

Ecotourism as a Mechanism for Sustainable Development and Investment Attraction in Algeria

السياحة البيئية كألية للتنمية المستدامة وجذب الاستثمار في الجزائر

Wassila Rezig

Faculty of Law – Benyoucef Benkhedda – University of Algiers 1

Digital Economy, Green Economy, and Business Law Laboratory

w.rezig@univ-alger.dz

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Abstract :

Development constitutes a fundamental prerequisite for ensuring societal stability and human advancement. Within the framework of its renewed tourism policy, Algeria has undertaken legal and economic reforms aligned with sustainable development principles to revitalize the tourism sector. These reforms reflect the state's strategic commitment to creating a conducive and enabling environment for promoting tourism activities while safeguarding the ecological balance and enhancing the nation's natural, cultural, and historical assets. Ecotourism, in particular, exerts a direct influence on the structural pillars of sustainable development and functions as a critical mechanism for attracting international visitors. As such, tourism-related investments have emerged as a vital source of foreign currency and a catalyst for macroeconomic diversification.

Keywords: Ecotourism; Sustainable Development; Tourism Investment; Strategic Master Plan

ملخص:

التنمية هي عنصر أساسي للاستقرار والتطور الاجتماعي والإنساني، ولقد سعت الجزائر في ظل سياستها السياحية الجديدة، قصد تنمية القطاع السياحي ومحاولة النهوض به إلى تبني إصلاحات قانونية واقتصادية في إطار التنمية المستدامة وذلك لتوضيح مدى عزم الدولة في إحداث محيط ملائم ومحفز لدعم وترقية الأنشطة السياحية في ظل حماية البيئة و تهمين القدرات الطبيعية و الثقافية و التاريخية للبلاد كون السياحة البيئية تؤثر بشكل مباشر على أبعاد التنمية المستدامة بالإضافة إلى اعتبارها عنصر فعال لجذب السياح الأجانب، حيث تعتبر الاستثمارات السياحية مصدرا هاما من مصادر العملات الأجنبية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: سياحة بيئية ؛ تنمية مستدامة ؛ استثمار سياحي ؛ مخطط توجيهي ؛

Auteur correspondant: Wassila Rezig

Introduction:

Sustainable development is a relatively modern conceptual construct that initially emerged in conjunction with national economic planning efforts, particularly in the context of post-colonial state-building. It gained institutional traction through the establishment of key international financial and environmental bodies, such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the latter inaugurated in 1960. The momentum intensified when the United Nations Economic and Social Council, in its 45th session held in 1968, adopted a resolution affirming the urgent necessity for coordinated and comprehensive action at both the national and international levels to mitigate environmental risks and to promote sound economic and social growth¹.

This institutional trajectory culminated in the seminal 1972 Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment, convened in Sweden, which unequivocally declared that the preservation and enhancement of the human environment constitutes a fundamental precondition for the well-being of nations. In 1982, the United Nations General Assembly further entrenched this normative orientation by adopting the World Charter for Nature, which emphasized the necessity of integrating nature conservation strategies into national development planning, thereby laying the groundwork for a globally coordinated vision of ecologically viable progress based on cooperative interdependence between societies and natural resources.

This perspective was authoritatively reaffirmed in the landmark report *Our Common Future* (1987), authored by the World Commission on Environment and Development, commonly referred to as the Brundtland Commission—named after its chairwoman, Gro Harlem Brundtland—who had been appointed in 1983 by the UN Secretary-General to investigate and propose a global agenda for transformative change². By 1990, the International Labour Conference had formally recognized sustainable development as the foundational paradigm underpinning all organizational activity within the International Labour Organization (ILO).

In 2002, the World Summit on Sustainable Development, convened in Johannesburg, South Africa, highlighted the imperative of protecting the global environment, eradicating poverty, and enhancing the resilience of developing countries in confronting the multifaceted challenges of globalization—particularly those pertaining to environmentally linked public health concerns. This was followed by the 2005 resolution of the Council of Arab Ministers of Social Affairs and Planning under the auspices of the League of Arab States, which adopted a renewed developmental vision aligned with the Millennium Development Goals. The resolution emphasized inclusive participation by marginalized demographics such as women and youth, and endorsed the involvement of civil society organizations as active agents in the realization of sustainable development objectives³.

Within this broader conceptual and institutional landscape, sustainable tourism development has emerged as a strategic contemporary approach aimed at reconciling the exigencies of economic expansion with the imperatives of environmental preservation and cultural heritage protection. It seeks to meet the needs of both tourists and host nations through a normative framework grounded in core principles such as the efficient utilization of natural resources, the safeguarding of ecosystems and biodiversity, the respect for local cultures and traditions, and the promotion of economic dividends for local communities⁴.

The strategic significance of sustainable tourism lies in its capacity to stimulate economic growth in host countries by fostering local market dynamism, enhancing income distribution, and improving standards of living. In this regard, sustainable tourism is increasingly regarded as an

essential investment mechanism to reinforce the socio-economic sustainability of touristic regions on a global scale.

In alignment with this paradigm, Algeria, under its revamped tourism policy, has endeavored to revitalize the sector by enacting a series of legislative and economic reforms rooted in the principles of sustainable development. Notably, Law No. 03-01 of 17 February 2003 concerning sustainable tourism development was promulgated to underscore the state's commitment to fostering an environment conducive to the advancement and regulation of touristic activities in Algeria⁵.

This initiative has been reinforced through a suite of complementary legislative instruments, including Law No. 03-02 concerning the general rules governing the use and exploitation of beaches and natural areas for tourism purposes; Law No. 03-03 governing tourism expansion zones and designated touristic sites; and Law No. 03-10 of 19 July 2003 on environmental protection within the framework of sustainable development⁶. Collectively, these legal texts are designed to bolster ecotourism, institutionalize the tourism sector, and enhance environmental governance.

Thus, this study acquires an intertwined character that integrates the intersection of environmental law, tourism legislation, achieving sustainable development, and tourism economics, while maintaining the legal aspect as the primary perspective.

Against this legislative and policy backdrop, the present study raises a twofold central research question: To what extent does ecotourism contribute to the realization of sustainable development in Algeria? And what policy incentives has the state recently adopted to attract investment in this domain?

To address this research problem, the study has been structured into two thematic sections:

- Section One: The Interrelationship between Ecotourism and Sustainable Development
- Section Two: Mechanisms through which Ecotourism Contributes to the Fulfillment of Sustainable Development Objectives

Section One: The Interrelationship Between Ecotourism and Sustainable Development

Ecotourism has emerged as a significant export-oriented industry, primarily reliant on the exploitation of a country's natural endowments—its environmental wealth and biodiversity—alongside human-constructed infrastructures intended to attract tourists. Beyond its economic value, ecotourism plays a decisive role in advancing sustainable development, serving as a mirror reflecting the trajectory of nations' progress across social, environmental, and economic dimensions. To delineate the conceptual boundaries of “sustainable ecotourism,” it becomes imperative to first examine the core constructs independently.

Subsection One: The Conceptualization of Ecotourism and Sustainable Development

Ecotourism constitutes a pivotal axis of the sustainability paradigm, as it represents a form of tourism explicitly predicated on ecological integrity and long-term viability. As such, it is fundamentally anchored in natural ecosystems, necessitating a precise definitional framework as follows:

1. Definition of the Environment

The term *environment* refers to the ensemble of natural and anthropogenic elements surrounding and influencing living organisms on the surface of the Earth. The term demands clarification through linguistic, terminological, and legal lenses⁷:

- **Linguistic Connotation:** In classical semantics, the term "environment" encompasses meanings such as habitat, setting, or condition, and its contextual interpretation is contingent upon the relationship between humans and the surrounding spheres—agricultural, health-related, social, economic, cultural, political, or touristic environments⁸. In French lexicography, the term was formally incorporated in 1972 to designate the sum of physical, chemical, and biological elements—natural or synthetic—within which humans, animals, and plants coexist.
- **Terminological Connotation:** Scholarly consensus tends to converge on an understanding of the environment as the totality of external conditions—water, air, soil, biodiversity, and the artificial constructs erected by humans to meet existential needs—that sustain and condition human life.
- **Legal Definition:** While the Algerian legislator has not explicitly codified a formal definition of the environment, constitutional provisions strongly affirm its centrality. Notably, Article 64 of the Constitution enshrines the citizen's right to a sound environment within the broader framework of sustainable development. Law No. 03-10 on environmental protection in the context of sustainable development provides, in Article 4, an indirect yet operational definition by enumerating its components: biotic and abiotic resources including air, atmosphere, water, soil, subsoil, flora, fauna, genetic heritage, as well as natural landscapes and ecological interactions⁹.

The 1972 Stockholm Conference advanced a broad, ecological interpretation: "The environment is defined as the sum total of all external, direct and indirect influences and conditions that affect the life and development of living organisms"—in other words, the entirety of the external milieu surrounding us.

2. Definition of Tourism and Ecotourism

Tourism refers to a constellation of socio-cultural, economic, and organizational activities involving the movement of individuals to foreign territories, typically for durations exceeding 24 hours, excluding employment as the primary motive.

Ecotourism, by contrast, is defined as "a form of responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and sustains the well-being of local communities." According to the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), ecotourism entails "travel to unspoiled natural areas that remain ecologically balanced and uncontaminated, allowing visitors to enjoy natural scenery, wildlife, and indigenous flora, while simultaneously supporting the economic systems of developing countries, promoting conservation, and institutionalizing the principles of sustainable development"¹⁰.

Scholars such as Lapeyre et al. assert that both general tourism and ecotourism represent economic activities that enable comparative advantages among developing countries, primarily through the optimal use of their natural capital¹¹. These activities can furnish sustainable income to local populations while incentivizing the preservation of ecological heritage.

The distinguishing feature of ecotourism lies in its systemic integration with economic and investment planning across all societal sectors. It necessitates the protection of its fundamental

components—environment, culture, tourism, and natural resources—through strategic programming that redirects touristic flows toward ecologically significant sites¹².

The intricate balance between tourism and the environment is a recurring theme in global discourse. The 1980 Manila Declaration on World Tourism, for instance, unequivocally asserts that tourism needs must be met in ways that do not compromise the socio-economic interests of local populations, the ecological equilibrium, or the historical and cultural assets that serve as primary tourist attractions¹³.

3. Definition of Sustainable Development

Development, in its broadest interpretation, is an ongoing, participatory process whereby individuals work collectively to transition society from a state of stagnation to one of progressive advancement. It entails targeted reforms across sectors aimed at elevating living standards¹⁴.

Legal and doctrinal scholarship defines sustainable development as the orchestration of activities that enhance human well-being while judiciously managing available natural resources over the long term, minimizing environmental degradation, and meeting present needs without undermining the capacities of future generations¹⁵.

As articulated by Gwackerman, sustainable development as a conceptual framework seeks to harmonize economic development with prudent environmental stewardship. This balance is only sustainable if resource use transcends generations while continuously improving human welfare¹⁶.

The Algerian legislator, through Article 4 of Law No. 03-10, conceptualizes sustainable development as the integration of socio-economic progress with environmental protection, aimed at fulfilling the needs of both current and future generations in a balanced and enduring manner¹⁷.

Hence, ecotourism cannot effectively serve as a development driver unless it is embedded within the architecture of sustainable tourism¹⁸. Only through such integration can it become a genuine instrument of sustainable development¹⁹.

Subsection Two: Principles and Components of Supporting Ecotourism in Algeria

Ecotourism is based on the following principles and legal components :

Branch One: Principles of Ecotourism

Ecotourism rests upon a set of normative and operational principles that collectively aim to reconcile human recreational activity with ecological preservation and socio-cultural integrity. Among the fundamental tenets that underpin ecotourism are the following:

- **Sustainable and Rational Management of Natural Resources and Biodiversity:** This principle entails the deliberate and scientifically informed stewardship of ecosystems and biological diversity in a manner that ensures their regeneration, resilience, and functionality over the long term.
- **Legal Safeguarding of Tourists and Environmental Sites:** Ensuring the security and well-being of tourists, alongside the strict protection of environmentally sensitive zones, requires adherence to robust legal frameworks and the implementation of stringent procedural mechanisms governing access, usage, and conduct within ecotouristic territories.
- **The Principle of Substitution:** This concept allows for the systematic replacement of environmentally harmful practices or infrastructures with alternatives that pose significantly

reduced ecological risks, thus embodying the ethos of precautionary environmental governance.

- **Provision of Informed Tourist Engagement:** Ecotourism necessitates equipping visitors with comprehensive, accurate, and context-sensitive information about the ecological, historical, and cultural attributes of the destination, thereby fostering informed and respectful interaction with the local environment.
- **Promotion of Environmental and Touristic Awareness:** Raising collective consciousness among both the resident population and the broader community is essential for cultivating a culture of ecological responsibility and sustainable hospitality practices.

The effective implementation and advancement of ecotourism are contingent upon the active and coordinated participation of a diverse constellation of stakeholders, including both natural and juridical persons. These stakeholders encompass eco-conscious tourists, tourism operators (such as travel agencies and tour coordinators), local residents, non-governmental organizations, as well as local, national, and international institutions vested in the promotion and regulation of sustainable tourism practices.

Branch Two: Pillars for Supporting the Environmental Tourism Strategy

In order to support and promote environmental tourism, the Algerian legislator has enacted a set of legal measures, which include:

1- Support for Electronic Environmental Tourism

Electronic tourism is the utilization of electronic technologies and the Internet in the field of travel and tourism, with the aim of enhancing the performance of tourism service providers and facilitating tourists' access to offers and services in a more efficient manner. This definition is articulated by the Algerian legislator in Article 19 of Law No. 03-01, on the sustainable development of tourism, as follows : "Promoting a favorable environment to stimulate the spirit of initiative and develop tourism." The law also emphasizes the employment of innovation across all development sectors, which applies to environmental tourism projects by valuing scientific research outcomes and technological development to equip public authorities with the necessary expertise for decision-making in this regard.

2- Partnership Support

The Algerian legislator, through Article 2 of Law No. 03-01 relating to sustainable tourism development (aforementioned), affirmed the necessity of promoting tourist investment through partnership in the tourism sector, while presenting an applied model of social privatization aimed at increasing public participation in economic capital; which some regard as the authorities' intent to forge a social alliance around the privatization dossier.

3-Support for Training in Ecotourism:

The Algerian legislator has prioritized human resources development to ensure optimal customer reception, as reflected in the establishment of several training institutions, namely:

- The National Higher School of Tourism,
- The National Institute of Hotel and Tourism Techniques,
- The Hotel and Tourism Center.

4- Media as a Support Tool for Ecotourism :

- Article 24 of Law No. 03-01 (aforementioned) provides for tourist information, considering it a tool for promoting tourism, valorizing the country's tourist potential, and exploiting it commercially. The same law, in the content of Article 28, regards it as an activity that highlights Algeria's tourist, cultural, and natural qualifications, while enhancing investment opportunities and strengthening partnerships in the tourism sector.

Section Two: Mechanisms through which Ecotourism Contributes to Sustainable Development

Tourism investment plays a pivotal role in fostering national economic growth. Among the most salient elements that attract investors are the availability of pristine, ecologically sound environments, and the presence of diversified natural landscapes capable of underpinning long-term sustainable development. The Algerian context illustrates this dynamic vividly, as the country is endowed with exceptional ecological assets and protected natural reserves suitable for recreational and touristic purposes.

Subsection One: Ecotourism within Protected Areas

Each state endeavors to capitalize on its touristic comparative advantages to attract both domestic and international visitors. In Algeria, ecotourism is particularly well-positioned due to the country's immense ecological wealth and its diverse network of protected areas dedicated to leisure, exploration, and environmental appreciation.

Branch One: Tourism Expansion Zones and Designated Touristic Sites

Tourism expansion zones are legally designated areas identified for their natural, archaeological, or historical allure, whose development potential is substantiated through preliminary studies specifying modes of touristic exploitation and methods for meeting visitor demand. These zones may also be defined as spatial territories tailored for touristic development, integrated with complementary activities and governed by a zoning framework encompassing development areas, expansion areas, and conservation zones²⁰.

In alignment with this policy orientation, Algeria has enacted robust legal and regulatory instruments to promote these zones, most notably Law No. 03-03 of 17 February 2003, concerning tourism expansion zones and designated touristic sites. According to Article 2(1) of the aforementioned law, tourism expansion zones are delineated as territorial extensions characterized by distinctive natural, cultural, and anthropogenic attributes that render them suitable for the establishment or enhancement of tourism infrastructure, capable of supporting one or more economically viable forms of tourism²¹.

These zones represent legally protected spaces or aggregated real estate units with specific qualifications. They may comprise built and unbuilt lands that are eligible for tourism infrastructure development with the objective of stimulating tourism investment. However, the excessive allocation of land to such zones has triggered rampant speculation, misuse, and informal or unregulated construction, thereby compromising the integrity of protected touristic real estate. In response, the legislator has reinforced legal prohibitions against unauthorized encroachments, particularly in high-value protected zones possessing recognized natural and archaeological significance.

As for *designated touristic sites*, Article 2(3) of Law No. 03-03 defines them as landscapes or locations distinguished by their aesthetic, natural, or man-made features, which confer upon them historical, artistic, mythical, or cultural value. These sites must be safeguarded from deterioration,

whether caused by anthropogenic activities or natural erosion, and their originality must be preserved and valorized.

Branch Two: National Parks

Initially established for the purpose of conserving fragile and irreplaceable natural attributes, Algeria's national parks (*hadhā'ir waṭaniyya*) have progressively evolved into structured recreational areas that serve as major tourism magnets. A *national park* is a territory demarcated for the protection of biodiversity and the preservation of shared natural resources. The broader concept of a natural space (*al-fadā' al-ṭabī'ī*) encompasses any region characterized by biological specificity, including natural landmarks, landscapes, and geologically or ecologically significant sites.

The legal framework governing these national parks is articulated in Executive Decree No. 13-374, which codifies the model basic statute of national parks. Under this statute, national parks are classified as public administrative entities endowed with legal personality and financial autonomy, thus qualifying as public law institutions. This classification subjects them to the entire suite of administrative legal norms, including administrative decisions and contracts, public sector personnel, and the application of administrative law²².

National parks have been formally integrated into Algeria's protected areas framework under the sustainable development regime. As critical custodians of biodiversity and nodes of ecotouristic attraction, they are established through presidential decrees that specify their nomenclature, location, and territorial boundaries.

These parks are diverse in nature and geography, comprising:

- Coastal parks such as El Kala, Gouraya, and Taza;
- Mountainous parks including Djurdjura, Chréa, Theniet El Had, and Belezma;
- Saharan parks, primarily Ahaggar and Tassili n'Ajjer, which hold significant geological and anthropological value.

Branch Three: Saharan Ecotourism

Saharan ecotourism is a specialized form of nature-based tourism situated within desert ecosystems. Its appeal lies in the interplay between natural features—such as sand dune fields (*ergs*), stony plains (*regs*), barren mountain ranges, dry riverbeds, and oases—and human cultural manifestations shaped by centuries of adaptation to desert life. The resulting synthesis of ecological and anthropological elements offers visitors a distinctive experience far removed from urban and rural norms.

Under Article 3 of Law No. 03-01, Saharan tourism is defined as touristic activity occurring in desert environments, based on the sustainable exploitation of the region's natural, historical, and cultural assets, and supplemented by recreational, leisure, and exploratory activities intrinsically linked to the desert setting.

In recent years, numerous international assessments have ranked Algeria among the world's most promising emerging tourist destinations, particularly in terms of Saharan tourism. The region's natural purity, geological marvels, paleontological treasures, and breathtaking landscapes have earned it international acclaim as a prime location for ecotourism.

A 2022 article in *The Washington Post* referred to Algeria as a "sleeping tourism giant," highlighting five Saharan destinations that attract growing attention from global tour operators due to their unique and varied characteristics:

- Assekrem, located in Tamanrasset near the Malian border, is celebrated as the site of the world's most stunning sunset.
- Taghit, a prominent oasis in Béchar Province, over 1,000 kilometers southwest of Algiers, draws visitors with its sand dunes and historic sites.
- Timimoun, known as the “Red Oasis” or the “Pearl of the Desert,” captivates tourists during the winter season with its palm groves and ancient adobe castles nestled in sandy landscapes.
- Djanet, a newly established wilaya bordering Niger and Libya, has witnessed increased international traffic, particularly following the launch of direct air routes from Paris. It is home to the Tassili n'Ajjer Cultural Park, designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1982, notable for its prehistoric cave art and volcanic formations—rendering it an unparalleled open-air museum.
- Ghardaïa, situated in the central north of the Algerian Sahara and known as the “City of the Seven Ksars,” is part of the M'zab Valley, home to the Ibadi Amazigh. Five of its historic fortified towns—Ghardaïa, Bounoura, El Atteuf, Melika, and Beni Isguen—have been inscribed by UNESCO as World Heritage Sites due to their architectural coherence and social cohesion preserved since the 11th century²³.

Subsection Two: Contemporary Initiatives for Advancing Ecotourism in Algeria

In response to the multifaceted challenges of economic diversification, environmental sustainability, and regional development, the Algerian state has adopted a comprehensive and proactive policy approach to reinvigorate the national tourism industry—particularly in its ecologically focused modalities. Recognizing ecotourism as a strategic lever for territorial attractiveness, environmental conservation, and socio-economic empowerment, the state has launched a constellation of initiatives designed to foster a more resilient and competitive tourism economy.

These initiatives have been embedded within a multidimensional policy framework that integrates legal, fiscal, institutional, and planning instruments. Their primary objective is not only to expand the sector's contribution to gross domestic product (GDP), but also to align Algeria's tourism model with the principles of sustainable development as articulated in international treaties, national legislation, and sectoral strategies. In this context, ecotourism is no longer viewed merely as a niche sub-sector, but as a transformative vector capable of enhancing local livelihoods, preserving biodiversity, and promoting Algeria's cultural and environmental patrimony on the global stage.

To operationalize this vision, the Algerian government has implemented a triadic policy structure centered around three interdependent pillars:

1. Fiscal reform, most notably through the provision of tax incentives and reduced VAT rates for tourism-related services and investments, aiming to enhance the sector's profitability and stimulate demand.
2. Financial and legal incentives for private investment, particularly through interest rate reductions, long-term loan guarantees, and the enactment of updated investment legislation tailored to attract both domestic and international capital into tourism infrastructure and ecotourism ventures.
3. The deployment of a national strategic tourism planning framework, embodied in the Strategic Development and Planning Scheme for Tourism (SDAT) – Horizons 2030, which

outlines the state's long-term vision for spatial, environmental, and economic reconfiguration of tourism activities across the national territory.

Collectively, these measures represent a deliberate and systematized shift toward institutionalizing ecotourism as a key pillar of Algeria's sustainable development architecture. By mobilizing financial tools, legal instruments, and spatial planning policies in a coordinated fashion, Algeria seeks to reposition itself as a destination where ecological sensitivity, cultural heritage, and economic modernity intersect to generate enduring national value.

Branch One: Fiscal Provision within the 2025 Finance Act

In alignment with its broader macroeconomic strategy to stimulate sectoral diversification and reduce dependency on hydrocarbons, the Algerian government has continued to prioritize the tourism sector as a vehicle for inclusive and sustainable growth²⁴. Within this framework, Article 215 of the Finance Law for the fiscal year 2025 introduces an extension of the preferential reduced value-added tax (VAT) rate of 9%, applicable to a defined set of tourism-related services. These services encompass a wide range of operational domains, including hotel accommodations, thermal spa facilities, certified touristic catering establishments, organized travel and excursion packages, and the leasing of vehicles specifically designated for touristic transport²⁵.

This targeted fiscal incentive, valid through 31 December 2027, reflects the state's commitment to enhancing the financial viability and international competitiveness of tourism-related investments²⁶. By reducing the indirect tax burden on both providers and consumers of tourism services, this measure seeks to stimulate aggregate demand in the sector while concurrently incentivizing private capital inflows²⁷. Furthermore, the provision aligns with global best practices in tourism-led development, wherein strategic tax exemptions or reductions serve as catalytic mechanisms for revitalizing underdeveloped or underexploited sectors²⁸.

Beyond its immediate fiscal dimensions, the measure also possesses structural significance, insofar as it forms part of a more comprehensive effort to institutionalize a favorable investment climate²⁹. By offering predictability and transparency in fiscal policy, Algeria positions itself as an increasingly attractive destination for both domestic and foreign investors seeking long-term engagement in eco-conscious, culturally embedded, and economically scalable tourism ventures³⁰.

Branch Two: Incentives for Tourism Investment

To further bolster private sector engagement in tourism infrastructure and services, the Algerian legislator has amended Article 94 of the 2016 Finance Law through Article 44 of the 2021 Supplementary Finance Law, thereby reducing interest rates on bank loans allocated for tourism-related investments as follows³¹:

- 3% for projects located in the southern regions and the high plateaus (Hauts Plateaux);
- 2% for investments situated in the northern regions.

The duration of eligibility for these preferential loan conditions is differentiated based on the repayment schedule:

- 5 years for loans with repayment periods exceeding 7 years³²;
- 3 years for loans with repayment terms equal to or less than 7 years.

Moreover, under the framework of Investment Law No. 22-18, agricultural investors operating in the form of corporate entities governed by Algerian law are entitled to tax exemptions ranging from 3 to 10 years, depending on the specific incentive regime applied to their investment category³³.

Branch Three: Launch of the Strategic Tourism Development Master Plan – Horizons 2030 (SDAT 2030)

The Stratégie de Développement et d'Aménagement Touristique – Horizons 2030 (SDAT 2030) serves as a strategic reflection of the Algerian state's long-term vision for sustainable tourism development. The master plan articulates a unified national framework for spatial and economic planning in the tourism sector, aligning touristic expansion with ecological sustainability and intersectoral integration³⁴.

The plan articulates five overarching objectives:

1. Establish tourism as a viable alternative to the hydrocarbon sector and as a contributor to national economic diversification;
2. Ensure the integration of related sectors, such as public works, agriculture, and culture, within the tourism development process;
3. Harmonize tourism promotion with environmental conservation imperatives;
4. Valorize Algeria's historical, cultural, and religious heritage³⁵;
5. Enhance Algeria's international image as a compelling, sustainable destination.

To achieve these objectives, the SDAT 2030 is structured around five strategic dynamics³⁶:

- Enhancing Algeria's positioning as a touristic destination to increase its attractiveness and competitiveness;
- Developing flagship tourism clusters and model villages through rationalized investment and sustainable land use;
- Deploying the Tourism Quality Plan (Plan Qualité Tourisme - PQT) to elevate service standards through professional training, educational innovation, and digital transformation;
- Operationalizing a public-private partnership strategy to synergize resources and expertise;
- Implementing a dedicated tourism financing strategy tailored to sector-specific investment cycles.

Among the various touristic forms prioritized for development are:

- Saharan tourism, capitalizing on Algeria's vast desert ecosystems³⁷;
- Thermal tourism, leveraging the country's underutilized geothermal assets—including 220 hot springs, of which approximately 50 have regional importance and 8 possess global recognition;
- Coastal tourism, promoting the country's extensive Mediterranean coastline;
- Business tourism, aimed at fostering professional and corporate travel within a sustainable infrastructural framework³⁸.

Conclusion:

Ecotourism plays a pivotal role in advancing sustainable development in Algeria, primarily due to the country's strategic geographical positioning and its exceptionally diverse touristic landscape, which attracts an increasing number of visitors annually. As the largest nation in the Maghreb and one of continental proportions, Algeria boasts a rich mosaic of natural assets: an extensive Mediterranean coastline, expansive plains, high plateaus, verdant mountainous regions,

arid and rocky terrains, golden deserts, and a wealth of historical and cultural heritage—complemented by a temperate climate conducive to year-round tourism.

In recognition of these inherent advantages, the Algerian state has adopted a series of legal, institutional, and policy-oriented reforms aimed at enhancing ecotourism as a lever for sustainable development and intergenerational ecological stewardship. Among the most salient of these initiatives are the Strategic Tourism Development Master Plan – Horizons 2030, which articulates a clear political will to anchor ecotourism within the national development strategy; the 2025 Finance Act, which fosters tourism through fiscal incentives; and Law No. 22-18 on investment, which offers substantial advantages for private actors investing in the tourism sector.

However, despite the state's concerted efforts, several structural and operational shortcomings persist, necessitating immediate and comprehensive interventions:

- **Infrastructure Enhancement:** Upgrade and expand tourism-related infrastructure, including road networks, public amenities, and transportation systems, ensuring full alignment with sustainability principles and environmental standards.
- **Strategic Marketing and International Promotion:** Formulate and implement robust marketing strategies to enhance Algeria's global tourism profile, actively participate in international tourism expos, and encourage eco-conscious tourist behaviors through awareness campaigns and destination branding.
- **Public-Private Sector Synergy:** Foster collaborative governance mechanisms between public institutions and private investors, thereby enabling the realization of tourism development objectives and facilitating greater investor engagement in sustainable tourism ventures.
- **Biodiversity and Park Conservation:** Strengthen the legal and operational frameworks for the protection and development of biodiversity-rich zones and national parks, ensuring their integrity as ecological and touristic assets.
- **Environmental Awareness and Community Empowerment:** Promote environmental education and ecological awareness among citizens, improve the socio-economic conditions of local populations, and incentivize their active participation in tourism-related activities.
- **Integration of Digital Technologies:** Leverage advanced technologies by developing comprehensive digital platforms—websites and mobile applications—to optimize visitor experience, enhance transparency, and streamline tourism services.

Footnote:

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