

## PUBLIC POLICY AND SUSTAINABLE TOURISM IN TURKEY

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*Although tourism has been considered as an important activity for the well-being of the economies and state regulations on tourism have a considerable history in Turkey, the concept of sustainable tourism was first mentioned in the 8<sup>th</sup> Five-Year Development Plan (2001-2005). Until that time however, almost all shores, forests, natural attractions and high plateaus were announced as tourism areas. In this regard, a productive and rationale use of the natural resources and even protection of ecologically and biologically sensitive areas require a comprehensive determination of tourism policies and plans. The aim of the paper is to analyse state policies on sustainable tourism and discuss future plans and projects of the government in Turkey. Further, the study also aims to offer recommendations for policy makers in order to better manage the policies regarding sustainable tourism.*

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**Keywords:** *sustainable tourism, policy making, Turkey*

### INTRODUCTION

Tourism can be viewed as a global activity providing service sector employment, revenue and general economic impacts. On a large scale this is generally referred to as ‘mass’ tourism. However, over recent years a number of types of tourism have arisen as an alternative to mass tourism, which collectively are referred to as ‘alternative’ tourism (Dowling and Fennell, 2003). This has been broadly defined as forms of tourism that set out to be consistent with natural, social and community values and which allow both hosts and guests to enjoy positive and worthwhile interactions and shared experiences (Wearing and Neil, 1999: 3). Alternative tourism fosters sustainability through the process of selective marketing in order



to attract environmentally conscious tourists who show respect for the natural and cultural components of tourism destinations and are conservation minded and culturally sensitive in their use of natural and cultural assets of tourism (Dowling and Fennell, 2003).

Turkey, as a developing country, adopted tourism not only as an alternative economic growth strategy, but also as a tool to create a favourable image on the international platform through exemplifying immediate implementation of an outward-oriented economic development policy (Tosun and Jenkins, 1996) that seemed to have been essential just after the 1980 military coup which was ushered in to combat corrupt party politics and serious social unrest and to preserve the democracy in the country (Ayata, 1994 cited in Tosun, 1998). The civilian government which came to power following the military government in 1983 saw tourism as an easy, effective and relatively cheap instrument to achieve export-led industrialization as a core principle of the 24 January Economic Stabilization Measurements formulated by the World Bank (WB) and International Monetary Fund (IMF) in 1980 (Tosun, 1998). Unfortunately, these principles could not be implemented due to the socio-economic and political crisis in the country.

Turkey has experienced an unexpectedly rapid tourism growth in terms of volume, value and physical superstructure (hotels, restaurants, bars, disco, etc.) in the absence of proper planning and development principles (Tosun, 1998). In other words, tourism growth has taken place largely in a haphazard way and created socio-economic and environmental problems, which may be called unsustainable tourism development.

The aim of the paper is therefore to point to sustainable tourism and the role of public policy in the sustainability of tourism on the basis of an extensive literature review. Following, the development of tourism in Turkey and the public policy on the sustainability of tourism is discussed. Further, the study also aims to offer recommendations and suggestions for policy makers in order to better manage the policies regarding sustainable tourism and to minimize the negative impacts of tourism.

## **SUSTAINABLE TOURISM**

Sustainable tourism began to be used from the late 1980s. At that time the term 'green tourism' was used more widely, and the environmental problems such as over-pollution and global warming were not apparent. Since the early 1990s the term 'sustainable tourism' has become more commonly used. It encompasses an approach to tourism

which recognizes the importance of the host community, the way staff are treated and the desire to maximize the economic benefits of tourism for the host community (Swarbrooke, 1999).

The concept of sustainability clearly embraces the environment, people and economic systems. In this regard, WTO defines sustainable tourism in the following manner: "Sustainable tourism meets the needs of today's tourists and host regions while protecting and enhancing opportunities for future. It is predicted as leading to management of all resources in such a way that economic, social and aesthetic needs can be fulfilled as well as maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, biological diversity, and life support systems" (WTO, 1998).

Many studies in tourism literature that incorporate an attempt to define sustainable tourism do not venture beyond the rhetoric of *balance* and the underlying rationale for policy formulation, and action therefore remains obscured (Hunter, 1997). The balance is intended to explain the right balance between the need for development and the need for environmental protection. According to Harris and associates (2002) the language of balance can be misleading since one's balance is another's imbalance and it is used to mask the reality that economic growth is generally the primary concern. As pointed out by Cater (1995) with specific reference to sustainable tourism, economic growth via tourism development will often conflict with environmental protection. Similarly, debating on the tourism development in developing countries, Tosun (1998) asserts that developing countries have frequently concentrated on the economic impacts of tourism development and ignored wider issues. Their need for new employment opportunities, foreign currency and taxation results in underestimation of wider issues such as environment and sustainability of resources. Although economic concerns may dominate in most situations, the outcome of the decision making process will vary according to the background and training of decision makers and to the specific circumstances surrounding the development proposal (Harris et al., 2002).

Logically, if it is accepted that alternative interpretations of sustainable development are inevitable and that sustainable tourism should be about trying to contribute to the wider goals of sustainable development, then it must surely be recognized that sustainable tourism cannot be seen as a rigid code (Harris et al., 2002). Rather, sustainable tourism should be seen as a flexible or adaptive paradigm, whereby different tourism development pathways may be appropriate according to local conditions (Hunter, 1997).

As the negative impacts of tourism were recognized, a series of initiatives were taken by public sector bodies to try to manage tourism through visitor management techniques. In general, tourism management initiatives were designed to ameliorate the worst excesses of tourism in the short term and they were generally small scale and did not seek to change the nature of tourism as a whole (Swarbrooke, 1999). On the other side, the industry's approach towards sustainable tourism development aims to reform tourism enterprises and mass tourism development in a comprehensive, systematic, integrative, community-oriented, renovated, and applicable attitude (Knowles, Diamantis and El-Mourhabi, 2004). In the same manner, development of sustainable tourism seems to be a fact that is connected with the tourism industry as a whole with its economic, social and environmental dimensions (Swarbrooke, 1999; WTTC, IFTO, IH&RA, ICCL and UNEP, 2002). However, as Tosun (2001) puts it, sustainable tourism development as an adaptive paradigm is a multi-disciplinary and broad concept.

## **SUSTAINABLE TOURISM POLICY AND PLANNING IN TURKEY**

Sustainable tourism has come to represent and encompass a set of principles, policy prescriptions, and management methods (Hunter, 1997). Tourism development based on these principles will help a destination area's environmental resources to be protected for future development. Successful implementation requires several public and private policies and actions, such as "integrated policy, planning and social learning processes" (Gunn, 1994). According to Dowling and Fennell (2003), sustainable tourism development is envisaged as leading to the management of all resources in such a way that it can fulfil economic, social and aesthetic needs while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, biological diversity and life support systems. In this manner, the goals of sustainable tourism are (Dowling and Fennell, 2003):

- to develop greater awareness and understanding of the significant contributions that tourism can make to the environment and the society,
- to promote equity in development,
- to improve the quality of life of the host community,
- to provide a high quality of experience for the visitor, and
- to maintain the quality of the environment on which the foregoing objectives depend.

Most commentators seem to believe that the public sector has a major role to play in the development of more sustainable forms of tourism (Swarbrooke, 1999). There are a number of reasons why it is thought appropriate that the public sector should play a leading role in trying to develop more sustainable forms of tourism (Swarbrooke, 1999). These include the following:

- The public sector usually has a mandate to represent the whole population not just particular interest groups or stake holders.
- The public sector is seen to be impartial with no commercial axe to grind or interest to protect.
- Because it is not constrained by short-term financial objectives the public sector is seen to be able to take a longer term view.

The public sector influences tourism in a number of ways, and can play a role in the development of sustainable tourism by a variety of means, including; legislation and regulation, funding and fiscal incentives, land use planning, development and building control, including the role of environmental impact assessments, the provision of infrastructure and superstructure (Swarbrooke, 1999). But this is almost problematic in the developing countries. Since the principles of sustainable tourism development appear to have been established by developed countries without taking into account the conditions of the developing world (Tosun, 2001), it is necessary for developing countries to approach tourism development planning by considering their own socio-cultural and political conditions, economic and human resources (Tosun, 1997). At this point, Gunn (1994) advocated that the best solution to sustainable development of the tourism industry is likely to occur not from advocacy of environmentalists or governments but from developers of tourism. When the fundamental of the dependency of all tourism upon the resource base becomes more apparent to developers, they will see that it is in their best interests to sustain the quality of the economic, environmental and social resources.

The call for the application of the sustainable development approach to tourism has been reflected in its suggested incorporation into planning procedures. Mathieson and Wall (1992: 178) stated that 'planning for tourist development is a complex process which should involve a consideration of diverse economic, environmental and social structures'. However, the emerging destinations of the less developed world are less likely to have their long-term interests protected as tourism develops (Harris et al., 2002). Although they have environmental and cultural features that potential tourists wish to experience, they also possess a lack of resources to initiate and boost a healthy tourism development. If

sustainable development is open to interpretation and is a multidimensional concept, so less developed countries place priority on the economic dimensions of the tourism development. In this regard, as Tosun (2001) puts it, it is not realistic to expect that a sector of the economy of a developing country will contribute to sustainable development of that country without a significant change in both the overall socio-economic structure and the public administration system.

According to Harris et al. (2002) it is ironic that to achieve economic development through tourism, many less developed countries have felt it necessary to take steps that may reduce the long-term benefits. They strive for foreign capital and offer a variety of concessions and incentives such as tax breaks, free access to land and low environmental standards that would probably reduce operating costs. This makes them more vulnerable. On the other hand, sustainable tourism development requires equity both inter-and-intra generational, which seems to be incompatible with the interests of those domestic and foreign people who invested their capital in tourism industry. It appears to be very difficult, if not impossible, to formulate a tourism policy which contradicts the investors' interests (Tosun, 2001).

On the administrative front, national tourism administrations increasingly have had to build coordination among ministries into their strategies, in particular for transport, employment, culture (Göymen, 2000) and sustainability of the industry. At a regional or local level, the priority tourism is afforded in government attentions may differ, but tourism is still recognized to be poorly understood (Miller and Twining-Ward, 2005) and managed industry. Policymaking in such developing countries tends to be highly centralized with national government deciding on many policies and providing much of the infrastructure and services. In many of these countries, the concentration of authority and decision making within the central government and its bureaucracies has been identified as a major obstacle to more effective governance and administration (Yüksel, Bramwell and Yüksel, 2005). It is extremely difficult to imagine the formulation and implementation of any approach to sustainable tourism in the absence of strong local (including regional) authority planning and development control, and without the involvement of local communities in the planning process to some degree (Hunter, 1997). It may well be that different levels of community involvement in tourism development decision-making are appropriate for different pathways of sustainable tourism. However, in most cases, democracy in developing countries has not been fully institutionalized and a supportive

democratic political culture may be only in the formative stage, collaborative schemes may face additional difficulties (Göymen, 2000).

Tourism Encouragement Law (law number 2634) of 1982 heralded to new liberal era and attempted to overcome some of the obstacles and problems like lack of coordination among tourism related organizations. An elaborate incentive system, using Ministry of Culture and Tourism (MCT) and the Tourism Bank as main instruments, was introduced backed by sufficient resources at least until the end of 80s (Göymen, 2000). As a result the number of MCT licensed establishments which stood at 596 with around 62,000 beds in 1982 increased to 2514 and 532,262 respectively in 2007 with an additional of 395,000 municipal licensed beds (MCT, 2008). In fact, governments have played an active role in shaping and directing tourism development by using generously and extensively fiscal and monetary instruments. It was achieved what was intended in the short term by increasing the physical capacity of the tourism industry, tourism demand and receipts. But this role may not mean a good performance in terms of sustainable tourism development (Tosun, 1997).

When Turkey became popular, it was not ready to absorb an expansion in tourism, technologically, socially and economically, and has been marketed as a low price holiday destination. The Turkish authorities did nothing to control this growth: on the contrary it was seen as a success, as the yardstick was volume. This meant that the rapid growth of arrivals to Turkey outstripped the supply of both accommodation and support facilities and gave Turkey a reputation for poorly planned, low-quality tourism plant (Cooper and Ozdil, 1992). Consequently, the environmental problems generated by mass tourism especially in significant destination areas, need new approaches and management (Gezici, 2006).

As far as sustainable tourism have different definitions and interpretations according to circumstances, clearly the overall strategy for sustainable tourism may vary from destination to destination. Thus tourism development for any particular destination area requires careful planning if it is to be successful and sustainable (García-Falcón and Medina-Muñoz, 1999). Implementing sustainable tourism is more difficult in mature over-developed tourism areas (Farsari, Butler, and Prastacos, 2007) as in the Mediterranean coasts of Turkey. Mass tourism exists in high concentration and with large-scale development along coastal areas in Side, Alanya, Fethiye, Kuşadasi. Thus, as Gezici (2006) concludes, destination areas have encountered more pressure and more intensive environmental problems. Based upon work in coastal Turkey,

Tosun (2001: 295) reports that ‘environmental pollution has become an important problem at these popular local tourist destinations due to the lack of measures to cope with the generation of new or increased waste residues. Sewage disposal systems were installed solely according to local residents.’ Supply dominant structure of the industry has resulted in unplanned rapid tourism growth, consequently has brought irreversible negative impacts on urban and rural areas with rich cultural, heritage and other attractions. Large numbers of hotels and second homes built in numerous coastal areas have destroyed olive and citrus fruit gardens. In this regard, Diamantis (2000) suggests that the entire Mediterranean region needs to change its image from a mass-tourism destination to a more green or sustainable region. In doing so, he continues, cooperative efforts amongst Mediterranean countries need to be advanced in conjunction with the practice of cooperative marketing efforts in attracting eco-tourists to their region. Such a contribution will, probably, enhance every specific country’s understanding of others’ failures and success and create an opportunity to supply better tourism products in a sustainable manner.

Sustainable tourism can only take place if carrying capacities for key tourism sites are conducted and then rigorously implemented through a system of effective planning and operating controls (WTO, 1990:47). On the contrary, the growth of the tourism industry continues at the expense of social and ecological integrity of destination region. As a consequence of this growth, tourism policy makers, particularly government, have been forced to consider a variety of new approaches to ensure that the environment, local people, tourists and business remain unaffected by the negative impacts of the industry (Dowling and Fennell, 2003). However, in 1997, Tosun asserted that there is a lack of proactive planning process; it was very difficult for a developing country such as Turkey to develop a proactive tourism approach by which to decrease or eradicate the influences of external actors such as tour operators and international hotel chains on tourism development. Further, he explained that the influences of external actors were not matters dependant on whether a country has a proactive or reactive planning approach, but a matter deriving from the nature of international tourism. What Tosun observed for 1997 is still valid for the tourism industry in Turkey, and the sustainability of the tourism industry is still under threat. Turkey has been popular as a cheap alternative destination to other Mediterranean destinations and Turkey’s unique cultural assets are not an important factor for international mass tourism demand anymore. While only 8 % of tourists visited Turkey for

cultural reasons in 1989, this figure has dropped to 4.8 % in 2007 (MCT, 2008).

In Turkey the central government is the only body deciding on the scope of planning and policy making not only for tourism but also for all areas of the economy and the administration. In this planning process, local bodies have been used as an extension of the ruling party to facilitate implementation of the central governments' priorities, or they are forced to follow central government decisions via various economic and political pressures (Tosun and Timothy, 1998). For Turkey, it should be understood or recognized that national planning and management approaches to tourism will not cover all aspects of the sustainable tourism development. As it is suggested by Berry and Ladkin (1997), any attempts to promote sustainable practices must be decided upon and coordinated at the regional level, with a single clear contact point for support and advice on the planning and the actions. At this point, a regional planning approach, which requires decentralization of the authority of the central government to regional and local authorities, seems to be an alternative strategy (Tosun, 1996). However, local authorities were never permitted to develop their independent policies free from the strict central government control (Ersoy, 1992). In this manner, some successful projects were initiated as in the case of Belek in the past. Some of these projects seemed to be successful for a certain period but the desire to earn much has overcome other goals. Another failure was experienced in Cappadocia, a popular tourist destination in Central Anatolia. Turkey has, with the collaboration of international bodies, tried to implement an environmental protection programme at the destination, but that programme seems to have failed, most probably because of lack of organization at regional level to manage and control the programme (Tosun and Jenkins, 1996). Although participatory tourism development approach has been popularized as an instrument for achieving more sustainable tourism development in the developed world, this pro-active approach, unfortunately, has not been recognized in Turkey and elsewhere in the developing world (Timothy, 1999).

In addition to environmental problems, the domination of supply-oriented tourism planning has resulted in excess supply, which is not utilized effectively. This may reflect an inefficient use of limited resources and an approach to development that primarily emphasizes economic growth (Tosun and Timothy, 1998). Moreover, there has not been strict control or regulation that would prevent hoteliers from polluting the environment. As a result, businesses with insufficient capitals strive to attract foreign tourists with cheap prices and they require

relatively high prices for the domestic travelers. Consequently social sustainability of the tourism industry is neglected due to rate barriers in front of the locals. Another serious threat the Turkish tourism industry is facing involves the widespread use of all-inclusive pricing. In response to the influence exerted by international tour operators in Turkey's tourism industry, nearly all resorts and even smaller hotels have started offering all-inclusive prices to remain competitive, which in turn have resulted in reduced service quality, lower profit margins. A general alternative, however, for all nations where the lifestyle, culture and natural environment are felt to be under threat, may be to focus on quality rather than quantity. This oft-promoted solution aims to reduce tourism's harmful effects without sacrificing economic benefits expected (Harris et al., 2002). This approach requires policy makers and interest groups to concentrate on providing high quality facilities and services and thereby attract high spending tourists, selective restraint operating through price. Unfortunately, this is a difficult alternative to cope with in the case of mature destinations where the industry is irreversibly dependent on the current markets and confines.

The case of Turkey suggests that without recognizing the institutional, political and developmental issues, and taking remedial actions based on hard political choices and a confident decision making process, contemporary development approaches to tourism planning may not be implemented, and consequently the potential social, economic and political benefits of tourism may not contribute to the objectives or principles of development and sustainable development (Tosun and Timothy, 1998). Clearly, the reasons behind the mismanagement of tourism development are a reflection of existing unhealthy power relations, public administration systems, democratic and political cultures, and the distribution of wealth among others (Tosun and Fyall, 2005). According to Tosun and Fyall, it should be kept in mind that it may not be possible to achieve environmental-sustainable tourism development without addressing these problems. Although they recommend that authorities should prepare a comprehensive, integrative, and participatory tourism development plan by re-determining the objective of tourism development, a radical change in the democratization of the country and its political structure is required for a healthy governance of the country.

Seasonality has been an inescapable aspect of tourism and the variations in demand are all the more acute because of the characteristics of the product. As a result, seasonality clearly and drastically limits tourism business creation, profitability and growth (Getz and Nielson, 2004), and Turkey is not an exception to this. In spite of Turkey's

tremendous potential and competing diversity of resources scattered throughout the vast land, Turkey could not overcome the problem of seasonality (Yolal, 2007). While overall tourist numbers are increasing, the historical profile of seasonality in Turkish tourism underlines the lack of efficient, comprehensive approach to the problem. The potential and resources of Turkey presents valuable options for both international and domestic travelers. Mitigating seasonality across time and attracting demand to rarely known places is necessary to cope with the environmental impacts of the tourism that have been resulted by the concentration of demand in confined places and time. However, efficient marketing and promotion of these resources are questionable. Due to lack of understanding of markets or lack of resources, Turkey could not promote itself well enough in international markets. Intensive marketing strategies will be an important tool for the purpose of promoting rarely known resources and attract new markets especially in the off-season periods.

It has been suggested that sustainable tourism means socially fair tourism and it involves four Es, namely: equity, equal opportunities, ethics and tourists and host being equal partners (Mowforth and Munt, 2003). The concentration of Turkish tourism industry on the coastal areas of Mediterranean and the Aegean Sea contributes to the further development of those regions which already possess a higher socio economic status compared to less develop South-East and East Anatolia (Tosun, 2003). As a response to unbalanced development of the tourism and its resources, planners and politician in the eastern and south-eastern part of the country strive to promote their tourism sector to enhance the development of these neglected, but with an abundance of historical and natural attractions, regions. Domestic tourism is more suitable for a socially and economically sustainable regional development, since it does not carry all of the problems linked to international tourism (Seckelmann, 2002). Increasing number of domestic travelers depicts a chance for the industry in order to be socially sustainable and diminish over-reliance on the foreign markets. Similarly, the economic benefits of the industry will be expanded to less developed regions and foster economic sustainability in these regions.

If properly applied, the negative effects of the tourism industry may be eradicated and many alternative forms of tourism might be induced. However, there seems to be several limitations to moving towards a sustainable approach in Turkey. Tosun (2001) summarizes these limitations as, a lack of contemporary tourism development approach, the structure of the public administration system, the emergence of

environmental matters and over-commercialization, the structure of the international tourism system, and the invasion of natural and historical sites by the industry and the second-homes. The economic necessities have also forced decision-makers to encourage tourism development without considering principles of development and sustainable development (Tosun, 2001). Moreover, the still prevailing centralist tradition and omnipotent bureaucracy is an impediment for a general awareness of sensitivity to the natural, historical, and cultural environment (Göymen, 2000), and such problems are not solely limited to the tourism industry.

The structure of the international tourism system has led Turkey to create a tourist infrastructure of facilities based on Western standards even in relatively underdeveloped local areas to provide the mass tourist with 'the protective ecological bubble of his accustomed environment' (Cohen, 1972, cited in Tosun, 2001) while local people in these areas have difficulty in satisfying their felt-needs such as those of housing, education and health. The type, direction, volume and impact of international tourism in Turkey are being determined by external factors to a large extent. In this context, it may be stated that tourism is an industry developed and run by foreigners for foreigners (Tosun, 2001).

The education and the awareness of the people, both the residents and the public, is also an important determinant for the success of the sustainable tourism development. Roney (2001) found that both the employees and the public are aware of the importance of sustainable tourism; however the people employed in tourism do not consider environmental problems being important as a result of their expectations from the industry. Similar studies reveal that having an environmental consciousness cannot be read as people behaving in an environmentalist manner.

## **DISCUSSION and CONCLUSION**

This paper attempts to present a general overview of the concept of sustainable tourism and analyze the policy making issues in Turkey related to sustainable tourism development. As in the case of many other developing countries, Turkey has chronic and severe macro economic problems such as high rates of unemployment as a result of rapid growth of the working-age population, an increasing rate of deficits in the current account of balance of payments, increasing debt and relatively high inflation and interest rates compared to European Union countries. Thus, economic benefits of the tourism industry are pivotal even though it is not

compatible with the principles of long-term sustainable development. As a result, Turkey has experienced a rapid tourism growth in terms of volume, value and physical superstructure but largely in a haphazard way that created socio-economic and environmental problems which may be called unsustainable tourism development. At government level there is no integrated planning or preparation for the rapid growth of tourism: research was minimal and a lack of expertise and experienced technical officers in tourism led to a failure to control low-cost developments and their consequent impacts (Cooper and Ozdil, 1992). The reluctance of different levels of bureaucracy to relinquish part of their authority, coupled with the relative weakness of civil society institutions and this situation can be remedied through integrated national/local planning, further devolution in administration, strengthening of formal institutions and civil society, and provision of more tools of participation and accountability (Göymen, 2000). However, this requires a comprehensive change in the administration of the government and its way of doing business.

Turkey is one of the largest countries in Europe and the Middle East with an area of a bit less than 800,000 sq km. It is extremely difficult to govern the tourism industry in such a vast land because of differing priorities and needs of each region and destination. In this regard a radical change in the democratization of the country and its political structure is required for better management of the tourism industry and resources. This should be followed by a regional planning approach, which requires decentralization of the authority of the central government to regional and local authorities.

In deciding national and regional policies, a matrix of all sectors of activity is assessed and evaluated: positive and negative economic effects, positive and negative social effects, positive and negative environmental effects, and so on (Dowling and Fennell, 2003). Thus tourism and environmental resource factors are not taken in isolation, nor at the remote end of a decision making process. This requires a comprehensive and collaborative approach. At this point, lack of organization and expertise at regional level is an important barrier in front of sustainability projects and planning. This problem can be solved by educating the local authorities, entrepreneurs, civil institutes and even the public. In this way a general understanding of tourism and its sustainability can be created among the public. Public and local administrations need to cooperate with social and educational institutions to educate the public about the environment and how to protect scarce natural resources. Even it seems to be difficult to educate such a crowded community; the use of information

technologies can facilitate such a process. Involvement of local communities in the planning process to some degree will also contribute to the success of plans and policies.

Turkey is a newcomer to the tourism industry, compared to other Mediterranean destinations. Cooperative efforts among Mediterranean countries need to be advanced with the practice of cooperative marketing efforts in attracting environmentally conscious eco-tourists. Focusing on quality, in this regard, rather than quantity will reduce tourism's negative effects without sacrificing economic benefits expected.

This study reveals a theoretical analysis of the public policy and sustainable tourism in Turkey. Policy and especially its implementation and consequently its success are a relatively understudied field compared to other aspects of tourism. Since sustainability clearly embraces the environment, people, economic systems and next generations, there is a need for further extensive empirical and theoretical studies. Research into government policies and the politics of tourism could increase understanding of the decision making process. Such studies could also facilitate policies for sustainable tourism development and improve the development of a well established industry.

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