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### **EVALUATION OF BALIKESIR PROVINCE BIGADIC DISTRICT BY MEANS OF SWOT ANALYSIS METHOD WITH THE POTENCIAL OF RURAL TOURISM**

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#### **EXTENSIVE SUMMARY**

The demand for tourism all over the world and our country is in a significant increase due to the effects of socio-economic changes. Visitors who joined the tourism movement increases the challenge to alternative tourism types to experience a different experience, to live in a natural environment, to experience different foods and drinks, to explore new things, to see different things. One of the alternative tourism types that can be considered in this context is rural tourism, which has a direct impact on rural development. Rural tourism besides agriculture and animal husbandry, as well as touristic values , brings to light. Analysis of SWOT is the most important strategic analysis technique that is used to assess the strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats of an operation or city.

In this study, an investigation is carried out towards Bigadiç district of Balıkesir province, which is an important destination in terms of rural tourism in Turkey and which is mentioned in 2023 Turkey Tourism Strategy.

Using the interview technique supported by the face-to-face interview method, the strengths and weaknesses of the Bigadic destination were determined and opportunities and threats were tried to be determined. In this direction; The opinions of the local people and the district protocol are consulted:

District Governor of Bigadiç: Altug ÇAĞLAR

Mayor of Bigadiç: Ismail AVCU

Neighborhood Mukhtar of Kadıköy: Abdülkadir BINGUL

Editor of district: Hasan ILTERİŞ

Within the scope of the research, the strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats obtained within the framework of the opinions of the local people and the district protocol, whose opinions and views are taken, are compiled as in Table 1.

<b>STRENGTHS</b>	<b>WEAKNESSES</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Excessive number of people coming from outside for business due to rich boron deposits</li><li>• Husbandry is very common</li><li>• More people living in rural areas</li><li>• The presence of quality forestland</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Lack of tourist facilities and superstructure</li><li>• Inadequate promotion and marketing</li><li>• Infrastructure and service quality do not respond to needs</li></ul>
<b>OPPORTUNITIES</b>	<b>THREATS</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The presence of 7 thousand decars land open to incentives for tourism investment.</li><li>• Increasing interest in rural tourism</li><li>• Providing opportunities for tourism such as mountain tourism, camping tourism, farm tourism</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Environmental problems arise because of attach importance to mining</li><li>• Gradually decrease of young population</li><li>• Not being on the intercity route</li></ul>

**(Table.1)**

Bigadiç's rural tourism potential is assessed in rural areas; It has been reached that there are many factors that will enable both the thermal tourism and the revitalization of nature and culture tourism. However, short-term and long-term strategic action plans must be developed and acted according to these action plans in order to develop the city as a tourism destination.

One of the weaknesses of Bigadiç, lack of promotion and marketing, is taken into consideration by the local government and it is necessary to allocate promotion budget in strategic action plans.

In order to be able to develop tourism in rural areas and accordingly rural tourism, many more measures need to be taken. If these measures are taken and tourism potential is assessed, it will be possible not only to be limited to thermal tourism but also to extend the stay period to other tourist facilities for thermal tourism purpose.