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The New Special Spatial Framework for Tourism

Codification of Provisions
of the Draft Joint Ministerial Decision
(May 2026)

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THE NEW SPECIAL SPATIAL FRAMEWORK FOR TOURISM

Codification of Provisions of the Draft Joint Ministerial Decision (May 2026)

On 11 May 2026, the draft Joint Ministerial Decision (JMD) was published with the title: “Approval of the Special Spatial Framework for Tourism and its Strategic Environmental Impact Study” (hereinafter: SSF-T). On this occasion, a guidance Q&A is presented to facilitate a complete understanding of the most significant provisions of the SSF-T.

1. What is the purpose of the SSF-T?

The purpose of the SSF-T is to determine long-term and medium-term objectives and strategic directions at the national level for the spatial organisation of the tourism sector — the most dynamic large-scale sector of the national economy — in terms of economic, environmental, and social sustainability and sustainable development.

2. What is the relationship of the SSF-T with other spatial and urban planning tools?

The underlying spatial and urban planning (e.g. RSF, MSF, LUP, SUP) is bound by the minimum level of environmental and social protection set by the SSF-T. For this reason, on one hand, until the review/amendment of the RSFs, the directions/regulations of the SSF-T prevail over any contrary provisions; on the other hand, regulations provided by first-tier urban planning tools or special decrees that establish stricter building conditions and restrictions, or use restrictions, prevail over the regulations of the SSF-T.

3. Into which areas is the national territory categorised?

The national territory is categorised:

- into five (5) areas based on the spatial organisation of tourist accommodation
- into areas with special geographical characteristics, and
- into areas with a special regime

as follows:

**Spatial Organisation
of Tourist
Accommodation**

**Special
Geographical
Characteristics**

**Special
Regime**

(A) Controlled Development

**(M) Metropolitan
Areas**

**Areas of the
National System
of Protected Areas**

(B) Developed

**(N) Islands
(Groups I, II and III)**

**Protected
and abandoned
settlements**

(C) Developing

(P) Coastal Zone

**Archaeological sites,
monuments and historic
places**

(D) Early Development

(O) Mountainous Areas

**(E) Areas of Special
Development Reinforcement**

It should be noted that the RSFs may modify the spatial organisation of tourist accommodation (A) through (E), by changing the classification by at most one tier at the Municipal Unit (MU) level, provided this is justified by the data from the RSF analysis. For example, the South Aegean RSF may, under the above conditions, change Sifnos from (B) to (C).

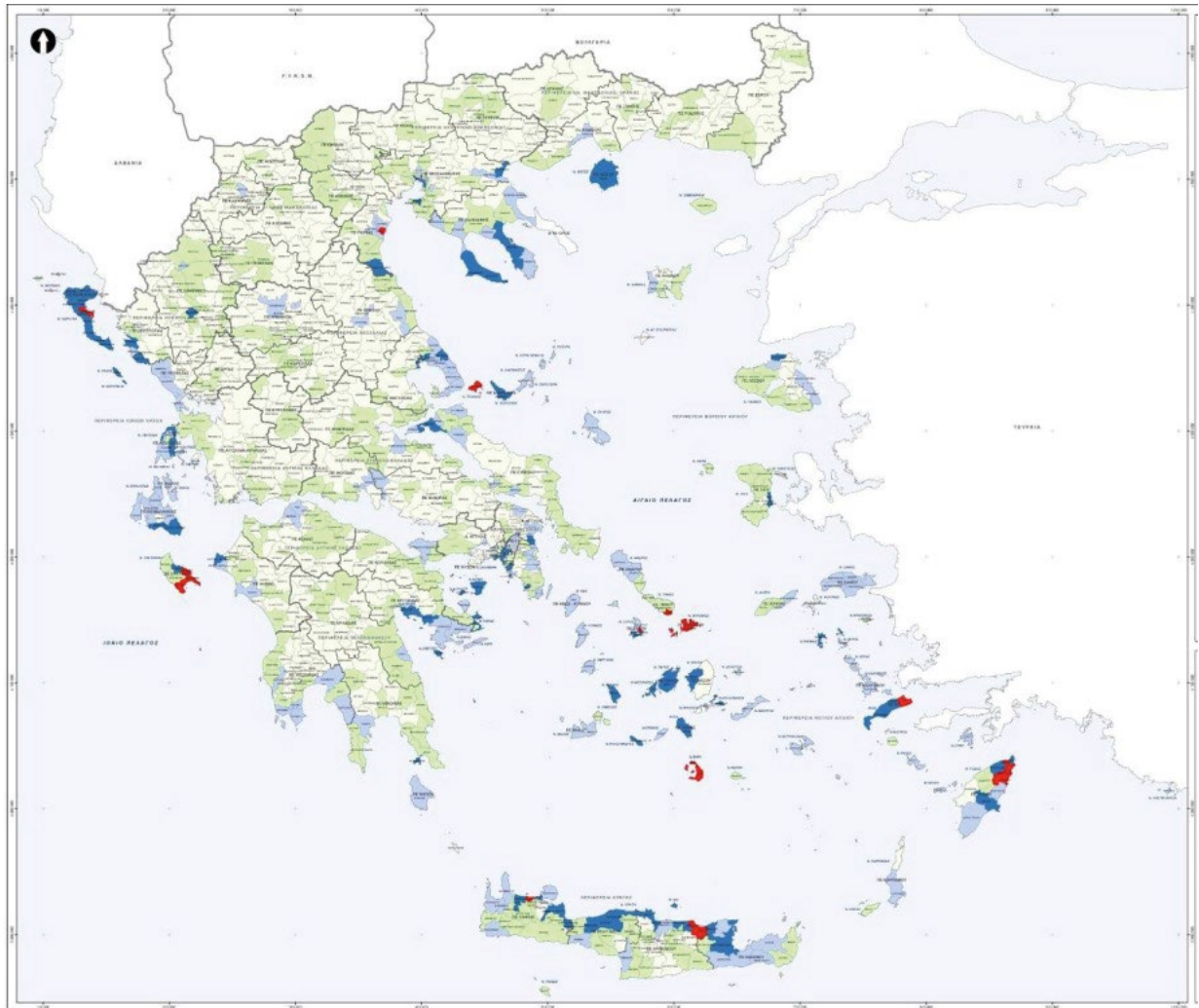


Figure 1:
SSF-T Map. (A) in red, (B) in dark blue, (C) in light blue, (D) in green and (E) in beige.

4. What are the individual regulations for categories (A) through (E) of the spatial organisation of tourist accommodation?

Category	minimum plot area (stremma) for the construction of new hotels in out-of-plan areas until the approval of a first-tier urban planning tool	stars/keys
(A)	16	3 to 5 (construction/extension)
(B)	12	
(C)	8	
(D)		2 to 5 (construction/extension)
(E)		no specific regulation or restriction applies

5. What applies to (M) Metropolitan Areas?

In the in-plan areas of the Region of Attica and the Metropolitan Area of Thessaloniki, as defined in the applicable Central Macedonia RSF, incentives are provided for the reuse of old industrial facilities as tourist facilities. This provision is set as a direction by the SSF-T towards the underlying spatial and urban planning tools, without specifying the incentives.

6. How is the (N) Islands category spatially distinguished and what are the individual regulations for each relevant group?

Category	beds	stars keys	restrictions for OTDA
<p>Group I: Islands larger than 250 sq. km. (Andros, Zakynthos, Thassos, Ikaria, Karpathos, Corfu, Kefalonia, Kythira, Kos, Lesvos, Lefkada, Lemnos, Naxos, Rhodes, Samos, Chios)</p>	<p>no bed limit is set (see however any restriction from the national territory category, e.g. A: bed limit 100 or B: bed limit 350)</p>	<p>no condition /restriction applies</p>	<p>gentle development only (except Rhodes and Corfu)</p>
<p>Group II: Islands between 20 and 250 sq. km. [Agios Efstratios, Aegina, Alonnisos, Amorgos, Anafi, Antikythira, Antiparos, Astypalaia, Gavdos, Ithaca, Ios, Kalamos, Kalymnos, Kasos, Kea, Kimolos, Kythnos, Kyra Panagia, Leros, Meganisi, Nisyros, Milos, Mykonos, Paxos, Paros, Patmos, Poros, Samothrace, Santorini (Thira), Saria, Serifos, Sikinos, Sifnos, Skiathos, Skopelos, Skyros, Spetses, Symi, Syros, Tilos, Tinos, Hydra, Folegandros, Fournoi, Chalki, Psara and other islands of the same size range]</p>	<p>up to 100</p>	<p>3 to 5</p>	<p>gentle development only</p>
<p>Group III: other islands (smaller than 20 sq. km.) (all islands and any land surface in the maritime space not included in Groups I</p>			
<p>Islands below 1,000 stremma</p>			<p>gentle maritime recreation (e.g. diving, swimming), information kiosks, 1 tourist residence or 1 glamping up to 50 persons and tourist vessel shelters (the permissibility of OTDAs is not directly regulated)</p>

It should be noted that category (N) covers the entire island territory of the country, excluding mainland Greece, Euboea and Crete.

7. What applies to the Coastal Zone (P)?

For (P) areas (where the coastal zone is understood as the geomorphological area on either side of the coastline, in which the interaction between the marine and terrestrial parts takes the form of complex systems of ecological elements and resources composed of biotic and abiotic components that coexist and interact with human communities and related socioeconomic activities), a distance of 0–25 meters from the coastline is required, with a complete prohibition of constructions and works, except for those intended for access by persons with disabilities and ambulances, and those permitted under Law 2971/2001, as amended by Law 5170/2025.

8. What applies to Mountainous Areas (O)?

For (O) areas, the utilisation of the housing surplus of declining and abandoned settlements is provided for.

9. What applies to the Areas of the National System of Protected Areas?

In the protected areas of Article 18 para. 3 of Law 1650/1988, only gentle, small-scale and environmentally friendly forms of tourism and related complementary activities are permitted, as defined in Presidential Decree 59/2018, in accordance with the established regulatory framework of the relevant protected area or, in the absence thereof, in accordance with the provisions of the corresponding approved Special Environmental Study. For this reason, all organized forms of tourism development and complementary activities (e.g. CTAs, SSMTAs) may include parts of the National System of Protected Areas, provided that in these parts the gentle development model is adopted, in which case the maximum building coefficient equals $\frac{1}{2}$ of that applicable in the corresponding category of organised tourism reception. It should be noted that specifically for (A) Controlled Development areas, the development of new tourist infrastructure is only provided for after the establishment of management plans.

10. What applies to protected and abandoned settlements?

First, it is proposed to establish rules for the morphology of new buildings, to strengthen shell restoration actions, and specifically for abandoned and declining settlements, to promote initiatives for their revitalisation. Furthermore, the utilisation of abandoned mountain settlements of architectural interest is encouraged, through the conversion of buildings of other uses into accommodation, or through new larger-scale investments, with incentives either for current owners or for interested investors. In this context, the need to restore and utilise old shells, to repurpose notable buildings or complexes, and to provide incentives for the conversion of traditional or listed buildings into hotel units of at least 3 stars. Similarly, ensuring their accessibility through connection to main road axes and improving their infrastructure networks is promoted. Finally, the promotion of the distinctive environmental, geological, architectural, historical, religious or cultural elements of each settlement is highlighted, with the aim of increasing the tourism potential and extending the tourist season.

11. What applies to archaeological sites, monuments and historic places?

First, the accessibility, visitability and functional organisation of archaeological sites, monuments and historic places are provided for, as well as the upgrading and protection of their surrounding area, with control of uses and the installation of infrastructure networks, to ensure their optimal presentation. Furthermore, the promotion, preservation and management of archaeological sites, monuments and historic places of the national territory is encouraged, through their organisation into multi-thematic networks. Finally, care is taken for the promotion and overall management of the landscape, to highlight the inseparable relationship of archaeological sites and monuments with their wider environment.

12. What does the designation “gentle development” entail for OFTDs and OTDAs?

The gentle development of OFTDs and OTDAs entails that the maximum building coefficient equals $\frac{1}{2}$ of that applicable in the corresponding category of organised tourism reception area.

13. How is the conflict between tourism uses and short-term rental regulated?

The activity of short-term rental of properties may be subject to spatially differentiated conditions and restrictions, which are specified based on the categorisation of areas (A, B, C, D, E) and/or their special geographical characteristics. In this context, measures for the organisation and control of the activity may be provided for, such as:

- the determination of conditions and requirements for making properties available for short-term rental
- the regulation of the duration of the activity per year
- the establishment of geographical prohibition or restriction zones for the activity
- the imposition of restrictions on the development of new short-term rental supply, especially in areas under increased pressure or with special geographical characteristics, including cases of newly-built residences.

14. What applies to non-main hotel accommodation?

First, the permitted number of beds in non-main hotel accommodation built under residential building conditions must not exceed the permitted beds in main hotel accommodation, in accordance with the applicable general land use in each case. Furthermore, the creation of different Furnished Rooms and Apartments for Rent businesses (FRAR) within the same building is not permitted. Finally, commercial shops and shops of sanitary interest in buildings where a FRAR business operates are permitted only on the ground floor of the building, and provided that each such business has an independent, external access/entrance.

15. In which areas and cases is the obligation to draw up Carrying Capacity Assessment Reports for tourism provided for?

The documentation of carrying capacity through a Carrying Capacity Assessment Report (CCAR) is required in the following categories:

CCAR	
(A)	• Preparation/review/amendment of first-tier urban planning studies (e.g. LUP, SUP)
(B)	• Location and licensing of an individual tourist unit of main or non-main tourist accommodation: (a) over 50 beds in a MU with a permanent population of less than 3,000 inhabitants and (b) over 150 beds in areas with a permanent population of greater than 3,000 inhabitants
(C)	Location and licensing of an individual tourist unit of main or non-main tourist accommodation: (a) over 50 beds in a MU with a permanent population of less than 3,000 inhabitants and (b) over 150 beds in areas with a permanent population of greater than 3,000 inhabitants
(D)	Location and licensing of an individual tourist unit of main or non-main tourist accommodation over 150 beds in areas with a permanent population of greater than 3,000 inhabitants
(E)	
Islands (N) – Group I	Preparation/review/amendment of first-tier urban planning studies (e.g. LUP, SUP)

In cases where the siting takes place in a MU with an already approved urban plan incorporating a CCAR, it must be documented either that the new unit does not result in an exceedance of the defined critical indicators, or it must be justified, based on scientific criteria, that the additional burden does not materially alter the basic parameters of the existing CCAR

16. How are any contradictions between specific directions and regulations of the individual national and spatial categories resolved?

In the event of contradictions between specific directions and regulations, "those that are more restrictive for construction and more supportive of the environment and the landscape shall prevail", in the exact wording of Article 6 of the SSF-T.

17. Which activities and projects are excluded from the scope of application of the SSF-T? (transitional provisions)

First, for licensing procedures for tourist installations that are in progress at the date of publication of the SSF-T, its provisions do not apply, provided that the following has been duly submitted, depending on the type of tourist installation:

- a complete EIS or SEA file for the issuance of an EACD
- a decision of inclusion in PPD
- a complete building pre-approval file
- a recommendation for approval of environmental conditions by DIPA/YPEN in the context of SEA review relating to an OTDA.

Likewise, the provisions of the SSF-T do not apply to projects and activities within approved OTDAs, CTAs, SSMTAs not prepared at the municipality or MU level and plans under Article 8 para. 7 of Law 4447/2016 (e.g. ITDA, AODPA, ISLBUP, SSDPPP, SSDPSI).

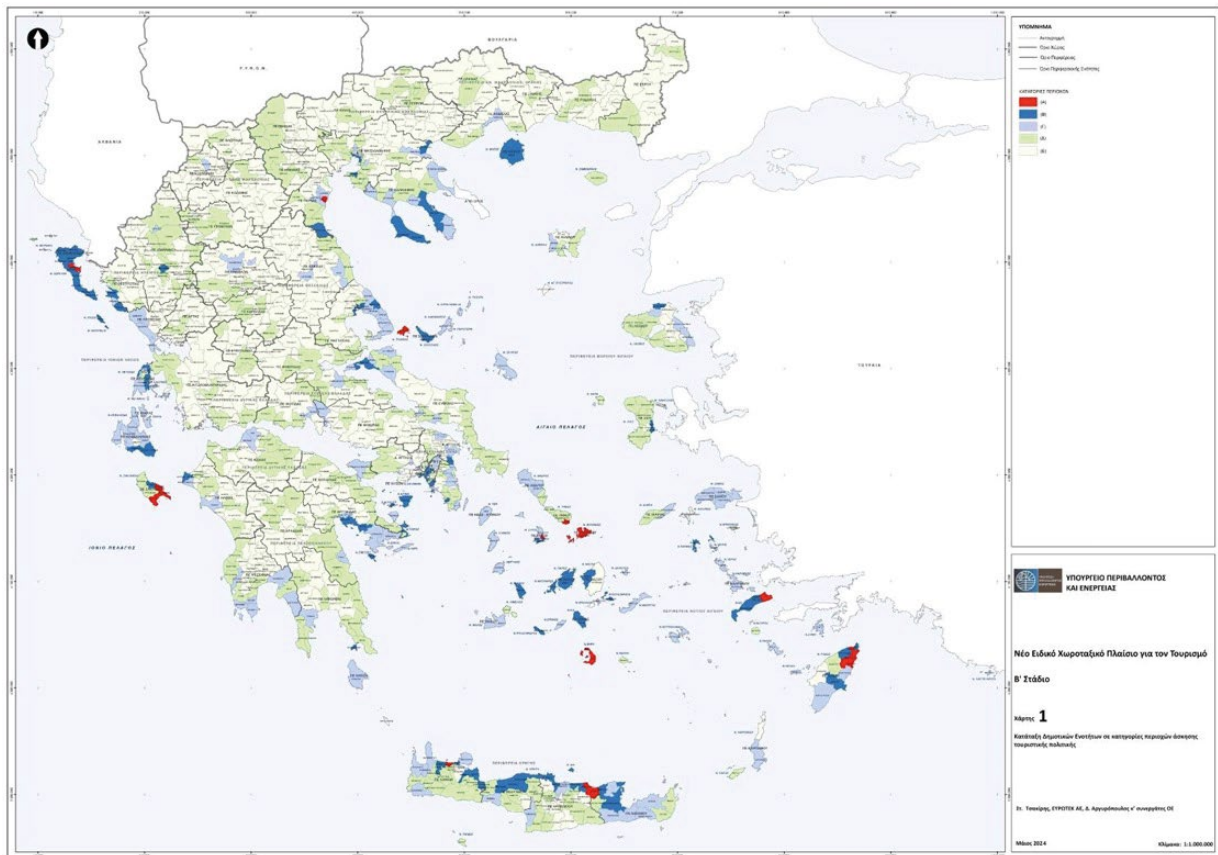
18. Examples of conditions and restrictions on individual (N) Islands and Crete

	national territory category	group (N)	conditions/restrictions			
			minimum out-of-plan area (stremma)	stars/keys	restrictions for OTDA (outside Natura, etc.)	bed limit
Kefalonia	B, C and E	I	for B: 12 for C and E: 8	for B and C: 3 to 5 for E: no restriction applies	gentle development	for B: 350 for C and E: no restriction applies
Rhodes	A, B, C, D and E	I	for A: 16 for B: 12 for C, D and E: 8	for A, B and C: 3 to 5 for D: 2 to 5 for E: no restriction applies	no restriction applies	for A: 100 for B: 350 for C, D, E: no restriction applies
Chios	B, D and E	I	for B: 12 for D and E: 8	for B: 3 to 5 for D: 2 to 5 for E: no restriction applies	gentle development	for B: 350 for D and E: no restriction applies
Anafi	D	II	8	3 to 5	gentle development	100
Antiparos	B	II	12	3 to 5	gentle development	100
Ios	B	II	12	3 to 5	gentle development	100

	national territory category	group (N)	conditions/restrictions			
			minimum out-of-plan area (stremma)	stars/keys	restrictions for OTDA (outside Natura, etc.)	bed limit
Milos	C	II	8	3 to 5	gentle development	100
Mykonos	A	II	16	3 to 5	gentle development	100
Paros	B	II	12	3 to 5	gentle development	100
Santorini	A	II	16	3 to 5	gentle development	100
Sifnos	B	II	12	3 to 5	gentle development	100
Skopelos	B	II	12	3 to 5	gentle development	100
Spetses	B	II	12	3 to 5	gentle development	100
Syros	A, B and C	II	for A: 16 for B: 12 for Γ: 8	for A: 16 for B: 12 for C: 8	gentle development	100
Crete	A (e.g. Chania), B (e.g. Mylopotamos), C (e.g. Kissamos), D (e.g. Sfakia) and E (e.g. Kastelli)	excluded from (N)	for A: 16 for B: 12 for C, D and E: 8	for A, B and C: 3 to 5 for D: 2 to 5 for E: no restriction applies	no restriction applies	no restriction applies

Appendices

Appendix I: SSF-T Map



Appendix II: Overall Categorisation

Category		minimum out-of-plan area (stremma)	stars /keys	development level	bed limit
(A)	Other	16	3 to 5	no restriction applies	no restriction applies
	(N) – I			if OTDA, gentle (except Corfu and Rhodes)	100
	(N) – II				
	(N) – III				
	Protected ¹			gentle and only after the establishment of management plans	no restriction applies
(B)	Other	12		no restriction applies	
	(N) – I			if OTDA, gentle	350
	(N) – II				100
	(N) – III				
	Protected			gentle	no restriction applies
(C)	Other	8		no restriction applies	
	(N) – I			if OTDA, gentle	100
	(N) – II				
	(N) – III				
	Protected			gentle	no restriction applies

Category		minimum out-of-plan area (stremma)	stars /keys	development level	bed limit
(D)	Other		2 to 5	no restriction applies	no restriction applies
	(N) – I		3 to 5	if OTDA, gentle	100
	(N) – II				
	(N) – III				
	Protected		2 to 5	gentle	no restriction applies
(E)	Other		no restriction applies	no restriction applies	
	(N) – I		3 to 5	if OTDA, gentle	
	(N) – II				
	(N) – III				
	Protected		no restriction applies	gentle	no restriction applies

¹ The regime of the protected areas should be read in conjunction with the corresponding Special Environmental Study (SES) and Articles 14A to 14D of Presidential Decree 59/2018, where a limit of 150 beds is established specifically for the Habitat and Species Conservation Zone.

Appendix III: Abbreviations

AODPA	Area of Organised Development of Productive Activities, pursuant to Article 24 of Law 1650/1986
CCAR	Carrying Capacity Assessment Report
CTA	Complex Tourist Accommodation, pursuant to Article 1 para. 2 sub-para. a item dd of Law 4276/2014
DIPA	Environmental Licensing Directorate
EACD	Environmental Approval Conditions Decision
EIS	Environmental Impact Study
FRAR	Furnished Rooms and Apartments for Rent
ISLBUP	Individual Single Large Business Unit Park, pursuant to Article 41 para. 1 sub-para. g of Law 3982/2011
ITDA	Integrated Tourism Development Area, pursuant to Article 29 of Law 2545/1990
LUP	Local Urban Plan
MSF	Maritime Spatial Framework
MU	Municipal Unit
OFTD	Organised Form of Tourism Development and complementary activities, including OTDAs, CTAs and SSMTAs
OTDA	Organised Tourism Development Area, i.e. the area developed under a unified plan in order to function primarily as an organised space for the development of tourism-recreation activities and other activities ancillary to tourism, specifically the ITDA, AODPA, SSDPPP, SSDPSI as specifically defined in Article 1 of Law 4179/2013
RSF	Regional Spatial Framework

SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment
SSDPPP	Special Spatial Development Plan for Public Properties, pursuant to Article 12 of Law 3986/2011
SSDPSI	Special Spatial Development Plan for Strategic Investments, pursuant to Article 24 of Law 3894/2010 and Laws 4608/2019 and 4864/2021.
SSF-T	Special Spatial Framework for Tourism
SSMTA	Small-Scale Mixed Tourist Accommodation, pursuant to Article 1 para. 2 sub-para. a item zz of Law 4276/2014
SUP	Special Urban Plan
YPEN	Ministry of Environment and Energy



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