

[DOI: 10.20472/IAC.2015.019.027](https://doi.org/10.20472/IAC.2015.019.027)

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**PROTECTION OF SOIL AND WATER RESOURCES IN
MEDITERRANEAN SMALL ISLANDS: A GREEK CASE**

Abstract:

The natural environment in Mediterranean and, therefore, small and medium-sized Greek islands, definitively forms their landscape. Elements that make up this landscape are, naturally, the history of each island, the inhabitants activities, the fragility of its natural and built environment, as well as its sensitive ecosystems. Thus, the rational management of natural resources of small-medium sized islands coupled, of course, with appropriate policies that do not depend on the socio-economic structures of the mainland, could be an important factor of self-sufficiency, attractiveness and sustainable development in general.

In this study, the island of Samothrace was examined, a 54% mountainous island, with 35.7% forest cover, whose inhabitants are employed mainly in the primary sector (farming, agriculture, fisheries) and in which the secondary sector has shrunk dramatically, while shrinking can also be observed at the tertiary sector.

The occupation of large proportion of the residents with livestock, in combination with natural disasters (intense floods, forest fires), has led to significant soil erosion phenomena (soil leaching and dramatic reduction in its productivity) and degradation of existing forests. The mitigation of these phenomena, the protection and rational management of the island's water resources, including wetlands, are imperative to safeguard the comparative advantage that is its natural environment.

Keywords:

Environmental protection, soil and water resources, islands, Greece

Acknowledgements: This research has been co-financed by the European Union (European Social Fund - ESF) and Greek national funds through the Operational Program "Education and Lifelong Learning" of the National Strategic Reference Framework (NSRF) - Research Funding Program: Thales. Investing in knowledge society through the European Social Fund.