

Small-Scale Wine Production, Wine Tourism, and Institutional Governance: The Wine Ecosystem in the North Aegean

Koutsouradi, Argyro; Koutsouradi, Myrsinia; Doumi, Maria

Department of Tourism Economics and Management, University of the Aegean,
Chios, Greece

Keywords: small-scale wine production, wine tourism, institutional governance, ecosystem

This study investigates the contribution of small-scale wine production to the development of wine tourism and the wine ecosystem in the North Aegean, focusing particularly on the role of institutional governance and cooperation among stakeholders. International literature views wine tourism as a complex system of interactions in which wine producers, tourism businesses, and institutional organizations contribute to the creation of local economic and social value. Special emphasis is placed on collaboration, networks, and clustering processes, as these strengthen the competitiveness, authenticity, and sustainability of wine-producing regions. At the same time, effective institutional organization and active stakeholder participation are considered essential conditions for coordinating actions and creating integrated wine tourism experiences.

The study follows a qualitative methodological approach and is based on semi-structured interviews with small-scale wine producers from all islands of the North Aegean Region. The sample was purposively selected, focusing on producers engaged in both wine production and wine tourism activities. Data analysis is conducted through thematic analysis in order to identify key patterns and relationships characterizing the wine ecosystem of the region.

The findings highlight that small-scale wine producers contribute significantly not only to primary production but also to strengthening the local economy through wine tourism activities. However, the sustainability and competitiveness of the wine ecosystem depend greatly on the level of cooperation and coordination among

institutional actors, such as Chambers of Commerce, Municipalities, and Regional authorities. Limited collaboration leads to fragmented promotional practices, difficulties in establishing a unified destination identity, and reduced access of producers to funding instruments and development programs. In addition, the absence of coordination weakens trust-based relationships and social cohesion among local stakeholders. The study concludes that effective institutional governance, stronger collaboration, and the development of integrated wine tourism strategies are key factors for the sustainable development and resilience of the island regions of the North Aegean.