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**An approach to managing and promoting Algeria's built heritage based on
the 'heritage - sustainable development - tourism' triptych**

مقاربة لإدارة وترويج التراث المبني بالجزائر

على أساس ثلاثية "التراث - التنمية المستدامة - السياحة"

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Abstract:

This article outlines a sustainable, integrated approach to the management and enhancement of Algeria's built heritage. This approach sees the built heritage as a driving force for sustainable local social and economic development. Associating built heritage with the development of responsible cultural tourism is likely to generate new economic dynamics at local level. This will help to open up isolated regions, make inland areas more attractive, improve the social situation of local residents, and so on. In return, the income generated by tourism provides local authorities with sustainable financial sources for the management and conservation of their built heritage. Finally, the proposed approach is based on the triptych 'heritage, sustainable development and responsible tourism'. This approach, which aims to preserve our heritage, also promotes responsible tourism, respect for local culture and preservation of the environment.

Keywords: Algeria - promoting built heritage - local social and economic development - responsible tourism - sustainable development.

الملخص:

هذا المقال يستعرض نهجاً مستداماً ومتكاملاً لإدارة وتعزيز التراث البنائي في الجزائر. يرى هذا النهج التراث البنائي كقوة دافعة للتنمية المحلية المستدامة الاجتماعية والاقتصادية. ربط التراث البنائي بتطوير السياحة الثقافية المسؤولة من المرجح أن يولد ديناميات اقتصادية جديدة على المستوى المحلي. وسيساعد ذلك في فتح المناطق المعزولة، وجعل المناطق الداخلية أكثر جاذبية، وتحسين الوضع الاجتماعي للسكان المحليين، وما إلى ذلك. بدوره، يوفر الدخل المتولد عن السياحة مصادر مالية مستدامة للسلطات المحلية لإدارة وحفظ تراثها البنائي. وأخيراً، يستند النهج المقترح على ثلاثي "التراث، والتنمية المستدامة، والسياحة المسؤولة". هذا النهج، الذي يهدف إلى الحفاظ على تراثنا، يعزز أيضاً السياحة المسؤولة، واحترام الثقافة المحلية، وحفظ البيئة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الجزائر - تعزيز التراث البنائي - التنمية المحلية الاجتماعية والاقتصادية - السياحة المسؤولة - التنمية المستدامة.

1. INTRODUCTION:

Algeria boasts a rich and diverse architectural and urban heritage that spans the entire country. Today, many historical sites and monuments have been designated and are subject to specific regulations for their preservation and enhancement. Indeed, several urban and archaeological sites have already been classified as UNESCO World Heritage sites. These include the Kalâa of Beni Hammad (1980), the M'Zab Valley (1982), the archaeological sites of Djémila (1982), Timgad (1982), and Tipasa (1982), and finally, the Casbah of Algiers (1992).

At the national level, the latest list published by the Ministry of Culture on its website includes 443 classified immovable cultural properties in Algeria.¹ These properties are distributed across the Algerian territory in various forms: historical monuments (64.02%), archaeological sites (27.10%), urban complexes not designated as protected sectors (1.64%), rural complexes not designated as protected sectors (0.93%), cultural parks (1.17%), urban complexes designated as protected sectors (4.44%), and rural complexes designated as protected sectors (0.7%). Altogether, these data and figures attest to the extensive material cultural heritage present in Algeria.

In this regard, the Algerian state has implemented numerous policies and strategies over the past decades aimed at the preservation and enhancement of urban and architectural heritage. Among these actions is the development of a comprehensive legal and legislative framework for the protection and enhancement of classified historical sites and monuments, such as the Permanent Plan for the Safeguarding and Enhancement

of Protected Sectors (PPSMVSS) and the Plan for the Protection and Enhancement of Archaeological Sites (PPMVSA). Additionally, several public agencies have been established to manage cultural properties and oversee restoration and enhancement operations, including the National Office for the Management and Exploitation of Cultural Properties (OGEC) and the National Agency for Protected Sectors (ANSS). Lastly, the training of specialists in the field of heritage, as well as in the professions of restoration and conservation of ancient buildings, constitutes another aspect of this policy.

In the same vein, the conservation and management of the entire built heritage present across the national territory now require increasingly substantial human, technical, and financial resources. This is partly due to the significant and growing number of classified immovable cultural properties. Moreover, some classified sites that have been affected by phenomena of impoverishment and precariousness risk being abandoned by the local population. Currently, these isolated sites contribute little to local economic development.

Given this situation, it is necessary today to approach the issue of the management and enhancement of built heritage in Algeria with new policies and strategies. These should ensure the sustainable and optimal conservation and valorization of built heritage, while simultaneously guaranteeing healthy and sustainable local social and economic development in these living historical sites.

In this context, the present reflection proposes to integrate the project of conservation and management of built

heritage into a more comprehensive and sustainable approach. This approach advocates for the enhancement of urban and architectural heritage in the service of responsible and sustainable tourism, thereby actively contributing to the generation of economic development dynamics in various regions of the country. This development will, in turn, ensure the funding for the preservation and promotion of the historical built environment. Finally, this approach aligns with the perspective of sustainable development and the practice of responsible tourism that respects traditions, local cultures, and the environment.

To effectively undertake this reflection, the article is composed of four main parts. The first part is dedicated to the issue of enhancing built heritage through its integration into a successful process of local economic development. The second part briefly presents the various strategies and actions for the enhancement of built heritage with a view to promoting tourism. The third part addresses the concept and principles of responsible tourism to ensure the preservation of cultural heritage in the face of the challenges posed by tourism activities. Finally, the last part presents some international examples of heritage sustainability and the practice of responsible tourism.

2. THE "HERITAGE, SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM" TRIPTYCH:

2.1. Basic concepts:

This section includes the definition of key concepts related to the fields of heritage, sustainable development, and tourism. Understanding these concepts, as defined by international organizations (UN, UNESCO, ICOMOS, etc.), provides a backdrop against

which the close relationship that must be established between these three domains (heritage, sustainable development, and tourism) will be explained. The ultimate goal is to develop a sustainable model for the promotion and enhancement of built heritage.

Heritage: According to the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), heritage is a broad concept that includes both natural and cultural environments. It encompasses natural and built sites, historical ensembles, landscapes, biodiversity, traditional and contemporary cultural practices, among others.²

Heritage thus reflects the historical development and identity of nations, regions, and local communities. Heritage can also play a dynamic and positive role in development and exchanges. Every place and community possesses a unique heritage and a valuable collective memory, which are essential for present and future development.

Cultural heritage: Cultural heritage is defined as a concept that encompasses groups of buildings and sites, monuments, artifacts, and museums recognized for their scientific, social, historical, artistic, and other values.³ Cultural heritage thus includes various types of tangible heritage as well as intangible cultural heritage. According to this definition, cultural events such as festivals and celebrations are not included in this concept, unlike rock paintings and industrial heritage.

Urban heritage: Urban heritage consists of architectural monuments and ordinary architecture, which is primarily composed of residential fabric. The harmony characterizes the entire urban ensemble, even if no single element apart from the others constitutes a particular architectural

masterpiece.⁴ Therefore, urban heritage concerns varied and complementary levels.

Cultural landscapes: Cultural landscapes are defined as the work generated from the interaction over time between nature and humans. Indeed, cultural landscapes reveal the presence of a strong and deep historical relationship between people and their natural environment.

Historic urban landscape: The notion of the historic urban landscape is part of a comprehensive and integrated approach to the conservation and management of heritage. In reality, the historic urban landscape surpasses the concepts of historic centers or historic ensembles, as it pertains to a broader urban territory that is the product of a historical layering of cultural and natural values and attributes, marked within its geographical context.⁵ Thus, the historic urban landscape includes, among other elements, buildings, green spaces, visual relationships, topography, hydrology, etc. It also encompasses intangible heritage and social and cultural practices within its conceptual framework.

Sustainable development: Sustainable development constitutes a growth model aimed at responsibly meeting the fundamental needs of present generations, particularly the most disadvantaged, while preserving the resources necessary for future generations to meet their needs. Sustainable development aims to simultaneously and long-term guarantee *"the preservation of natural capital and ecosystems, social justice, and economic development that generates employment activities"*.⁶

Cultural tourism: Cultural tourism is an activity where the main interest of visitors is to discover and experience the cultural aspects of a destination, whether

tangible or intangible. These elements include the arts, architecture, historical and culinary heritage, literature, etc., as well as the lifestyles, values, beliefs, and traditions of a society.

Sustainable tourism: Sustainable tourism takes into account the economic, social, and environmental effects, both present and future. It aims to responsibly meet the needs of tourists, industry professionals, the environment, and local communities.⁷ This form of tourism seeks to minimize the negative impacts of mass tourism and to preserve the heritage wealth (natural, cultural, and social) of the visited areas. Finally, sustainable tourism manifests in various forms (e.g., responsible tourism, ecotourism, solidarity tourism, slow tourism, etc.), depending on the desired focus (social, cultural, natural).

Domestic tourism: In general, domestic tourism refers to the activities of a tourist within their own country. This type of tourism can be considered a form of sustainable tourism as it directly contributes to local economic development. It also helps minimize negative environmental impacts by reducing carbon emissions generated by transportation methods (airplane, train, car, bus, etc.).

2.2. Reflections and conceptual framework:

The concept of heritage first responds to the fundamental idea of inheritance and the transmission of a society's history, identity, collective memory, know-how, etc. This transmission between different generations must be approached with care and interest. Considered this way, *"heritage is only a means and not an end"*.⁸

To perpetuate this chain of inheritance between generations, heritage (both tangible

and intangible) must be preserved over time. However, it must be acknowledged that the approach of classifying urban and architectural heritage in Algeria without integrating it into a dynamic of urban, economic, and social development—thus risking its isolation and freezing its use over time—is insufficient to guarantee its sustainability and its role as a conduit for the transmission of history, culture, and traditions. Moreover, the issue of funding conservation and management operations for built heritage remains unresolved and requires in-depth consideration.

In this context, this contribution aims to outline a reflection for the development of a comprehensive and sustainable approach to the management and conservation of urban and architectural heritage in Algeria. This approach integrates the promotion and use of built heritage into a dynamic of local economic development supported by tourism activities.

"Heritage preservation has significant economic implications, related to the increases in income and job creation it generates. It can initiate a virtuous circle of local development".⁹

Heritage thus contributes to increasing the wealth of a territory and, in turn, generates the necessary funds for investment in the heritage sector. Finally, these new investments can serve as an important source for consolidating local development in the future.

This approach, which aims to incorporate built heritage into a sustainability perspective, requires the use of appropriate and durable solutions. It is necessary to implement innovative urban policies at the scale of the considered territory, in consultation with local

authorities and populations.¹⁰ In summary, this approach advocates for the promotion of responsible tourism that respects local populations, preserves the environment, and contributes to the creation of collective wealth at the local level. Ultimately, the initiation of the economic development process based on tourism activities will, in turn, finance the conservation and enhancement operations of urban and architectural heritage.

The proposed conceptual framework for developing this approach is based on the triptych of sustainable development, tourism, and cultural heritage. The choice of a responsible tourism model according to the principles and objectives of sustainable development aims to foster tourism development that respects the environment and local culture. On the other hand, the promotion of cultural tourism aims to avoid the detrimental effects of mass tourism and better enhance the role of heritage for local communities. Indeed, tourism policies that emphasize local identity can be supported by cultural tourism.¹¹ In conclusion, this positive interaction between the continuous enhancement of heritage and the promotion of responsible cultural tourism is likely to ensure the sustainability of urban and architectural heritage on one hand, and to serve as a lever for local economic development on the other.

3. BUILT HERITAGE, A DRIVING FORCE FOR TOURISM AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:

Far from claiming to provide a comprehensive overview of the various actions and strategies aimed at enhancing and promoting built heritage, the aim here is to succinctly outline the general rules and most common actions that can achieve this

goal. The objective is to raise awareness among different city stakeholders about the importance of enhancing built heritage in Algeria as a vector for local economic development. Finally, it is necessary to remind that each site and each historical monument has its own potential and characteristics, requiring tailored enhancement actions and solutions.

Thus, the following list summarizes the most common actions and strategies for the promotion and enhancement of built heritage:

- thorough evaluation of cultural heritage to identify sites, practices, and traditions to be enhanced. Identifying heritage allows for improved services and increased visibility of the relevant territory.¹²
- restoration and conservation of historical sites and monuments to preserve their integrity and ensure their longevity.
- promotion of awareness through educational programs, guided tours, and publications to inform the public about the cultural and historical significance of historical sites and monuments.
- improvement of signage and accessibility (e.g., signage and normative panels, tourist pathways marked on the ground, etc.) to encourage tourists to visit and explore historical sites.¹³
- establishment of local economic partnerships with local authorities, cultural associations, and businesses to foster local economic and tourist development and ensure sustainable heritage management.
- encouragement of public-private partnerships through the development of policies and laws that incentivize the enhancement and promotion of built heritage, and to fund and promote local cultural tourism.

- organization of cultural events, artistic performances, exhibitions, etc., at historical sites to attract a wider audience and strengthen the link between cultural heritage and tourism.
- use of innovative technologies (virtual reality, augmented reality, mobile applications, virtual tours, etc.) to make heritage exploration more interactive.
- continuous training of various actors in the tourism sector to properly fulfill their roles in hospitality, communication, and information.
- construction and rehabilitation of tourist infrastructure and improvement of services as tourist sites must ensure visitor safety, service quality (transport, accommodation, etc.), and comfort while preserving the integrity and authenticity of cultural heritage.
- development of varied and authentic tourist experiences with the creation of immersive tourist circuits that emphasize history, local culture, traditions, etc., highlighting different aspects of cultural heritage.
- conducting targeted promotional campaigns at national and international levels, through various communication channels (media, social networks, travel blogs, etc.), to emphasize the authenticity of built heritage in Algeria.
- cultivating responsible tourism and raising awareness among residents and visitors about the importance of respecting and safeguarding cultural heritage.

The combination of these various actions, among others, can significantly contribute to the enhancement and promotion of built heritage in Algeria as a powerful driver of tourism and, consequently, local economic development.

4. RESPONSIBLE TOURISM TO PRESERVE CULTURAL HERITAGE:

The approaches adopted for tourism development in historical sites must be integrated and sustainable. Thus, the promotion of responsible tourism in historical sites formally aligns with a sustainable development approach that addresses local concerns and issues (economic, social, and environmental), on the one hand, and engages in a process of preserving cultural heritage (both tangible and intangible), on the other.

The following list enumerates, in a non-exhaustive manner, the approaches that promote responsible tourism development and respect for cultural heritage:

- responsible planning through the development of tourism strategies that prioritize heritage preservation, identify sensitive areas, and define development limits.
- investment in conservation by allocating funds from tourism to the preservation and conservation of sites and cultural practices.
- actively involving local associations in the decision-making process of heritage management to ensure tourism development that respects the needs, values, and traditions of the local population.¹⁴
- establishing effective management and regulatory frameworks to guide tourism activities and manage visitor flow in sensitive areas.
- raising awareness among tourists, tourism operators, and local communities about the importance of built heritage and the practice of responsible tourism.
- offering a variety of cultural and tourist experiences to reduce pressure on sensitive sites and promote lesser-known historical sites.

- utilizing innovative and environmentally friendly technologies to enhance the tourist experience while minimizing the impact on heritage (e.g., interactive apps or virtual tours).
- regularly conducting impact assessments of tourism activities on sites and historical monuments to make necessary adjustments to developed strategies and meet changing needs.
- limiting the number of visitors in sensitive sites to control tourist influx and consequently reduce the risk of heritage degradation.
- investing in sustainable tourism infrastructure that meets visitors' needs while respecting the environment and valuing tangible heritage.
- encouraging tourist sites to obtain responsible tourism certifications that attest to their commitment to heritage and environmental preservation.
- promoting local crafts that contribute to the safeguarding of traditions and ancient know-how, which also provide a significant resource for the local population.
- designing tourist itineraries that are respectful and sensitive to the concerns of local communities and the preservation of cultural heritage and the environment.

All of these actions, which promote responsible and sustainable tourism in historical sites, help create enriching tourist and cultural experiences, support healthy economic development, and preserve cultural heritage.

5. HERITAGE SUSTAINABILITY AND RESPONSIBLE TOURISM, INTERNATIONAL EXAMPLES:

This section of the article provides a brief overview of several international examples focusing on: cultural heritage

preservation policies, responsible cultural tourism, and sustainability initiatives for cultural heritage conducted by international organizations.

5.1. International examples of cultural heritage preservation policies:

The following examples illustrate how certain historical sites in different regions of the world have successfully reduced the impact of tourism activities on the preservation of cultural heritage:

Tourist flows Management in Kyoto (Japan): To alleviate pressure on popular tourist sites caused by the massive influx of visitors, the city of Kyoto has introduced restrictive measures such as quotas for temporary housing rentals and the promotion of less-frequented areas. Finally, the Japan National Tourism Organization encourages tourists to be considerate of the local population.¹⁵

Restrictive measures at Machu Picchu (Peru): To reduce the impact of increasingly invasive mass tourism, which threatens the tangible heritage of Machu Picchu, Peru limited the number of visitors to 2,500 per day in 2017. One-way circuits have also been introduced to better protect the site. Additionally, numerous communication campaigns have been conducted to raise awareness among visitors about the necessity of practicing responsible tourism.

National parks preservation program in the United States: American national parks implement preservation programs and restrictions on visitor activities to reduce the impact on natural and cultural ecosystems. Additionally, these parks now hold several designations that include them in the domain of heritage (e.g., UNESCO World Heritage List).¹⁶

5.2. International examples of responsible cultural tourism:

The following examples propose innovative approaches that advocate for responsible cultural tourism to preserve cultural heritage and the environment:

The *Viking routes* in Norway: This initiative highlights sites and cultural heritage related to the Vikings while emphasizing sustainability and environmental preservation. These routes include towns, museums, archaeological remains, forts, etc.¹⁷

Ecotourism in Costa Rica: Costa Rica has been renowned for its ecotourism since the 1980s.¹⁸ The initiatives include the promotion of rural tourism, the conservation of national parks, and raising awareness about biodiversity.

Eco-friendly accommodations in Sweden: Sweden was one of the first countries in the world to develop an ecotourism charter. This charter encourages eco-friendly accommodations (e.g., ecolodges and environmentally friendly hotels) that offer tourists authentic experiences while reducing environmental impact.

Incredible India Program in India: Since 2002, the Indian government has developed a strong strategy to establish India as an authentic destination.¹⁹ To achieve this, India launched the *Incredible India* campaign, which focuses on promoting heritage and cultural tourism in the country.

5.3. International initiatives for the cultural heritage sustainability:

Some international initiatives implement sustainability mechanisms to preserve the richness of cultural heritage and

promote economic and social development in historical sites. Here are a few examples:

UNESCO World Heritage Label: The UNESCO World Heritage list identifies and conserves sites or properties of outstanding universal value. The UNESCO World Heritage Label is crucial as it encourages heritage preservation and promotes responsible tourism.

UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN): This initiative, dating back to 2004, advocates for a model of sustainable urban development based on cultural exchange between cities that share cultural creativity as a common value.²⁰

Heritage conservation through the World Monuments Fund (WMF): The World Monuments Fund (WMF) finances heritage conservation projects worldwide and collaborates with civil society actors and government partners to safeguard endangered historical sites.²¹

These examples illustrate various approaches and mechanisms aimed at the sustainability of cultural heritage on an international scale. They also demonstrate how cultural heritage preservation is integrated into sustainable development projects.

6. CONCLUSION:

This communication outlines a comprehensive and integrated approach to the enhancement of urban and architectural heritage in Algeria. The proposed approach is based on promoting responsible tourism in historical sites to generate a dynamic of local economic development, which in turn funds the conservation and management operations of urban and architectural heritage.

This brief proposal for a strategy to enhance built heritage obviously needs to be developed and examined from different perspectives (social, economic, urban, etc.), as it is important to devise a heritage enhancement strategy based on a comprehensive, clear, and sustainable vision (what type of tourism? local and/or foreign tourists? what kinds of cultural activities? etc.).

To achieve significant results, it is also necessary to include all concerned parties in the decision-making process (local authorities, associations, specialists, local population, etc.) because the viability of such an approach depends on the commitment of the local populations, who view these places as living heritage. In reality, while it is true that heritage interests policymakers, entrepreneurs, and intellectuals alike,²² it is clearly its appropriation by local populations through an adequate heritage and management strategy that ensures its sustainability.²³

Finally, the management of urban and architectural heritage must demonstrate creativity and innovation because heritage, in its various forms, is destined to renew and constantly adapt to new situations: *"all the world's heritage is bound to transform, adapt, update, with some emerging while others disappear"*.²⁴

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²² MICHEL Franck, *op. cit.*, p.17-18.

²³ VERNIERES Michel, *op. cit.*, p.13.

²⁴ MICHEL Franck, *op. cit.*, p. 20.