The Regenerative Contribution of Local Markets Integrated into Tourism

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Abstract

The impacts of tourism activities on local economies, cultural heritage, and the natural environment have increased the importance of regenerative approaches that go beyond conventional sustainable tourism practices. Regenerative tourism aims not only to minimise the negative impacts of tourism but also to strengthen the economic, social, and ecological well-being of the destinations visited.

This study examines the contribution of local markets integrated into tourism activities to regenerative tourism in Muğla. Conducted within the scope of the TÜBİTAK 2209-A programme, the research involved fieldwork completed in 2026 and analysed the perspectives of 17 producers/market vendors and 17 tourists.

The findings demonstrate that local markets make significant contributions by providing opportunities for direct sales, supporting short supply chains, and generating local economic value. Producers' perspectives particularly highlight the importance of supporting small-scale and women producers, maintaining local production, promoting natural production methods, conserving local seeds, and supporting biodiversity.

Tourists' perspectives reveal additional contributions, including opportunities to experience local products and culture, establish direct social connections with producers, learn about production processes, encourage seasonal consumption, and reduce food waste.

However, the research also identified areas requiring improvement, including plastic use, waste management, limited tourist demand, and the lack of measurable indicators for monitoring certain environmental practices.

Based on the research findings, a guide entitled *Tourism-Supported Regenerative Local Markets: A Guide to Implementation, Monitoring, and Evaluation* has been prepared. The guide is intended to be shared with local stakeholders, and the proposed practices will be evaluated using measurable monitoring indicators.

The study demonstrates that local markets can be regarded not merely as places of economic exchange but also as important components of tourism that support the preservation of local culture, responsible consumption, social interaction, and sustainable production.

Keywords: Regenerative tourism, local markets, sustainable consumption, local development, Muğla.

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