

# Island of lesbos, greece



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This case study was chosen to understand the development of the Island of Lesbos by the decentralization and diversification of tourism from the central 'Greater Athens' to the agrarian-based rural community on the island of Lesbos. The strategies used to develop sustainable tourism on the Island and the role of policymakers.

The main proposal 'Rural Tourism Program for Mission Espada Region in San Antonio, Texas' shares the same objectives with this study which are:

- Decentralization and diversification of tourism.
- Sustainable development of rural tourism in agrarian-based rural communities.
- The stimulation of rural employment and economic development of the region.

Up to the early seventies Greek policy aimed at a rapid development of the Greater Athens Area. Later on, the emphasis of policymakers shifted to the mainland of Greece with the construction of surface transportation networks, electricity and communication lines.

At the end of the seventies, the policy shifted more to a decentralization policy. By means of five-year plans, the policy has also aimed at the development of the backward regions of the country.

Tourism development played an important role in these plans as it represents a major economic activity in Greece. In 1988 tourist revenues represent more than 7% of the Gross Domestic Product. Tourism creates also a large number of direct, indirect or induced jobs. In 1990 about 480, 000 people were estimated to be employed in the tourist sector of Greece. The

number of tourist arrivals in Greece has grown by about 420 % in the period 1971-1992.' This development is clearly reflected on many islands, e. g. on Lesbos (Nijkamp and Verdonkschot, 1995).

The island of Lesbos is still one of the economically deprived and sensitive areas of Greece. The primary sector is the most important one of Lesbos' economy, because of the enormous olive oil and ouzo production. While foreign tourism has existed on Lesbos since the 1960s, it has had over the past 10-15 years a significant impact on the island with the development of built holiday resorts and the expansion of facilities for tourism development.

The attractions of the island play an important role in future tourist arrivals. Its Mediterranean climate, its many beaches, and bays, its beautiful landscape, and the size of the island offer the advantage of diversified tourism with many options. Other natural features of the island are the petrified trees, thermal springs, olive gardens and the variety of the landscape.

Archaeological sites, folk and art museums, Byzantine castles and cathedrals, ancient theaters, and Roman aqueducts can be visited. The island is also rich in religious buildings. There are many monasteries, which exhibit the heritage of the Island. Of special importance are the old picturesque villages like Molyvos and the traditional industries, like olive oil production, ouzo production, leather, wood carving and pottery industries (Nijkamp and Verdonkschot, 1995).

The visitors have been classified into different tourism categories in order to conceptualize and plan to offer activities and services based on their specific

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demands. The potential tourists are classified into the following types of tourism which provide a brief description of the activities offered in each category in table 2.

Tourism Category Target Visitors Infrastructure and development required  
 Activities Offered Farm/Agriculture based Visitors from Urban areas and International tourists Training locals for tourism, establishing standards for products and services, development of infrastructure to accommodate guests Farm animals related activities, Demonstrative farming, rural style cuisine, harvest festivals and nature-based outdoor activities.

Adventure sports tourism Adventure sports enthusiasts Development and maintenance of trekking/hiking routes, Mapping of existing trails, Proposal and development of facilities to support adventure sports Trekking, Hiking, Adventure sports and cycling

Sea Tourism Aquatic sports enthusiasts Proposal and development of facilities/ infrastructure to support aquatic sports, training of locals to conduct and maintain aquatic sports Windsurfing, Water skiing, Snorkeling, Scuba diving, Sailing, and Parasailing

Winter Tourism Winter tourists Infrastructure development to accommodate winter tourists, Planning of winter activities Food festivals, music festivals, indoor sports and activities, culture and heritage tours

Exclusive Tourism High-income tourists Development of luxury tourism facilities, training locals to provide luxury services and products, extension of

the present built-up area Spa treatments, Beauty and wellness services, Gourmet dining, adventure/aquatic sports and luxury tours

Table 2: based on the information from (Nijkamp and Verdonkschot, 1995).

In conclusion, the different opportunities for tourism development are explored and the plans and strategies for different types of tourism are developed to bring tourism to the agrarian-based island of Lesbos. This is a great example of how tourism is decentralized and diversified from popular overcrowded destinations to rural agrarian-based communities for the development of rural tourism.

## **Rural Tourism and Sustainable Business Development Proposal**

Mission Espada's roots lie in east Texas, where Spain founded Mission San Francisco de Los Texas in 1690. Founded as San Francisco de Los Tejas in 1690, the oldest of the East Texas missions were moved to the San Antonio River in 1731 and renamed San Francisco de La Espada. The southernmost of the San Antonio chain of missions, Mission Espada appears almost as remote today as it did in the mid-1700's.

Along with several others, it served as a buffer against French encroachment from Louisiana (Las Misiones, 2017). The missionaries strove to make life in the mission communities closely resemble that of Spanish villages. They taught mission Indians specific vocations - men learned carpentry, masonry, and stonecutting to construct elaborate buildings. Espada was the only mission to make brick, which is still visible. The influence of these mission artisans is evident throughout the city today.

Spanish Franciscan missionaries pursued a powerful vision for God and country. They aligned and trained the Coahuiltecan hunting and gathering cultures to be servants of God and loyal, productive citizens of New Spain. Over a 50-year period, they earnestly taught the principles of farming, ranching, architecture, blacksmithing, loom weaving, spinning, and masonry. Espada was the only San Antonio mission where bricks and tiles were made. The Catholic faith and Spanish language became the foundation of the new culture (National Parks Service, 2017).

In its last years as an active mission, Espada suffered epidemics and fire, along with never-ceasing raids. In September 1831, the governor of Coahuila and Texas sent orders to the political chief of Texas that all mission property, except the churches, should be sold at auction.

The mission was partially returned to usage in 1858 with the arrival of a French priest, The Reverend Francis Bouchu. Father Bouchu made records of everything still standing, including all the painted artwork still visible. He established Mission Espada as his home and was initially responsible for the rebuilding of the church.

Without Father Bouchu, there might not have been anything left to "save" or restore in the 20th century (Las Misiones, 2017).

### **Site**

Mission Espada is located 6.5 miles south of Mission Concepcion and is linked by the historic 'Camino De Los Reyes' also known as the Kings Path. A World Heritage Inscription, the proposed site is around 612 hectares and is

located 1.2 miles south of Mission Espada. The site is located just outside the Mission Espada's buffer zone as it is a World Heritage site.

This particular site has been chosen as it is accessible from Mission Espada through an asphalted country road in good condition that winds through country homes and farms, offering an excellent view of the rural setting there. This road also has very little traffic which is ideal for cycling and directly connects the proposed site to the Mission Espada which is just 1.2 miles from the site.

The main feature of the site is the Cassin Lake. Cassin Lake is in the San Antonio River basin on Minita Creek two miles west of Southton in southeastern Bexar County (at 29°18' N, 98°27' W). The artificial lake was built in 1907 for irrigation purposes and was evidently named after William Cassin, an early landowner for whom the town of Cassin was also named. In the early 1990s the lake, which has a maximum capacity of 580 acre-feet, was owned and operated by Medina Properties Limited. The surrounding terrain is flat to gently rolling and is surfaced by clay loam that supports mesquite, cacti, and grasses (Texas State Historical Association, 2017).

The lake provides an opportunity for popular recreational activities like fishing, boating, picnicking and relaxation. The lakeside is also the ideal location for 'Texas Style' barbecues. The flat nature of the site is ideal for equestrian, demonstrative agriculture and demonstrative dairy activities that are all planned as per this proposal.

The site is flat to gently rolling and is surfaced by clay loam that supports mesquite, cacti, and grasses. The site is bordered by the Roosevelt Avenue

to the west, farmland to the north, national parkland to the east and a large-scale solar farm to the south. The site is not in the flood zone of the San Antonio River and the lake is artificially created. The site borders the Mission Espada buffer zone towards the north-east as seen in Figure 1.

As per the latest land use map of San Antonio, the site falls in the suburban tier which is further described as a private and industrial zone.

Figure 1: The land use map showing the extent of the buffer zone. The proposed site is not in the buffer zone (image reference: GoogleMaps and San Antonio Missions 2014: 255)

There are two main entry points to the site one which is accessible from the country road leading south of the Mission Espada and enters the site from the North and the other entrance being accessible from the main Roosevelt avenue which is from the West as seen. The entrance from the North is ideal for tourists as it leads directly from Mission Espada to the site and offers excellent views of the country style homes and farms along the road. This road introduces tourists to the rural setting before they enter the site.

The entrance from the West is well suited to be the service entry for the site as it is directly connected to the Roosevelt Avenue. Roosevelt Avenue is the main road which will make access to the site for the heavy vehicles providing services to the site easier, without disturbing the peace and quiet of the countryside. By having two different entrances we can ensure that services provided to the site will not interfere with tourists and the tourists do not see the movement of heavy trucks in and out of the site.



Figure 2: The two entrances to the site are seen in the above image. (image reference: Google Maps)

### **Concept and Development Program**

The project is aimed at developing rural tourism in the areas around Mission Espada by proposing a rural tourism model that would attract tourists and benefit the rural communities. This would generate a lot of employment opportunities and help in the development of small businesses in the area while providing a unique way for tourists to experience the culture and heritage of Texas.

The proposal is a rural tourism hub centered around rural life in Ranches in Texas that revolve around agriculture, dairy, livestock and equestrian activities. The whole program is divided into four main themes based on the type of activities. The four Themes being

- Dairy and livestock
- Lake and Fishing
- Agriculture and Apiculture
- Equestrian

These four themes would be accommodated in four different zones that the site will be divided based on their area requirement. These zones will provide recreational activities, tutorials, demonstrations and offer products specific to the zone.