

## THE CONTRIBUTION OF O.A.K.A. TO THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF THE WIDER REGION

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### **Abstract**

*The object of this paper is to broaden the contribution of the Olympic Sports Center of Athens "Spyros Louis" to the sustainable development of the urban wider region.*

*The aim is to investigate the degree of influence of the upgrading works that have been completed or are expected to take place in the next period in the largest sports facility in the country, with a view to the sustainable development of the urban fabric and the wider region.*

*From the data collected by the organization, the Olympic Sports Center of Athens "Spyros Louis" seems to base its long-term strategic planning on the achievement of the sustainable development goals. The organization is expected to implement development projects and sports events, which will contribute greatly to the sustainable development of the wider region with actions that will put under their protection the environment, society, economy, and cultural heritage of the region. A basic prerequisite in every action of the organization is the reduction of the environmental footprint of its operations, but also the increase of the environmental awareness of both the visitors to the sports complex and the citizens of the wider region.*

*The project results in proposals and actions that can be carried out in consultation with local private and public bodies, as well as the local community, in such a way that sustainability is the reason for the start of structuring and implementation of an innovative strategic plan aiming at social welfare and the restoration of climate and economic imbalance.*

**Key words:** *O.A.K.A., Sustainable development, Attica*

### **Introduction**

The contact of an organization with the fundamental principles of sustainability leads to the decoding of the difficulties that the organization may face in the future in the process of developing and expanding its activities. Sustainable development is distinguished by three main pillars of development in the fields of the economy, society and the environment. The adoption of sustainable and innovative practices by organizations can be proven to promote the holistic upgrading of an area in which it operates. What is important is to create the right conditions for the development of a sustainable area with respect for the environment, society and culture.

Today, there is a need for a stable and long-term development policy with balanced development of the economy, society and the environment. By creating a long-term strategic plan to exploit the infrastructure and resources of a region, it is possible to achieve the objectives of sustainable development.

The United Nations has set and defined the 17 Sustainable Development Goals by 2030 so that humanity can respond to the ongoing environmental challenges from which it is threatened. With the 2030 Agenda, it is possible to restore global prosperity and redress climate, economic and social imbalance.

Like all sectors, sport can help to strengthen these efforts on the road to a more sustainable path. According to the President of the International Olympic Committee, Thomas Bach, it is important to adopt the Sustainable Development Goals and in coordination with the United Nations the International Olympic Committees can contribute to tackling climate change.

In turn, the Olympic Sports Center of Athens "Spyros Louis", is characterized by international recognition and high symbolic value. It is a large-scale project and due to the dynamics it has, it can become a major development pole for the whole of Greece. As the largest sports facility in the country, it can be a development tool for the entire Greek territory with a positive impact on the economy, culture, tourism, society and the environment. The dynamics it possesses and the culture of the organization, as it has been formed in recent years, allow the investment in a more sustainable strategic plan, which will have a positive impact on the development of the region.

### **The modern history of O.A.K.A.**

The Olympic Sports Center of Athens "Spyros Louis", over the years has experienced glorious periods, but also moments of impoverishment and devaluation of sports facilities. The organization of the Olympic Games in Athens in 2004, brought about the need to create new projects within the Olympic complex to meet the requirements of this great event. More specifically, the installation of the Calatrava roof in the Central Stadium took place, as well as the shelter at the Velodrome, which was inspired by the famous architect Santiago Calatrava. This was followed by the creation and placement of masterpieces, such as the wall of nations, the agora, a sculpture made of metal cavities.

The post-Olympic exploitation of sports infrastructure was a major challenge for Greece. As in other host countries of the Olympic Games, preference was given to the construction of permanent sports facilities, with a view to their subsequent exploitation. A frequent phenomenon is the investment in huge sports infrastructure, which serves only the Olympic needs, constituting unsustainable investments after the games (Gratton & Preuss, 2008). In the case of the Olympic Sports Center of Athens there was no specific strategic planning and plan for the next day. Projects for which huge amounts of money have been given are in complete decline or only part of them are being used.

The biggest problem faced by the installation of O.A.K.A. is that of maintenance. In many cases, such as in metal constructions (central stage shelter, market, etc.) no maintenance has ever been done. While, other facilities, such as the indoor gymnasium of sports and the indoor swimming pool face problems of waterproofing and insulation.

Today, there is a need for a long-term strategic plan to exploit the heritage of the games aiming at the triptych: development, culture, quality of life.

The anniversary year for the completion of the 200 years since the Greek Revolution is an opportunity to re-establish the new dynamics of the country in the modern world, through works of breath for the place.

O.A.K.A. "Spyros Louis" is characterized by international recognition and high symbolic value. It is a large-scale project and due to the dynamics it has, it can become a major development pole for the whole of Greece. A dynamic that according to data of the Hellenic Police, the traffic reaches daily about 16 thousand people, while on weekends about 21

thousand, of which these are athletes, athletes, users of the premises, citizens for walking and cycling, employees of the facilities and offices of federations.

The Olympic Complex should be promoted post-Olympic to the World Athletic Mecca of modern sports (Lykopoulos, 2006). As the largest sports facility in the country, it can be a development tool for the entire Greek territory with a positive impact on the economy, culture, tourism, society and the environment.

### **The pivotal role of O.A.K.A. in the Olympic Games in Athens**

The vision that led to the construction of the center was to create the right conditions so that at some point the Olympic Games would be hosted again in Greece. The upgrading of the infrastructure of the complex took place, along with the upgrading and creation of three other centers that framed the games, the Olympic Village, the Historical Center of Athens and the Coastal Zone of Faliro.

The Olympic Sports Center of Athens was the epicenter of the 2004 Olympic Games. For the needs of the Olympic Games, the famous architect Santiago Calatrava placed a roof in the Olympic Stadium, and a shelter in the Velodrome. In the surrounding area of the complex were added two more architectural masterpieces: the wall of nations and the market. For Calatrava, the Olympic Park was the symbol of universality.

The upgrading and construction of the Olympic facilities led to the remodeling of the city of Athens and gave impetus to tourism recognition and development. The major sports projects, such as O.A.K.A. aimed to upgrade and improve the quality of life of the residents, but also to offer visitors a unique experience.

O.A.K.A. hosted most of the events, as well as the opening and closing ceremonies of the Olympic Games, with the participation of athletes from more than 200 countries. A total of 10.6 thousand athletes from all over the world took part, a number almost equivalent to the previous event in Sydney.

The experience of organizing the Olympic Games in Athens in 2004, highlighted Greece as a country that has the ability to carry out difficult tasks, pleasantly surprising the global community with its successes.

The Olympic Stadium revived the ideals of Hellenism, which were embodied through a modern, highly technological construction that became the symbol of Greece for its accession to the 21st century (Traganou, 2008, 2009).

### **Digital upgrade of O.A.K.A.**

The bridging and strengthening of the relations between the local community and the organization is a very important step in the development and improvement of the operations of the sports facilities of the Olympic complex. A great project is the creation of an application, called OAKA APP, which for the first time will give a voice to the audience that uses or visits the sports facilities. For the first time, athletes, citizens and users of the Olympic facilities of OAKA have the opportunity to contribute to the process of upgrading their facilities and operations through this application. Users of the application have the opportunity to actively participate as citizens and to point out any omissions or problems that have been created and have not been taken to the attention of the management and employees of the Olympic complex. Any fault can be reported either through a simple report, attaching a photo or indicating the location on the map to make it easier to identify the problem.

All proposals submitted through the application can contribute to improving and maintaining the quality of sports facilities. The organization has taken care to safeguard users' personal data during the submission of user feedback (<https://www.oaka.com.gr/>).

## **Economy**

O.A.K.A.'s facilities constitute an important portfolio of real estate in Greece. The organization of the 2004 Olympic Games positively affected the economic life, the tourist demand, the urban environment and the international image and promotion of the city. For the needs of the Olympic Games in Athens in 2004, the infrastructure of the capital, but also of other regions of the country, was significantly upgraded. A frequent phenomenon, however, is the investment in huge sports infrastructure, which serves only the Olympic needs, constituting unsustainable investments after the games (Gratton & Preuss, 2008). As it seemed, the influence of the organization of the Olympic Games in the Greek financial markets was also great, as according to data collected by Bloomberg, during the period of preparation for their conduct, there was difficulty in adapting the new market data to the Stock Exchange (N. Veraros & E. Kasimati, 2004). With the announcement of Athens' candidacy for the Olympic Games, the weekly return on shares increased by 7.68%, with the infrastructure development sector contributing greatly (N. Veraros & E. Kasimati, 2004). In the case of O.A.K.A. there was no specific strategic planning and plan for the next day. Today, there is a need for a long-term strategic plan to exploit the heritage of the games aiming at the triptych: development, culture, quality of life.

O.A.K.A. through a structured strategic plan for the sustainable development of both its facilities and operations, aims to improve the image of the area through full cooperation with public and private local bodies and through interaction with society as a whole.

As far as the economy sector is concerned, viable marketing policies can be adopted for the economic development of both the organization itself and the wider region of Attica. The economic benefits that may arise from sporting events can bring about increased competitiveness by multiplying investments, increasing traffic, and increasing jobs for residents in current events in the city. Higher returns on real estate investments can be noted, creating more and more economic benefits for the local community.

Apart from the sustainable development of the area, economic benefits can also be created through the sustainable tourist development of the sports facility and the surrounding areas. The increase in traffic will result in an increase in cash flow in the region and the financial contribution of sports events to the country's GDP (Bouterakos, 2020).

The inclusion of O.A.K.A. in the National Recovery and Resilience Plan "Greece 2.0" for the full modernization and utilization of the infrastructure, is an important opportunity for its transformation into a modern sports center.

The vision for O.A.K.A. is to design a pioneering development for the whole country, by reforming it into an emblematic landmark of international scope.

For the conduct of the Olympic Games in Athens, a total of 33 pitches were created and put into operation, of which 23 are still operating to this day. The creation of new infrastructure brought economic benefits for the country, as most of the Olympic facilities were used in the post-Olympic era for permanent use of these sports infrastructure. Specifically, 71% of the sports infrastructure upgraded for the reception of the Olympic Games is still in operation, a percentage that proves their exploitation afterwards. O.A.K.A. hosted most of the events, as well as the opening and closing ceremonies of the Olympic Games, with the participation of athletes from more than 200 countries. A total of 10.6 thousand athletes from all over the world took part, a number almost equivalent to the previous event in Sydney. The high number of visitors during the Olympic Games in Athens to the athletic facilities of O.A.K.A., brought about an increase in the country's tourism development, as well as an increase in the available jobs to meet the needs of the event.

## **Society**

Social capital, the primary and necessary factor of development of a region, must be a priority and be part of an organization's responsibility towards its environment.

According to the Eurobarometer on sport and physical activity, one of the factors of non-participation of citizens in physical activity is the lack of adequate and accessible sports infrastructure in the place where they live. One of the aims of sports organisations is to create the appropriate conditions for sport and participation of citizens in leisure activities without social discrimination and exclusion.

The contribution of O.A.K.A. to sports development is not limited only to the local level but also to the national level. According to data from the Hellenic Police, every day 16 thousand citizens from different areas of Attica make use of the Olympic Facilities either for active sports or for recreation.

Improving the functionality and accessibility of the Olympic facilities can enhance the long-term participation of citizens in physical activity and push the local community into a healthier lifestyle.

It is also important to take into account the needs of different groups and to enable people with disabilities to access the facilities, as well as their participation in sport, with drastic measures and actions in order to eliminate exclusion and prejudice.

Besides, the Olympic values of O.A.K.A., which remained as a legacy from the 2004 Olympic Games, refer to equality, social inclusion and respect among people and can be transferred to society so that everyone can enjoy the benefits and joys of sports.

The intellectual and ideological values of the landscape of the Olympic Park in which the Olympic Games took place, give an identity to the region, inform the local population about its history and strengthen the sense of collectivity and social cohesion.

O.A.K.A. has a key role in maintaining the prosperity of the local community and through the dissemination of Olympic Values in cooperation with local bodies it can contribute to the development of actions with a strong social footprint.

## **Environment**

The concept of sustainable development concerns both the environment and development. For economic and social development, the environment is an important parameter. Modern societies aim to strike a balance between socio-economic development and environmental protection. The climate crisis and the prospects for greener growth are at the heart of the policies of all leaders worldwide.

It is necessary for organizations to examine the environmental dimension in order to formulate a dynamic and rational policy aiming at their development. Sustainability policies can not only bring positive results to the image of an organization, but also create an image of renewal in the area where they operate.

The redevelopment of O.A.K.A., according to the National Recovery and Resilience Plan "Greece 2.0" (<https://greece20.gov.gr/>), will have a "triple footprint", developmental, fiscal and ecological. In the context of this project for the upgrading of O.A.K.A., the increase of the energy efficiency of the installations is included. The organization may turn to renewable ways of pumping energy sources for the proper functioning of the facilities and the requirements of the project.

The reduction of the operating costs of the facilities after their energy upgrade may reach 50%. This entails by reducing the environmental footprint and in addition to the interventions for the restoration of the surrounding area with the creation of green spaces and the replacement of environmentally friendly materials, O.A.K.A. will significantly upgrade the

image of the wider area and will enhance the sense of environmental awareness of its residents. The integration of sustainability into the everyday life of the local residents will bring significant results in the quality of their living within the urban fabric.

For its part, the Olympic Sports Center of Athens "Spyros Louis", makes daily great efforts both to maintain its infrastructure and to upgrade them based on the principles of sustainability. The potential of the organization is proven in practice, as the transformation of the Olympic Center into an Olympic Park in Athens has been planned in the coming years, through the implementation of the Strategic Development Plan Master Plan, an investment of more than 43 million euros. € available through the Recovery Fund. With the implementation of this project, as the Prime Minister of the country has mentioned, the goal is for OAKA to become in a short time a point of reference for Sports, Culture, but also for society and citizens (Reuters, 2021).

The master plan for the development and modernization of OAKA, includes projects of energy upgrade, restoration and maintenance as well as the creation of green spaces, corridors for bicycles, runners and walkers, as well as commercial areas as well as a hotel to serve the visitors. An important step is the focus on the environmental dimension of the projects, as there will be a 40% increase in green space, sports facilities will gain energy autonomy with the ultimate goal of reducing pollutant emissions as much as possible. The works have already begun and are expected to be completed by 2024, with the strategic work plan to include the energy upgrade of the central stadium, with a reduction of its operating costs by more than 30% (Greek Travel Pages, 2021). In the post-Olympic era a large part of the facilities as we know faced periods of impoverishment, for this reason the maintenance of the Calatrava shelter is necessary, as the erosion it has undergone is evident. Also, the Wet Track Center is going to be upgraded through the implementation of maintenance and energy upgrade works, in order to reduce the operating costs of the facilities by 50%. The medical care of both visitors and athletes who are active in the facilities of O.A.K.A. is among the priorities of the strategic plan and that is why the creation of a Rehabilitation – Recovery Center and modern health and treatment services has been planned. As far as the installation of the Bike Path is concerned, the proposals for upgrading carry significant weight for the development of sport and its usefulness in many areas. More specifically, it is expected that an energy upgrade will take place, as well as its emergence as a modern space of sports, culture and complementary actions (focus of educational, conference and exhibition activities), in order to apply the principles of sustainable development and reduce the environmental footprint of the activities carried out in the Olympic Park.

Apart from the upgrading of the sports facilities that O.A.K.A. has, the master plan also focuses on the restoration of the surrounding area by enhancing the environmental footprint. The use of environmentally friendly materials will reduce the environmental footprint of the body but will also upgrade its image, through the use of photovoltaic systems to pump the necessary energy and save it for the proper functioning of the organization's work.

The integration of sustainability in the everyday life of the residents of the area will bring significant results in their quality of living and in their behavior, which may present increased chances of environmental awareness. The satisfaction of the citizens will come through the contact with sports events, the accessibility to sports facilities specially designed for the public and the sustainable development of the urban fabric that will bring advantages to the improvement of their quality of life in the long term.

The environmental sustainability that the region will have can ensure social cohesion between citizens and private and public bodies.

Also, the fact that OAKA has cultural elements, leads environmental sustainability to its advanced dimension, which expresses both the protection of the environment and the simultaneous preservation of the cultural heritage of the region. The culture, combined with

the natural environment available in the new Olympic Park, can make it a pole of attraction for thousands of visitors and citizens of the region with strong elements of environmental awareness.

In the context of this project for the upgrading of OAKA, the increase of the energy efficiency of the installations is included. The organization may turn to renewable ways of pumping energy sources for the proper functioning of the facilities and the requirements of the project. The image of the area is going to be upgraded to such an extent that both citizens and visitors will inevitably acquire an environmental behavior in the context of their activities in the sports center.

The practical sense of responsibility towards the environment is expressed through the implementation of the restructurings of the sports center and the surrounding area. These changes will give a great competitive advantage to the Olympic Sports Center of Athens "Spyros Louis", which is the largest sports center in Europe within the urban fabric. The aim is for OAKA to be part of a sustainable value chain, in which the management and employees of the sports center and the institutions of the Attica region, as well as the local community, will interact together to achieve the greatest possible reduction of the environmental footprint of the region and to optimize the quality of life in the long term.

## **Culture**

In recent years, culture and local development have a parallel developmental course. Today, the concept of the development of entire regions is related to the exploitation and promotion of monuments and cultural goods that each place has. Culture is one of the main pillars of sustainable development and includes the main elements of identity of each place.

Apart from being a sports destination, O.A.K.A. is also a cultural destination, having both an important material and intangible cultural heritage, which is a heritage of all Greek citizens.

The cultural characteristics of the area can be exploited and highlighted in order to contribute to the development of cultural tourism at a local level. The visitor can come into contact with the spiritual and ideological values of the landscape of the Olympic Park in which the Olympic Games were held, which are a fact of international fame and as a strong brand name, have a global reach.

The privileged location of the Olympic complex is of particularly high cultural value due to the archaeological findings and monuments located within the facility. The Adriano Aqueduct is a monumental water supply project built in 140 AD, is visible in the northwestern part of the center and continues to operate until today carrying significant quantities of water. The emergence of the Aqueduct, with the creation of a water and culture park, can act as a means for the recreation needs of residents and visitors, but also as a means of environmental awareness of citizens.

The creation of cultural routes, one of the most basic tools for the development of cultural tourism, can contribute to the development of initiatives by local bodies for the preservation of local culture, the enhancement of the protection of cultural and natural resources and sustainable local development. More specifically, the cultural routes can be the driving force for the development of the place by creating opportunities for local businesses, attracting new investments and increasing tourist demand.

The promotion of the cultural reserve of O.A.K.A. will create a dynamic course of sustainable development for the economy, society, culture and the environment of the Attica region.

### **Promotion of points of archaeological interest of O.A.K.A.**

The protection, promotion and exploitation of cultural units are important components for the development of a region and a country at all levels. Our cultural heritage can be a lever for development and, by extension, for sustainable development. Today, entire regions rely on cultural tourism and the exploitation of their cultural reserve in order to develop tourism (Richards, 1996). Besides, "the relationship of man with the past is alive and uninterrupted, as the present is nourished by the past and the future of the present" as Mitoula mentions, 2006.

Important ancient monuments of the Roman period came to light during the work on the Olympic works, in a place where in antiquity Amarisia Artemis was worshipped. In the area of the Olympic facilities of Maroussi there are ten monuments of archaeological interest, the most important of which are the Roman cistern, the Clay Roman pipelines, the Roman Valaneio and the Adrianeion Aqueduct.

The aim of O.A.K.A. "Spyros Louis" is to create a "tourist product", highlighting the archaeological wealth of the area, in order to enhance the ability to attract visitors and give back "life" within the urban fabric.

### **Adrianeio Aqueduct**

The Adrianeion Aqueduct of Athens was completed in 140 AD by the Roman emperor Hadrian and is the only Roman Aqueduct, built in Europe and still carries water today. The water springs from the outskirts of Parnitha and ends at Dexameni Square in Kolonaki. The total distance traveled by the aqueduct is 20 km.

At the Olympic facilities of O.A.K.A. the tunnel is located at a depth of about 20 m. There are many wells of the Adrianeio Aqueduct, of a square or circular cross-section, which can be observed by the visitor to the north of the Olympic Stadium, while remarkable samples of the manhole trunks can be seen on the west side of the sports facilities, near the stairway to the ISAP.

Beyond being a point of extensive research for archaeologists, intense interest in its construction and operation is shown by scientific engineers and researchers. According to Christou (2020), "the external aqueduct still has the ability to transport water from the springs of Parnitha to the city of Athens and has been studied enough to know a lot about its operation".

The exploitation of the transported water that passes through the facilities of O.A.K.A. is the current project that will help both in the economy of scale but mainly in the cultural development of the Adrianeio Aqueduct. Since 2011, a memorandum of cooperation has been signed between EYDAP and O.A.K.A., for its reopening, the exploitation of its waters, but also for its emergence as the only active ancient aqueduct in Europe. This memorandum includes the optimization of the use of water in the facilities of O.A.K.A., through recycling and reuse of treated water for irrigation purposes and the reopening of the central fountain of the Stadium (fontana). O.A.K.A. for its part proposes the creation of cultural routes that will unify all the archaeological monuments with each other. These spaces will be connected to each other by a network of routes and the visitor will be able to make a historical retrospection in the past and follow the course of the water. Consequently, a water route will be created that will include green spaces, but at the same time it will be a place of culture, without however "losing" the athletic identity of the center.

O.A.K.A. is a dynamic space that flourished especially during the 2004 Olympic Games. In recent years the center has been degraded, for many years no maintenance and modernization work has been carried out, while the facilities have been looted and sabotaged.



The proposal for the promotion and exploitation of the Adrianeio Aqueduct aims at the cultural, aesthetic and environmental upgrading of the area of O.A.K.A. A place that apart from being a sports and cultural destination, will also emerge as a tourist destination, as part of the modern history of the Olympic Games.

### **Sustainable tourism development**

All the sports facilities located in the Olympic complex meet the parameters of a long-term tourism development. In O.A.K.A. there are different types of characteristics of tourist demand (Kokkosis-Tsartas, 2001), with the dominant ones being the development for cultural and sports tourism.

One of the competitive advantages of the Olympic complex concerns the existence of natural and cultural tourist resources as well as sports facilities and services, which contribute to the tourist development of the wider region. The large areas of greenery and the archaeological findings located within the urban park, give a comparative advantage to the organization and are important indications of the dynamic trend of development of the facilities in tourist and recreation areas. Apart from the natural and cultural tourist resources, a positive element is the existence of infrastructure and services in sports facilities, which indirectly or directly affect the tourist development of the region and other types of characteristics in the wider region that are potentially tourist resources (Kokkosis-Tsartas, 2001).

It is obvious that O.A.K.A. has prospects of tourist development both for the area of its activity, but also for the region as a whole. European standards have a guiding role in the effort to develop a rational tourism policy for the organization in cooperation with the local bodies that contribute to its formation.

Greece has adopted a unique model of tourism development, which favors the dynamic presence of Local Government Organizations (Local Authorities), which undertake to create the plan for the organization, planning of local and regional development of tourism and its subsequent promotion at national and international level (Kokkosis-Tsartas, 2001). The preparation of a rational tourism plan for the wider area of activity of the organization, lies in the fact that the stakeholders are necessary to co-decide and take joint action in a broader spirit of shared responsibility.

From the above, it follows that the formulation of a policy for tourism in the wider region, it is possible to start with steady steps following for the beginning the sustainable approach (Kokkosis-Tsartas, 2001), through which tourism in the region will be an activity that brings not only environmental but also economic viability. A combined approach, which suits the data and the potential of the region, in such a way that O.A.K.A. is a lever for tourism development. If a significant percentage of satisfaction of tourism development occurs for the wider region and the organization, then the sectoral approach can be applied. Through this approach, O.A.K.A. will have the ability to maintain the dynamic brand name of the wider region in the long term and to increase its competitive advantage, while at the same time it actively and systematically protects the quality of the environment in which citizens live and visit thousands of visitors daily (Mitoula, R., Kaldis, P., 2018).

Each tourist product is going through a unique life cycle, which will end either in its renewal or in its decline. The successive phases of tourism development, which will be covered by the wider area of the Olympic complex, will determine its socio-economic characteristics and the type of tourist infrastructure and services that will be created. Based on the evolutionary model of the three stages of development (Kokkosis and Tsartas, 2001), O.A.K.A. is in the second stage of tourism development as it is expected by 2024 to implement the planned development projects included in the development plan under the

name Master Plan. Large-scale investments have been launched by the state, as well as significant changes in infrastructure and their operation so that a large number of tourists and visitors can be accommodated and served in the facilities and the wider region. Also important are the indications of the emergence of organized mass tourism aiming at the tour and use of the facilities and services offered in the Olympic complex and the surrounding area. The promotion of the image and the activities carried out at O.A.K.A. have a direct impact on the image of the wider region, for this reason it is necessary to draw up a structured and sustainable strategic plan for the promotion of the tourism product.

## **Conclusions**

Taking into account all the above, it is obvious that the results that will be brought about by the implementation of the strategic plan for the upgrading of the sports facilities of O.A.K.A. and its surrounding area, will offer advantages to the wider region. The development projects, having a positive impact on the wider region, will make it a sustainable area with environmentally friendly practices, which are part of the everyday life of citizens, increasing the levels of improvement of the quality of life of the residents.

Attracting investments in O.A.K.A. will contribute to the economic growth of the region, as opportunities for sustainable tourism development and training of a dynamic brand name will be presented to enhance extroversion beyond the Greek borders.

The aim is to increase the percentages of environmentally aware citizens, as they can contribute positively to the sustainable development of the wider region. The modern tourist seeks in every tour a unique and more qualitative experience, which will enrich his journey. In recent years, the trend of tourism is considered more "energetic", as visitors choose tourism sustainability.

O.A.K.A. has the ability to form a great tourist product, which will stimulate the interest of visitors on a spiritual level. The way of highlighting the tourist product for the wider region is a matter of major importance as it is the key to the subsequent course of tourism development of the region. The available tourist resources that extend to the Olympic Park are a basic prerequisite for the degree of development of the tourist development of the wider region.

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