
**The role of sustainable tourism clusters in the tourism sector
sustainability: Case study of Algeria**

**دور العناقيد السياحية المستدامة في استدامة قطاع السياحة:
دراسة حالة الجزائر**

***Ali Khenafar**

Abbas laghour University Khenchela, Algeria

khenafar.ali@univ-khenchela.dz

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Abstract :

Sustainable tourism clusters represent a contemporary strategic approach adopted by numerous countries to enhance the tourism sector and achieve sustainable development, particularly in light of current global economic and environmental challenges.

This study seeks to highlight the role of these clusters in advancing the sustainability of Algeria's tourism sector by analyzing the sector's current state (components, performance), presenting a conceptual framework for sustainable tourism clusters—emphasizing their significance and linkage to sustainable development—and then applying this framework to the Algerian context. The study concludes that Algeria possesses significant potential to activate this strategy, contributing to balanced tourism development capable of addressing future challenges.

Key words :Tourism- Algeria- Sustainability- Tourism clusters.

JEL classification codes: G01 ; N10.

Introduction :

Sustainable tourism clusters are one of the new strategies and mechanisms that many countries of the world, such as Italy, China and the United States of America, have come to rely on. They are based on the clustering of specific areas to make use of the advantages of geographical proximity and maximise the benefits resulting from them. These clusters develop the network of relationships of the main actors and introduce advanced technological methods, which leads to maximising the benefits in these clusters.

Tourism is nowadays considered one of the main economic activities. It plays an increasingly important role as an engine of development. In recent years, tourism has shown its importance as an activity that generates wealth, employment and the development of new economic activities.

Tourism is related to the geographical space and its impact on societies in addition to its integration with many other industries and economic sectors, which enables it to be a successful cluster.

These unique characteristics of tourism have posed significant challenges in aligning the development model with sustainable development goals. Within this framework, sustainable tourism clusters have emerged as prominent mechanisms to advance sustainable development broadly and foster sector-specific sustainability in tourism.

This is what distinguishes sustainable tourism clusters compared to traditional tourism clusters.

Algeria is endowed with diverse tourism assets, yet it requires strategic frameworks to unlock the sector's full potential. Among the foremost mechanisms to achieve this is leveraging sustainable tourism clusters—a model that integrates resource optimization, community engagement, and environmental stewardship to drive sectoral resilience.

Research Problem:

In light of the above context, the following research question is posed:

How can tourism clusters push the tourism sector in Algeria towards sustainability?

The importance of the study:

This research is an attempt to link sustainable tourism clusters with the sustainability of the tourism sector, which has become one of the largest development industries.

The study -in addition- provides some suggestions and solutions to the issues that the tourism sector suffers from in Algeria.

Objectives of the study:

This study aims to highlight the most important features of sustainable tourism clusters, sustainable tourism, and how to consolidate and emphasise it in order to preserve the rights of future generations, analyse the status of tourism in Algeria through the indicators of the reports of the World Economic Forum and the World Tourism Organization, and clarify the relationship between sustainable tourism and sustainable development goals, in addition to addressing sustainable tourism clusters and highlighting their role in the sustainability of the tourism sector.

Methodology:

To answer the research question, some descriptive methods are adopted to describe the study literature according to the study data (sustainable tourism clusters, sustainable tourism...), side by side the analytical method is used to analyse the indicators and to clarify the role of sustainable tourism clusters in pushing the tourism sector towards sustainability.

Research axes:

In order to answer the research question, the study is divided into three main axes:

- Attractions and components of tourism in Algeria
- Tourism in Algeria: Facts, Figures and Indicators
- Sustainable tourism clusters to achieve sustainable development in Algeria.

The first axis: Tourism attractions and elements of tourism in Algeria

Algeria is characterised by many tourist attractions, which can be divided into the following:

I. Natural ingredients:

That are represented in the geographical location, climatic conditions, terrain and livestock

1. Geographical location:

Algeria enjoys a privileged geographical location, as it is located in the north of the African continent (the gateway to Africa) and is located in the middle of the Arab Maghreb countries, with an area of 2,381,791 km², ranking first in the Arab and African world and tenth in the world, and this has made Algeria a tourist attraction(Ring, Noelle Watson, & Paul Schellinger Routle, 2023).

2. Climate:

Algeria is characterised by a diverse climate, with three types of climate(Ring, Noelle Watson, & Paul Schellinger Routle, 2023):

- a. **Mediterranean climate:** Warm in summer and mild and rainy in winter, covering the tourist areas from east to west.
- b. **Continental climate:** A transitional climate between the Mediterranean climate and the desert climate, characterised by long, cold winters and hot, dry summers, prevailing in the high plateau regions.
- c. **Dry desert climate :** Characterised by high temperatures (extreme heat) and dryness throughout the year, this climate covers the southern regions and oases.

3. Terrain:

Algeria has three main regions(Ring, Noelle Watson, & Paul Schellinger Routle, 2023):

- a. **North Coast Region:** This region is characterised by the availability of tourist attractions and extends in the distance between Wadi Kiss in the municipality of Marsa Benmehidi, Tlemcen, on the Algerian-Moroccan border in the west to

Wadi Souani Saba in the municipality of Souarkh, Tarf, on the Algerian-Tunisian border in the east, and is made up of a land belt with a minimum width of 800 metres, a group of islands, islets and continental shelves, the length of the coastal strip is estimated at 1622.48 km, where these factors represent tourist attractions.

- b. High Plateau and Steppe Region:** It extends from the inner hill range in the north to the Saharan Atlas in the south and from the Tunisian border in the east to the Moroccan border in the west, parallel to the northern region, and is characterised by the presence of mountain ranges of varying heights that can be exploited in mountain tourism.
- c. The Saharawi region:** It covers an area of 2,000,000 km², about 80% of the area of Algeria, extending from the southern foothills of the Saharan Atlas to the borders of Mali and Niger in the south and from the Tunisian and Libyan borders in the east to the Moroccan, Western Sahara and Mauritanian borders in the west. It is characterised by its oases, sand (sand dunes), palm forests and granite mountains, what makes it an interesting destination for foreign tourists.

4- Hydrological wealth:

Algeria has more than 200 sources of underground thermal water, characterised by important therapeutic properties, including Hammam Salheen in Biskra and Khenchela, Hammam Dabbagh in Guelma, Hammam Regha in Ain Dafla and Hammam Bougerara in Tlemcen, which attracts many tourists (Wikipedia, 2025).

II. Historical attractions :

Algeria has many historical elements that testify to the greatness of the successive civilisations, from the Amazigh civilisation to the Phoenician civilisation to the Byzantine civilisation and the Roman civilisation, up to the Islamic civilisation. Among the most important historical and cultural sites that Algeria enjoys are the Tassili site, Timgad, Djemila, Oued Mizab and Kasbah, in addition to a large number of museums (Wikipedia, 2025).

The second axis: Tourism in Algeria: Facts, Figures and Indicators

This axis aims to analyse the performance of the tourism sector in Algeria through tourism figures and indicators according to both the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) report and the World Economic Forum's Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Report, and to compare Algeria's performance with comparison countries, which were selected by Indian economist Sanjay Lall, and divided into three groups: role models (France, Spain), neighbouring countries (Tunisia, Morocco), and competitors (Turkey, Egypt).

I. Global Tourism in Figures

According to the World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO), 2017 was a record year for international tourism, as the number of tourists in the world grew for the eighth consecutive year, a continuous growth rate not recorded since the 1960s, as the number of tourists reached about 1.323 billion tourists, an increase of about 84 million tourists (about 7%) compared to 2016, and the growth of tourism in the period 2010-2017 at an average of 4% (المختار، 2017, p. 123).

According to the World Travel and Tourism Council, the tourism sector has achieved the following figures: The direct contribution of travel and tourism to GDP was \$2,570.1 billion (about 3.2 per cent of GDP) in 2017 and is expected to rise to 3.8 per cent annually during 2018-2028 (المختار، 2017, p. 123).

II. Tourism indicators in Algeria

The tourism indicators in Algeria are shown in Table 01 as follows :

Table No. (02): Performance indicators of the travel and tourism sector in Algeria and comparison countries according to the World Economic Forum in 2017.

The country Indicators	Algeria	neighbouring countries		Rival countries		Role model countries	
		Tunisia	Morocco	Egypt	Turkey	France	Spain
Overall aggregate index (136 countries)	118	87	65	74	44	2	1
The first sub-indicator:	93	81	72	102	82	26	30
Enabling environment	110	66	49	78	63	46	75
Business environment	81	102	20	130	116	67	18
	89	75	99	68	64	14	24

.2Peace and security	112	113	117	102	94	28	34
.3Health and hygiene	96	73	77	89	72	20	29
.4HumanResources and Labour Market							
.5Information and Communication TechnologyReadiness							
The second sub- indicator :	124	52	76	44	75	26	7
Tourism and	131	48	35	37	87	26	5
travelpolicies and	134	76	91	102	50	19	43
favourable conditions	4	9	47	2	70	118	97
6. Extent to which tourism and travel are prioritised	106	89	107	67	112	17	3
7. Global openness							
8. Price competitiveness							
9.Environmentalsustai nability							
The thirdsub- indicator:	122	81	68	82	38	9	4
Infrastructure	100	85	63	59	14	13	9
10. The extent to which tourism and travel are prioritised	105	95	60	82	54	7	15
11. Global openness	131	69	80	93	42	17	2
12.Price competitiveness							
The fourthsub- indicator:	94	101	41	48	26	4	3
Natural and Cultural	124	94	47	97	70	13	9
Resources	53	83	41	22	16	3	2
13. Natural resources							
14.Cultural resources and business trips							

Source: prepared by the researcher based on:

- World ECONOMY FORUM . the travel and tourism competitiveness report 2017
wef.geneva.2017
- World economy forum.2017the travel and tourism competitiveness report
2017.www.weforum .org tastvisit 20/01/2019

According to Table (01), we present the following observations:

- In 2017, the tourism sector in Algeria directly contributed an estimated 3.3% to GDP, surpassing the 3% target set in the 2015 Horizon Business Plan.

Despite this achievement, Algeria remains the lowest contributor among its peers, while neighboring countries like Tunisia and Morocco are recognized as leading contributors. The direct contribution of Algeria's tourism sector to GDP is projected to grow by approximately 2.4% from 2018 to 2028—a relatively moderate rate compared to benchmark countries and lower than all of them.

- In 2017, the total contribution of Algeria's tourism sector to GDP reached 6.8%, significantly lower than the ratios achieved by all comparator countries, as well as the averages for North Africa and the global benchmark. However, the projected growth rate of the sector's total contribution to GDP from 2018 to 2028 is somewhat promising, estimated at 2.8%. While this rate outperforms model countries like France and Spain, it remains below the levels achieved by neighboring countries (Tunisia, Morocco), competitor nations (Egypt, Turkey), and the regional and global averages.

- In 2017, the tourism sector in Algeria directly contributed only 2.8% to job creation—a figure significantly lower than most comparator countries (with the exception of Turkey), as well as below the averages for North African nations and the global benchmark. Furthermore, the projected growth rate for the sector's direct contribution to employment between 2018 and 2028 was estimated at a modest 1.9%, highlighting the need for strategic interventions to unlock its potential, which is a very acceptable rate and greater than the expected rate in Tunisia (neighbouring country) and Egypt (competition country) and equal to the expected rate in France and the average of North African countries, which means there are employment opportunities on the horizon of 2028. This is due to Algeria's adoption of a national strategy for the 2030 horizon aimed at developing the tourism sector.

- The projected growth rate of the tourism sector's contribution to direct job creation in Algeria from 2018 to 2028 is considered moderate, indicating room for improvement to fully harness the sector's potential, estimated at 1.9%, the same rate expected for

Egypt (a competitor), France (a role model) and the average North African country.

- The total contribution of the tourism sector in Algeria to job creation was 6% in 2017 (i.e. about 678.7 thousand jobs), which is a very small percentage as it is lower than all comparable countries, while the expected growth rate of the contribution of the tourism sector to job creation during the period 2018-2028 is estimated at 2.1%, a very acceptable rate as it is greater than the expected rate in each of the neighbouring countries (Tunisia and Morocco) and even the role model countries (France, Spain) and close to the rate of competing countries (Egypt, Turkey) and even the global average.

- The share of the tourism sector in total exports in Algeria in 2017 was estimated at 0.7% (very small) and much lower than the rates achieved in all comparative countries, which is evidence of the weak contribution of the tourism sector to the national economy, which is due to the dominance of the hydrocarbon sector, but the expected growth rate of the contribution of the tourism sector to the GDP of Algeria during the period 2018-2028 is very good, estimated at 6%, the largest among all comparative countries, and this is due to the adoption of a national strategy for the horizon of 2030.

- The total contribution of tourism investments to total investments in Algeria in 2017 was 2.5%, which is lower than the average of North African countries, the world and all comparison countries, while the expected growth rate in the contribution of tourism investments to total investments during the period 2018-2028 was estimated at 4.3%, which is considered good and is the highest compared to all comparison countries except Egypt (5.9%), equal to the global average and close to the average of North African countries (4.5%).

III. Tourism indicators in Algeria according to the World Economic Forum's Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Report

Through this axis, the reality of tourism indicators in Algeria will be addressed and compared with some countries that are close to it in terms of tourism components, based on the Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Report.

1. Tourism indicators in Algeria according to the World Economic Forum's Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Report 2017:

The Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Report was issued for the first time in 2017, and the 2018 report includes a set of factors and policies that enable the sustainable development of the tourism sector. The number of countries included in the report reached 136 countries, and Algeria ranked 118, up by five (05) places compared to 2015 (123 out of 141 countries)(World economies forum .the travel and tourism competitiveness, 2017, p. 209).

Algeria's performance compared to comparable countries can be illustrated in the following table.

Table No. (02): Performance indicators of the travel and tourism sector in Algeria and comparison countries according to the World Economic Forum in 2017.

The country Indicators	Algeria	neighbouring countries		Rival countries		Role model countries	
		Tunisia	Morocco	Egypt	Turkey	France	Spain
Overall aggregate index (136 countries)	118	87	65	74	44	2	1
The first sub-indicator:							
Enabling environment	93	81	72	102	82	26	30
1. Business environment	110	66	49	78	63	46	75
2. Peace and security	81	102	20	130	116	67	18
3. Health and hygiene	89	75	99	68	64	14	24
4. Human Resources and Labour Market	112	113	117	102	94	28	34
5. Information and Communication Technology Readiness	96	73	77	89	72	20	29
The second sub-indicator :							
Tourism and travel policies and favourable conditions	124	52	76	44	75	26	7
6. Extent to which tourism and travel are prioritised	131	48	35	37	87	26	5
7. Global openness	134	76	91	102	50	19	43
8. Price competitiveness	4	9	47	2	70	118	97
9. Environmental sustainability	106	89	107	67	112	17	3
The third sub-indicator:							
Infrastructure	122	81	68	82	38	9	4
10. The extent to which tourism and travel are prioritised	100	85	63	59	14	13	9
11. Global openness	105	95	60	82	54	7	15
12. Price competitiveness	131	69	80	93	42	17	2
The fourth sub-indicator:							
Natural and Cultural Resources	94	101	41	48	26	4	3
13. Natural resources	124	94	47	97	70	13	9
14. Cultural resources and business trips	53	83	41	22	16	3	2

Source: prepared by the researcher based on:

World ECONOMY FORUM, the travel and tourism competitiveness report 2017 wef.geneva.2017

World economy forum.2017the travel and tourism competitiveness report 2017.www.weforum.org/tastvisit 20/01/2019

Note: Ranking out of 136 countries

It is clear from the previous table that Algeria ranked 118th in the overall index (overall) out of 136 countries and advanced by 5 positions compared to 2015 (123 out of 141 countries), but it is still in a very late position as it came last among the comparison countries. This is due to its very poor performance in the sub-indices of tourism and travel policies and favourable conditions or infrastructure and its poor performance in the infrastructure index and the index of natural and cultural resources(World economies forum .the travel and tourism competitiveness, 2017).

2. Tourism Indicators in Algeria (World Economic Forum’s Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Report 2024):

The 2024 Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Report has been published, outlining key factors and policies essential for the growth of the tourism sector. This year’s report encompasses 119 countries, providing a comprehensive analysis of global tourism competitiveness, Algeria ranked 98th, up by (18) places compared to 2017 (118 out of 136 countries) (World ECONOMY FORUM . the travel and tourism competitiveness report , 2024). Algeria's performance compared to the comparison countries can be illustrated in the following table.

Table No. (03) : Performance indicators of the travel and tourism sector in Algeria and comparison countries according to the World Economic Forum in 2024.

Country Indicator	Algeria	neighbouring countries		Rival countries		Role model countries	
		Tunisia	Morocco	Egypt	Turkey	France	Spain
Overall aggregate indicator (119 countries)	98	83	82	61	29	04	02
The first sub-indicator:							
Enabling environment	3,24	3,43	4,15	3,88	3,55	5,35	4,92
1. Business environment	5,58	5,17	5,75	5,37	4,96	5,78	6,14
2. Peace and security	4,35	4,41	3,71	3,95	4,85	06,20	5,99
3. Health and hygiene	3,03	3,38	3,10	3,43	3,52	5,02	4,75
4. Human Resources and Labour Market	5,32	4,28	4,41	4,45	5,29	6,22	6,05
5.Information and							

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Communication TechnologyReadiness							
The second sub-indicator:							
Tourism and travel policies and favourable conditions	3,69	5,60	4,38	5,87	6,12	4,93	5,73
.6Extent to which tourism and travel are prioritised	2,49	3,43	4,19	3,09	4,16	4,75	5,01
.7Global openness	6,03	5,94	4,84	6,11	5,19	3,18	3,60
.8Price competitiveness							
The thirdsub-indicator:							
Infrastructure							
09. Air transport infrastructure	2,66	2,95	3,65	4,58	5,50	5,49	6,06
10. Port Infrastructure	2,80	2,69	3,33	3,85	3,72	5,31	4,92
11. Tourism services and infrastructure	2,61	2,69	2,31	2,76	3,40	5,03	5,46
The fourthsub-indicator:							
Natural and Cultural Resources	2,47	2,02	2,20	3,11	3,50	5,41	4,95
12. Natural resources	2,20	1,83	2,75	3,18	4,96	6,25	6,64
13. Cultural resources and business trips	1,94	2,64	2,90	2,39	4,23	5,07	4,81
14.Non-recreational resources							
The fifthsub-indicator:							
Sustainability							
15.EnvironmentalSustainability	3,42	3,97	4,00	4,07	4,18	5,89	5,39
16.Economic and social sustainability	4,47	3,45	2,69	2,27	4,32	3,15	4,25
17.Demand for Sustainability	2,82	3,35	3,49	4,90	3,10	3,22	3,34

Source:prepared by the researcher based on:

- World ECONOMY FORUM . the travel and tourism competitiveness report 2024
wef.geneva.2024

Note: Ranking out of 119 countries

It is clear from the previous table that Algeria ranked 98th in the overall index (overall) out of 119 countries and advanced by 18 places (centres) compared to 2017 (118 out of 136 countries), but it is still in a very late position as it came last among the comparison countries. This is due to its very poor performance in the tourism and travel policies and favourable conditions or infrastructure sub-indices and its poor performance in the infrastructure index and the natural and cultural resources index, mainly due to significant weaknesses in the following pillars(World ECONOMY FORUM . the travel and tourism competitiveness report , 2024):

- **Business Environment:** The weakness of this pillar is due to the weakness of the following sub-pillars: Property rights, restrictions on rules and regulations related to foreign direct investment, and the tax rate on profits.
- **Human Resources and Labour Market:** The weakness of this pillar is due to the weak labour market in Algeria.
- **The extent to which tourism and travel are prioritised:** The weakness of this pillar is due to the weakness of the following sub-pillars: Lack of the development prioritisation of the travel and tourism industry by the government, ineffective marketing campaigns to attract tourists, poor tourism data, poor government spending on the tourism sector, and the absence of a clear tourism strategy.
- **Global openness:** Algeria's poor openness to the world is due to: Difficult visa procedures, limited openness to bilateral agreements for aviation services, and few regional trade agreements in force.
- **Environmental Sustainability:** Algeria's poor environmental sustainability is due to the lack of stringent and conflicting environmental regulations, and the ineffectiveness of the state's efforts to ensure that the travel and tourism sector is developed in a sustainable manner.
- **Air transport infrastructure:** The weakness of this pillar in Algeria is due to the poor quality of airports in terms of capacity and conditions.
- **Infrastructure of ports and roads:** The infrastructure of ports and roads in Algeria is weak due to the poor quality of roads and the lack of a wide network.
- **Infrastructure for tourism services:** Algeria's lag in this pillar is due to the lack of hotels and the quality of tourism

infrastructure, insufficient car rental companies, and the low number of ATMs compared to the population.

- **Natural and cultural resources:** The weakness of this pillar is mainly due to the decline in the attractiveness of natural assets (parks, beaches, mountains) and the small number of protected areas compared to the total area.

The third axis: Sustainable tourism clusters to achieve the Sustainable Development in Algeria

I. Tourism and sustainability

The topic of tourism is approached from the perspective of sustainable development by identifying a set of concepts that reflect the idea of sustainable tourism.

1. Definition of tourism:

There are many definitions of tourism, but the study will address the definition of the World Tourism Organisation, which defines it as : ‘A human activity and a social phenomenon based on the movement of individuals from their permanent places of residence to other areas outside their community for a temporary period of not less than 24 hours and not more than a full year for one of the known purposes of tourism, except for study and work.’ (2019، اسماعيل)

2. The concept of sustainable tourism:

The concept of sustainable tourism first appeared during the sessions of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (Earth Summit), which was held in 1992 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, and the World Tourism Organisation defined it as:

‘Tourism that takes into account the current (present) and foreseeable future macro-economic, social and environmental impacts of its activities, that meets the needs of tourists, the private sector and host communities, and that conserves the environment.’)sdt.iisd.org(2017 ،

3. The relationship between tourism and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development commits UNWTO member countries to achieving sustainable tourism by focusing on the SDGs in general, which will be explained below) sdg.iisd.org (2017:

- **Eradicate Poverty:** Tourism can be linked to the national strategy for poverty reduction and entrepreneurship through low-skilled labour and local employment.
- **Eradicate hunger and provide food security:** Tourism can catalyse sustainable agriculture by supplying hotels with sustainable products.
- **Good health and well-being:** Tax income generated from tourism and visitor fees can be reinvested in protected areas.
- **Quality Education:** Building capacity and skills is essential to support a dynamic tourism sector, creating employment opportunities for youth, women, and individuals with disabilities.
- **Gender Equality:** Tourism empowers women by providing direct employment and income-generating opportunities in tourism and hospitality-related businesses.
- **Clean Water and Sanitation:** Tourism investments can significantly contribute to improving access to clean water and sanitation infrastructure.
- **Affordable and Clean Energy:** Tourism can drive the adoption of clean energy solutions, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, mitigating climate change, and enhancing access to sustainable energy sources.
- **Decent Work and Economic Growth:** By committing member countries to develop and implement policies to promote sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products.
- **Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure:** Tourism can influence public policies aimed at modernising infrastructure to make it more sustainable, innovative and efficient.
- **Reduce inequality within and between countries:** Tourism can engage local people and all stakeholders in tourism development and contribute to urban renewal and rural development.

- **Sustainable Cities and Communities:** Tourism drives urban renewal and safeguards cultural and natural heritage, fostering vibrant, inclusive communities.
- **Responsible Consumption and Production:** Sustainable tourism stimulates job creation, supports local cultures, and promotes eco-friendly products, aligning with sustainable consumption and production frameworks.
- **Climate Action:** Tourism stakeholders can lead climate change mitigation by adopting low-carbon practices and reducing their environmental footprint.
- **Life Below Water:** Tourism enhances the economic potential of small island developing states and least developed countries by protecting marine ecosystems and advancing the blue economy through sustainable marine resource use.
- **Life on Land:** Sustainable tourism contributes to biodiversity conservation, offering alternative livelihoods for local communities while preserving natural habitats.
- **Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions:** Tourism fosters cross-cultural dialogue, promoting tolerance and mutual understanding among diverse cultures and religions.
- **Enhance implementation mechanisms and revitalize global partnerships for sustainable development:** Tourism serves as a catalyst for fostering public-private collaborations and engaging diverse stakeholders in collective efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

II. Sustainable Tourism Clusters

Before delving into the concept of sustainable tourism clusters, it is essential to first explore the broader notion of clusters in general, followed by a focused examination of tourism clusters.

1. Definition of a Cluster:

Numerous definitions of a cluster exist, but Porter's 1990 definition remains the most widely recognized and concise. He described it as "a geographically proximate group of interconnected companies and associated institutions in a particular field, linked by commonalities and complementarities. The geographic scope of a cluster can range from a single city or

region to an entire country or even a group of neighboring countries.”(Porter, 2008, p. 213)

2. Tourism Cluster:

Treating the tourism sector as comparable to other industrial sectors highlights its distinct characteristics and operational dynamics., and due to its development, diversity and increasing growth. The cluster model can be applied to the tourism product. Tourism clusters have been defined by the World Tourism Organisation as ‘the geographical area in which tourists spend their entire tourist experience, which is a set of resources, attractions, infrastructure, technologies, service providers, other concerned sectors, and administrative bodies whose activities contribute, link and cooperate in providing the tourist experience expected by the tourist when choosing a destination’.(Julian, 2019)

3. The concept of sustainable tourism clusters:

Sustainable tourism clusters are a group of geographically proximate units linked by relations of interconnection, cooperation and integration working according .

Algeria’s rich natural landscapes and historical heritage position it as a compelling tourism destination, yet systemic imbalances—including regulatory inefficiencies, human resource gaps, underdeveloped transport infrastructure, and limited environmental sustainability practices—hinder its transition to sustainable tourism. By adopting sustainable tourism clusters, Algeria can address these challenges through a holistic framework that optimizes resource efficiency, reduces operational costs, and fosters synergies among stakeholders. This model prioritizes preserving cultural heritage, integrating circular economy principles, and ensuring equitable benefit distribution, thereby aligning economic growth with ecological stewardship and socio-cultural preservation. Such clusters could transform Algeria’s tourism sector into a regenerative ecosystem, balancing competitiveness with global sustainability benchmarks while empowering local communities and safeguarding intergenerational equity. Sustainable tourism clusters can be generated at the level of urban or rural areas, nationally or between neighbouring countries.

III. Benefits of creating sustainable tourism clusters

Sustainable tourism clusters are distinguished from (traditional) tourism clusters by their ability to reap economic benefits while taking into account the social and environmental dimensions. The benefits resulting from sustainable tourism clusters can be divided into the following (Wahl, 2008):

1. Economic benefits:

Sustainable tourism clusters enhance the efficient utilization of natural resources and production inputs, minimize operational costs—including energy consumption, waste management, and compliance expenditures tied to environmental regulations—and elevate the reputation of participating businesses. By fostering synergies among stakeholders, these clusters create a framework for sustainable practices that align economic viability with ecological stewardship.

2.Environmental benefits:

Sustainable tourism clusters contribute to reducing environmental pollution, improving the quality of the environment, preserving and sustaining natural resources.

3. Social benefits:

Sustainable tourism clusters help reduce poverty and improve the standard of living of community members, by opening new markets and equitably distributing the benefits generated to all parties, ensuring the sustainability of economic activities, safeguarding environmental integrity, and upholding the cultural and social heritage of local communities—thereby fostering a holistic balance between development priorities and intergenerational equity.

Conclusion :

Algeria has many natural and historical elements that qualify it to be a distinctive tourist attraction, but it suffers from some imbalances that have become weaknesses .

Algeria is endowed with abundant natural and historical assets that position it as a unique tourism destination. However, persistent

structural gaps have undermined its potential, posing critical challenges to its tourism sector broadly and sustainable tourism initiatives specifically. Key imbalances span:

- Regulatory frameworks and business climate,
- Human capital development and labor market dynamics,
- Global market integration and competitiveness,
- Environmental sustainability imperatives,
- Transport infrastructure gaps (air, maritime, road networks),
- Tourism-specific service infrastructure (accommodation, facilities, digital connectivity).

These systemic weaknesses hinder the alignment of Algeria's tourism sector with global sustainability benchmarks, limiting its capacity to leverage its intrinsic advantages for long-term, inclusive growth.

Sustainable tourism clusters are one of the most important mechanisms that will contribute to solving the issue of tourism attraction in Algeria, which still occupies unsatisfactory positions globally compared to neighbouring and competing countries.

As Algeria is rich in environmental sustainability, this type of cluster can be the cornerstone for building an effective national strategy to support economic, environmental and social sustainability through the tourism sector.

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