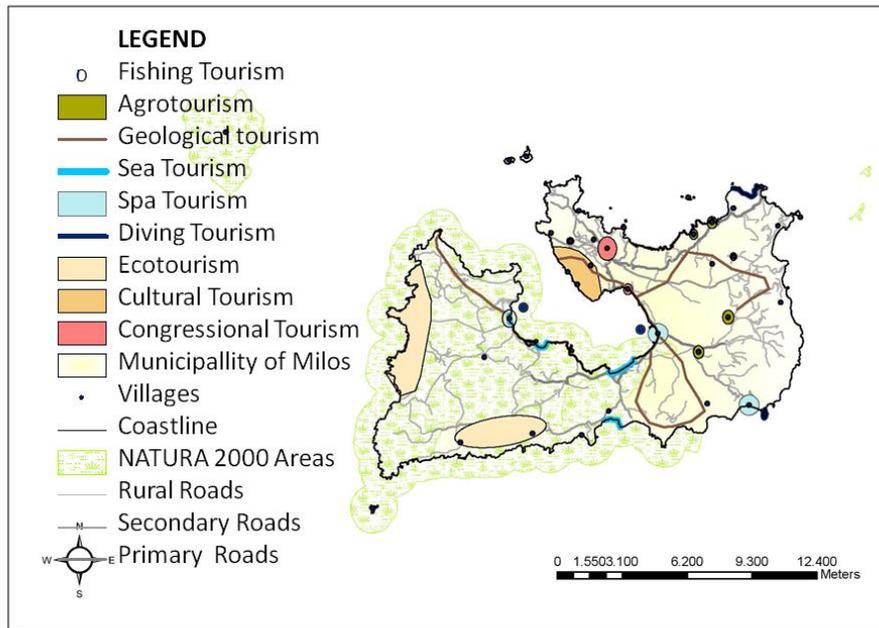
**Map 3: Application scenario**

The waste management has also been the subject of intervention. Large hotel complexes have placed photovoltaic facades and energy systems. The vehicles operate either with natural gas or electric. The road network has been remodeled and expanded while a network of cycle paths with rental bikes operates.

The energy standards are followed in all productive sectors. Energy plants and the organic farming in agriculture, organic livestock farming are applied and fish farming are created. Under the 'Green' development is also the activity of fishing tourism, where tourists take part in fishing and the procedures that are followed. The secondary sector is based on mining companies with expansion in the marine department and the manufacturing plants.

The direction of the 'Blue' development finds response in the tertiary sector, with emphasis on alternative forms of tourism. Convention centres operate in Adams and Pera Triovasalo. Agrotourist accommodation operate in rural areas, offering accommodation and engage visitors in agricultural activities. Moreover, ecotourism is developing. The Natura 2000 area is exploited with the organization of the space, with sightings stops and guided tours of the visitors to the rare species of flora and

fauna, by the qualified personnel which is available. The demands of the geologist tourist are met through geological routes. Equally important alternative forms of tourism are the marine ones. The cruise tourism is growing, since Adamas has the facilities to host cruise ships. The spa tourism occurs, using the hot springs. It is accompanied by the development of the appropriate accommodation and catering facilities in these settlements, along with Hospice so as to cope with chronic diseases. The diving tourism, under the direction of the 'Blue' development constitutes an important aspect. Travel agencies operate with personnel which is specialized in diving activities and provide the necessary equipment, while offering diving courses.



**Map 4:** Application Scenario-Experiential Tourism

## Section 7: Conclusions

The experiential tourism through the rational use of resources, national and international policies and the guidelines of the "Green" and "Blue" Growth are development perspectives for the Greek islands. It gives hope for a sustainable future based on the endogenous development of these regions.

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