



## Transition to a Rural Green Economy with Eco-Agro Tourism: The Case of Kızıklı Aromatic Village (Türkiye)

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### Abstract

In the 21st century, where urban life and urban population continue to increase, the longing for green and the desire to return to nature attract people to destinations where nature-based activities is carried out. Eco-agro tourism, which is a type of tourism where eco-tourism and agro-tourism intersect, creates positive effects on the socio-cultural, economic and natural environment. Similarly, in the green economy approach, attention is drawn to the positive effects it creates in terms of economic welfare, quality of life and environmental protection. In addition, today the idea of destinations developing an economy based on environmentally friendly production is increasingly important. The study focused on eco-agro tourism, where the natural environment is placed at the center of the economic system in developing rural areas and sustainability in production and consumption can be achieved. It is thought that it is important to reveal the eco-agro tourism potential of the countryside from the perspective of the local people who know the region best. In addition, local people's ideas on eco-agro tourism for a sustainable "green economy" and "green-oriented development" should be known as it will show both the support they will give to tourism development and their participation in tourism activities. From this point of view, Kızıklı Village, which is connected to the Burhaniye district of Balıkesir, was chosen as the research sample. In the study, in which the qualitative research method was adopted, data were collected from 42 participants. The obtained data were subjected to content analysis, thematic groupings were made and their frequencies and percentages were presented to the reader. According to the data obtained from the field; it has been determined that Kızıklı village has eco-agro tourism potential, that the residents of the village will support eco-agro tourism development at a high level, and that eco-agro tourism can be the locomotive in strengthening the existing economic environment and making the green economy applicable in Kızıklı. Among the other results obtained from the research are that eco-agro tourism development and sustainability will be supported by the local people due to their positive contributions to the economic, natural and socio-cultural environment and that the local people will assume responsibilities as stakeholders.

**Keywords:** Green Economy, Eco-Agro, Tourism, Aromatic Village, Sustainability

Özgürel, G., Atış, E. & Çelik Uğuz, S. (2023). Transition to a Rural Green Economy with Eco-Agro Tourism: The Case of Kızıklı Aromatic Village (Türkiye) . Journal of the Human and Social Science Researches , 12 (2) , 796-818. <https://doi.org/10.15869/itobiad.1254129>

Date of Submission	06.03.2023
Date of Acceptance	12.06.2023
Date of Publication	17.06.2023
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## Eko-Agro Turizm ile Kırsal Yeşil Ekonomiye Geçişi Sağlamak: Kızıklı Aromatik Köy Örneği (Türkiye)

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### Öz

Kent yaşamının ve kentsel nüfusun artarak devam ettiği 21. yüzyılda, yeşile duyulan özlem ve doğaya dönüş arzusu insanoğlunu doğa temelli aktivitelerin yapılacağı destinasyonlara çekmektedir. Eko turizm ve agro turizmin keşiştiği bir turizm türü olan eko-agro turizm sosyo-kültürel, ekonomik ve doğal çevre üzerinde olumlu etkiler yaratmaktadır. Benzer biçimde yeşil ekonomi yaklaşımında da ekonomik refah, yaşam kalitesi ve çevrenin korunması açısından yarattığı olumlu etkilere dikkat çekilmektedir. Ek olarak günümüzde destinasyonların çevre dostu üretime dayalı bir ekonomi geliştirmesi fikri giderek daha çok önemsenmektedir. Yapılan çalışmada; kalkınmakta olan kırsal yörelerde doğal çevrenin ekonomik sistemin merkezine yerleştirildiği, üretim ve tüketimde sürdürülebilirliğin sağlanabildiği eko-agro turizme odaklanılmıştır. Kırsalın eko-agro turizm potansiyelinin, yöreyi en iyi bilen yerel halkın bakış açısıyla ortaya çıkartılmasının önemli olduğu düşünülmektedir. Ek olarak yerel halkın sürdürülebilir bir “yeşil ekonomi” ve “yeşil odaklı gelişim” için eko-agro turizme yönelik fikirlerinin, hem turizm gelişimine vereceği destek hem de turizm faaliyetlerine katılım durumunu göstereceği için bilinmesi gerekmektedir. Bu bakış açısıyla Balıkesir’in Burhaniye ilçesine bağlı olan Kızıklı Mahallesi (Köyü) araştırma örneklemleri olarak seçilmiştir. Nitel araştırma yönteminin benimsendiği çalışmada, 42 katılımcıdan veriler toplanmıştır. Elde edilen veriler içerik analizine tabi tutulmuş, tematik gruplandırılmalar yapılarak frekansları ve yüzdesel oranları okuyucuya sunulmuştur. Sahadan elde edilen verilere göre; Kızıklı Mahallesi’nin eko-agro turizm potansiyelinin bulunduğu, mahalle sakinlerinin eko-agro turizm gelişimini yüksek düzeyde destekleyecekleri, var olan ekonomik çevrenin güçlendirilmesinde ve yeşil ekonominin Kızıklı’da uygulanabilir olmasında eko-agro turizmin lokomotif olabileceği tespit edilmiştir. Eko-agro turizm gelişiminin ve sürdürülebilirliğin ekonomik, doğal ve sosyo-kültürel çevrede yaratacağı olumlu katkıları nedeniyle Kızıklı’da yerel halk tarafından destekleneceği ve paydaş olarak yerel halkın sorumluluklar üstlenecekleri araştırmadan elde edilen diğer sonuçlar arasındadır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Yeşil Ekonomi, Eco-Agro, Turizm, Aromatik Köy, Sürdürülebilirlik

Özgürel, G., Atış, E. & Çelik Uğuz, S. (2023). Transition to a Rural Green Economy with Eco-Agro Tourism: The Case of Kızıklı Aromatic Village (Türkiye). İnsan ve Toplum Bilimleri Araştırmaları Dergisi, 12 (2), 796-818. <https://doi.org/10.15869/itobiad.1254129>

Geliş Tarihi	10.10.2022
Kabul Tarihi	28.02.2023
Yayın Tarihi	13.03.2023
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## Introduction

Migrations from rural settlements to cities have led to an increase in population density in cities, and both the detachment from natural ecosystems and the distance from nature have intensely affected today's urbanites. The strong ties of human beings with nature have shaped their relationship with nature according to the place where they live. For those in the countryside, nature is the place where production activities such as farming, forestry, beekeeping and animal husbandry are carried out, while for those living in cities, nature has turned into consumption places where they will go as soon as they have the opportunity and leisure time will be evaluated. While the biodiversity in the countryside is a source of livelihood for the local people, on the other hand, the opening of the region to visitors can pave the way for them to obtain various gains from Eco-agro tourism activities. Plants, which have an important place in human life, can be a meal by coming to the fore with their flavors, a healing resource in traditional folk medicine, and shot that leave a mark on the lenses of nature lovers (Demirtaş and Demirtaş, 2021). Eco-agro tourists are responsible and responsive visitors who want to explore nature and local culture. With eco-agro tourism in rural areas, tourists can perform many activities such as participating in natural life, engaging in sports activities, organic nutrition, observing plant and animal species, discovering local culture and traditions, as well as participating in festivals, arts and agricultural activities. With eco-agro tourism, which is a nature-friendly and nature-based type of tourism, it is possible to ensure sustainability in the region in all environmental layers in terms of economic, natural and socio-cultural environment. Effective management of local resources and wastes generated after consumption and the natural environment; the preservation of local culture, the sharing of experiences and the socio-cultural environment; With the transition to the green economy to make local economic development sustainable, the economic environment can be built with the power taken from eco-agro tourism development.

The answer to the question has been sought in the study; Can eco-agro tourism be a tool for a green-oriented development in rural areas that focus on sustainable development? In this context, it is aimed to draw attention to eco-agro tourism in creating a sustainable environment with sustainable production and consumption in rural areas. The "Tourism Report in the Green Economy " published by the World Tourism Organization in 2012 can be cited as a proof of the increasing impact of the tourism sector on the green economy. In the report, attention is drawn to the tourism sector in the policies produced in rural areas. In this context, emphasis is placed on the necessity and importance of establishing active tourism enterprises, developing by encouraging agro tourism, and benefiting from the natural and cultural heritage of rural areas. In the study, the idea that sustainable production and consumption can be achieved with the locomotive power of tourism activities by adopting the "green approach" of socio-cultural, physical, natural and economic environments in regions with eco-agro tourism potential has been opened to discussion. It has been determined that studies have been carried out on titles such as "tourism in the green economy" (Toubes and Araújo-Vila, 2022), "driving and attractive forces/challenges of the green economy" (Licastro

and Sergi, 2021; Pan et al, 2018), “nature-based tourism and neoliberalism” (Duffy, 2015), “green economy decision support systems in tourism destinations” (Law et al., 2016), “developing of green marketing practices in tourism” (Hanna et al., 2018) and “green economy implementation strategies of tourism stakeholders” (Stroebel, 2015; Law et al., 2016) in the literature review. Licastro and Sergi (2021, p. 11) state that foreign intervention is not always sufficient to encourage the transition to a green economy, therefore it depends on the enthusiasm of local people, central and local governments. According to the findings of their research by Toubes and Araújo-Vila (2022, p. 10), they concluded that the role of tourism in the green economy is in its early stages and that research in this area is still very new. They drew attention to the fact that approximately 80% of the articles were published between 2015 and 2022 in their research, in which they examined 327 articles. Duffy (2015) critically examines the claims that the “green economy” can provide environmentally sustainable economic growth in relation to tourism. In addition, the researcher discusses how nature-based tourism produces and hides the contradictions of capitalism in the research. Hanna et al. (2018) examined how consumers interpret and process the marketing and communication of sustainable tourism forms in destinations in their study. Licastro and Sergi (2021, p. 11) stated in their research that the view that the local should be enthusiastic in the transition to green economy formed the basis for the study. In this direction, in the study, it is aimed to determine the views of the local people about the eco-agro tourism potential, the effects of eco-agro tourism development in the region and whether a transition to the green economy can be made with eco-agro tourism. For these purposes, the field study of the research was conducted in Kızıklı, a village in the district of Burhaniye, which was a village before the implementation of Balıkesir Metropolitan Municipality and then a neighborhood. The “Aromatic Village” Project in Kızıklı was implemented in 2021. With the project prepared and implemented by the Rural Services Department of Balıkesir Metropolitan Municipality, the polargenium\*<sup>+</sup> produced by the Balıkesir Farmer Training Center (BAÇEM) was donated to women farmers and women producers were supported at all stages from cultivation to sale. With this project, pioneering steps were taken to increase economic diversity, support women and develop eco-agro tourism. The authors adopted the idea that Kızıklı village, where the first steps towards eco-agro tourism development were taken with the Aromatic Village Project, can be put forward as a core village in Edremit Gulf and that it can gain existence as the core of eco village networks due to its location. The study aims to highlight the eco-agro tourism potential of Kızıklı village, the level of acceptance of tourism development and participation of local people, the answers to the questions of whether eco-agro tourism can serve as a tool for the transition to a rural green economy, and to launch eco-agro tourism development from Kızıklı as a “core village” in the study.

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\* Pelargonium is the common name for a species of perennial herbaceous plants in the genus Pelargonium of the genus Geraniaceae, 14–40 cm tall and bloom purplish-pink flowers in June-July. The subsoil part of the plant is fleshy, and the base leaves are heart-shaped. It is schizocarp, the fruits of which are divided into 5 mesocarps. The erect stems bear five-petaled flowers in umbel-like clusters, which are occasionally branched.

Within the scope of the study, the concepts of eco-agro tourism, green economy and core village were tried to be explained and then information was given about Kızıklı village and the "Aromatic Village" project initiated in this village. In other parts of the study, the research method and findings were included and various suggestions were developed in line with the results obtained from the research and the study was completed.

### **Eco-Agro Tourism**

The concepts of eco-agro tourism and agro tourism are often used synonymously. Ecotourism is about connecting conservation, communities and sustainable travel. Eco-tourism is explained as responsible travel to natural areas that is focused on environmental protection, improves the quality of life and well-being of local people, includes education and interpretation of both tourism workers and tourists (The International Ecotourism Society, 2022). In this context, ecotourism is a sustainable type of tourism that can preserve the attractiveness that creates a source for tourism and improve the socio-economic conditions of the country, including the local people (Tajer and Demir, 2022, p. 1). Agro tourism, on the other hand, is a type of tourism in which comprehensive accommodation, food, excursion services, organization of entertainment and sports events, fishing, hunting organization, etc. are carried out accompanied by the traditional acculturation prevailing in rural areas, and where the knowledge and skills of rural labor and technology can be gained to its participants (Philip et al., 2010, p. 754-757). The basis of the agro tourism product is recreation, traditions, culture, fresh air, contact with animals, silence and peace in the village (Abdulkakim o'g'li, 2023, p. 25). Daugstad and Kirchengast (2013) proved it in their research that agro-tourism appeals to a target group eager to have seemingly intimate, personalized and ethically correct experiences during their holidays.

Rural areas are known to be popular destinations for holidays and excursions. In particular, the fact that agricultural products specific to the region from past to present, production methods and characteristics of local communities offer cultural landscapes that attract tourists increases the interest and visits to these places.

Using a region's agricultural biodiversity to attract tourists is one of the components of ecotourism and agro-tourism-themed projects, which are often carried out in recent years. Eco-agro tourism is a combination of "Eco tourism" and "Agro Tourism". To put it more clearly, eco-agrotourism is nature-based, agro-tourism is farm-based, while eco-agro-tourism includes both (Cvijanovic and Vukovic, 2014, p.33). Eco-agrotourism supports local communities and works to encourage actions that include respect for the local and responsible behaviour. Eco-agro tourism aims to promote agriculture as a tourism attraction on the one hand and to maintain the culture and nature of the place on the other. In this context, eco-agro tourism realizes sustainability under the umbrella of nature-based tourism. Eco-agrotourism is a market-linked method of increasing and conserving biodiversity and sustainable rural community development and is becoming increasingly important as a viable economic activity in the development process of many countries (Little, 2006, p.4, Hosseini vd., 2021). It is a form of tourism that includes visitors who participate in sustainable farming, learning

about local products (www.lodgify.com, 2022). The reason for the adoption of eco-agro-tourism and finding increasingly crowded adherents is the reproduction of environmental resources in consumption preferences based on "derivation" instead of "consumption" (Yüzüncüyıl, 2021).

Eco-agro tourism has some characteristic features. These features can be summarized as follows (Little, 2006, p.10):

- It includes direct interaction between agricultural producers, agricultural products, and tourists.
- Tourists' experiences vary in terms of the duration of the visit, the distance traveled and the purpose of visit. The tourist needs to visit for the learning experience apart from the purchase of products, other daily leisure activities.
- The direction of the benefits to be obtained is shifting away from rural tourism towards agricultural tourism.
- Eco-agro tourism by nature; culture/heritage tourism is necessarily in close contact with other types of tourism such as nature tourism, health tourism and experiential tourism.
- In eco-agro tourism, local or traditional ideas are used extensively in activities.
- Products developed within the scope of eco-agro tourism should have wide potential uses. Agricultural fairs and food festivals should include farmers' markets, craft stores, herbal and other health food stores, educational tours, camping and picnic areas.
- Eco-agro tourism is service-oriented and meets the standards that should be in a tourism product.

Eco-agro tourism activities create a sustainable economic environment in the region with sustainable production and consumption. In order to realize "sustainable development", tourism activities should be based on the "green economy".

### **Green Economy and Core Villages in Tourism**

In order to achieve the success of the "sustainable development model", which focuses on meeting the needs of the present generation without sacrificing the opportunity to meet the needs of future generations, the source of future economic growth is focused on the "green economy" (Presidential Strategy and Budget Department, 2021; Sakaloglu, 2019, p.16). The concept of "green economy" is at the center of the concept of "sustainable development", which provides a common denominator in ensuring economic growth and environmental sustainability. The United Nations Environment Programme [UNEP] (2022) defines the "green economy"; It sees it as a growth approach that eliminates environmental risks and ecological problems by using resources efficiently and has social inclusion with its structure that increases human welfare and social equality. Baranova and Kegeyan (2019, p.1) see the "green economy" as an economic model in which the economic system is dependent on the natural environment and the natural environment is a

part of the economic system. Researchers suggest that resource savings will be achieved with the "green economy" and that environmental risks can be reduced by increasing social welfare with an economy based on environmentally friendly production.

The global tourism industry feeds on environmental resources and has the potential to destroy or to destruct the resources it feeds on. Especially related to sustainability; It is clear that these problems can be eliminated with "green"-oriented development in the sustainability of the tourism sector, which has problems in (1) energy and greenhouse gas emissions, (2) water consumption, (3) waste management, (4) biodiversity loss, (5) effective management of cultural heritage, (6) planning and management (United Nations Environment Programme and World Tourism Organization [WTO], 2012, p.3). In this context, it is thought that the core village practices, which have started to be emphasized on a world scale in recent years, can be used in the development and strengthening of the tourism-centered green economy in rural areas where the population is relatively low in Türkiye.

In eco-agro tourism, where traditional culture, rural labor and knowledge are transferred through various activities in rural areas and village settlements, eco villages are examined with the "core village" approach. Socio-culturally, villages or settlements that continue traditional village life, where village characteristics and unique cultural texture are preserved, and which show eco-agro-tourism potential are accepted as "core villages" (Çakmak, 2021, p.40). Core villages, are villages or settlements that continue their traditional village life with their socio-cultural environment, have carried them undeteriorated to the present day, are nature-friendly in their production processes, and have tourism potential with the hospitality of the village people (Tuğun and Karaman, 2014, p.327). The process initiated with the "core villages"; For the sustainability of environmental values, it paves the way for the creation of eco-villages / ecological villages, which are village settlement units that provide the continuity of rural and natural life in environmental areas and nature-based tourism development (Asimgil, 2017, p.97).

With "core village" applications, it is possible to increase the contributions of tourism to high levels. In this context, it can be said that the objectives set by the United Nations World Tourism Organization [UNWTO] (2021, p.2) for the best tourism villages also apply to the core villages. The objectives of the good practices for the core villages are presented below:

- To reduce regional and regional inequalities in income and development,
- To combat the decline of the rural population,
- To ensure gender equality,
- Empowering women and young people,
- To promote rural transformation and increase traction capacity,
- To realize multi-layered management with the cooperation of the public, private sector and village people, active support and participation of stakeholders,
- To improve infrastructure and connections to access investment and

finance,

- To ensure digitalization and innovation development,
- To innovate in product development and value chain integration,
- To promote the relationship between sustainable, fair and durable food,
- To promote the relationship between tourism and sustainable, equitable and resilient food systems to protect natural biodiversity, agricultural biodiversity, cultural heritage and local gastronomy,
- To improve the protection of natural and cultural resources,
- To promote sustainable practices for more efficient use of resources and reduction of emissions and waste,
- To increase education in rural settlements, to develop sustainable production skills and social relations and behaviors.

According to the World Tourism Organization, there are 44 villages from 31 countries in the list of the best tourism villages of 2021. Mustafapaşa and Taraklı villages from Türkiye are included in this global list. Eco-agro tourism activities are an educational tool for farmers and tourists, and the training process is one of the sustainable ways for the future of village life (Demirbaş Topçu, 2007, p.40). Training activities for village people may include information given to farmers about agricultural techniques, activities to raise awareness of their cultural values, creation of tourism awareness, management of tourism enterprises, relations with visitors, communication and development of language skills. Villagers participating in eco-agro tourism activities can reach higher living standards by increasing and even diversifying their incomes (Zoto et al., 2013, p.211).

### **Kızıklı Village and Aromatic Village Project**

The identification of villages or rural settlements with eco-agro tourism potential as "core villages" creates a driving force in the development of eco-agro tourism (Çakmak, 2021, p. 40, Asımgil, 2017, p. 97). Eco-agro tourism development can be achieved in "core villages" by showing many good practices such as carrying out projects supporting women and youth in rural areas, increasing income and encouraging rural transformation. It is a known fact that the economy in rural settlements is dependent on the natural environment. Transition to a green economy locally, the natural environment is made possible by an environmentally friendly derivation (Yüzüncü Yıl, 2021) model. In order to find an answer to the question that can eco-agro tourism be the locomotive for a green-oriented development? Kızıklı village, where the research data were collected, was chosen as a tool.

Kızıklı village is located in the northwest of Türkiye in Balıkesir province (Figure 1). It is 5 km from the district center of Burhaniye. The population is 1699 (www.nufusune.com, 2022), the main occupation of families is farming. In order to develop the agriculture-based economy and to ensure diversification in economic activities, the Aromatic Village Project was initiated in Kızıklı. This project has been put forward with the support and contribution of BAÇEM serving in Burhaniye under the Balıkesir Metropolitan Municipality Rural Services



Department. 11 thousand geranium seedlings, which were grown as a result of 5 years of R&D studies at BAÇEM, have been given to 8 women producers living in Kızıklı village since 2020. In this context, steps have been taken for the first time in Türkiye to produce the geranium plant by planting it in the fields. Following this initiative, women producers started preparations for "Aromatik Köy Burhaniye Kızıklı Women's Development Cooperative" ([www.bacem.com.tr](http://www.bacem.com.tr), 2021).



Figure 1. Kızıklı Village Location Map (Source: Compiled by the authors)

The Aromatic Village Project aims to: 1- To expand the production of geranium plants, which have wide areas of use such as agriculture, food, medicine, perfumery and cosmetics, 2- To accelerate rural development by supporting women producers, 3- To promote the image of the region with the geranium plant and to create a brand that will make Balıkesir the aromatherapy center of Türkiye,

4- To use its resources actively in production with ecological sensitivity, social responsibility, economic efficiency sensitivity, economic efficiency sensitivity and to increase tourist attractiveness by carrying these sustainable principles to tourism. Thus, this project aims to diversify production, support women's employment and develop tourism. From the geranium plant, which attracts attention with its high aromatic and cosmetic value; essential oil, hydrosol, insect repellent, tea plant, desserts (e.g. ice cream, lemonade, baklava, gullac, rice pudding, custard and jam) can be made (Tanrıkulu, 2021). The Aromatic Village Project, which supports the development of eco-agro tourism, is one of the tools that can bring Kızıklı to the status of "core village". It is foreseen that the project, which is owned and sustained in transforming the eco-agro tourism potential in Kızıklı into tourism supply and in bringing the village to the forefront as a core village, will create opportunities.



Figure 2. Kızıklı Aromatic Village Project. Burhaniye-Balıkesir (Source: [www.bacem.org.tr](http://www.bacem.org.tr), 2021)

### Materials and Methods

Qualitative research method was used in the study. The research was carried out in a realistic environment, in a holistic manner, with on-the-spot observations and interviews. In-depth interviews were conducted because it is an open-ended and discovery-oriented method. In this context, the participants residing in Kızıklı village; Kızıklı's views on the eco-agro tourism potential, the gains that can be achieved through eco-agro tourism development and the transition of the village economy to the green economy were tried to be determined through in-depth face-to-face interviews. In the research; The following questions were asked to the people live in Kızıklı:

- Do they think that the Kızıklı village has eco-agro tourism potential?
- What gains do they foresee if eco-agro tourism is developed in Kızıklı?
- Will they support the activities to be carried out to contribute to the development of eco-agro tourism in Kızıklı by participating in them?
- Is it possible to adopt a green economy and transition to a green economy in Kızıklı?

In this context, the research questions were created by reviewing the relevant literature and the final form of the questions was given by taking the opinions of 5 tourism experts. Field research was held between 01 May and 18 May 2022 in Kızıklı village. On-site observations were made by the researchers in the field and data were collected in the form of questions and answers from 42 participants in Kızıklı village through a semi-structured questionnaire. In the field study, the necessary notes were taken by the researchers in the observation form. In addition, the interview that started with the village headman was continued with the snowball method and interviews were carried out with the residents of Kızıklı, who have a higher level of education. In the interviews that lasted for 10 days, interviews lasting an average of 1 hour and 30 minutes were conducted with each participant and the feelings and perspectives of the participants were tried to be analyzed in depth. The interviews were terminated after the 42nd participant due to the fact that similar answers to all the questions in the research began to be received. The data obtained from the participants were recorded by the researchers and the notes taken in the in-depth interview were shared with each participant before the interview was terminated.

## Results

In this section, the answers to 11 personal questions prepared to reveal the demographic characteristics of the participants are included first. 7% (n=3) of the participants consisting of residents of Kızıklı village are "Women" and 93% (n=39) are "Men". 21% (n=9) of the participants were "21-30 years old", 23% (n=10) were "31-40 years", 14% (n=6) were in the range of "41-50 years", and 40% (n=17) were "51 years and older". Of the participants, 11 (26%) were "Single" and 31 (73%) were "Married". According to their level of education, most of the participants, proportionally 52% (n=22) have the degree of "Secondary Education", 38% (n=16) have the degree of "Primary", and 9% (n=4) have the degree of "Higher Education". According to the income status variable, 38% (n=16) of the participants have "under 4254 TL", 28% (n=12) have "between 4255-6000 TL", 14% (n=6) have "between 6001-8000TL" and 14% (n=8) have "8001 TL and above" income. When the distribution of the participants according to their professions is examined; "Farmer" (n=20) in the first place, "Self-Employed Business" (n=12) in the second place, "Tradesman" (n=5) in the third place, "Livestock" and "Labor" in the fourth place (n=2) and "Pensioners" (n=1) in the fifth place. The majority of the participants; he was born in Kızıklı village/Burhaniye (n=35) and those who have lived in Kızıklı since their birth are also the majority (n=36). 17% (n=7) of the participants have never been involved in the "agricultural production-farming process". In terms of "Farming in the Family", only 5 (12%) of the participants are engaged in non-agricultural economic activities. To put it more clearly, the families of the majority of the participants (88% n=37) are engaged in agriculture. When the frequency of the participants' expressions according to the "Size of the Land Owned or Leased by the Family" is examined; In the first place, 38% (n=16) were found to have cultivated "20 001 m<sup>2</sup> and above" and in the second place 35.7% (n=15) were found to have cultivated agricultural land "less than 5 000 m<sup>2</sup>".

Table 1. Demographic Information.

		F	%
Gender	Female	3	7.14
	Male	39	92,86
	<b>Total</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>100.00</b>
Age	21-30	9	21.42
	31-40	10	23.81
	41-50	6	14.29
	51+	17	40.48
	<b>Total</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>100.00</b>
Marital Status	Single	11	26.19
	Married	31	73.81
	<b>Total</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>100.00</b>
Education Level	Elementary Education	16	38.10
	Secondary Education	22	52.38
	High Education	4	9.52
	<b>Total</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>100.00</b>
Monthly Household Net Income	Less than 4.254 TL	16	38.10
	4.255-6.000 TL	12	28.57
	6.001-8.000 TL	6	14.29
	8.001 TL and up	8	19.04
	<b>Total</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>100.00</b>
Occupation	Farmer (full time)	20	47.62
	Self-employment	12	28.57
	Small Business	5	11.91
	Farming	2	4.76
	Employee	2	4.76
	Retired	1	2.38
	<b>Total</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>100.00</b>
Place of Birth	Kızıklı/Burhaniye	35	83.33
	Other	7	16.67
	<b>Total</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>100.00</b>
Length of Life in Kızıklı	Since I was born	36	85.71
	Other (average 10 years)	6	14.29
	<b>Total</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>100.00</b>
Period of Participation in Agricultural Production	I've never produced	7	16.67
	Less than 10 years	12	28.57
	11 years and up	23	54.76
	<b>Total</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>100.00</b>
Status of Engaging in Agriculture in the Family	None	5	11.90
	Yes	37	88.10
	<b>Total</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>100.00</b>
Size of Land Owned or Leased by the Family	None	5	11.90
	Less than 5.000 m <sup>2</sup>	15	35.71
	5.001-20.000 m <sup>2</sup>	6	14.29
	20.001 m <sup>2</sup> and up	16	38.10
	<b>Total</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>100.00</b>

After a brief briefing revealing the purpose and importance of the research, the participants were asked what the effects of eco-agro tourism development in

Kızıklı village might be, and their answers were grouped thematically and presented in Table 2 below with their frequency and percentage rates.

Table 2. Content Analysis of Participants' Views on the Effects of Eco-Agro Tourism Development.

Main Theme	F	%	Sub-Theme	Codes	F	%
1. Constructive Effects	103	53,93	Positive Economic Factors	Demand for Local Products, Economic Diversity, Additional Income, Employment, Increase in Investments, Business Opportunity, etc.	36	34,95
			Positive Socio-Cultural Factors	Opportunity for Socio-Cultural Experience, Evaluation of Social Capital, Preservation of Agriculture/Production Culture, Improvement of Quality of Life, Social Pride, Strengthening the Sense of Community, Creating Places and Environments for Socialization, etc.	34	33,01
			Positive Environmental Factors	Protection of Village Texture, Beautification of Appearance, Protection of Natural Environment, Awareness of Natural Environment, Ecological Life, etc.	33	32,04
<b>Total</b>					<b>103</b>	<b>100</b>
2. Destructive Effects	88	46,07	Negative Environmental Factors	Crowding, Parking Problems, Traffic Congestion, Environmental Pollution (Garbage, Noise), Deterioration of Local Texture, etc.	39	44,32
			Negative Economic Factors	Income Not Remaining in Kızıklı (Income Leakage), Increasing Living Costs (Inflationary Pressure), Obtaining Low Income from Tourism, Expensive Agricultural Lands, etc.	31	35,23
			Negative Socio-Cultural Factors	Disruption in Lifestyle, Increased Crime (Theft, Damage to Persons or Property), Social Disharmony and Conflicts, etc.	18	20,45
<b>Total</b>					<b>88</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Sum Total</b>	<b>191</b>	<b>%100</b>				

In the study, constructive and destructive effects titles emerged as the main theme. Under the heading of constructive effects, according to their frequency; under the sub-themes of positive economic, socio-cultural and environmental factors and destructive effects, respectively according to their frequency; sub-themes of negative environmental, economic and socio-cultural factors have emerged. The findings obtained from the research show that the participants have the opinions that the effects of eco-agro-tourism can be both positive and negative. Under the

main theme of constructive effects, positive economic factors are 34.95%, positive socio-cultural factors are 33.01% and positive environmental factors are 32.04%. Under the main theme of destructive effects, according to their frequency; Negative environmental factors are distributed as 44.32% in the first place, negative economic factors in the second place as 35.23% and negative socio-cultural factors as 20.45% in the third place.

Participants were asked whether they would participate to support the future development of eco-agro tourism in Kızıklı village. Almost all of the participants (n=38) stated that they are ready to participate today to support the development of eco-agro tourism. The participants also stated that they could participate in the planning that could be made in Kızıklı (n=39), that they would support the construction of tourism facilities in their regions (n=33), that they expected financial (n=28) and educational support from local administrations for eco-agro tourism development (n=19) and that they would be pleased to see eco-agro tourism activities and tourists in Kızıklı (n=38). The research findings support the findings from the study of Tuzon et al. (2014).

In the continuation of the research, the participants were briefly informed about the "green economy" model and their views on the transition of Kızıklı to the green economy were tried to be learned. In this context, it would be appropriate to present the answers of the participants about the eco-agro tourism potential of Kızıklı first. When the participant responses are evaluated in general, it is stated by the majority of the participants that Kızıklı village has the following characteristics in terms of eco-agro tourism potential:

- Fresh air,
- Suitable climatic conditions,
- Its geomorphological diversity with its plains and mountains,
- Fertile soils,
- Variety of fruits and vegetables grown in the village (beans, peas, kidney beans, tomatoes, eggplants, etc.),
  - Alfalfa, corn silage, barley, and wheat
  - Olive growing,
  - Mineral water sources in the village (sour water-upper side of the village),
  - Village landscape,
  - Aromatic plants such as pelargonium, chamomile, calendula, rosemary, marjoram and similar plants,
- Natural local foods (local cheese, tomato paste, organic yoghurt) The eco-agro tourism potential in the village of Kızıklı is remarkable.

In Kızıklı; the centuries-old monumental trees that are registered and need to be protected, the Sinan Dede Tomb where thousands of people pray by making charities every year, including the surrounding provinces, the sarcophagus, the

historical houses made of stone and adobe in the site of Eski amlık, the caves in Güvercinlik (pigeon rock) and the well in the village and the right side on the way from the village to the big stream, 100 meters from the asphalt road, there is a stone-built well, about 1 meter in diameter and 40 meter deep this historical well called Cangak. The assets in question are; As the spiritual and historical values of Kızıklı village, it is among the tourism attractions. The fertile agricultural areas in Kızıklı are the main source of livelihood of the people. In Kızıklı village, beekeeping and animal breeding are among the sources of income of the people, albeit at a low level. In terms of fauna in Kızıklı, where hunting is not common, wild boars, partridges, yearling horses, marten, jackals, foxes and bears are seen in the forested areas of Saritepe and akmak. In and around the village, roe deer are under protection. In the village of Kızıklı and its immediate surroundings, olive, fig and pine nut trees, wild sprouts, white thorns, thyme, chicory, asparagus, tangle, sorrel belly and radish are diverse in terms of vegetation.

Within the findings obtained from the research, some remarkable results were reached that will contribute to the sustainability of the activities in Kızıklı. Accordingly, it was determined that the majority of the participants had a high level of awareness about the importance of education in order to sustain their resources and that it was a necessity to raise awareness of the residents in Kızıklı. An information supporting the finding obtained is in the study of Abdulkakim o'g'li (2023, p. 27). The researcher emphasizes that the cultural and personal development of the villagers is important for the development of agro tourism. In addition, it is stated by the majority of the participants that cooperatives should be well operated, small workshops should be established to process local products, long-term planning should be made in agricultural production, public support should be increased in agriculture. K22 from the participants; The phrase "National development starts from the peasant, therefore the farmer must be supported" draws attention to the responsibility of the public authority for sustainable development. All of the participants stated that there was no transportation/access barrier in the village for both themselves and the visitors, and that the existing highways and their location close to the district center provided a great advantage in terms of transportation and transportation. Finally, "Do you think it is possible to create an economically sustainable Kızıklı with eco-agro tourism? How should it be?" question. All of the participants are of the opinion that economic sustainability can be achieved with eco-agro tourism in Kızıklı. In this context, the participants interviewed in Kızıklı village; They are of the opinion that young population migrations can be prevented by creating appropriate conditions, that promotion and marketing activities should be emphasized, and that the creation of sales places for natural products such as village bread, tarhana, medicinal herbs, butter, olive oil, pelargonium, aromatic oils, etc. will contribute to the development of eco-agro-tourism. Some of the personal suggestions of the participants in Kızıklı for the development of eco-agro tourism are as follows:

- K8; "A village market should be established at the junction of Börezli-Kızıklı

road",

- K40; "Farmers by producing, cooperatives by packing, and a company by promoting can contribute the project",

- K13; "Kızıklı Village is receiving immigration and needs job opportunities. If tourists come, local dishes and food are encouraged",

- K26; "The dam water is being wasted. When the grown products cannot be sold, the loss is great. Agricultural costs are very high. If a purchase guarantee contract is signed with state support, especially for aromatic products, it may be more sustainable to grow and develop and to open up to eco-agro tourism."

### Conclusion-Recommendations and Discussion

Eco-agrotourism, as an economic activity, is gaining more and more importance due to its applicability in the development process of many countries. Today, eco-agro tourism draws attention and supported with the projects and academic studies developed in Europe, North, Central and South America and many countries of the Caribbean such as Barbados, Jamaica and the Dominican Republic, which have eco-agro tourism potential (Little, 2006). Among the villages in different countries in the world that play a role in the development of eco-agro tourism; Mbam and Faune villages (Senegal), Seiben Linden (Germany), Ithaca and Arcosanti (USA), Bedzed (England), Tamara (Portugal), Findhorn (Scotland), Kemer Evler eco village (Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus), Figardu (South Cyprus), Crystal Waters (Australia) and Latif Yalçın Farm (Erzincan), Birecik Nature House (Şanlıurfa), Ormanevi (Çanakkale), Gağgı Farm, Foça Eco-village and Marmariç Ecological Settlement (İzmir), Knidia Farm (Muğla), Endive Nature House (Bolu), Güllübahçe, Eski Doğanbey, Kirazlı, Caferli and Yaylaköy (Aydın) (Tuğun and Karaman, 2014, p.324; Kılıç and İşcan, 2019, p.5-9; Yıldız et al., 2020; Çakmak and Göktuğ, 2021, p.448-454).

With the agro-tourism project carried out by the Venda Nova do Imigrante Municipality in Espírito Santo Province, the properties most of which are devoted to coffee production were visited by tourists and support was provided to bring this to the forefront as a business. With the cooperation and organization of the private and public sectors, 51 farms and 12 local restaurants were made open to visitors for 12 months. Tourists can participate in the production of agricultural products such as tomatoes, carrots, tangerines, strawberries, avocados and coffee from planting to harvest. Locally produced yogurt, bread, homemade cakes and cookies, rum (liquor) are offered for on-site consumption and/or as a souvenir/gift (Campanhola and da Silva, 1999, p. 7). Tuzon et al. (2014) in their study; The Philippines, Cabuyao, Laguna, Barangay have tried to determine the acceptability of the residents of Casile in converting their location into an eco-agro tourism area. The researchers stated that the participants agreed on the proposal to transform their regions into an agricultural tourism area, respectively; They concluded that cultural acceptability is at the top and economic and social acceptability is at the top because of the income they can get from tourists. Stating that the least acceptability occurs in the environmental field, the researchers concluded that the development of agrotourism, which includes local residents, gives control over the



development and management of the project.

In this study, which was conducted by referring to the opinions of the residents of Kızıklı village, positive results were obtained that there is eco-agro tourism potential in Kızıklı, that local families will fully support the development of eco-agro tourism and that both the economy of the village will be strengthened and the transition to green economy will accelerate with eco-agro tourism. The findings show that the local people think that the effects of eco-agro tourism development in Kızıklı can be both constructive and destructive. Perceptions of constructive effects have a share of 53.93%, while perceptions of destructive effects have a share of 46.07%. This situation explains the reasons for most of the participants (n=38) to fully support the development of eco-agro tourism. Participants see the benefits they will gain from eco-agro tourism higher than the costs they will have to bear. Based on the social exchange theory developed by Blau in the literature, it can be said that the local people can have positive relations and socio-cultural interaction with the tourists coming to the region because they perceive that their socio-cultural gains will be higher than their social costs (Özgürel, 2020, pp. 132-133). The fact that most of the participants (n=38) stated that they would be pleased to carry out tourism activities and to see tourists in Kızıklı supports that positive feelings and thoughts will create positive behaviors. Both the benefits of ecotourism (Stone and Nyaupane, 2018; Snyman and Bricker, 2019; Vysochan et al., 2022) and the benefits of agro tourism (Vysochan et al., 2022) have been revealed in various research. With this study, eco-agro tourism and its perceived effects were presented to planners, practitioners and academics with participant views from the perspective of general community welfare.

At the same time, it was determined that the local people whose opinions were consulted in the study believed that eco-agro tourism should exist and be carried out as a pioneer of sustainable development. The findings show that Kızıklı village can be accepted as a core village considering the examples in the world and in Türkiye and can be transformed into a sustainable settlement unit with its eco-agro-tourism development – ecological, economic, social and cultural life.

According to the findings obtained in the study, the following suggestions have been made regarding the development of eco-agro tourism in Türkiye and specifically Kızıklı Village.

- \* Public/private institutions and organizations should be evaluate the eco-agro tourism potential in rural areas and start infrastructure works for tourism supply,

- \* The production of new and applicable projects that will trigger eco-agro tourism activities should be implemented immediately,

- \* Studies should be carried out to determine the core villages for the development of eco-agro tourism and to increase the visibility and awareness of these villages with the environmental network approach,

- \* Researches should be conducted to determine eco-agro tourist motivations and innovative, original, interesting and creative activities should be organized for eco-agro tourism experience,

\* Tourism planning should be done for the application of eco-agro tourism, which is a nature-based tourism type, and alternative tourism types together,

\* In line with the principle of protecting and using natural and cultural areas, routes with eco-agro content (trekking, cycling, harvesting, gastronomy, art, landscape, etc.) should be created and implemented,

\* A commission should be established with the participation of all stakeholders for the Aromatic Village Project, which supports eco-agro-tourism development and can bring Kızıklı to the status of a core village,

\* After reaching the status of a core village in Kızıklı, it should be accepted as a center in Edremit Gulf and its attractiveness should be increased by establishing an eco-agro network,

\* Kızıklı Aromatic Village should be made a part of the Balıkesir Aromatherapy Festival in the coming years and some of the festival activities should be offered in Kızıklı as an alternative venue,

\* Natural environments for healthy nutrition, recreation and entertainment should be opened to service in Kızıklı, cultural interaction should be established between local people and eco-agro tourists, and tourist experiences should be qualified with a quality service understanding,

\* Environmentally friendly enterprises should be encouraged to invest in Kızıklı and to establish enterprises,

\* Burhaniye Kızıklı Women's Development Cooperative should be put into practice immediately and the training, production and marketing process in cooperative activities should be carried out,

\* Aromatic Cafe serving Aromatic Village delicacies should be opened under the responsibility of the cooperative,

\* Within the cooperative, "aromatic village" branded food products, handicrafts and souvenirs should be produced.

Peer-Review	Double anonymized - Two External
Ethical Statement	<p>* It is declared that scientific and ethical principles have been followed while carrying out and writing this study and that all the sources used have been properly cited.</p> <p>*( Ethics Committee Decision was taken with the decision of Balıkesir University Social and Human Sciences Ethics Committee dated 17.03.2022 and numbered 2022/02.)</p>
Plagiarism Checks	Yes - Ithenticate
Conflicts of Interest	The author(s) has no conflict of interest to declare.
Complaints	<a href="mailto:itobiad@itobiad.com">itobiad@itobiad.com</a>
Grant Support	The author(s) acknowledge that they received no external funding in support of this research.
Author Contributions	<p>Design of Study: 1. Author (%35), 2. Author (%30), 3. Author (%35)</p> <p>Data Acquisition: 1. Author (%40), 2. Author (%20), 3. Author (%40)</p> <p>Data Analysis: 1. Author (%40), 2. Author (%40), 3. Author (%30)</p> <p>Writing up: 1. Author (%35), 2. Author (%30), 3. Author (%35)</p> <p>Submission and Revision: 1. Author (%35), 2. Author (%35), 3. Author (%30)</p>

Değerlendirme	İki Dış Hakem / Çift Taraflı Körleme
Etik Beyan	<p>*Bu çalışmanın hazırlanma sürecinde bilimsel ve etik ilkelere uyulduğu ve yararlanılan tüm çalışmaların kaynakçada belirtildiği beyan olunur.</p> <p>*( Balıkesir Üniversitesi Sosyal ve Beşeri Bilimler Etik Komisyonununun 17.03.2022 Tarih , 2022/02 Nolu kararı ile Etik Kurul Kararı alınmıştır.)</p>
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Etik Bildirim	<a href="mailto:itobiad@itobiad.com">itobiad@itobiad.com</a>
Çıkar Çatışması	Çıkar çatışması beyan edilmemiştir.
Finansman	Bu araştırmayı desteklemek için dış fon kullanılmamıştır.
Yazar Katkıları	<p>Çalışmanın Tasarlanması: 1. Yazar (%35), 2. Yazar (%30), 3. Yazar (%35)</p> <p>Veri Toplanması: 1. Yazar (%40), 2. Yazar (%20), 3. Yazar (%40)</p> <p>Veri Analizi: 1. Yazar (%40), 2. Yazar (%40), 3. Yazar (%30)</p> <p>Makalenin Yazımı: 1. Yazar (%35), 2. Yazar (%30), 3. Yazar (%35)</p> <p>Makale Gönderimi ve Revizyonu: 1. Yazar (%35), 2. Yazar (%35), 3. Yazar (%30)</p>

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