

## Tunisian Case of Desert Valorisation for Promoter Enduring Development of Competence

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**Abstract:** The aim of this study is to identify through economic, social and cultural indicators, the effects induced by a touristy activity development in the region of Tataouine (Southern Tunisian) in order to follow and measure the durability of this sector on this territory. Indeed, the Saharan tourism, based essentially on the patrimonial resources, the handicraft and all productions bound to the specific local resources exploitation, appears like a promoter sector carrier of dynamics susceptible to be transmitted to the whole economy and could be considered like an anchorage favourable point to an enduring development. The actors, both in public and private sector, survey showed that 78% of Tataouine region entrepreneurs proved their great satisfaction on the economic profitability of their projects. In addition, on the territorial integration of the enterprise and its contribution to the local economic channel, it was noticed that the impact on the local development is rather advantageous: on the one hand because the permanent or seasonal regular staff is employees of the region and on the other hand the supplies are, for the majority, local products. Nevertheless, the stakes in putting on tourism this delicate territory are considerable, especially when it was noticed that the Saharan tourism in Tunisia takes place on the base of generic benefits identical to those of the bathing model which could only increase the pressure on the Sahara.

**Keywords:** Arid and desert territories, Enduring development, Indicators, Saharan tourism

### 1. Introduction

In Tunisia, the arid and desert margins or territories cover more than 77.6% of the total surface. 20% of which is completely desert zones (PAN LCD - Tunisia). These areas are submitted to strong constraints. Otherwise, the stakes in these Saharan territories are environmental and ecologic (natural resources degradation), economic (regression of rangeland, growth of new economic activities as Saharan and cultural tourism, irrigated culture, etc.), sociologic (farming exodus but also the return of emigrant who had tendency to invest there) and politic (emergence of new institutions, collective land privatization, etc.).

During the years 80 and 90, Tunisia is considered among the principal destination of tourist from Western Europe. Nevertheless, a consequent part of its market is absorbed by the emergence of new products as notably the Saharan tourism. This sector becomes an opportunity for the region of Tataouine and a product of high territorial economic value.

The region of Tataouine has 5 big hotels with capacity of 416 beds. According to the inventory of 2006, 25.550 tourists had visited Tataouine and passed 36.550 nights there. The number of passengers has been estimated to 600 thousand tourists according to the census of the National Office of Tourism for the year 2006. Otherwise, in the region of Tataouine, which was nearly a desert zone, nine tourist projects valorizing the heritage of this region are putted in place and eleven tourist projects had been also programmed in the national plan of development with a total cost of 5614 MDT and 6710 MDT, respectively. These touristy units had created about 87 permanent jobs and are going to create more than 96 permanent employments (ONTT, 2006).

The stake for the whole actors of this economic sector is to improve the quality of services and products in view of a general profitability and a better competitiveness. It is in this setting that the renewal of interest for the patrimony in a perspective of an enduring development tourist is enrolled.

### 2. Materials and Methods

The aim of this work is to identify through economic, social and cultural indicators, the types of effect induced by the development of a tourist activity in the region of Tataouine (southeast of Tunisian) as well to the

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scale of territory as to the enterprise and company (hotel, museum, host houses, etc.) where all investigation are taken place. Considering the territorial contexts, these indicators have been selected according to the relative criteria to the four measurements of the enduring tourism (environmental, economic, social and ethical). For each of them, assessment criteria will be proposed with indicators and elements of measurement.

A reading grid will be elaborated. This grid is based on the fourth measurements of the enduring development.

**Table 1. Select criteria.**

	<b>Economic</b>	<b>Environmental</b>	<b>Social</b>	<b>Ethical</b>
Different criteria	-Profitability -Territory integration -Everlastingness of enterprise	-Renewal of resource - Valorization - setting of life	- Reconnaissance - Insertion - Partnership - Accessibility	- Governance - Transparency - Solidarity-time

### 3. Results and discussions

For each criterion already cited, a qualitative appreciation note for the different entrepreneurs was recorded. The notes are codified as follow: (0: if the criteria are not taken in account, 1: criteria are weakly taken in account, 2: criteria are well taken in account, 3: if the criteria are very well taken in account).

An assessment grid is elaborated where some different colours are attributed to each dimension of the enduring development in order to make the results well clear.

**Table 2. Assessment grid.**

Criteria list	Scoring scale				Total	Average
	0	1	2	3		
<b><i>Environmental dimension</i></b>						
Integration of stand on landscape				×	3	
Economy of water measurement	×				0	
Heating systems (solar energy)		×			1	
Architectural quality: conformable used material		×			1	
Architectural quality: respect of local architecture				×	3	
Wastewaters treatments: Existence system of purification		×			1	
Waste treatment	×				0	
Landscape quality: prescriptions and specification respect		×			1	
Supply and 1st matter: stand, is this local?				×	3	
Supply of 1st matter: food product, is this local?				×	3	
Information transmitted : potentialities of territories documents				×	3	
Festivities participation, actions of environment improvement		×			1	
Respect of common interest, multi use of tourist sites		×			1	
Neighborhood relationship: existence of problem		×			1	
Dialogue quality for multi use of tourist sites		×			1	
					<b>23</b>	<b>1.53</b>

<b>Social dimension</b>						
Personnel satisfaction degree			×		2	
Declared enrollment			×		2	
Personnel fidelity: number of regular salaried			×	×	2	
Absence authorization for formation		×			1	
Trainee reception			×		2	
Local live: voluntary activity, cultural, sporty		×			1	
Diversity of client: academic and clients with weak income		×			1	
Pricing: existence of reduction for the weak income and students		×			1	
					<b>12</b>	<b>1.5</b>
<b>Economic dimension</b>						
Remuneration of high responsible, degree of satisfaction				×	3	
Stability of personnel: permanent employee or regular seasonal employee				×	3	
Creation of job: number of employee living in place				×	3	
Tourist attraction: clientele flux during tourist season			×		2	
Image : conviviality				×	3	
Commercial diversity: diversification of activities or products			×		2	
Tourism display: satisfaction on number of activities month				×	3	
Economic spécialization: multiactivities others families incomes			×		2	
State of commerce floor			×		2	
Market vigil				×	3	
Renewal: presence of successor			×		2	
Concurrence: regional offer in the same activity, not embarrassing			×		2	
					<b>32</b>	<b>2.66</b>
<b>Governance</b>						
Existence of usually collaboration between actors		×			1	
Existence of profit-sharing device of salaried for results		×			1	
Results: information on the enterprise		×			1	
Job contracts: information on the job contract		×			1	
Solidarity effort: enterprise help to the salaried				×	3	
Planning: Existence of plan of environment improvement	×				0	
					<b>7</b>	<b>1.16</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>41</b>	
<b>Percentage</b>	<b>7.32</b>	<b>39.02</b>	<b>24.39</b>	<b>29.27</b>	<b>100</b>	

Source: Our investigation, 2007

This grid can be used in order to visualize the application degree of the dimension of the enduring tourism by the enterprises and companies and to sensitize the agent and the territorial collectivities to the methods and the practices of "developer and applicator of enduring development".

The grid showed that the different criteria of the enduring development are weakly taken in account with a

percentage of 39% for category 1.

After having completely filled the assessment grid, it is possible to draw a "curve of fever" of the patrimonial enhancement project. Indeed, a neat ordering followed of sorting cells was achieved. A global representation of the activities according to the graphic position of the grid criteria was obtained to the look of the dimension of enduring development (social, economic, environmental and ethical).

The reading of the assessment grid mentioned showed that it is especially the economic dimension that is taken in account by all entrepreneurs of Tataouine region. This grid had permitted :

- To emerge the progress that it is possible and desirable to implement it, to improve the application conditions of an enduring tourist development, to reinitiate the planning operations and to respect especially the social conditions;
- To propose to the entrepreneurs a reproducible process of developer and applicator of an "enduring development" which reduces the uncertainties margins and the interpretation gaps concerning the implementation of this concept (conducting process of tourist projects);
- To adopt the concept of "quality process" where the principles of the enduring development are appropriated, placing, therefore, the users in a virtuous process of continuous improvement of the productions or services.

#### 4. Conclusions and recommendations

The interest accorded to the heritage and its tourist valorization, in the world, becomes more and more remarkable especially in the northern countries. This allowed, at a time, creating of new tourist products susceptible to attract a new clientele and increasing the profitability economic of the sector (Vergneau, 1998). Besides, the interest carried to the patrimony and the environment is inscribed also in the worry to improve the quality of life and work in local and regional scale and encouraging the attractively spaces which will be planed to the investments.

However, the tourist valorization of the patrimony is confronted to many constraints revealing as well to the volume of the investments which will be agree as to the environmental and cultural stake. Therefore, this equation tourist and heritage is far to be reached when it is about reconciling the economic profitability with the environment preservation of sites and monuments.

In conclusion, we noted the existence of a diversity of actors according to their strategies of action concerning tourist valorization of the local heritage. Two big types of tourist development process could be distinguished:

- Process 1: corresponding to a logic essentially commercial and economic,
- Process 2: groups the actors who look for, rather, to another more traditional tourism. Therefore, they will be oriented for logic of patrimony conservation.

Between these extreme processes, we can separate other types of process. Indeed, when we passed from the extreme process 1 to the extreme process 2 we can find: the private entrepreneurs (Hotels, tourist restaurant), the tourism enterprises (Travels agencies), the small professionals (Local products tradesmen), the patrimonies professionals (Representatives of patrimony institute), the guest host and the passionate (Associations of protection of the local patrimony).

The identification of one actor or a group of actors depended, therefore, on the nature of the other groups of actors. This interaction intervenes in order to be situated in the social setting of the territory. It operated also in order to influence the options and choices.

On the other hand, we should specify that there is also interdependence between the two processes. For example, thanks to the enterprises of tourism (travels agencies, entrepreneurs), which bring the clientele, the small companies, living on a patrimonial valorization, received this clientele which is indispensable to the profitability of their activities. Nevertheless, the small companies (the passionate, the guest host) give a natural and human picture in the territory that is used like an attractive element by these enterprises of big dimension.

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