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Tourism and its future: tourism development strategies in the context of coast, culture and agriculture-Meander Basin

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TOURISM AND ITS FUTURE
Tourism Development Strategies in the Context of
Coast, Culture and Agriculture-Meander Basin

Ercan Koç
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Summary

Turkey, during nearly in a hundred years of development period has lived a process where population and income in rural areas have decreased but on the contrary urban and coastal areas have developed. Now, one of every four people lives in urban settlements. During this process, the living environment and the quality of life has negatively effected by the concentration of the urban areas not as the planning has foreseen, the concretion of urban surfaces and insufficient reinforcement area problems. The naturalness of the rural areas, product diversity, nature beauty and the relations of production, rural culture and lifestyle has become longed qualifications.

Meander basin with its nature of accessibility, integrity of coastal-plain-mountain where combined, different geographies, naturalness, rich fauna and flora, the sea, lakes, rivers, hot springs, special products, historical values and cultural diversity has a special place. At the same time the country's most important coastal tourism is the focus of the surface of the rear axle Kuşadası-Bodrum.

Increase in the density of urban settlements, inadequate reinforcement measures and the loss of legibility, rural poverty and abandonment of settlements inhabited by the problems of this scope requires new improvements and the development of new principles of sustainability. In this context Meander basin is in great potential. To participate in the production process, nature sports facilities, health tourism through thermal resources, cultural tourism, access to a rich diversity of fauna and flora, opportunities provided by sea, lake, river sources, the local culture, lifestyle, recognition of settling relations, accommodation with local properties for the region will take different roles at all levels and contains programmability.

In this study, development and promotion strategies for Meander basin mostly consisting of Aydın province in the above content, will be examined for the integrity of coastal tourism, culture, agriculture and a proposal of a model will be developed.

1.Introduction

Rural communities which are spatially, physically, and socially distinctive, serve as icons for regional identities, so that residents typically share a culture, history, language, ethnicity, and regular face-to-face interactions (Salamon, K.A. MacTavish, 2009). Employment in rural areas typically depends on extraction of raw materials in agriculture, forestry, fisheries, mining, or other natural resources. Rural areas problem are generally defined as; 1) It is not enough income as a result of limited small agricultural land, 1) The vast migration from rural to urban places, entailed loss of community or new community forms, 2) Declining the traditional primary sector economy effected the rural community negatively, 3) Globalization negatively affected rural community economies worldwide by directly or indirectly causing population

decline and economic erosion. 4) As production cost is increasing, selling price is decreasing because of competition, 5) High rate of illiteracy, 7) High rate of hidden unemployment 8) Not enough conscious about the agricultural technology and channel of marketing, 9. Financial scarcity, 10. Health care problems, 11. exploitation by landlords and moneylenders.

The certain specific policy areas, in particular skills, knowledge, innovation, enterprise, and competition, were emphasized as the drivers of growth (ODPM, 2003). In response to the pressures of social and economic restructuring, rural and small places have been actively searching for new activities to replace or supplement more traditional economies. One of the common avenues for potential alternative economic activity includes tourism (Halseth, Meiklejohn, 2009). To challenge the problem using the potential of rural areas, a various kind of tourism concept which is named rural tourism, eco tourism, farm tourism, and nature tourism entered the development literature.

Ecotourism is more than the well-known definition by Ceballos-Lascuraín as 'travelling to relatively undisturbed natural areas' for its biological and cultural features (Courvisanosa and Jain, 2006). This broader sustainable development definition of ecotourism is more in line with the definition of ecotourism provided by the International Ecotourism Society, as 'responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and sustains the well-being of local people' (TIES, 2004). Rural tourism is recognized as including natural resource-based recreational activities in the countryside, contact with local cultures, relatively small scales of accommodation and infrastructure provision, and close involvement of local providers. Agro tourism movement has been growing in momentum as has food, wine and gastronomy tourism. Agri tours¹, farm stays² tour trail³, farm market has seen different face of agro tourism.

Briefly all these concept are based to 1) conserve the environment 2) supply well-being of local people' for all definition. Therefore it can be said that eco-tourism consist of rural and agro tourism.

As a pressure, the quest increasing anomie associated with contemporary urban work and living condition, has been supported these kind of eco tourism experiences. On the other hand, tourism sector is to increase rapidly. In Europe the average annual growth of tourism market will reach 3.4% for the period 1995-2020 while the same rate worldwide will be 4.1%. Mediterranean region which consist of Menderes basin is one of the most important tourism regions worldwide reaching 22% of worldwide receipts (Halseth, G. & Meiklejohn, C. 2009). It is necessary to keep in mind that tourism has many impacts both positive and negative (such as any other industry) at the destination place where it is developed. Those impacts can be positive so they can contribute considerably in the region's development while negative

¹ Agritourism also has an agricultural industry sector dimension. Study tours are provided for industry that have a decidedly tourist flavour. Agri Tours, customize tours where the focus is on industry development, new technology and techniques and research and development. These tours often include meetings with agribusiness and political leaders and on farm seminars and coaching.

² The trend which tourists are increasingly interested in the experience - wanting to see how something is made, purchase food from the grower, meet the winemaker.

³ Business activities include: Travel Packages, Trail Walks - guided walking tour series, Guidebooks, listings for member businesses and contacts. businesses, local governments, counties, and residents benefit from a coordinated approach to the management of its unique intrinsic qualities and tourism promotion. As a result of activities, residents along the trail have access to increased local recreational, educational and employment opportunities, a sense of identity as a scenic byway community, and an enhanced quality of life.

impacts can lead to the decrease of tourist activity (Coccosis, Constantoglou, 2006). That is why minimizing the pressure of the tourism on natural resources has to be one of the main policy arena.

Increasing recognition of the effects of materialism and consuming society on the natural resources worldwide bringing has lead sustainable approach. The meaning of sustainability is applicable in tourism industry through the concept of sustainable tourism development which consist an important place of application for sustainability principles (Coccosis, 1996, Coccosis and Nijkamp, 1995). Sustainability in tourism has to do with a tendency of development that recognises and puts principles in tourism development (Halseth, Meiklejohn, 2009). Carrying capacity is given as a clue. If those effects are beyond the area's carrying capacity then the destinations loses its attractiveness in the tourism system (Halseth, Meiklejohn, 2009).

Theoretical concepts relating to commodification, tourism as performance, performativity, and power relationships are providing new insights into the production and consumption of eco tourism. A key management issue relates to minimizing the negative impacts of tourism on environment and culture while maximizing positive contributions to economy and society. Eco tourism take place within a broad policy context in which the state motivating local resources is a key player and the planning process is used as a tool. Partnership and networking are of growing importance as methods of managing resource use and developing and promoting distinctive eco tourism products (Cawley, 2009).

While there is considerable lip service paid to ecotourism by the academic and political fraternities, there remains a significant gap between the theory of ecotourism and its practice on the ground. Although, at first sights the recent promotion of eco tourism and linkages with agricultere sector are an attempt to enhance the local value added of the tourism industry and at the same time promoting the development of domestic agriculture, some quarries or remarks are to be rised on this subject. Quarries are remarks are sorted as following items.

- 1) Tourists, by their very presence, result in some degradation of the environment. This presence creates a complex problem: the preservation of forests and nature needs scarce resources provided by ecotourists, who by their very presence and money alter the eco-system and society for ever (Buchsbaum, 2004).
- 2) Agriculture-tourism linkage per se will not facilitate the development of neither tourism nor agriculture, unless the nature of the tourism product or the agriculture sector in each country has to be understood before effective strategies could be devised for improving competitiveness (Halseth, Meiklejohn, 2009).
- 3) Ecotourism has the extremely difficult task of finding a balance between damage caused by tourists and ongoing preservation of the ecosystem for posterity (Buchsbaum, 2004) (5). In Costa Rica case study, two general premises for ecotourism can be drawn. 1) Ecotourism needs to be developed in an ecologically sustainable manner that does not become purely market-oriented and mass tourist-based and in a way that does not displace other ecologically sustainable activities. 2) Ecotourism needs to be integrated and monitored as part of a range of sustainable activities based on modern service and information-oriented industry development (Buchsbaum, 2004).

In this paper, with in this concept, Meander valley as a part of Mediterranean basin is analyzed taking in an account all potentials and problems together.

Initially the paper outlines the eco tourism paradigm within which this discussion resides. A footprint of the political economy of ecotourism is followed in Meander in order to provide a setting from which to apply a distinctive policy framework. The next section sets up an 'eco-sustainable framework' and integrated strategies which is suggested with the aim of regions development and making the all people to share all the beauties for this river basin.

2. Meander Basin Description

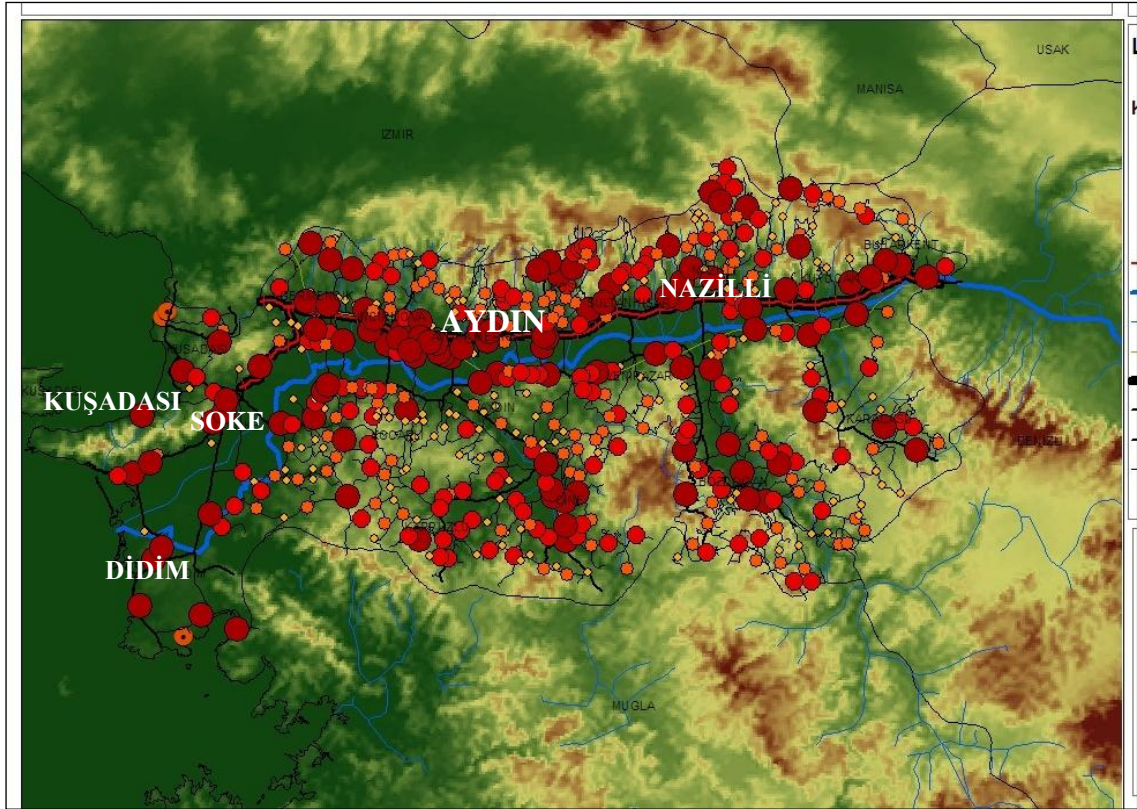
Meander flowing near Dinar in west central Turkey, flows west through the graben and reach the Aegean Sea. The Meander was so celebrated in antiquity for its numerous windings. The ancient Ionian city Afrodissias, Miletus, Priene, Myastook placed in this basin. Ephesus antique city is much closed to Meander river's antique cities chain with the approximately 50 far a way (Map1). Meander Basin is a place where very old civilizations lived during ancient times and also rich in works of Emirates and Ottoman periods as well, is in need of a regional identity.

<p>Map 1a: The coast of Aegean Sea in antique period.</p>	<p>Map 1b: Antique cities in Meander basin</p>

Recently, Aydın as province center, Nazilli, Söke are the mid-sized cities taking place along the river (Map 2). Kuşadası and Didim are also tourism destination places settled on the both side of the river meeting Aegean Sea Shore. Traditional sun, sea and beach are the main the tourism product in these locations as. Large-scale and upscale hotels and secondary summer houses largely define tourism product in Kuşadası, Didim with the summer population of approximately 500000 for both that it is ten times bigger than winter population. High volume mass tourism has been the main feature of the tourism industry in these coasts. Most cruise and stop-over tourists travel on pre-paid packages in Kuşadası. Cruise tourists integrated mostly with Ephesus and the Virgin Mary.

Although the huge potential of heritage and agriculture and thermal recourses the background of these coast, neither eco-tourism, agro tourism nor heritage tourism has not yet been evaluated in these natural beauty area. Recognition of the shortcomings of enclave tourism led to a focus on diversification of the tourism product as well as the type of tourist. The papers aim is to focus how the Meander natural and cultural and heritage potentials can be used for the various versions of sustainable tourism.

As mentioned above very flourish and rich landscape of the Meander basin has attracted many people from past to today, many settlements has been settled in these areas. The potentials are examined in three heading - agriculture, tourism and culture.



Map 2: Meander basin and the rural settlements distributions (yellow represents the losing population, orange is stagnant and red shows the increasing population)

Agriculture

In the economic perspective Aegean region is the most advanced region following Istanbul-Kocaeli-Bursa sub region which is located in the country's most developed Marmara region. Meander basin is the Aegean's one of the five basins. Integrated long coast line, forest, fertile agricultural lands along the Merderes Basin, describes the two main sectors of the region tourism and agriculture.

The Mediterranean climate is dominant in the basin which is hot and dry during summers, mild and rainy during winters. 61-year average temperature is 17.5 degrees and relative humidity is 62.9, annual average rainfall is 657.7 mm. As the average of the hottest month is July with 28 degrees, the lowest month is January with 8 degrees.

The basin is surrounded by 817,953 hectares of forest area. Agricultural land of 395,494 hectares is 48% absolute agricultural territory. 17% of the agricultural land is fruit and vineyard areas, 3.1% are the areas for the crisper. In 162,401 hectares of the land is carried out for the special products (figs, chestnuts, olives), farming. Along the Meander river willow and tamarisks are observed, olives, sweaters pine, red pine and oak is observed up to 500-550 m. high, under the olive and pine, scrub plant community is located. Country's 8% of the production of cotton, 32% of the production of chestnuts, 51% of the production of figs, 21% of the production of olive is covered from the basin. Particularly in Soke organic agriculture is held in the basin. Meadow and pasture land in the basin area of 24,706 hectares also reflect the presence of livestock sector. Agricultural enterprises in the province consists of 76% of the whole agricultural businesses have the size of 10-99 acres.

The basin has the small-scale business structure with 57% which the enterprises are in vegetable and animal production. Only 41% of enterprises engaged in vegetable production, animal production are only a 2% share of the businesses. (DIE, 1997)

Farming problems in Basin include: 1)the small agriculture business enterprises 2)low farm incomes; high dependence on subsidies, 3)vulnerability to market fluctuations in the demand for agricultural products, 4)productivity slowdown and decline in agricultural production in cultivated areas - reductions of fig, olive and cotton production in cultivated areas as well as tonnage in the period from 2002 until 2008, 5)Non developed agro-based industries (lace and hosiery facility is not available, 6)There is a danger of water erosion around the Meander River 8)There is poverty reduction in the amount of organic matter and soil, 9)Although 67% percent of agricultural land is irrigable, 38% of the irrigable lands are irrigated, 10)Deficiencies in packaging and marketing of special products.

Due to these problems generally there is a constant loss of young population in rural areas, where the elderly population is dominated by the settlements. Tourism structuring is needed to reverse this identity and to keep and to improve the population.

Tourism ve Culture

Meander Basin with tourism activity, presently the culture and art, faith tourism, silk road, / folkloric richness, historical heritage and the ancient cities, natural beauty, national park, rivers and lakes. Meander delta, with spas offers a potential for diversity in terms of eco-tourism. Despite this diversity, during the summer months is mainly based on the structure of coastal tourism. Proto-Hittite, Ionian culture after Hittite, Lydia, Persia, and Assyria, Urartu cultures, than Seljuk and Ottoman and Republican periods reflects the importance of the cultural layers of the basin.

The number of people staying in Aydın in 2009 is 774,361 persons. In 2000, this value is 422,741. In a 9-year period it is increased by approximately 1.4 times. 56% of the occupants are foreign, 44% are native guests. The average length of stay of the foreigners are 3.6 days, of the natives are 2.8 days. 97.3% of visitors staying in Aydın come to Kusadasi and Didim. There are 689 facilities and 60,192 beds in the province of Aydın.

Meander, as mentioned above, is a basin where ancient cities are dense. These ancient cities contain natural beauty at the same time. Meander Basin also offers potential in terms of local events. Camel wrestling, local agricultural products (figs, grapes, water chestnuts) festivals draw attention. All these resources can be used to build synergies with the advantage of each type -culture, eco and heritage tourism.

Moreover, the basin has significant potential in terms of geothermal resources. At the beginning of 2007, Buharkent region, "Buharkent Thermal Tourism Development Area" and İmamköy with its surrounding with the center of Aydın including Ilıcabaşı has been declared as "Tralleis Thermal Tourism Development Area". In Germencik Alangullu (Bozköy), Omerli and Gümüş (Gümüşılica); in Kusadasi Davutlar, in Sultanhisar Salavatlı and in Buharkent there are total of 6 plant area for the use of thermal.

Natural structure of the basin is rich in for the presence of plants and animals. In the high positions there are the highlands; Important Bird Areas (IBA) that contain "areas of lagoons and lakes, caves, waterfalls and camping and caravan tourism areas to support each other, has the potential to create synergy. At the same time Dilek Peninsula which is in the boundaries of the districts of Kusadasi and Soke - Meander Delta National Park, are the living and breeding

areas of the Mediterranean monk seals and sea turtles. Meander Delta lagoons, with the presence of a large number and variety of small and great cattles, fishing, bird watching has an important tourism potential.

As a result of analysis in basin, it is seen that there is the following barriers to and advantages of regional ecotourism.

Key Advantages	Key Barriers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • very close to İzmir and important tourism center and airport, • history, • potential employment, • easy accessibility, • growth – business, • clean green environment, • security, • diversification longevity • flexibility/creativity, • openness, • less wastage, • quality product, • extra income, • increased employment, • diversity of employment, • promoting local produce, • satisfy overseas and local tourist’s curiosity • break down barriers between city and country, • create interest in employment/career in agriculture, • educational product, • special agricultural products, • various aktivies supporting tourism, unique rural settlements, • identity, clean water resources, • hospitality • a good climate, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • better infrastructure and transport, • high quality accommodation, • planning controls, • legislation, • urban attitude, • lack of regional knowledge, • lack of settlement integration, • service attitude, • set up costs / ongoing expenses, • new skills required, • attitude (customer service), • new management techniques, • balance between agriculture • tourism, • knowladge how to maximise tourism value, • lack of co-operation culture, • marketing expertise, • public liability, • network, • cost to provide facilities, • lack of Government funding

3.Aims for Meander Basin Research

Objectives in the political structure of Europe within the scope of rural development and agricultural policy are; 1)Sustainable agricultural activities, 2)Sustainable marketing infrastructure, 3)The creation of the sustainable transport, 4) the development of organic agriculture, 5) Conservation of Bio-diversity, 6) The development of a generation free from genetically modified organisms, 7) With more and better work creation of full employment, 8) A better social cohesion target, 9) Creation of balance between ecological and economic development. However, like Turkey, a country where the 30% of the population work in the agricultural sector, only such kind of agriculture policy is not enough to ensure the

development of agriculture and rural development. Therefore, countries in the sub region, having committed to the development of sustainable tourism, are now promoting ecotourism and cultural and heritage tourism (Clayton, Karagiannis, 2008). In the Meander basin where there are still virgin natural areas, integration of tourism, agriculture would be supportive of rural development by the supporting of heritage tourism.

In this frame, main aim is to increase the rural income, employment and agricultural services in Meander basin. Meander basin, with driven accessibility features, of the connections of sea, road, airport and rail, mainly is surrounded by urban and rural settlements like Kusadasi, Didim Bodrum based with dominantly coast tourism sector and agriculture-based settlements having natural quality requires different developing strategies for the significant and various potential.

Regional Development agency and local authorities must work together sequentially towards the common goal of broad sustainable ecotourism by the preservation of the local ecological diversity. Local government must be organized to work together in whole basin. The strategies and principles for Meander Basin have been listed in the following items (Figure 1, 2,3).

Main principles are listed following items;

- a) Preserving rural landscapes, communities and the environment,
- b) Keep land in agricultural production,
- c) Creating sustainable livelihoods, discourage urban migration, overcrowding, the development of slums etc.,
- d) Behaving sensitive for carrying capacity,

Main strategies are drawn as below.

Agriculture

- a) Enterprise development opportunities for agriculture;
- b) Benefiting of product differentiation,

Tourism

- a) Integration of various tourism activities such as eco, health, adventure, sports tourism etc.
- b) Provision of various activities being integrated with eco tourism.
- c) Creating and stimulating a more diverse, authentic tourism product based not only on sun, sand and sea but also on food, cultural dishes, and cuisine. Farm and agro-based sites and tours, including heritage, cultural, agronomic and scientific sites and attractions etc.;
- d) Facilitating regional agriculture/tourism sector co-operation
- e) Encouraging entrepreneurial development between the sectors

Services, Management and Infrastructure

- a) Establishing comprehensive directories of local service providers in all sectors
- b) Linking the existing tourism marketing and promotion programmes
- c) Build partnerships through nurturing informal support systems to optimize human capital and un-tapped resources;
- d) Integrated organization models for two sector
- e) Activating marketing campaigns
- f) Provision education of both two sector
- g) Marketing campaigns must be to encompass a higher-budget ecotourism market
- h) Supply better infrastructure such as sanitary, transportation and communication
- i) Potential future project

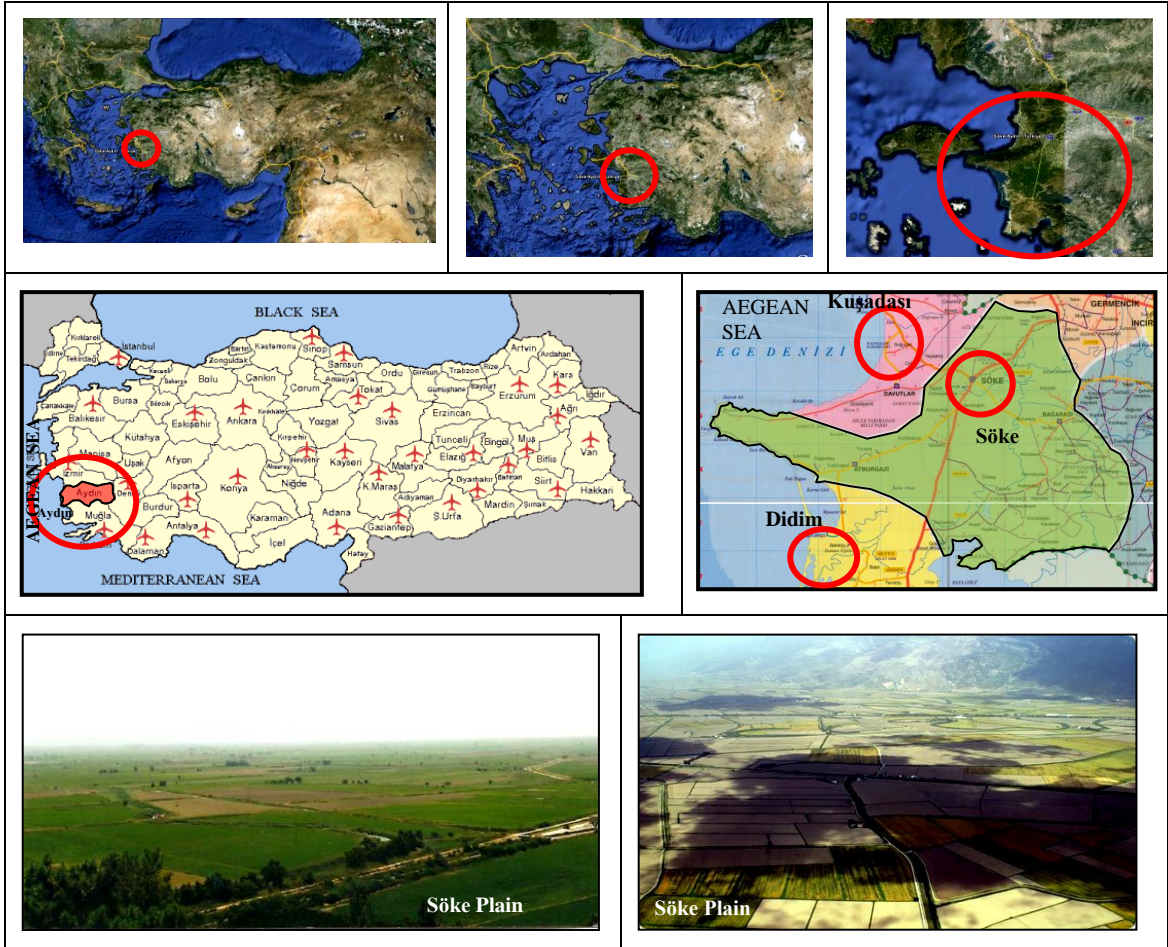
4. Conclusions

“Meander basin” has some indicators of small town and rural tourism development potential ingredient within an economy. However, an understanding of the risks they take on when seeking to mobilize such assets in support of new economic activity is important asset.

The tourism sector is often defined as an amalgam of many products, services and experiences. This makes it possible to develop a tourism product out of almost any mix of cultural, environmental, agricultural, and geographic or other resource endowments Courvisanosa, Jain (2006). As eco tourism is given the new way to tourism, it is discussed that the integration of tourism between entertainment, music and the productive sectors in particular agriculture and nature can make synergy to sustainable tourism development. Management and planning must be based from an analysis of the place-based assets and infrastructure available to support the tourism activities. Between tourism and agriculture can be enhanced through the adoption of a cluster-based strategy and integration of the region potentials for improving the competitiveness of the tourism and agriculture sector for improving the livelihoods of communities and rural areas. While some tourism features can draw visitors by themselves, more often it is the case that sets of tourism options and attractions work together to create a cumulative set of opportunities and experiences so as to draw a wide range of visitors.

The linkages between tourism and agriculture, contribute significantly to national and regional GDP, increased employment, and social stability. The tourism and agricultural sectors compete for similar resources namely land and the environment, rural landscape, water, soil conservation, coastal and marine resources, and importantly labour. It is important to develop integrated settlement system combining agricultural and tourism as well as service sector strategies. From land use regulation to transportation route upgrades, opportunities to mobilize local assets into viable economic contributors depend upon a supporting policy and investment climate.

The health and safety of food and water supplies are critical for tourism, as is the health and safety of workers is paramount for a successful tourism industry. It can be demonstrated that agriculture and tourism linkages are a win-win opportunity to make both sectors more competitive through: publicity campaign, up to date information, and excellent communications delivered throughout the entire chain of stakeholders, sharing best practices and adapting the same to the local environment. Additionally, partnership development, between and within sectors, and the use of informal support systems are critical to achieving success. Education and training at all levels is necessary to improve the quality, quantity and reliability of goods and services. Education in quality and other standards, Human Resource Development management, group dynamics, negotiation skills, marketing and promotion etc. are indispensable parameters. Local identity must be conserved and not to be lost. The tourism season must be extended with the increasing the accommodation time and programming various tourism activities for whole year to increase the income and stability employment.



Map 3: Location of Meander Basin

Eco tourism model process		
Eco-tourism organization Individual initiatives	Eco-tourism organization Individual initiatives Local government Voluntary organizations	Eco-tourism organization Development agency Central government Local government Voluntary organizations Individual initiatives
ECO-TOURISM PLANNING	ECO-TOURISM PLANNING	ECO-TOURISM PLANNING
Short-term (2011-2015)	Medium term (2015-2020)	Long-term (2020-2030)
Daily activities	Daily activities Accommodation activities	Daily activities Accommodation activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤Gather yourself activities ➤Farm tools ➤Roadside stalls ➤Olive activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤Festivals ➤Hobby gardens ➤Boarding ➤Picnic activities ➤Sports activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤Full-time housing ➤Full board meals ➤Olive activities ➤Conventional oil production ➤Olive-marketing activities ➤Sports activities ➤Different tourism activities

Figure 1: Eco tourism process for short, medium and long period.

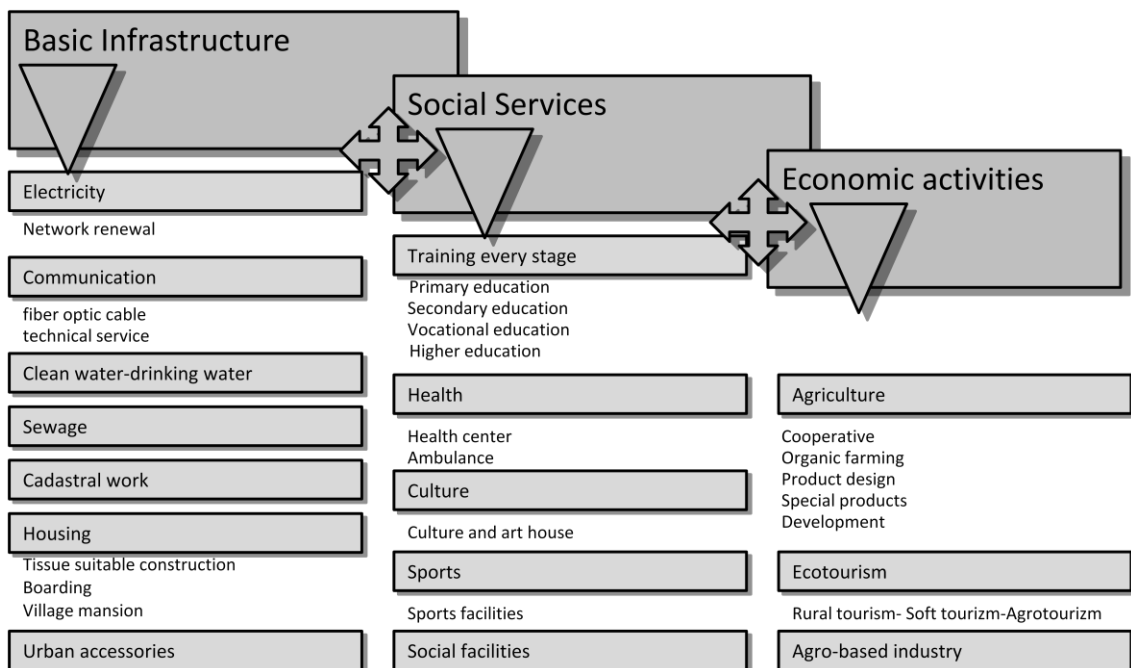


Figure 2: Basic services and organization for eco tourism

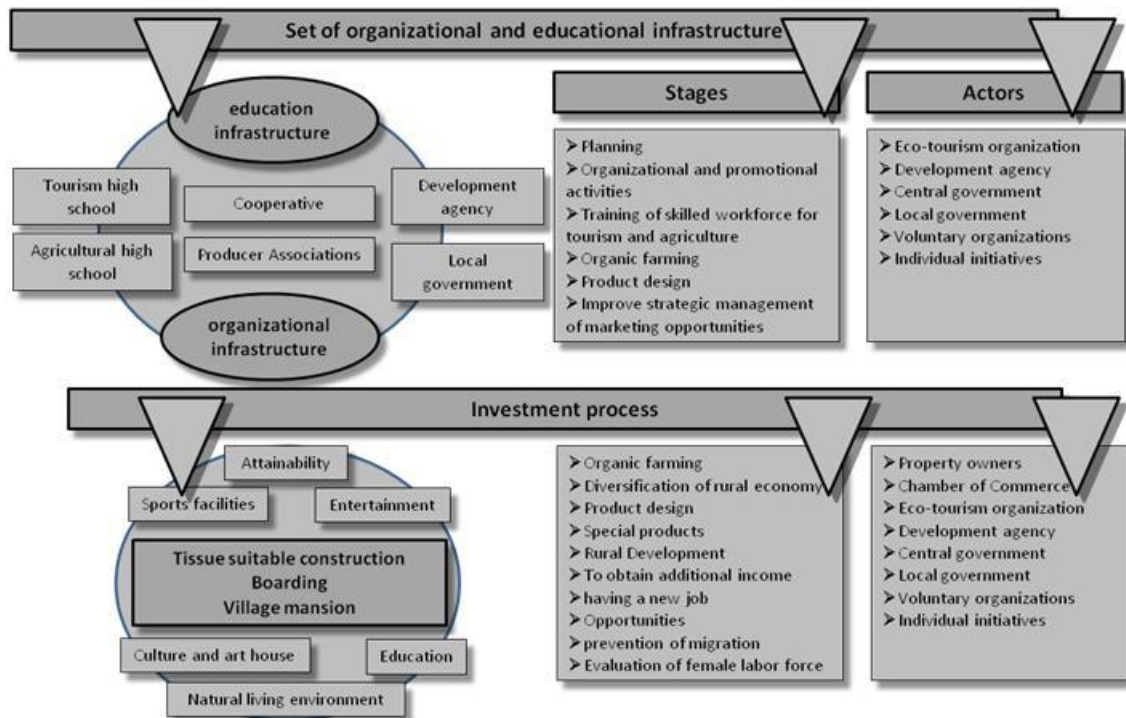


Figure 3: Set of organizational and educational infrastructure



Figure 4: Spatial activities for Bafa Lake.



Figure 5: Some pictures from the Meander Basin.

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