



Balancing Economic Development
and Environmental Planning for
Tourism in Rural Europe

DIAGNOSTIC STUDY OF SYVOTA



September 2001

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INTRODUCTION

Syvota is a scenic coastal village characterised by its rare natural beauty. It is situated on the coastal line of Epirus, along the Ionian Sea, in the Prefecture of Thesprotia. (See Maps 2 and 3) It lies 24 km south of Igoumenitsa, opposite Corfu Island. Syvota attracts both Greek and foreign tourists at increasing rates over the past two decades. This increasing tourist activity is now leading towards the degradation of the village's environment.

The Local Authority of Syvota is in favour of planning, and the approved local plan is a positive step towards environmental conservation. However the local plan has not been either sufficiently discussed among local stakeholders or implemented. Therefore, the main goal of the case-study is the attainment of an agreement through reconciliation of interests among the local stakeholders, in view of commencing the next phase of the local plan, namely the Plan Application and the subsequent issuing of the Plan Application Act.

The Municipality of Syvota, in accordance with the 1998 Law enforcing the unification of communities (known as Kapodistrias Plan) is formed by the communities of Syvota, Plataria, Faskomilia, Skorpiona, Argyrotopo and Polyneri. Our case-study is located at the community (village) of Syvota.



CHAPTER A. SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROFILE OF THE AREA

A.1. Socio-economic Structure

A.1.1 Population – Trends

The population of the Municipality of Syvota, according to the 2001 Census, was 2975 people, the maximum ever recorded in the area. According to Tables A.1.1, and A.1.2, the Municipality of Syvota has the 3rd highest rate of population increase in the Prefecture over the last three decades, after Igoumenitsa and Perdika.

The favourable geographical characteristics of Syvota, the development of significant road infrastructures in the Prefecture and the employment opportunities offered by tourism stimulated the population increase during the last two decades within the Municipality. The settlements of Syvota and Plataria present a high population increase during the 1971-2001 period (57% and 93.5% respectively). On the contrary, in the mountainous settlements of Faskomilia and Argyrotopos, the population decreases.

Estimates made by the Municipal Local Authority reckon that in the Municipality of Syvota, the permanent residents during the winter period are 3,150, while during the summer, the overall population reaches 10,000 inhabitants approximately, including tourists, permanent residents and residents occupying summer houses.

In the settlement of Syvota, the permanent population is 879 people according to the 2001 census, but the Local Authority estimates that it is increased between May and September to 3,000-4,000 people. The Regional Tourism Office's estimate is slightly less, claiming that the population of the village is tripled during the same period, hence it becomes about 2,700.

TABLE A.1.1: POPULATION OF THE PREFECTURE OF THESPROTIA PER MUNICIPALITY AND COMMUNITY(1971-2001)

	Population				% Change				
	1971	1981	1991	2001	1971-1981	1981-1991	1991-2001	1971-1991	1971-2001
M. of Aherontas	2200	2236	2190	2343	1.6	-2.1	7.0	-0.5	6.5
M. of Igoumenitsa	8313	10336	11608	14630	24.3	12.3	26.0	39.6	76.0
M. of Margaritio	3467	3359	3324	3042	-3.1	-1.0	-8.5	-4.1	-12.3
M. of Paramythia	8986	8728	8626	7862	-2.9	-1.2	-8.9	-4.0	-12.5
M. of Parapotamos	1524	1315	1335	1662	-13.7	1.5	24.5	-12.4	9.1
M. of Sagiada	2028	1886	2074	2098	-7.0	10.0	1.2	2.3	3.5
M. of Syvota	2186	2196	2617	2975	0.5	19.2	13.7	19.7	36.1
M. of Filiates	9578	9018	9758	8487	-5.9	8.2	-13.0	1.9	-11.4
C. of Perdika	1287	1369	1730	2239	6.4	26.4	29.4	34.4	74.0
C. of Souli	1115	835	926	753	-25.1	10.9	-18.7	-17.0	-32.5
Total of Prefecture	40684	41278	44188	46091	1.5	7.1	4.3	8.6	13.3

Source : Master Plan of Thesprotia, National Statistical Service

**TABLE A.1.2: POPULATION OF THE MUNICIPALITY OF SYVOTA PER COMMUNITY
(1971-2001)**

	Population				% Change			
	1971	1981	1991	2001	1971-1981	1981-1991	1991-2001	1971-2001
M. of Syvota	2186	2196	2617	2975	0.5	19.2	13.7	36.1
Argyrotopos	485	401	526	516	-17.3	31.2	-1.9	6.4
Syvota	560	575	756	879	2.7	31.5	16.3	57.0
Faskomilia	649	579	577	628	-10.8	-0.4	8.8	-3.2
Plataria	492	641	758	952	30.3	18.3	15.6	93.5

Source : Master Plan of Thesprotia , National Statistical Service

A.1.2 Economic Activities

Employment

In the coastal areas of the Prefecture, most inhabitants are employed in the tourism sector and in agriculture, usually interchanging these activities at different times of the year. Young people often give up the traditional agricultural activities to become fully occupied in the tourism sector or they move to larger urban centres.

Tourism activities in Syvota mainly include family-run rooms and apartments rented to tourists, operating for a short season in the summer. During the winter, the local inhabitants are occupied with agricultural activities.

As presented in Table A.1.3, more than 1/3 of the inhabitants of the Municipality of Syvota have declared as their main occupation primary sector activities, including agriculture, animal husbandry and fishing. The tertiary sector, which includes tourism as well as commercial activities and other services, employs 295 people, while the local manufacturing industry (secondary sector) employs 214 persons.

**TABLE A.1.3: EMPLOYMENT IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF SYVOTA PER ECONOMIC
SECTOR (1991)**

	Total		Primary Sector		Secondary Sector		Third Sector	
	Number	% Prefecture	Number	% Prefecture	Number	% Prefecture	Number	% Prefecture
M. Syvota	904	6.2	351	7.0	214	6.7	295	5.1
%	100.0		38.8		23.7		32.6	

Source : Master Plan of Thesprotia

Sectoral Activity

Primary Sector

Irrigated land takes up 133.6 Ha of the Municipality of Syvota, (Table A.1.4) indicating the dominance of agricultural activity in the area. According to the Municipal Authority of Syvota, (Table A.1.5) the main agricultural products include olives, olive oil, (exported to other areas in Epirus), clover, dairy products, fish and sage.

TABLE A.1.4: AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF SYVOTA

	Horticultural Cultivation		Tree Cultivation		Irrigated Cultivations		Total	
	Hectares	%	Hectares	%	Hectares	%	Hectares	%
M. Syvota	8.1	1.4	119.0	4.6	133.6	2.2	260.7	2.8

Source : Master Plan of Thesprotia

TABLE A.1.5: NUMBER OF Ha PER CULTIVATION TYPE

Cmmunity	Corn	Clover	Citrus trees	Olive trees	Almonds
Plataria	3	34	2.6	155	3.2
Argyrotopos	5.5	70	2.1	227	0.3
Syvota	-	-	-	315	-
Faskomilia	1.5	60	2.3	200	-
Total	10	164	7,0	898	3.5

Source : Feasibility Study of The Municipal Development Agency of Syvota

Animal farming includes cow breeding, accounting for 4.7% of the Prefecture's total production and sheep breeding, accounting for 3.7% of the Prefecture's total. Fishing activities are also pursued in the village of Syvota, where there is a small marina for fishing boats.

However, as shown in the table below, the economic activity of the primary sector tends to be of a small scale and family-based, with only three companies been registered in the area officially.

TABLE A.1.6: NUMBER OF ECONOMIC UNITS PER SECTOR (2000)

ACTIVITIES	Municipality of Syvota	
	Companies	Units
Agriculture, animal husbandry, fishing and forestry	3	3
Total of Primary Sector	3	3
Mines and Quarries	2	2
Manufacturing industry	20	23
Construction	48	53
Total of Secondary Sector	70	78
Commerce	81	92
Hotels and Restaurants	235	255
Transport, Storage and Communications	10	11
Marketing	6	6
Business and Real Estates	12	14
Other Services	11	13
Total of tertiary sector	355	391
Total	428	472

Source : Master Plan of Thesprotia

Secondary Sector

As already presented in Table A.1.6 above, there are 70 companies registered in this economic sector, accounting for only 16.3% of the companies in the Municipality.

During the last decade, there have been some new investment projects in processing of agricultural and fishery products (packaging and refrigeration companies - Feasibility Study of the Municipal Development Agency of Syvota).

Tertiary Sector

According to Table A.1.6, most of the registered companies in the Municipality of Syvota belong to the tertiary sector (83%). Among those, 92% are hotels and restaurants, demonstrating the dominance of tourism in the area.

Relationship between sectors

The Municipality of Syvota presents a mixed economy. Tourism activities are predominant, mainly concentrated in the villages of Syvota and Plataria. Agriculture also plays an important role in the area's economy, being usually complemented by or complementing the tourism activities of the local population. The secondary sector is not highly developed, but has a significant presence in the area, providing employment for almost ¼ of the local population.

A.1.3. Tourism – In-depth Analysis

A.1.3.1 Supply

According to the Master Plan of Thesprotia, there are 8 designated (by the Hellenic Organisation of Tourism) tourist areas in the prefecture. Within the Municipality of Syvota there are two designated areas, namely the villages of Syvota and Plataria.

According to Table A.1.7, the Municipality of Syvota contains 192 tourist accommodation units and a total of 3,203 beds, which account for 60% of the prefecture's accommodation capacity. Among these, there are 20 Hotels, 158 Rented Room Units and 14 Apartment Units. The available hotel beds account for 51% of the prefecture's stock of hotel beds, while the beds offered in rented rooms and apartments account for 65% of the prefecture's total of this type of accommodation.

TABLE A.1.7: TOURIST ACCOMMODATION IN THE PREFECTURE OF THESPROTIA, PER MUNICIPALITY (2001)

	Tourist Accommodation															
	Hotels				Rented Rooms				Rented Apartments				Total			
	Units		Beds		Units		Beds		Units		Beds		Units		Beds	
	Nu.	%	Nu.	%	Nu.	%	Nu.	%	Nu.	%	Nu.	%	Nu.	%	Nu.	%
M. Aherontas	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	3.0	6	2.1	1	0.3	6	0.1
M. Igoumenitsa	13	33.3	576	26.8	30	11.2	278	9.4	10	30.3	76	27.0	53	15.5	930	17.3
M. Margaritio	0	0.0	0	0.0	12	4.5	116	3.9	1	3.0	6	2.1	13	3.8	122	2.3
M. Paramythia	1	2.6	11	0.5	3	1.1	42	1.4	5	15.2	34	12.1	9	2.6	87	1.6
M. Sagiada	0	0.0	0	0.0	13	4.8	81	2.7	0	0.0	0	0.0	13	3.8	81	1.5
M Syvota	20	51.3	1103	51.4	158	58.7	1956	66.2	14	42.4	144	51.1	192	56.3	3203	59.5
M. Filiates	1	2.6	15	0.7	2	0.7	18	0.6	1	3.0	4	1.4	4	1.2	37	0.7
C. Perdika	4	10.3	441	20.5	51	19.0	464	15.7	1	3.0	12	4.3	56	16.4	917	17.0
Total	39	100.0	2146	100.0	269	100.0	2955	100.0	33	100.0	282	100.0	341	100.0	5383	100.0

Source: NTO – Epirus Office and PRISMA

High class hotels (A and B) have a significant presence in Syvota, accounting for 60% of the hotel beds of the municipality. Rented rooms and apartments also demonstrate good quality standards, with 92% of their beds being registered in A and B classes. High class hotel beds have also a high share in the stock of the prefecture. A-class hotels in Syvota contain 41.6% of the Prefecture's total A beds, and B-Class hotels contain 71.4% of the Prefecture's B beds. Similarly, A-class rented rooms and apartments offer 67.4% of the Prefecture's total beds of this type (table A.1.8).

TABLE A.1.8: TOURIST BEDS ACCORDING TO CLASS IN THESPROTIA (2001)

	Hotels								Rooms & Apartments					
	A		B		C		D-E		A		B		C	
	Beds	%	Beds	%	Beds	%	Beds	%	Beds	%	Beds	%	Beds	%
M. Igoumenitsa	21	5.0	104	15.4	297	40.3	154	49.7	146	7.4	149	15.2	59	22.0
M. Margaritio									35	1.8	79	8.0	8	3.0
M. Paramythia							11	3.5	46	2.3	30	3.1		
M. Sagiada									48	2.4	33	3.4		
M Syvota	176	41.6	483	71.4	299	40.6	145	46.8	1335	67.4	588	59.8	177	66.0
M. Filiates	15	3.5							4	0.2	18	1.8		
C. Perdika	211	49.9	89	13.2	141	19.1			366	18.5	86	8.7	24	9.0
Total	423	100.0	676	100.0	737	100.0	310	100.0	1975	100.0	983	100.0	268	100.0

Source: : NTO – Epirus Office and PRISMA

From table A.1.9 becomes apparent that, within the Municipality, the village of Syvota demonstrates its dominance as a tourist accommodation provider compared to Plataria, since the vast majority of hotel beds (96%) are located in Syvota. The same applies with rented rooms and apartments, where 71.8% of beds offered in rented rooms and 92.3% of beds offered in rented apartments are located in Syvota (table A.1.10).

TABLE A.1.9: DISTRIBUTION OF HOTELS PER SETTLEMENT AND CLASS IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF SYVOTA (2001)

		Class						Total
		Lux	A	B	C	D	E	
Syvota	Units	-	2	5	8	2	2	19
	Rooms	-	105	231	154	35	38	563
	Beds	-	176	439	299	71	74	1059
Plataria	Units	-	-	1	-	-	-	1
	Rooms	-	-	22	-	-	-	22
	Beds	-	-	44	-	-	-	44

Source: : NTO – Epirus Office and PRISMA

TABLE A.1.10: DISTRIBUTION OF RENTED ROOMS AND APARTMENTS PER SETTLEMENT AND CLASS IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF SYVOTA (2001)

Municipality and Settlements	Rented Rooms						Apartments					
	Units				Rooms	Beds	Units				Rooms	Beds
	Class						Class					
	A	B	C	Total	A	B	C	Total				
M. of Syvota	93	49	16	158	871	1956	12	2	-	14	80	144
Polyneri	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Faskomilia	-	1	-	1	10	20	1	-	-	1	3	5
Plataria	27	13	3	43	237	507	1	-	-	1	4	6
Syvota	65	34	13	112	614	1404	10	2	-	12	73	133
Argyrotopos	1	1	-	2	10	25	-	-	-	-	-	-

Source: : NTO – Epirus Office and PRISMA

However, according to estimates by both the Municipal Authority and the Greek National Organisation of Tourism, there are also unauthorised rooms and apartments, operating without permission from the National Tourism Organisation (NTO) in the village of Syvota. These accommodation facilities offer approximately 500 beds, in unregistered locations.

Camping sites are also available in the Municipality of Syvota, providing 87% of the tent-places of the Prefecture. There is one camping site in Syvota, with 255-people capacity and 2 in Plataria, with 540-people capacity in total.

Catering and refreshments facilities include 38 restaurants and 70 bars and cafes in the Municipality. The majority of these are located in the village of Syvota.

Complementary activities provided for tourists in Syvota include:

- **Agro-tourism.** Through the LEADER Programme there has been an effort to develop agrotourism in the area of Syvota. 3 agrotourism units have been partly financed by LEADER.
- **Sea tourism.** Syvota provides opportunities for yachting and especially sailing. An informal, makeshift marina has been created by a local entrepreneur to accommodate visiting boats and to provide also shelter for boats offered for renting. A proper marina has been planned in the bay of Syvota, financed by CSFIII and its construction is due to start in 2002.
- **Festivals.** There is a local religious festival every year in Syvota on the Day of Analipsis. Within the wider area of the settlement there are also 6 Cultural Associations, organising festivals, excursions and visits to archaeological sites.
- **Hiking paths.** There is a hiking route in the area, starting from Syvota, going through the area of Vrahonas and leading to Polyneri, proposed by the TERRA-Coastlink Programme. The route follows rural footpaths and roads, but it is not defined in its full length.

Public Amenities and Services

Public amenities and services are presented in the following table. It is noted that there are no health facilities in the Municipality. The closest facilities are located in the neighbouring Municipalities of Igoumenitsa, Filiates and Paramythia.

TABLE A.1.11: PUBLIC SERVICES IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF SYVOTA

Type of service	Municipality of Syvota
Hospital /Health Center	No
Nursery	No
Vocational Training	No
Lyceums	No
High Schools	1
Primary Schools	4
Nursery Schools	4
Banks	1 cash machine
Sport facilities	1 football field/1 tennis court/1 basketball court

Source : Master Plan of Thesprotia , Municipal Authority of Syvota

In Syvota, there are also the following administrative offices:

- The Community Hall
- The Port Authority
- The Police
- The Telecommunications Branch.
- The Local Agricultural Cooperative

Syvota is serviced by an old **sewage** system which causes many problems to the inhabitants and the environment. There have been many complaints by the inhabitants to the local authorities and as a result, there are three major sewage works under construction at present, financed through the CSF. (Table A.1.12).

TABLE A.1.12: SEWAGE WORKS FINANCED BY THE CSF IN SYVOTA

Title	Cost (000 Euro)
Sewage Network of Plataria-Syvota	1765
Sewage Plant of Plataria – Syvota	880
Connection to the Sewage Plant	1470

Source: *MINENV, N. Bakalis – P. Markantonatos O.E., December 1999*

In the Prefecture of Thesprotia, a new **landfill** is under construction in the area of Astimitsi, which will also service Syvota. It takes up an area of 2.5 Ha, servicing 13,038 inhabitants. At present, in the prefecture there are 33 designated areas of disposal and 69 arbitrary ones.

A major problem for the village of Syvota is the **water supply**. During the peak tourism period in the summer the whole village or part of it, including the hotels, may go without water for several hours. A significant new project has already started (in 2001),

financed by CSF II and III, providing extra water to the communities of Syvota and Perdika.

A.1.3.2. Demand

Three indicators have been used to assess the current situation and the trends of tourism development over the past decade: arrivals of tourists, total nights spent by tourists on an annual basis and length of stay in the area. These indicators have been examined separately for Greek and foreign tourists.

An important indicator for the assessment of tourist activity is the length of time spent in the area, presented in the following table. The average length of stay of visitors in the Prefecture was 2.1 days in 1990, increasing to 3.0 days in 1999.

The average length of stay of Greek visitors in Thesprotia is shorter to that of foreign visitors. For the period 1990 - 1999 foreign visitors stayed on average for 3.4 days, while Greek visitors stayed on average for 1.8 days. The trend is however positive, for both types of visitors, showing an increase of 50% on average on the length of stay of all visitors.

TABLE A.1.13. AVERAGE LENGTH OF STAY OF VISITORS IN THE PREFECTURE OF THESPROTIA IN DAYS (1990-1999)

Year	P. THESPROTIA		
	Greek	Foreign	Total
1990	1.6	3.0	2.1
1991	1.7	2.8	2.1
1992	1.8	2.5	2.1
1993	1.7	3.2	2.4
1994	1.7	3.0	2.2
1995	1.8	3.2	2.3
1996	1.6	3.6	2.4
1997	1.8	3.9	2.6
1998	2.7	4.6	3.2
1999	2.5	4.1	3.0
Average 1990-1999	1.8	3.4	2.4

Source: NTO and PRISMA

In Syvota, the average length of stay is greater to that of the Prefecture, with an average of 3.6 days for Greek tourists and 8.4 days for foreign tourists. The longer length of stay in Syvota reflects the type of tourism which is dominant, i.e. holiday tourism. On the contrary, in other places of Thesprotia, namely Igoumenitsa, the dominant form of tourism is business or transit visits. However, the trend in Syvota appears to be

negative, with the average length of stay diminishing through the past decade and reaching in 1999 almost half the figures of 1989. This is a particularly worrying trend, regarding the local economy, because shorter holidays imply more effort from the host business community and higher cost to sustain the standards of services; and less opportunity for the visitors to make use of local facilities and services, including retail and recreational activities, so that the financial benefit of their visit can spread more widely in the community with added/multiplier effects.

Although this trend may reflect to a large extent the world-wide economic crisis of the 1990s, it may also imply that Syvota, as a tourist destination, lacks sufficient resources and lags behind in attractiveness. Namely, Syvota cannot retain its visitors because it does not offer a tourist product rich enough, diversified and capable to motivate -and captivate- the visitor to spend a longer period of time in the area pleasantly and fully occupied.

TABLE A.1.14: AVERAGE LENGTH OF STAY OF VISITORS IN SYVOTA IN DAYS (1989-1999)

Year	SYVOTA		
	Greek	Foreign	Total
1989	6.4	11.2	10.2
1990	5.0	10.7	9.8
1993	3.6	9.3	8.2
1994	4.0	10.3	8.8
1995	4.2	9.2	7.8
1996	4.0	9.9	8.5
1997	3.3	8.6	6.7
1998	3.1	7.6	5.6
1999	3.6	8.4	5.9
Average 1989-1999	4.1	9.5	7.9

Source: NTO and PRISMA

The arrivals of tourists in Syvota and the nights spent in the village over the year, as presented in the table below, show that there has been a steady increase in both over the past decade for Greek tourists; and a significant fluctuation for foreign tourists. Foreign arrivals have slightly decreased from 1989 to 1999 but the nights spent in the village have drastically decreased over the same period. The shares of Greek and foreign visitors in the local tourism market have also significantly changed. Thus, Greek tourists which in 1999 accounted for more than half of the total visitors, have increased their share substantially over the past decade in the arrivals figures (from 21% in 1989 to 52.5% in 1999) and accordingly in the overall nights spent in Syvota (from 13% in 1989

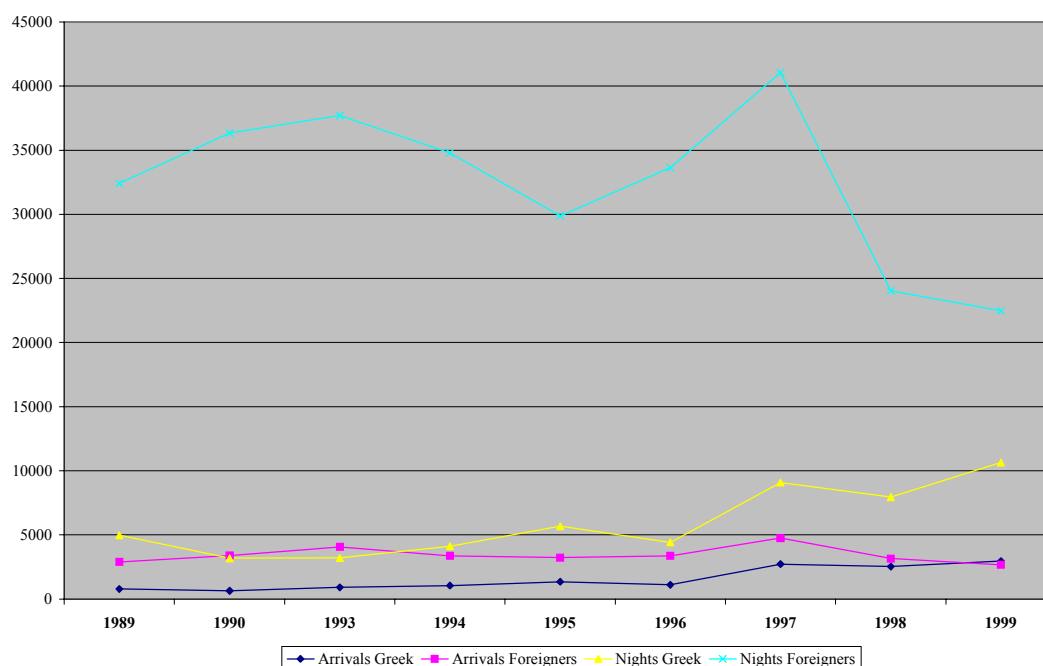
to 32% in 1999). On the contrary, foreign tourists reduced substantially their arrivals share (from 79% in 1989 to 47% in 1999) as well as their share of overall time spent in accommodation in Syvota (from 87% in 1989 to 68% in 1999)

TABLE A.1.15: ARRIVALS AND TOURIST NIGHTS SPENT IN SYVOTA 1989-1999

Years	Arrivals					Nights				
	Greek	%	Foreigners	%	Total	Greek	%	Foreigners	%	Total
1989	771	21.1	2890	78.9	3661	4975	13.3	32412	86.7	37387
1990	635	15.8	3393	84.2	4028	3180	8.1	36333	92.0	39513
1993	894	18.1	4059	82.0	4953	3203	7.8	37699	92.2	40902
1994	1032	23.5	3364	76.5	4396	4109	10.6	34799	89.4	38908
1995	1342	29.4	3227	70.6	4569	5681	16.0	29887	84.0	35568
1996	1095	24.5	3368	75.5	4463	4411	11.6	33639	88.4	38050
1997	2719	36.4	4752	63.6	7471	9074	18.1	41050	81.9	50124
1998	2525	44.5	3152	55.5	5677	7953	24.9	24016	75.1	31969
1999	2955	52.6	2665	47.4	5620	10637	32.1	22481	67.9	33118

Source: National Statistical Service - NTO

ARRIVALS AND TOURIST NIGHTS SPENT IN SYVOTA 1989-1999



A.1.3.3 Problems

The problems in the area can be summarised as follows:

- The majority of existing (official) beds are not in hotels but in rented rooms and apartments (66%). This makes it difficult for the area to cooperate with tour operators and achieve longer season and better prices. However, it is positive that the majority of hotel beds (60%) are of high class (A and B) attracting tourists of higher incomes, and often, of higher environmental sensitivity.
- The tourist season is very short for the majority of the units, especially the smaller ones (40 days). Moreover, the average length of time the tourists spend in the area is short and has been decreasing during the past decade. This calls for diversification of the tourist product, through the provision of opportunities for recreation. At present, complementary activities that would improve the tourist product, including sports, visits to natural and cultural attractions, walking/hiking and alternative forms of tourism are not encouraged.
- The fluctuations that have been observed in the arrivals and overall nights spent (on an annual basis) of tourists, especially foreign tourists, reflect the instability of the tourism market, on the one hand; and the “stagnation” of the product of the area in terms of new investment, quality of services and opportunities for diversified tourist activity, on the other hand.
- The public amenities and services need drastic improvement. These include water supply, waste disposal (solid and liquid), open spaces and provision of parking areas. Also, access to medical facilities and to banks is very unsatisfactory.
- The carrying capacity of beaches near the village exceeds the limits in the peak season. Alternative locations for swimming might be encouraged through better organised public transport.
- The local community does not exploit the potential provided by tourism to promote other local products, such as agricultural products or handicrafts.

A.2. Environmental Protection

A.2.1 Designated areas

Syvota is surrounded by a remarkable landscape, which is coupled by a valuable ecosystem along its coastal line. The two islands (Agios Nikolaos and Mavro Oros) opposite the port were designated as areas of outstanding natural beauty by the Prefectural Authority in 1982. The area is also awaiting designation by the Ministry of the Environment.

A.2.2. Designated settlements, buildings, monuments

26 buildings in Syvota were placed under a conservation order in 1995, by the Ministry of Environment, Planning and Public Works. Moreover, the Ministry of Culture, in 1993, designated Vrachonas, a mountainous settlement next to Syvota, as a byzantine monument. Vrachonas is a deserted settlement of 50 houses, constructed during the 18th-19th centuries.

A.2.3. Other areas of interest

The coast of Syvota and the neighbouring Community of Perdika is washed by the blue-green waters of the Ionian Sea, including many sandy beaches, small scenic bays and ports. The visitors have many opportunities to explore them by little boats and to reach them by road. Swimming and water sports are pursued in the beautiful beaches of Zeri, Gallikos Molos, Bella Vraka, Zavia, Mega Ammos, Pisina, Agia Paraskevi and other smaller ones. The carrying capacity of these beaches is important for the preservation of their natural features. In some of them, their capacity is exceeded by far during the peak summer months.

Visitors can also visit the islands of Paxi and Antipaxi by boat, in frequently organised day-excursions. Both islands are of outstanding natural beauty.

The designated areas and buildings of Syvota are presented in the following table:

TABLE A.2.1: DESIGNATED AREAS IN SYVOTA

Community	Description	Settlement	Location	Date and type of Designation	Responsible Authority
Syvota	The Settlement of Vrachonas in Syvota	Brachonas	SE area of Syvota	Byzantine Monument 1993	Ministry of Culture
Syvota	The islands of Mavro Oros and Agios Nikolaos	Islands	Syvota	1988 Areas of outstanding natural beauty	Prefecture of Thesprotia
Syvota	26 buildings in the Community	Syvota	Syvota	Traditional Buildings 1995	MINENV

Source : Master Plan of Thesprotia

A.3 Access and Accessibility

There are three ways for the visitors to reach Syvota

1. By air, arriving at the Airports of Ioannina, Aktion in Preveza or Corfu and then by car or public transport and ferry.
2. By ferry boat to Igoumenitsa (from Patras, Corfu, Italy) and then by car or public transport.
3. By road, using the national road network.

Airports

There are no airports in the Prefecture of Thesprotia. However, the airports of Ioannina, Preveza (Aktion) and Corfu serve the majority of passengers travelling to/from the area.

The airport of Corfu is much closer to Igoumenitsa, the capital of the Prefecture, carrying the majority of tourists who are heading for Syvota, arriving during the summer through charter flights.

Arrivals and departures in the airport of Aktion in Preveza, are not frequent during the winter, but increase significantly during the summer through charter flights.

In the airport of Ioannina, flights are scheduled frequently throughout the whole year, but passengers travelling to the Prefecture of Thesprotia and Syvota may not prefer to travel through Ioannina, since it is located 105 km away from Igoumenitsa. The Ioannina airport does not host charter flights.

Ports

The port of Igoumenitsa, plays a strategic role in the transportation system. The harbour facilities are currently expanded. The port has been graded 5th in importance in Greece and the main «gate» of the Northern and Western regions of Greece towards Italy and the EU.

There are scheduled routes from Igoumenitsa to Brindisi, Bari, Ancona and Venice. There are also frequent routes to the ports of Corfu and Patras.

Road Network

Egnatia Motorway

Egnatia is under construction at present. It is a motorway of international importance, which is expected to become a major connecting route between Thesprotia and NE

Greece, leading to Turkey and the Balkan countries. It belongs to a wider European transportation network, along with the routes of Berlin-Sofia-Thessaloniki, Helsinki Alexandroupolis and Vienna-Belgrade-Thessaloniki, providing access to the Balkans and the rest of the countries of Eastern Europe.

Part of this motorway crosses the region of Epirus, starting at the port of Igoumenitsa, and leading through Metsovo and Panagia to the neighbouring region of Thessaly.

National Road Network

Two main routes classified as “national” cross Thesprotia and one of them crosses the Municipality of Syvota. These are:

- Igoumenitsa-Preveza. This route is 82 km long, connecting the settlements of Plataria, Mazarakia, Karteri, Vrachos, Kanali and Nikopolis, and ending at Preveza.
- Igoumenitsa-Ioannina. It is a route 92 km long, connecting the settlements of Neraida, Plakoti, Polydroso, Vrosina, Soulopoulo and Klimatia.

Secondary Road Network

Syvota can also be accessed through two “provincial” routes:

1. Igoumenitsa-Perdika-Syvota. A road starting from Igoumenitsa, leading to Plataria, Karteri and Perdika, ending in Syvota.
2. Igoumenitsa-Plataria-Syvota, a coastal route, passing next to Plataria and leading directly to Syvota.

A.4. Stakeholder Analysis

The main stakeholders identified in the area of Syvota include:

A.4.1 Public Authorities

- The Regional Secretariat of Epirus-Department of Planning and the Environment, representing the regional administration of the central government. It is responsible for the physical planning of the region, the environmental controls and the supervision of the Structure Plans, the Master Plans and the Local Plans.
- The Municipal Authority of Syvota, having responsibility for the implementation and financing of all public services in the area and for the implementation of the Local Town Plan.
- The Prefectural Authority of Thesprotia - Department of Planning, representing a sub-regional authority. Given that its geographical jurisdiction includes a significant

part of the coastal zone, its responsibilities include the supervision of large infrastructure projects of the area and the supervision of the Town Plans implemented in the settlements. Moreover, it includes the Board of Architectural Control, responsible for approving the architectural design of new buildings in protected areas.

- The National Tourism Organization (NTO) –Regional Service of Igoumenitsa. It is an organisation supervised by the Ministry of Development. Its main goal is the promotion of tourism in Greece. NTO implements the tourism policy adopted by the Government and coordinates the activities of all ministries and other public and private organisations responsible for servicing and promoting tourism. NTO also issues licenses to hotels and other types of tourism accommodation units, which are necessary for them to operate legally.
- The prefectural department of the Ministry of Agriculture - Directorate for the Development & Protection of Forests. It is responsible for the protection of forests and areas that are designated as “wooded”, as well as for the designation of such areas. It is also responsible for the supervision of construction in areas, which are environmentally protected and/or designated as forests or “wooded” and for the designation of shelters of wild life.
- The regional Ephorates of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities, Ephorates of Byzantine Monuments and Ephorates of Recent Monuments, which belong to the Ministry of Culture, with responsibility for the protection, preservation and designation of monuments and archeological sites.

A.4.2 NGOs

- The Association of Hotel Owners of Syvota
- The Association of Rented Rooms and Apartment owners of Syvota
- The Thesprotia Chamber of Commerce and Industry, representing all SMEs of its area. It encompasses a section of tourism, covering the activity of the tourism industry in the Prefecture.
- The Agricultural Cooperative of Syvota, representing all the inhabitants occupied in agricultural activities
- The Cultural Association of Syvota, which is responsible for the organisation of certain activities for the promotion of the cultural heritage of the area
- The Athletic Association of Syvota, which is responsible for the organisation of athletic activities and excursions

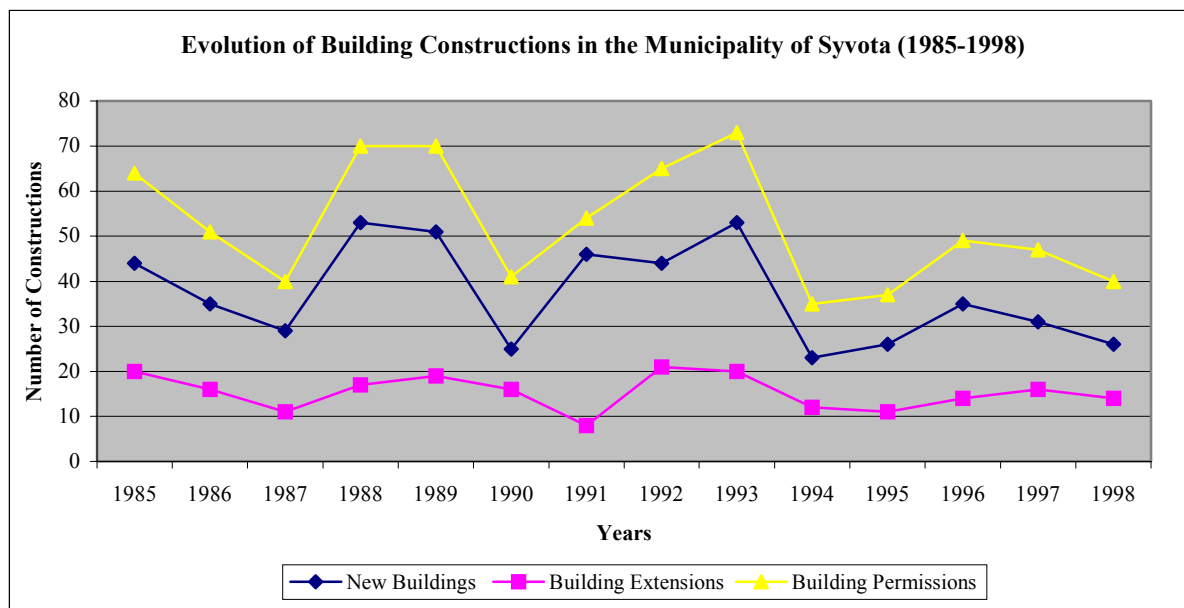
CHAPTER B. THE PLANNING STATUS OF THE AREA

B.1 The Structure of settlements

The settlement of Syvota initially consisted of a few huts, providing shelter to fishermen who used the bay for fishing. Gradually the village grew as a summer resort for the nearby towns, while a few houses and rooms were let to tourists, mostly Greek people from other parts of Epirus. The breakthrough came with the construction of a luxury hotel by the Club Méditerranée, later renamed Robinson Club. Syvota was “discovered” as a place of outstanding natural beauty, providing also opportunities for maritime sports. From the 1970s, the building of hotels and apartment blocks increased steadily, transforming Syvota to a tourist village, living mostly in the summer and deserted in the winter. However, lacking a Town Plan, the village was built in an arbitrary way, often without proper planning and building permissions been granted. The natural features of the landscape, and in particular the hill overlooking the bay from its south side, was thoroughly built up, replacing the greenery and rocks with facades of hotels and apartment blocks.

Today, only limited stretches of land have been left unbuilt within the official limits of the settlement, which were specified formally in 1988. However, in 1994 the official limits of the village were expanded significantly by the Town Plan, which was approved but not implemented. During the 1990s, several public projects, including pedestrian ways, squares, the construction of a promenade along the port etc, have created pleasant public spaces and have improved the appearance of the village. In 1992, the then Community Council of Syvota passed a decision to designate the area as "saturated" regarding new investment in hotels. This was followed by a regulation issued by the Ministry of Development which excluded hotels in Syvota, if they were below class A, from subsidies (such subsidies were, and still are, granted to new investment projects in Greece, to encourage development in the regions). Hotels are eligible to a construction grant of 15% of their investment cost.

New buildings over the past 15 years have been constantly added to Syvota, without dramatic peaks or troughs. The following diagram shows this process.



B.2 Position of settlements in the regional urban network

Syvota and the wider area of the Municipality, is mostly dependent on the towns of Igoumenitsa and Paramythia for services.

Igoumenitsa is a «second level» urban centre (i.e. a prefectural capital, the first level being defined by the regional capital) providing public facilities and services such as education, health, justice, etc., as well as a market place for local produce to the neighbouring municipalities of Filiates, Sagiada, Parapotamos, Syvota, Margariti and Perdika. Paramythia, on the other hand, is a provincial centre, which also offers significant public services in the form of administrative offices of central bodies.

B.3 The Town Plan

The Town Plan, according to the Greek legislation consists of two parts and is conducted accordingly in two phases. The first phase contains the Planning Study and the second phase the Application.

The Town Plan of Syvota began to be composed in 1991. Its first phase was approved by the local and prefectural authorities in 1994, and was subsequently published in the Official Journal of the Government (FEK). The Study delineated the areas for the extension of the village and set the terms and conditions for the suitability of building plots and building design and construction. However, the Town Plan was not implemented, because the Plan Application study did not go ahead. This happened

partly because of lack of funds and because the local community demanded further expansion of the village, through designating agricultural land as urban land and including it to the Plan.

Thus, following the approval of the first phase in 1994, public pressure towards the Community Council resulted to a decision to revise the 1994 Town Plan, in order to designate more areas for the expansion of the village. However, a new Planning Study was never officially commissioned, because the Local Council could not make the necessary funds available.

The new Municipal Authority of Syvota is now considering to abandon the new Planning Study and proceed, provided that resources are made available in the Prefectural budget, to the 1994 Plan Application Study, so that at least the approved Plan can be implemented.

Today, in the village of Syvota, the following Building Regulations are in force:

Building Plots	Eligible size:	300 m ² -2000m ²
Maximum allowed coverage	As a proportion of the plot	70%
Building Ratio (built area/plot area)	For the first 100m ²	1,60
	For the next 100m ²	0.80
	For the next 100m ²	0.60
	More than 300m ²	0.40
	Total built space	≤400m ²
	For Public Service Buildings > 300m ²	0.80
	For Tourism and other commercial uses > 300 m ²	0.60
	For plots over 4.000 m ²	0.40

The Town Plan of 1994 has proposed the following regulations for 3 Land Use Zones, including the existing settlement and the proposed areas for future expansion.

	Zone A General Housing	Zone B Exclusively Housing	Zone C Exclusively Housing
Minimum plot	500 m ²	1.000 m ²	1.000 m ²
Maximum coverage	50%	30%	30%
Minimum front	15 m.	20 m.	15 m
Building Ratio	0,8 in max area of 400 m ²	0,4 in max area of 400 m ²	0,4 in max area of 400 m ²
Maximum height	7,5 m. + Roof of max. 2 m	7,5 m. + Roof of max 2 m	7,5 m + Roof of max 2 m
Number of Floors	2	2	2

Source: Town Plan of Syvota, 1994.

Within Zone A, the following activities are allowed:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Housing➤ Hotels of less than 100 beds and hostels➤ Commercial Activities (shopping centres and super markets excluded)➤ Offices, Banks, Public Services➤ Education➤ Restaurants➤ Cafeterias	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Religious buildings➤ Social Amenities➤ Light Manufacturing➤ Petrol stations➤ Sports grounds➤ Parking Areas➤ Cultural facilities
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Within Zones B and C, the following activities are allowed:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Housing➤ Hostels of less than 20 beds➤ Commercial activities for everyday needs➤ Offices, Banks, Public Services➤ Primary and Secondary Education Buildings	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Religious buildings➤ Social facilities➤ Sports facilities➤ Cultural facilities
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The Village of Syvota



The beach of Bella Vraka



The beaches of Mega Tafros and Zavia

Chapter C. SWOT Analysis

Strengths

- Natural resources - beaches, landscape, monuments.
- Large stock of tourist accommodation – (majority of rooms and apartments in category A, majority of hotels in categories A+B, i.e. high class).
- Pleasant village environment.
- Sufficient and good quality catering facilities.
- Opportunities for recreation, especially sea sports and yachting.
- Relatively balanced economy. - Many local entrepreneurs involved in tourism are also involved in agriculture.

Opportunities

- Great improvements in access to Syvota are currently being carried out. (The port of Igoumenitsa, the Egnatia motorway and the Aktion channel tunnel.)
- The surrounding area provides opportunities for alternative forms of tourism.
- There is already an approved Town Plan, which is awaiting for its Implementation Study to be carried out.
- Funds have been allocated by the Greek Government through the ESF III for improvements to the water supply and the waste disposal.

Weaknesses

- Unplanned development of the village.
- Places of natural beauty such as the hills over the bay of Syvota have been built up and lost their charm.
- Most tourist beds are located in rooms and apartments suitable for medium to low income tourists.
- There is a parking problem in the village.
- Existing water and sewage networks are insufficient.
- The beaches near the village are over-crowded at the height of the tourist season.
- The tourist season is very short.
- Existing facilities for recreation are insufficient.
- No plans to develop additional attractions for tourists.

Threats

- The unplanned expansion of the village threatens the natural beauty of the environment and the quality of life for local residents.
- The short tourist season makes some tourist businesses non-viable and inhibits improvements in their services.
- Lack of planning control may lead to further deterioration of the bay of Syvota.
- Existing tourist services do not offer sufficient variety to attract tourists for longer periods. There is very little diversification of the tourism product of the area.
- The quality of service is low partly because of the proliferation of family businesses not employing trained personnel. This contributes to tourists staying for shorter periods in the village. It also tends to attract a less demanding clientele, with low spending capacity, low education levels and poor awareness of environmental protection.

CHAPTER D. CONFLICT ANALYSIS – SYVOTA

There are four areas of conflict that are pivotal to the development of Syvota as a tourist resort. The first focuses on its transformation from an unspoilt fishing harbour to a town that developed haphazardly, as a result of its attractive location. There is a conflict between development and the maintenance of natural beauty. The second relates to the prevalence of small tourist units, unsuitable for package holidays that could be more profitable. Here the conflict arises between a more traditional pattern of family businesses and the need for larger scale operations. The third conflict concerns the deterioration of the environment because of the unplanned development of the tourist industry. Finally, there are some socio-economic implications stemming from the tourist development that could be harmful.

1. Haphazard development

- The scenic village of Syvota has attracted many tourists, both Greek and foreign, over the last twenty years. In response to the demand for accommodation, local entrepreneurs built hotels and rooms to let, in an unplanned way that has damaged the natural beauty of the area.
- The Local Authority, which has been keen on planning to protect the environment, has approved a local plan. However, objections have been raised to this plan by local stakeholders, who argued for further expansion of the village through inclusion of surrounding agricultural areas in the Plan. These arguments, which favoured the expansion of tourism-related uses, have held back the implementation of the town plan for about 8 years. Lack of funds, coupled with the low priority given to the implementation of the town plan by the local Council, because of the conflict in the local community regarding expansion, has encouraged further haphazard development.
- An increase in both Greek and foreign tourists in the area during the summer months has resulted in overcrowding of public spaces, which have nearly reached their carrying capacity. This is mostly evident in the local beaches. As a result, some of the local amenities, including the nearest beaches, are becoming unattractive to the tourists.

2. Small scale operations

- The majority of tourist beds are in small units of rented rooms. This creates difficulties in working through tour operators that would result in a longer and more profitable tourist season.
- The tourist season is very short with hotel and room owners' relying on the loyalty of independent customers.
- Tourist activities have concentrated on swimming and sailing, while other attractions such as hiking and sight seeing, that require some organising, are not sufficiently exploited.
- The decision of the Community Council of Syvota in 1992 to remove the incentives for low-class hotel construction in Syvota (by discontinuing the grant provided to new hotel investments through the Development Law) and the subsequent decision of the NTO in 1994 to refuse a licence of operation to new rooms/apartment units, had a twin aim: to discourage the further expansion of small accommodation units which cannot reach the standards of quality tourism and cannot compete in the international market; and to encourage larger units of high quality. This created conflict in the local community which could not afford the latter and foresaw the influx of non-endogenous investments to the area.

3. Environmental deterioration

- The population of Syvota is three times larger in the tourist season reaching more than 10,000 inhabitants including holiday-home owners, tourists and locals. This places enormous pressure on the local services.
- Syvota is serviced by an old sewage system that causes many problems to the inhabitants and the environment.
- There is a serious water shortage during the summer months. This is considered a serious threat to the continuation of Syvota as a tourist resort.
- There is a serious parking problem in the town due to the lack of parking places.
- There is noise pollution.
- The streets and beaches do not get properly cleaned.
- Non-implementation of the town plan has deprived the village of open recreation spaces, playgrounds for children, sports facilities and green areas of public use.

4. Socio-economic implications

- There has been a movement of people away from the mountain areas into the coastal villages reflecting the employment opportunities created by tourism. Mountain villages are depopulating.
- Young people often give up agricultural activities and move to urban centres to work in the tourist industry. This may unbalance the current distribution of employment in the economic sectors.
- There are no health services in Syvota.

In conclusion, it seems that Syvota could benefit more from tourism if the town provided a higher standard of services and a wider variety of attractions to tourists that would result to longer stay in the village. If, on the other hand, the current trends continue, the town may cease to be attractive to visitors altogether.

MAPS OF LAND USES

The following maps illustrate the land uses in Parga, following the site-inspection conducted by the three-member team of the Regional Support Unit in order to record the various land uses identified in the area.

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