



# **AGROTOURISM IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF XANTHI**

## **STUDY OF THE CURRENT STATUS**

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**XANTHI, JAN 14**

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ANNEXES

AnnexA: Questionnaire for accommodation enterpreneurs

Annex B: Filled in questionnaires for accommodation enterpreneurs

Annex C: Questionnaire for entrepreneurs of other sectors (outside accommodation)

Annex D: Filled in questionnaires for entrepreneurs of other sectors (outside accommodation)

Annex E: Questionnaire for visitors / tourists

<b>SUMMARY</b>
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The study of the current status in agrotourism sector was conducted and aims at identifying the present situation in the region of Xanthi and at the same time proposing various means to enhance the tourism product and create a unique tourism product.

The present study is divided into five main chapters which display and analyse the current situation in the region each one from a different scope while at the end the means of enhancing agrotourism are proposed.

The first main part covers the methodology followed for the present study and presents both the research methods employed (which in the present case are questionnaires) and the data that were analysed. The questionnaires used for the study of the current status study were three and were addressed to three different types of respondents.

Hence, the next three main chapters following the methodology are dedicated in the analysis of the questionnaires results gathered. The first of the three chapters mentioned above involves the analysis of the questionnaire results for accommodation entrepreneurs while the second covers the questionnaire results for entrepreneurs of other sectors (outside accommodation) and the third questionnaire results for visitors / tourists are examined.

The last part of the study is covered by the SWOT analysis which examines the strengths and weaknesses while it identifies potential opportunities and threats.

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Tourism was always regarded as the “heavy industry” of Greece. Hence, the development of an alternative tourism product of high quality and standards adapted to those internationally employed will be of major importance for the flourishing of the tourism sector and the enhancement of entrepreneurship which will lead to the socioeconomic development of the region in the midst of the financial crisis that turbulences most of the Southern European countries.

For the above mentioned reasons, the Municipality of Xanthi decided to exploit the initiative given by EU funding instruments and submit as Lead Partner the project proposal called “Quality Certification System in Agrotourism” (CerTour) joining forces with other organisations from the Black Sea region.

The present study of current status was conducted in the framework of Activity 1.1 of the above mentioned project which is funded by the Joint Operational programme “Black Sea Basin 2007-2013”.

Main aim to the study is to examine the current situation related to agrotourism and the services provided in the region of Xanthi. Furthermore, it investigates the existence of official and unofficial standards along with their applicability and effectiveness in cases where those kinds of standards exist.

The specifications for this study were set by Partner 1 of the project, “Black Sea Economic Centre” (Bulgaria) who also designed the questionnaire that was used for information gathering. In order to further facilitate the information gathering and increase the validity of the research results, the study team of the Municipality of Xanthi decided to design a third questionnaire addressing to entrepreneurs of other sectors – outside accommodation- and public bodies related to tourism.

The study of the current status in agrotourism sector in the region of Xanthi will be a useful tool which together with the studies developed by the other partners will form the basis for the implementation of the Gap Analysis (Activity 1.3).

## **2. METHODOLOGY**

### **2.1 GENERAL**

The development of the present study was based on information gathered from the following sources:

- Web- bibliography concerning the current status of agrotourism in Xanthi
- Site visits to selected agrotourism accommodations in the region and discussions with entrepreneurs of agrotourism sector
- Discussions with representatives of other enterprises related to the tourism product of the region
- 3 questionnaires with different content which were completed by respondents coming from different target groups, more precisely:
  - Questionnaire addressing to entrepreneurs who own accommodation facilities in the region of the Municipality of Xanthi
  - Questionnaire addressing to entrepreneurs operating in other business sectors and to public sector bodies related to tourism
  - Questionnaire addressing to visitors/tourists in the region

The questionnaires were completed either directly by the respondents or by members of the team that developed the study who received the answers via telephone or skype. The content of the questionnaires is described below.

### **2.2 QUESTIONNAIRE FOR ACCOMMODATION ENTREPRENEURS**

The content of the questionnaires addressing to entrepreneurs who own agrotourism accommodation was derived from the Specifications for the present study, which were designed by the “Black Sea Economic Centre” in the framework of the CerTour project, and involves the following sections:

- Data related to the type, the capacity and the category of the accommodation
- Data related to the human resources of the accommodation (general education, training on tourism, foreign language fluency)
- Data related to the promotion of the accommodation and the provision of information to the public
- Data related to the implementation of quality systems or quality standards

- List of services offered by the accommodation
- Aims of the accommodation business and problems faced in its operation which are related to external factors

The format of the questionnaire is attached to Annex A of the present study

Taking into consideration that the study specifications stipulated the completion of 20 such questionnaires, 21 questionnaires were completed and gathered which are attached in Annex B

### **2.3 QUESTIONNAIRE FOR ENTREPRENEURS OF OTHER SECTORS (OUTSIDE ACCOMMODATION)**

The content of the questionnaire addressing to entrepreneurs of other sectors – outside accommodation – and public bodies related to tourism was not identified in the specification study of the "Black Sea Economic Centre". Therefore, it was designed by the team that developed the present study and includes:

- Information concerning the type of the organization / enterprise that the respondent represents
- Services offered by the organisation / enterprise
- Estimation concerning the satisfaction level of the visitors / tourists on the tourism product of the region and more precisely:
  - the completeness of the services offered
  - their quality
  - the speed of service to visitors / tourists/ clients
  - the effectiveness of the service (namely the satisfaction of the customers' needs)

Especially for the third question of the questionnaire, the respondents were asked to evaluate the satisfaction degree of the visitors / tourists, not only from their business but from the tourism product of the region in general and namely the services that are related to those that their own business offers. The aim of this question is to demonstrate the perception of whether the region meets the visitors' needs and to compare this perception with the real degree of customer satisfaction

The following chart demonstrates the number of questionnaires completed classified according to the type of organization / enterprise compared to the number that it was stipulated in the specification study of the "Black Sea Economic Centre"

Type of enterprise / organisation	Estimated number of questionnaires	Total number of completed questionnaires
1. Operators	4-8	2
2. Local Authorities – Development Agencies	8-16	8
3. Transportation businesses	8-16	8
4. Accommodation businesses	8-16	(βλ. No 7)
5. Catering businesses	4-8	16
6. Cafe - Bars - Pubs	0	8
7. Entrepreneurs in the accommodation sector (*)	20	21
8. Tourist agencies	8-16	8
9. Guide services	4-8	4
10. Tourist Information Centres	4-8	4
11. Retail shop services	0	12
12. Services supporting tourism businesses	0	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>60-100</b>	<b>72</b>

(\*) In this category 21 questionnaires for accommodation enterprises were completed (see. 2.2)

Obviously the specifications set by the "Black Sea Economic Centre" were adapted to the local conditions of the study. Indicatively, it is mentioned that it was regarded necessary to complete more questionnaires than those stipulated for the businesses operating in the catering sector and to further add the business categories "Café-Bars – Pubs", "Commercial businesses for tourist products" and "Services for the support of tourism enterprises"

The format of the questionnaire is attached to Annex C of the present study while the completed questionnaires to Annex D

## 2.4 QUESTIONNAIRE FOR VISITORS / TOURISTS

The content of the questionnaire for visitors / tourists of the region was designed by the "Black Sea Economic Centre" and includes the following question sections:

- Personal information of the respondent (country of origin, age, sex and occupation)



- The reasons why the respondent chose this particular tourism destination
- The source of information concerning the destination, the way of booking and the means of travelling
- The activities in which the respondent was involved during their stay (attractions visited, activities in which the respondent participated and the events attended). This section involves closed multiple choice questions and open questions
- The degree of satisfaction concerning the plan of the trip, the accommodation, the offered services and the first impression upon the arrival. At this point the respondent is asked to also express his/her expectations
- The overall assessment of the advantages (strengths) and disadvantages (points for improvement) of the region, the total evaluation and the intention to re-visit this particular destination or the intention to recommend it to this family and friends

The format of the questionnaire is attached to Annex E of the present study

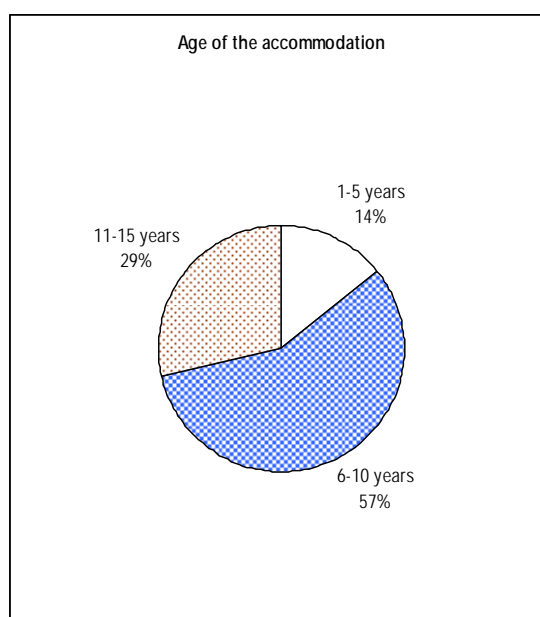
Taking into consideration the specification study had stipulated 40-80 completed questionnaires of this type, a total of 54 questionnaires were completed which are attached to Annex of the study of visitors / customers needs and expectation and are deliverable of Activity which form the project's work deliverable. (Activity 1.2 of the project "Quality Certification System in Agrotourism")

### 3. QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS FOR ACCOMMODATION ENTREPRENEURS

#### 3.1 PROFILE OF THE ACCOMMODATION

##### Age of the accommodation

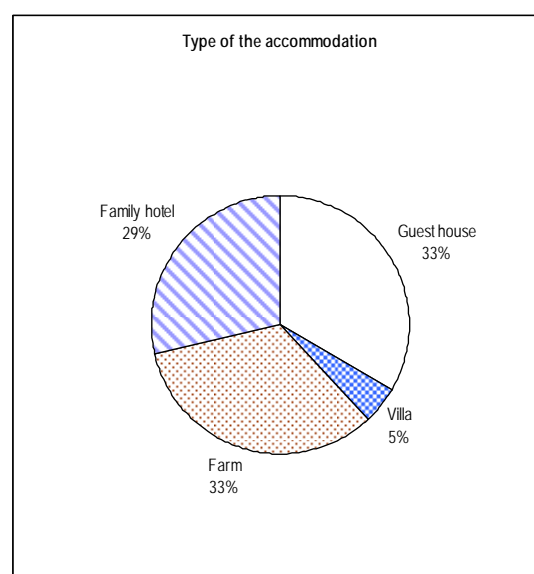
The age of the accommodation that completed the questionnaire is demonstrated in the diagram. However, the region has some older accommodations but the vast majority is no older than 15 years. This is a result of the implementation of the EU programme “Leader” which in different forms funded agrotourism accommodations in the region



##### Type of the accommodation

The accommodations participating in the research were by type:

- Guest houses: 7
- Villas: 1
- Farms: 7
- Family hotels: 6

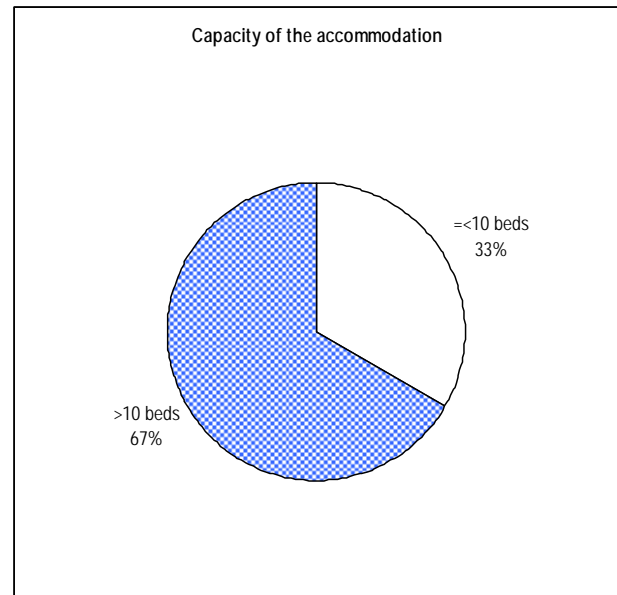


### Capacity of the accommodation

The categories of accommodation that participated in the research by their capacity is as following:

- =< 10 beds: 7
- > 10 beds: 14

In reality, the region has a higher percentage of accommodations with capacity over 10 beds than the one that appears in the responses of the questionnaire but they did not participate in the research

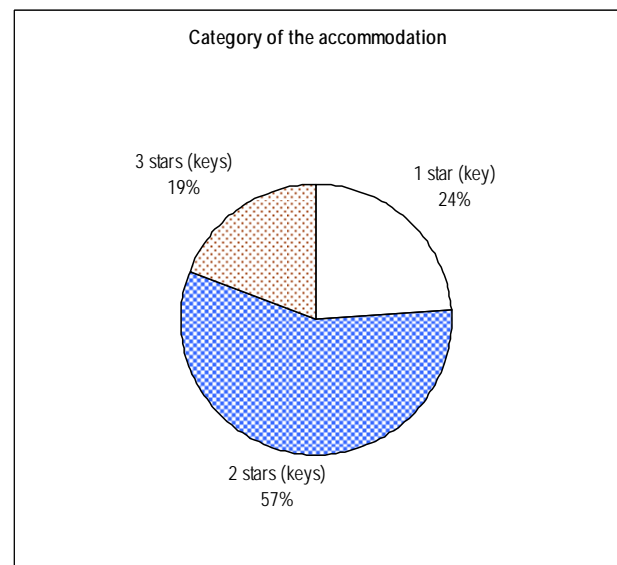


### Category of the accommodation

The categories of accommodations are expressed in stars or, in the case of rooms to let, in keys. The accommodations that participated in the research are classified in the following categories:

- 1 star (or key): 5
- 2 stars (or key): 12
- 3 stars (or key): 14

This allocation is representative for accommodations of the region even though there is a small number of accommodation of greater category



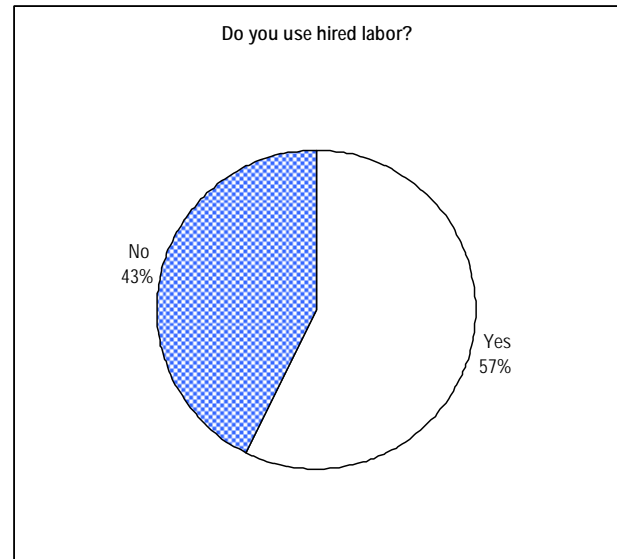
## 3.2 HUMAN RESOURCES

### Employment of staff

The respondents answered whether their business employs staff – even seasonal – outside their family members. The answers display the following distribution:

- Employment of staff - Yes: 12
- Employment of staff - No: 9

It should be noted that the staff is mainly employed on a part-time or seasonal basis

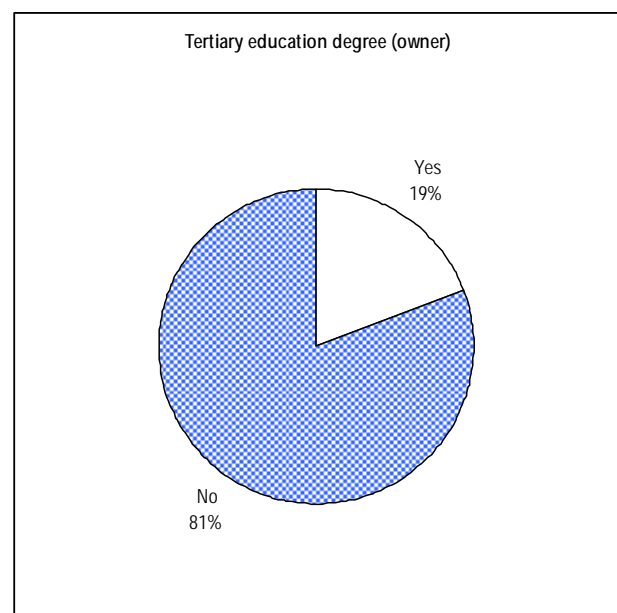


### Owner's educational level

In the question whether the owner of the accommodation (or its manager) is a higher education graduate, the responses are distributed as follows:

- Yes: 4
- No: 17

It should be stressed that the percentage of higher education graduates among owners/managers of accommodation is very low

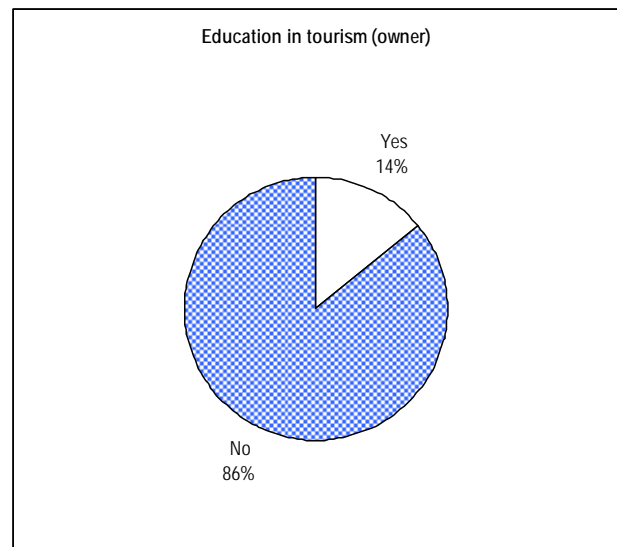


### Education of the owners in tourism

In the question whether the owner of the accommodation (or its manager) is educated in the field of tourism, the answers are distributed as follows:

- Yes: 3
- No: 18

It should be stressed that the percentage among owners / managers of the accommodation with education in the field of tourism is very low

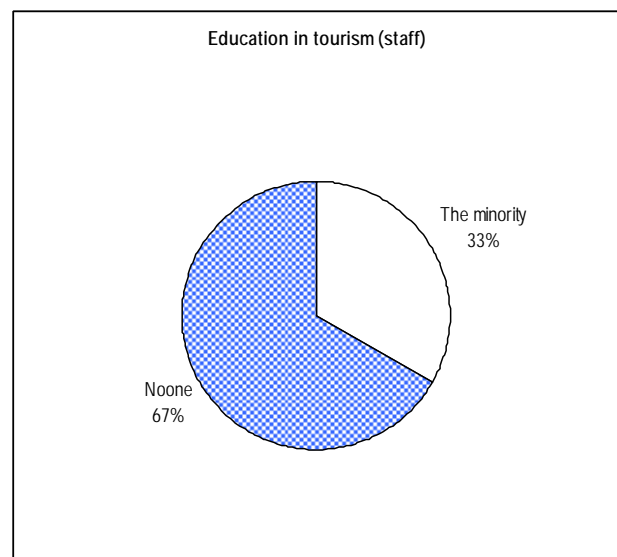


### Education of the staff in tourism

In the question whether the employees of the accommodation (when the accommodation has staff) are educated in the field of tourism, the answers are distributed as follows:

- All: 0
- The majority: 0
- The minority: 4
- None: 8

The substantial lack of education of the employees in the field of tourism should be stressed

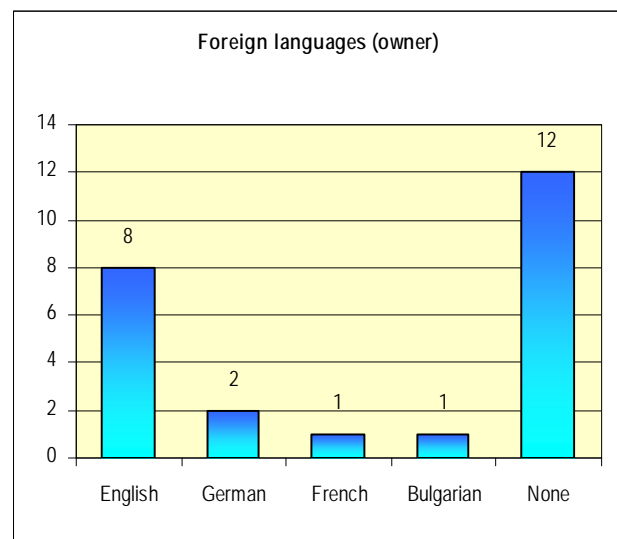


### Foreign languages (owner)

The participants in the research were asked if and which languages are used in the accommodation either by the owner or by the members of his/her family. The responses were:

- English: in 8 accommodations
- German: in 2 accommodations
- French: in 1 accommodation
- Bulgarian: in 1 accommodation

In 12 accommodations the owners don't speak any foreign language

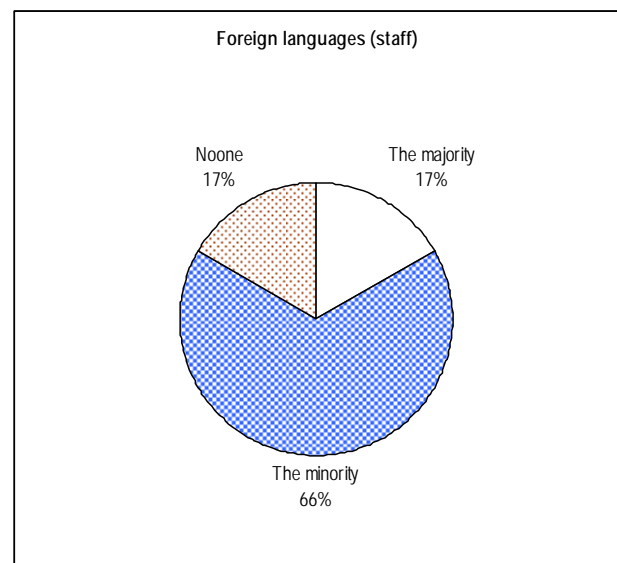


### Foreign languages (staff)

The participants in the research were asked whether their staff (if there is) knows foreign languages. The responses were:

- All: σε κανένα κατάλυμα
- The majority: in 2 accommodations
- The minority: in 8 accommodations
- None: in none accommodation

Businesses that employ 1 employee (not always the same due to the seasonal nature of the business) who knows occasionally a foreign language were registered in the category "The minority"

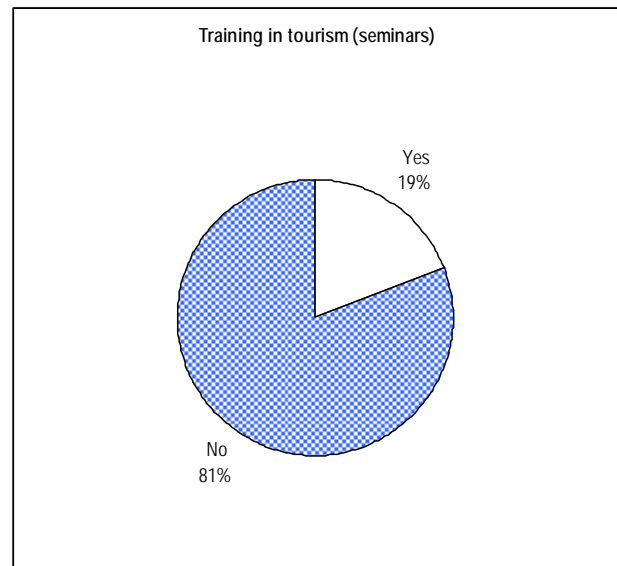


### Training in tourism

The question whether the entrepreneurs (owners or managers) of the accommodation are trained in the field of tourism (seminars) received the following answers:

- Yes: 4
- No: 17

The low level of entrepreneurs who are trained is stressed

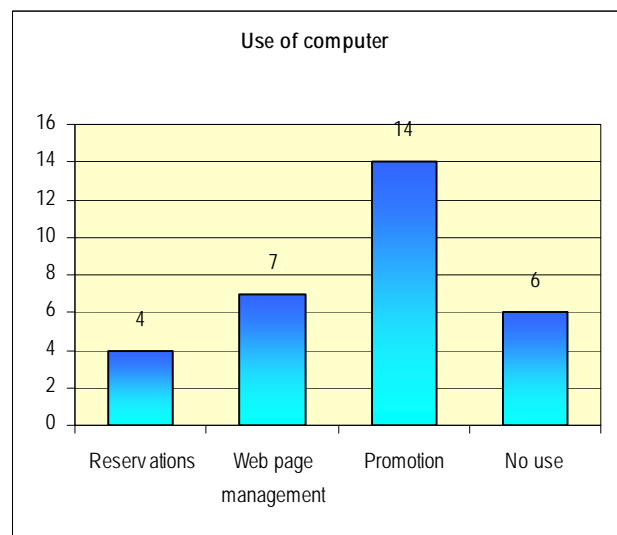


## 3.3 PROMOTION AND INFORMATION

### Use of computer

In the question of whether and for what reason the businesses use a computer, the answers were:

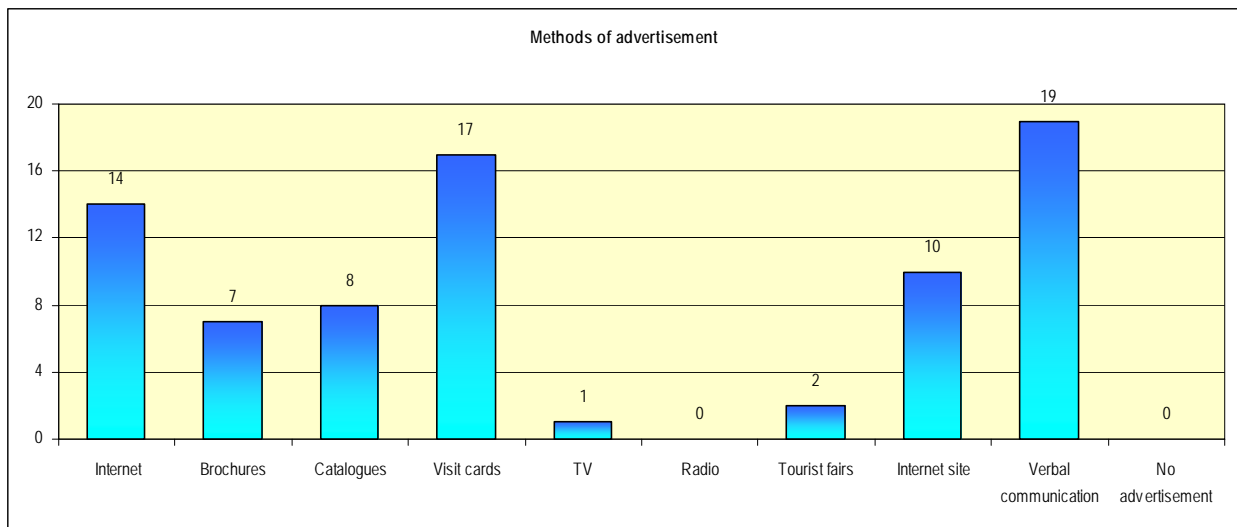
- For reservations: 4
- For webpage management: 7
- For promotion of the business: 14
- No use: 6



### Methods of advertisement

The advertisement of the accommodation, according to the responses in the respective question, is done with a combination of various methods. The number of accommodations in the sample that use these methods is:

- Via Internet: 14
- Via brochures: 7
- Via tourist catalogue: 8
- Via visit cards: 17
- Via television: 1
- Via radio: 0
- Via tourist events/ expos: 2
- Via website: 10
- Via verbal communication: 19
- No advertisement: 0



### Expansion of the tourism market

In the question of which way the businesses use to expand their tourism market, the answer from 13 businesses is that this is accomplished via Internet. None of the businesses stated the use of tourist catalogue or cooperation with marketing business while 8 businesses gave no answer on whether they investigate the expansion of the market



### Use of centres offering tourist information services

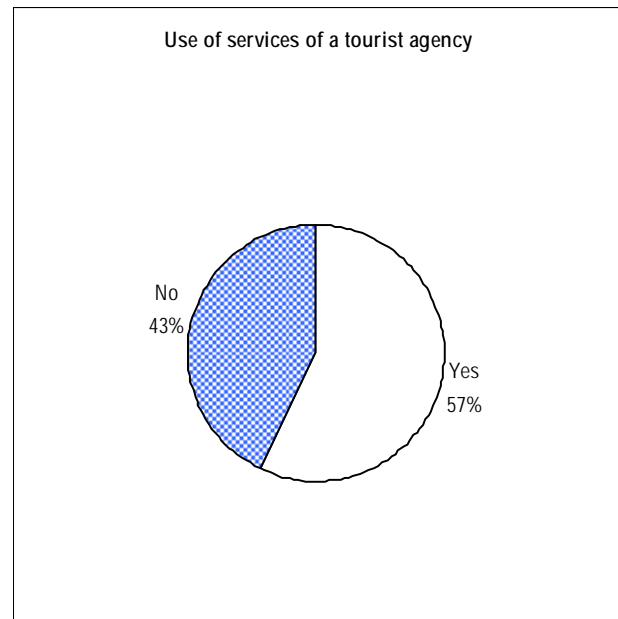
None of the participating businesses answered that they use services offered by centres of tourist information

### Use of services of a tourist agency

The participants in the research were asked whether they use the services of a tourist agency. The answers were:

- Yes: 12
- No: 9

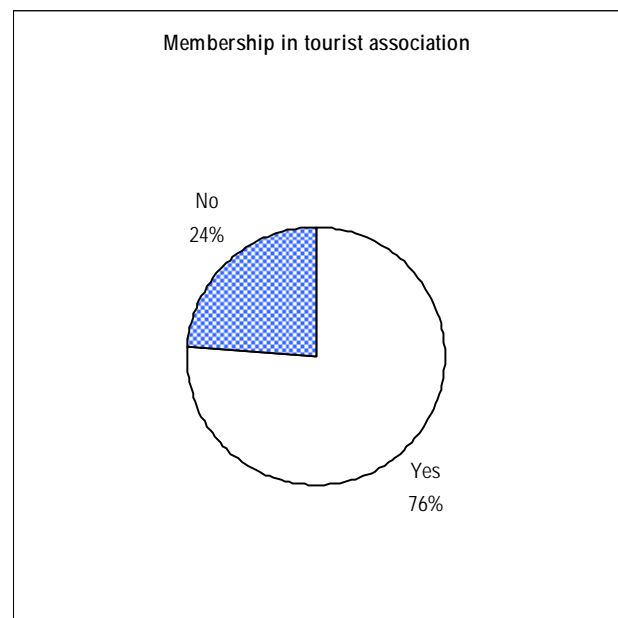
It is noted that most of the businesses even though that they are classified as small enterprises, they use the services of a tourist agency obviously in order to attract clients



### Membership in tourist association

The participants in the research were asked whether they participate individually or as businesses in tourist associations, outside those that it is obligatory to participate (eg. chambers). The answers were:

- Yes: 16
- No: 5



### 3.4 QUALITY RELATED ISSUES

#### Quality certifications and implementation of standards and specification

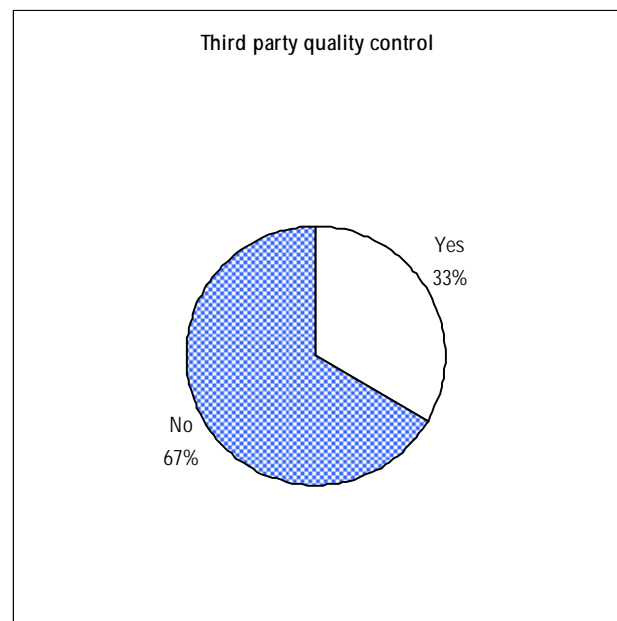
From the businesses that participated in the research, only one has quality certification and implements quality standards or specifications

#### Third party quality control

The 21 businesses participating in the research, in the question of whether they experience a third party quality control in the past, answered

- Yes: 7
- No: 14

It is clarified that the control is performed by the Hellenic Tourism Organisation in order to identify whether the businesses meet the criteria stipulated by the national legal and regulatory framework (and in this sense it is quality control)



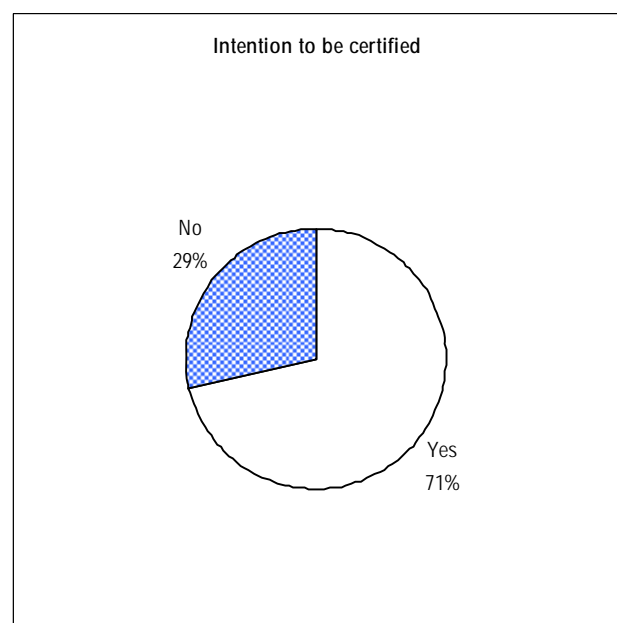
#### Intention to be certified

The respondents were asked to express their intention to have their business certified or not.

The answers were:

- Yes: 15
- No: 6

It is clarified that almost all of the participants who gave a positive response were not informed and asked for more and detailed information in order to determine their final decision. However, it seems that they are convinced of the benefits of the certification.

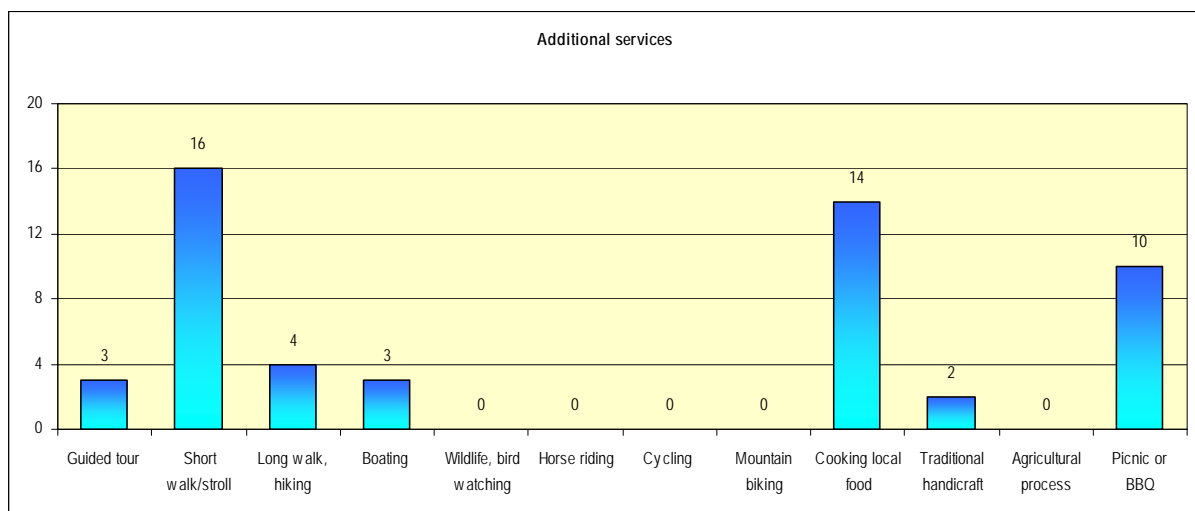


### 3.5 ADDITIONAL SERVICES PROVIDED

The additional services offered by the accommodation businesses of the region according to the responses of the participants in the research are:

- Guided tour: 3 accommodations
- Short walk/stroll: 16 accommodations
- Long walk/hiking: 4 accommodations
- Boating: 3 accommodations
- Wildlife/ bird watching: 0 accommodations
- Horse riding: 0 accommodations
- Cycling: 0 accommodations
- Mountain biking: 0 accommodations
- Cooking local food: 14 accommodations
- Traditional handicraft: 2 accommodations
- Agricultural process: 0 accommodations
- Picnic/Barbeque: 10 accommodations

As it is known among the study team, in the region the additional services that appear to have zero value in the results are offered, but this services is not offered by the businesses that participated in the research

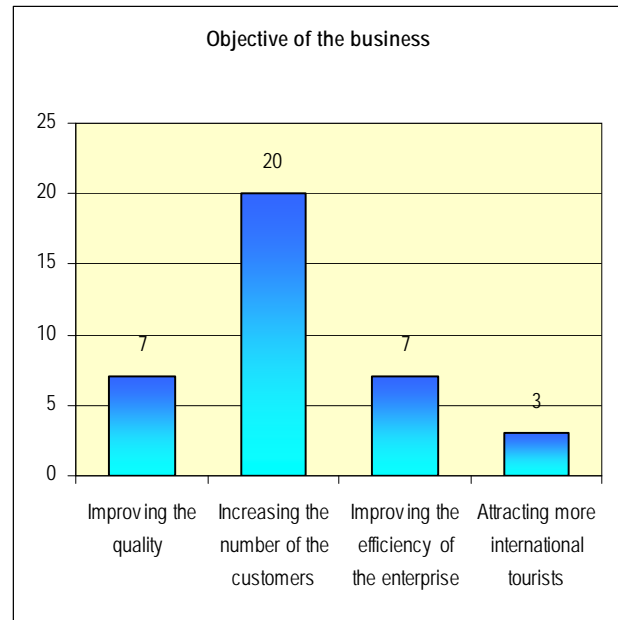


### 3.6 OBJECTIVES AND PROBLEMS OF THE BUSINESSES

#### Objective of the business

The entrepreneurs that participated in the research were asked to name the main strategic objectives of their businesses for the upcoming period. The answers were:

- Improving the quality: 7
- Increasing the number of the customers: 20
- Improving the efficiency of the enterprise: 7
- Attracting more international tourists: 3

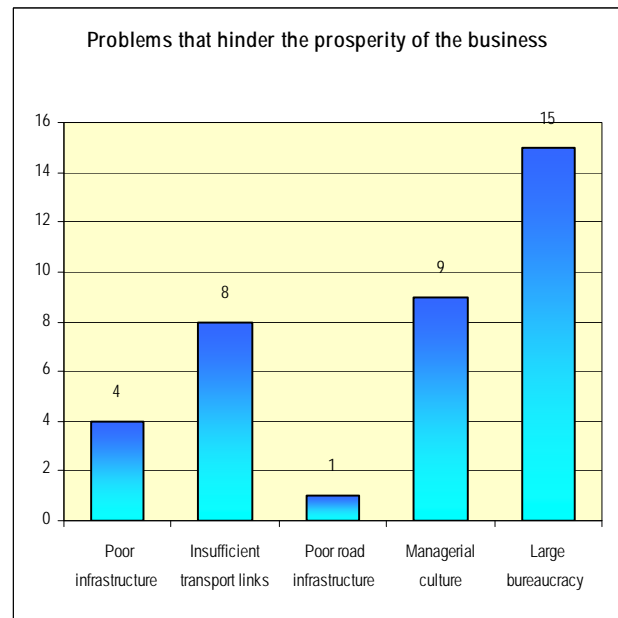


#### Problems of the business

In the question of which are the problems that hinder the prosperity of the business the answers were:

- Poor infrastructure in the region: 4
- Insufficient transport links: 8
- Poor road infrastructure: 1
- Lack of managerial culture: 9
- Large bureaucracy in procedures: 15

Other problems that were mentioned but are not included in the options of the questionnaire were the insufficient access to funding, the financial crisis of the country and the phenomena of corruption



## 4. RESULTS OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE OF ENTREPRENEURS OUTSIDE THE ACCOMMODATION SECTOR

### 4.1 GENERAL

The overall results of the questionnaires received from tourism entrepreneurs outside accommodation are displayed in the following charts:

TYPE OF ORGANISATION	NUMBER OF QUESTIONNAIRES
1. Agency of tourism interest or content	2
2. Municipality / Development Agency	8
3. Transportation business	8
4. Catering business	16
5. Cafe - bar - pub	8
6. Tourist agency	8
7. Agency providing tourist information	4
8. Guide services	4
9. Retail shop	12
10. Service supporting tourism businesses	2

SERVICES PROVIDED	SERVICES PROVIDERS
1. Provision of tourism information	12
2. Promotion of tourism product	7
3. Transportation	8
4. Catering services	19
5. Entertainment services	15
6. Services of tourist agencies	7
7. Tourist guides	6
8. Retail shop services	12
9. Service supporting tourism businesses	8

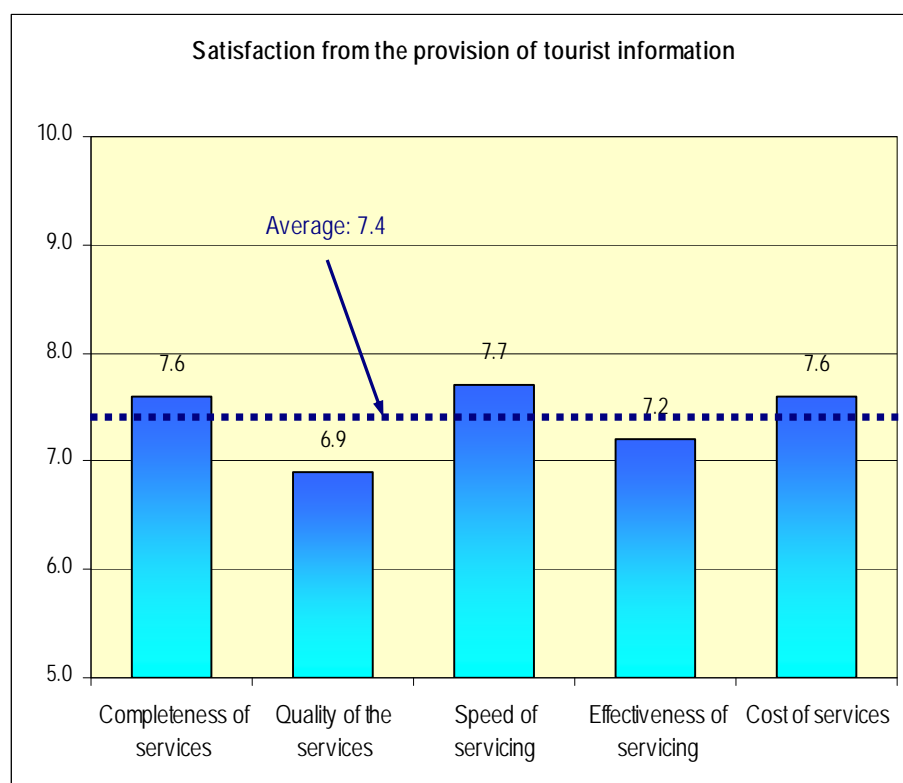
LEVEL OF CUSTOMERS SATISFACTION <sup>(*)</sup>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
From the adequacy of the services			1	2	6	12	27	16	23	7
From the quality of the services				6	13	9	18	25	15	8
From the speed of servicing <sup>(**)</sup>			1	5	5	13	8	29	25	6
From the effectiveness of servicing				3	5	21	12	29	23	1
From the cost of services			1	10	4	14	19	27	16	3

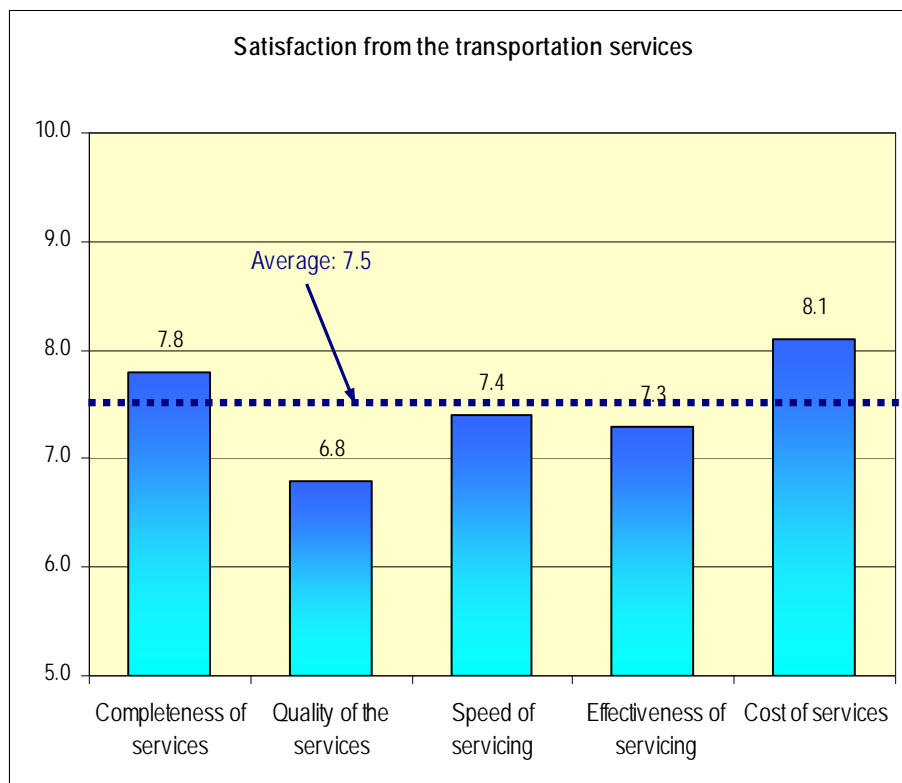
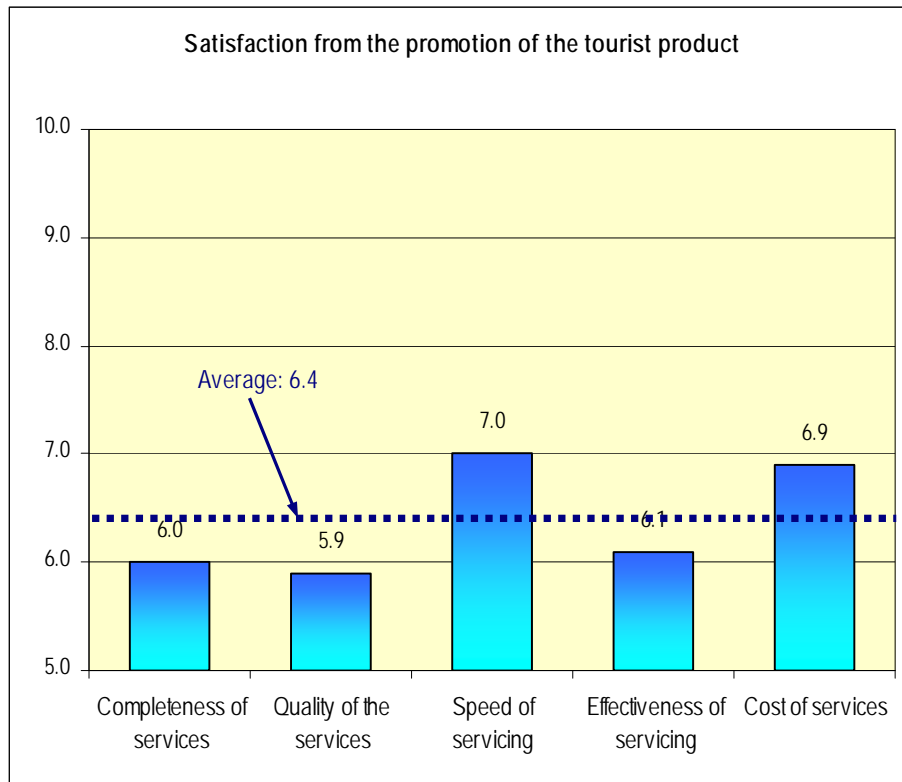
(\*) Number of responses

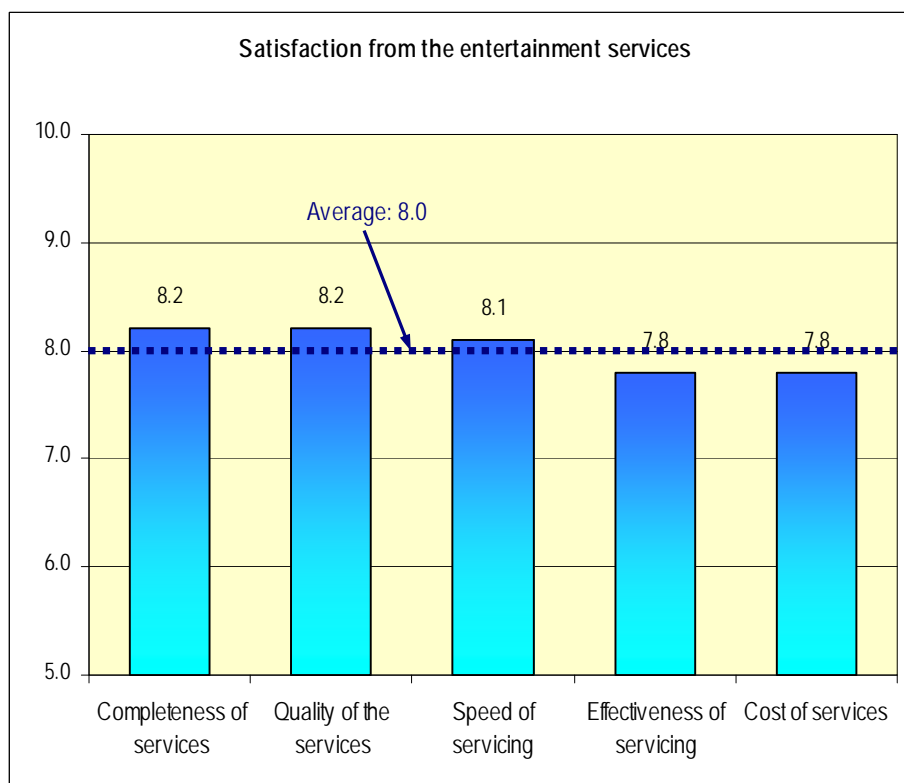
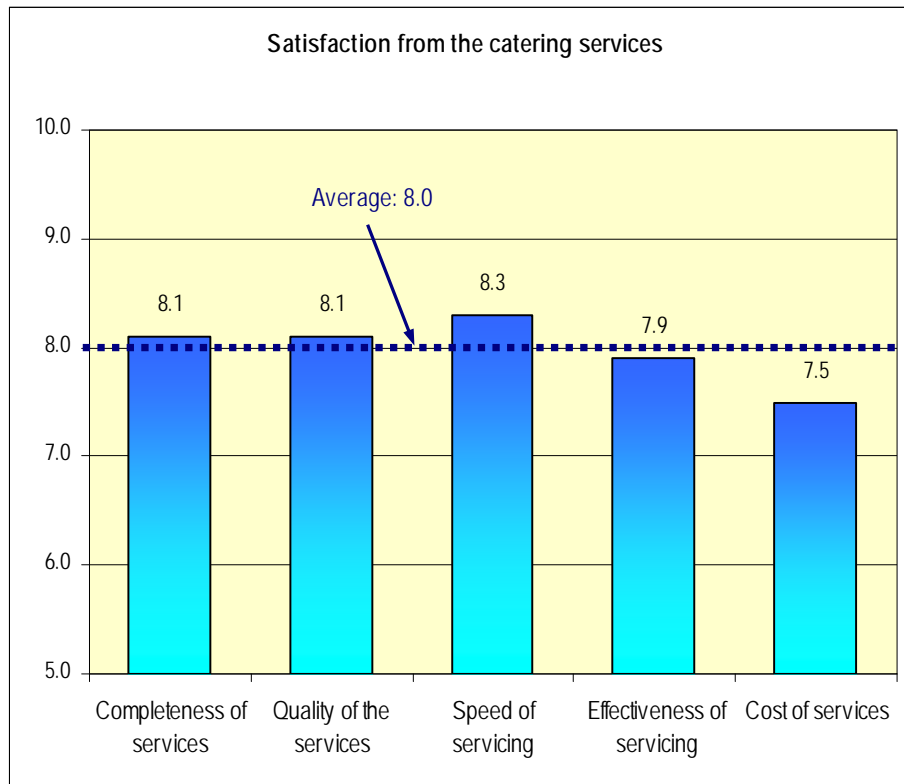
(\*\*) In two questionnaires the particular criterion of satisfaction was not rated

## 4.2 ESTIMATED LEVEL OF SATISFACTION PER TYPE OF SERVICES

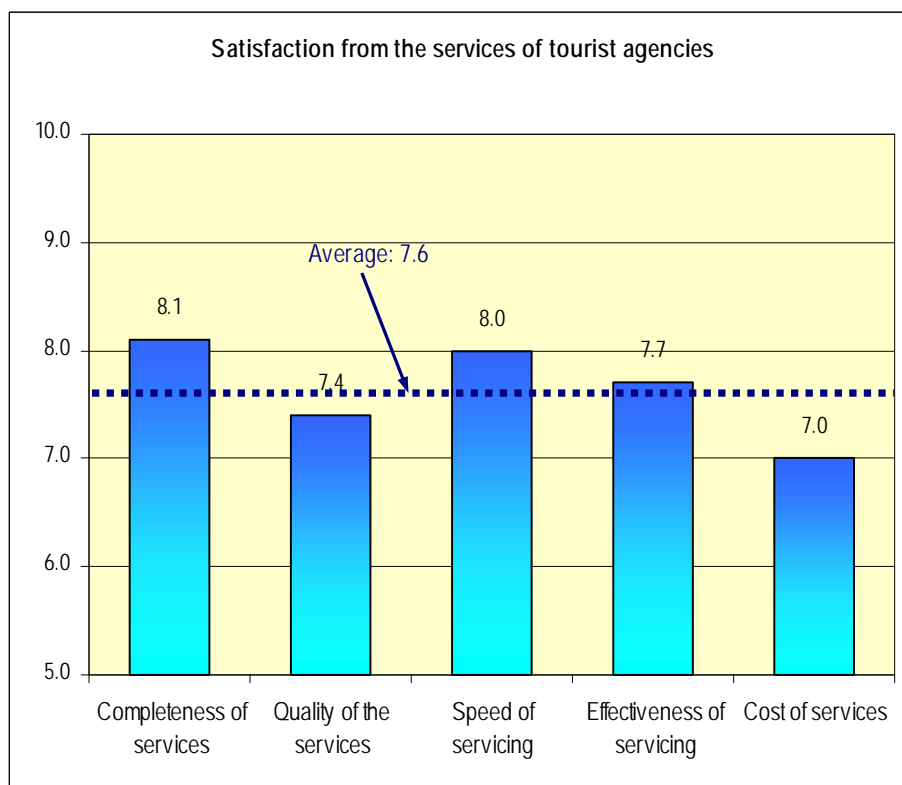
For each type of service, the estimated level of satisfaction per satisfaction factor is demonstrated in the following charts:

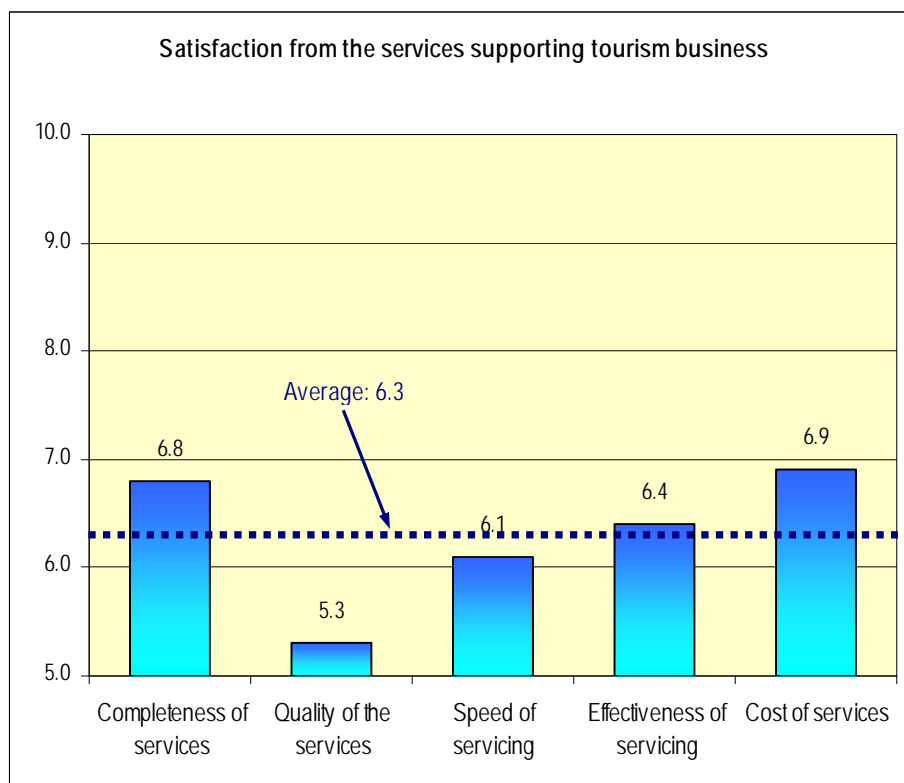
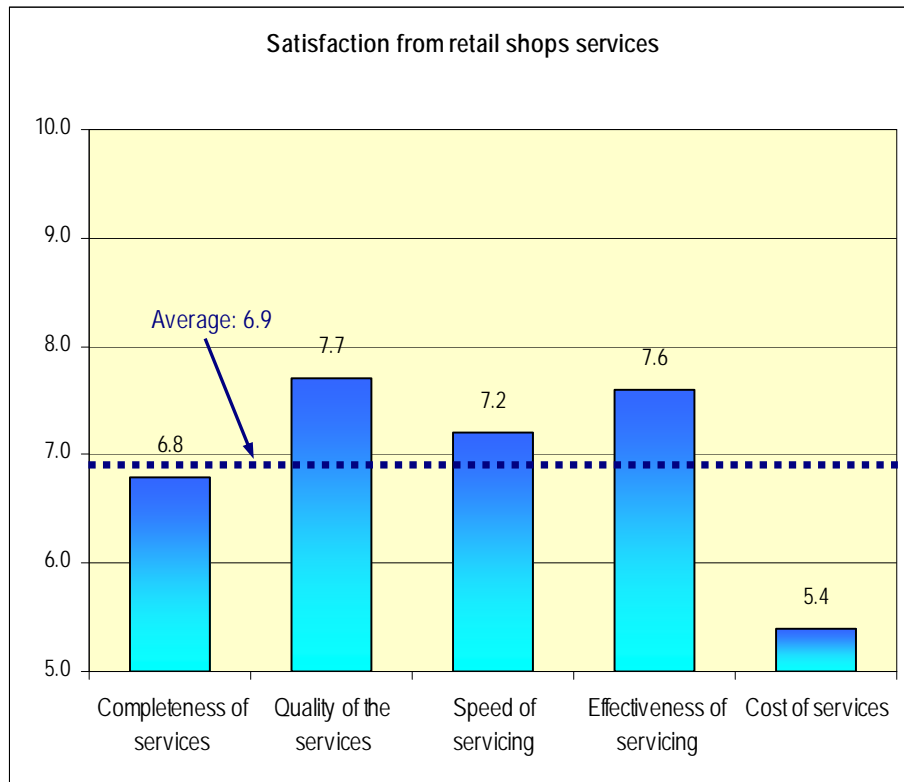




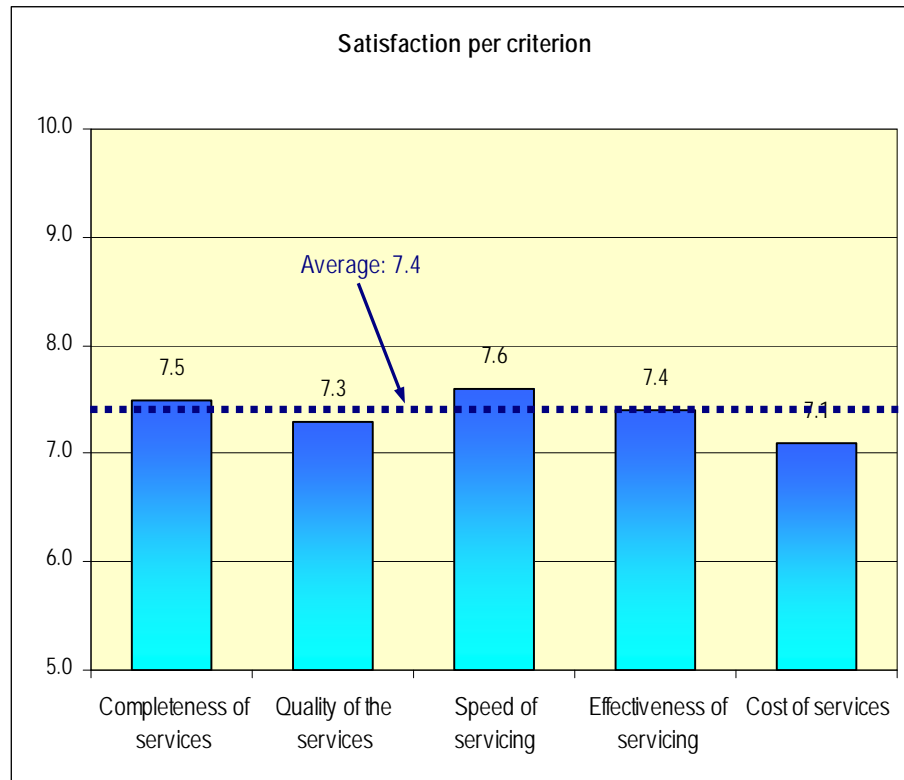




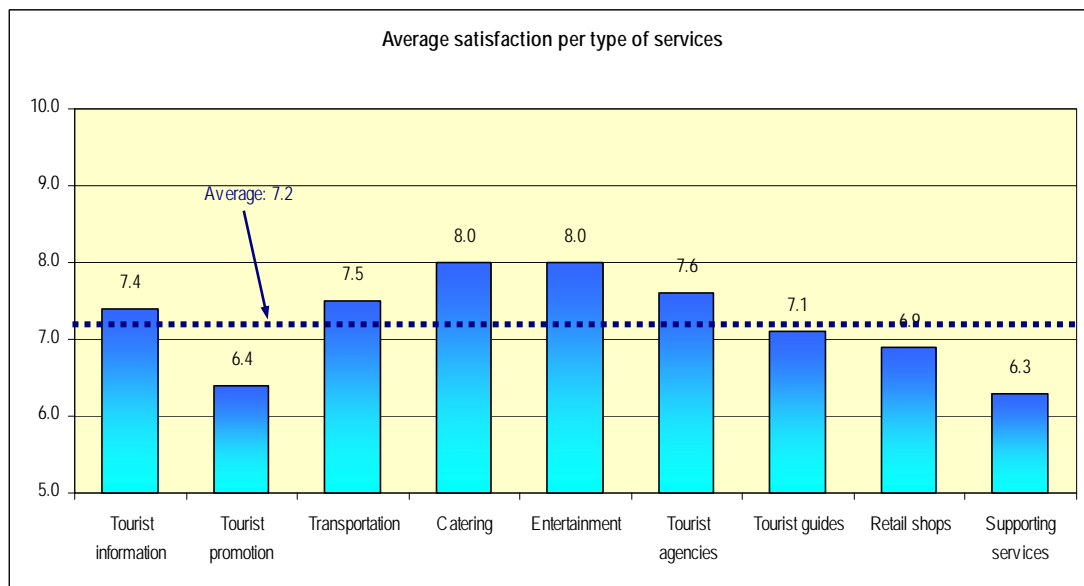




The overall estimated level of satisfaction per criterion is shown in the following chart:



The overall estimated level of satisfaction per type of services and the overall average can be shown in the following chart:



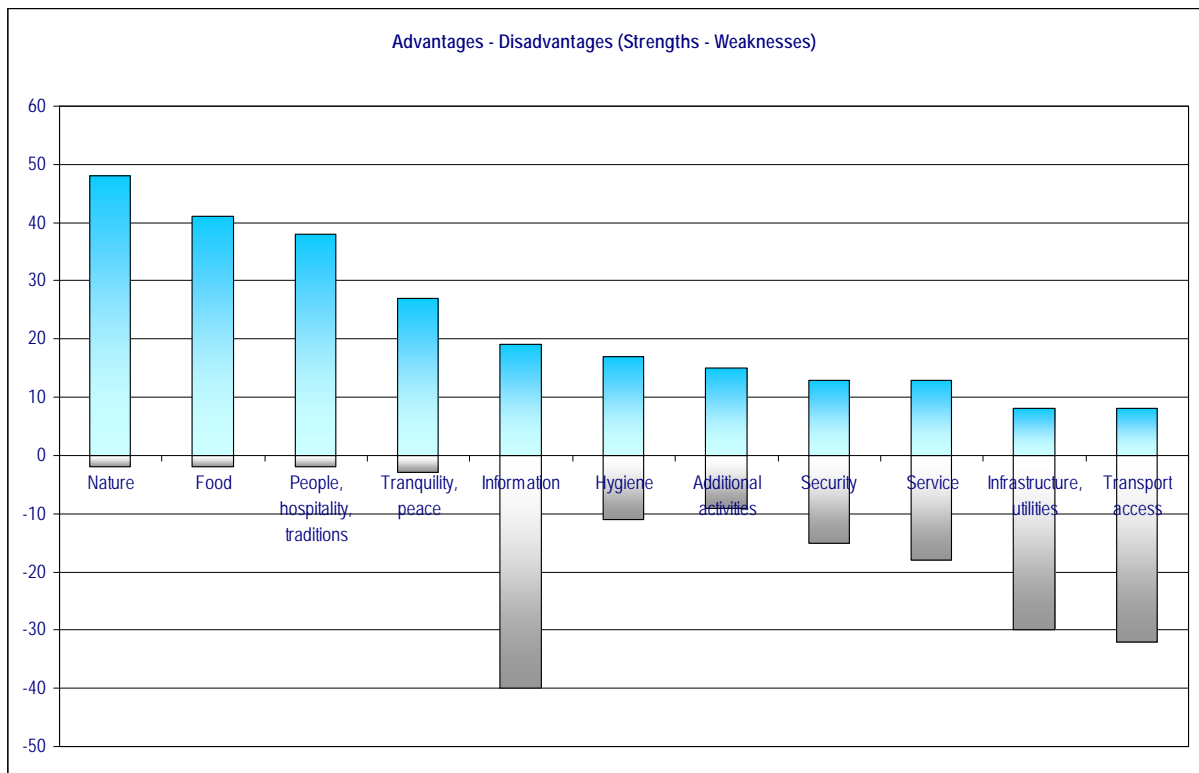
## 5. RESULTS OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE FOR VISITORS - TOURISTS

Out of the 23 questions from the questionnaire for visitors – tourists, for the aims of the present study the results of question 21 are employed which asks from the respondents to assess their overall impression from their trip and to identify some of the factors as advantages or disadvantages of the region they visited. The structure of the question where the number of characterisations for each factor is demonstrated, is as follows:

21. What is your overall impression and assessment? Which of the following is an advantage or disadvantage for the region?

Advantage		Disadvantage
48	1. Nature	2
38	2. People, Hospitality, Traditions	2
8	3. Infrastructure, Utilities	30
19	4. Information	40
8	5. Transport Access	32
41	6. Food	2
13	7. Services	18
13	8. Security	15
17	9. Hygiene	11
27	10. Tranquility, peace	3
15	11. Variety of additional activities	9
1	12. Other (please specify)	1

The overall results of the responses are shown in the following charts where the strengths and weaknesses of the region, according to the visitors' perception, are demonstrated:



## **6. SWOT ANALYSIS**

### **6.1 STRENGTHS**

- The relatively recent establishment of accommodations in the region which documents – in general – recent construction and allows the provision of many comforts
- The non existing need for immediate renovation in the majority of accommodations due to their relatively recent establishment
- The ability to communicate in a foreign language exists in the majority of the accommodations (either by the owner or by the employees)
- The satisfactory degree of communication between agrotourism accommodation businesses and tourist agencies
- The participation of the vast majority of businesses in tourism trade unions related to tourism sector
- The provision to the visitors / tourists of a wide range of additional tourist services in the study area
- The positive performance of the region in offering certain services (such as good food, entertainment opportunities and services of tourist agencies) that contributes to the satisfaction of the tourists / visitors
- The natural environment of the region
- The hospitable attitude of entrepreneurs, employees and inhabitants of the region towards tourists / visitors

### **6.2 WEAKNESSES**

- The relatively low category (stars - keys) of accommodations are a disincentive for the potential visitors
- The seasonal operation of accommodations has as a result the increased operational cost of the businesses
- The employment of non permanent staff, usually of limited skills and without special knowledge in the field of tourist services

- The relatively low level of training of both owners and employees in general fields and fields of management of tourist accommodations
- The limited administrative and managerial capacity of the entrepreneurs of the agrotourism sector
- The introversion of the businesses and their lack of attracting a significant number of visitors from abroad
- The negative performance of the region in providing specific services (such as effective tourism promotion, guide services, shopping services and other supportive services) create dissatisfaction to the tourists / visitors

### **6.3 OPPORTUNITIES**

- The apparent reorientation of tourists towards destinations and activities of agrotouristic character
- The new programming period of European Union funding programmes for which all the involved stakeholders (public administration, agencies and enterprises) should prepare themselves properly to achieve the best possible exploitation
- The possibilities offered by information and communication technologies for the improvement of business operation, better promotion of the tourism product and cost reduction
- The intention of businesses of the agrotourism sector to certify themselves according to quality standards after being informed
- The project "Quality Certification in Agrotourism - CerTour" and the cross-border relations developed in the framework of its implementation

### **6.4 THREATS**

- The extension of the financial crisis that will discourage visitors from travelling and vacationing or will impose the decrease in the number of overnight stays and the use of additional services
- The extension of the particularly limited funding for both the operational costs of the businesses and the investments on modernisation or infrastructure
- The apparent inability of the Hellenic Tourism Organisation to reciprocate its responsibilities

- The insufficient infrastructure in the region of the study and more particularly the limited transportation network from and to agrotourism destinations which threatens to cancel the promotion activities of the region and its businesses
- The stiffness of public administration, bureaucracy and the often occurring phenomena of corruption
- The tourism promotion of the region which is often of limited effectiveness



**ANNEX A**

**QUESTIONNAIRE**

**FOR ACCOMMODATION ENTREPRENEURS**

**ANNEX B**

**FILLED IN QUESTIONNAIRES  
FOR ACCOMMODATION ENTREPRENEURS**

**ANNEX C**

**QUESTIONNAIRE**

**FOR ENTREPRENEURS OF OTHER SECTORS  
(OUTSIDE ACCOMMODATION)**

**ANNEX D**

**FILLED IN QUESTIONNAIRES**

**FOR ENTREPRENEURS OF OTHER SECTORS  
(OUTSIDE ACCOMMODATION)**

**ANNEX E**

**QUESTIONNAIRE  
FOR VISITORS / TOURISTS**