

# "ECOTOURISM AS A STRATEGY TO ACHIEVE ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION AND ACTIVATE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT"

DR. TEBIB FATIHA,

Faculty of Law and Political Science, University of IBN KHALDOUN TIARET

[fatiha.tebib@univ-tiaret.dz](mailto:fatiha.tebib@univ-tiaret.dz)

Received: 20/05/2025

Revised: 29/06/2025

Published: 10/07/2025

## INTRODUCTION:

The global economy today is witnessing a rapid shift toward adopting development policies that take into account the environmental dimension, in light of increasing environmental and economic challenges. Ecotourism is one of the most prominent alternatives that enhances opportunities for economic diversification. It contributes to sustainable development by preserving natural resources, creating local job opportunities, and stimulating local development.

The topic of sustainable development holds a prominent position in international policy and in the public policies of states at both national and local levels. The adoption of sustainable development has become an important tool for achieving the political, economic, and social goals that international entities strive for, in order to narrow the gap between them and their populations.

The tourism industry represents one of the main mechanisms for supporting the national economy and directing investment toward natural resources with tourism appeal. It is considered a significant economic and social force. The advantage offered by promoting ecotourism lies in linking investment and productive community projects with the protection of the environment, biodiversity, cultural diversity, and the uniqueness of tourist areas—within a unified development framework. This is achieved by preparing tourism development programs that guide tourism toward environmentally distinctive sites, while emphasizing the practice of creative and entertaining tourism behaviors without compromising or negatively impacting the quality of the environment.

## Problem Statement:

This article addresses the issue of ecotourism as a strategy to achieve economic diversification and the goal of sustainable development. The problem focuses on the importance of ecotourism and its consideration as an alternative to a rentier economy, and highlights the significance of the environmental dimension and its integration into the tourism industry to achieve development goals. From this perspective, we pose the following main question:

**How can ecotourism contribute to achieving economic diversification and promoting sustainable development?**

From this main problem, a set of sub-questions arises, including:

- What is the conceptual framework of ecotourism?
- What is the policy of economic diversification and what are its objectives?
- What is the impact of ecotourism on the implementation of economic diversification policy and the fulfillment of sustainable development requirements?

To answer the main problem and the sub-questions, we propose the following hypotheses:

- There is a significant correlation between the promotion of ecotourism and economic diversification policy.
- There is a causal relationship between the impact of ecotourism and the rise in sustainable development indicators.

## Study Objectives:

This study aims to explore the nature of the relationship between providing favorable conditions for ecotourism and its role in promoting the success of economic diversification on one hand, and on the

other hand, the positive responses related to the indicators and goals of sustainable development. The study is conducted through an analytical and investigative approach to the ecotourism strategy and its positive relationship with the variable of sustainable development.

#### **Significance of the Study:**

The importance of this study lies in addressing a significant topic in the field of political science and international relations—namely, sustainable development, which has become a pressure tool that any external or internal adversary can use to threaten national and international security. On another level, the study deals with a subject directly related to economic diversification in societies and states, which is considered a cornerstone of economic, social, and political progress.

These two variables (sustainable development and economic diversification) are inferred to be linked to the main variable—**ecotourism**—which, as a result of its outcomes, activates the economic diversification policy, leading ultimately to the successful implementation of sustainable development.

Therefore, the importance of ecotourism can be observed through the activation of its essential requirements by developing the sectors that complement it, and through the potential positive results of the ecotourism strategy in economic, social, and political aspects.

#### **RESEARCH METHODS AND APPROACHES:**

- **Historical Method:**

This method helped trace the conceptual development of ecotourism alongside sustainable development. History remains a valuable tool for political analysis as it provides a source for politicians to affirm or refute a phenomenon, event, or theory.

- **State-Society Relationship Approach:**

This approach emphasizes understanding the relationship between the state and society. Thinker Joel Migdal, in particular, focused on the transformations within the political system and the state, especially in the Third World. He studied the factors of influence and interaction, with the core of this relationship being **social control**, where the society submits to the authority of the state to achieve national stability and security, through the participation of people in the programs and roles carried out by political units.

#### **Study Structure:**

##### **Axis 1: The Conceptual Framework of Ecotourism**

1. Definition of Ecotourism
2. Types of Ecotourism
3. Importance of Ecotourism

##### **Axis 2: Economic Diversification Policy**

1. The Concept of Economic Diversification
2. Objectives of Economic Diversification

##### **Axis 3: The Impact of Ecotourism on Achieving Economic Diversification Policy and Promoting Sustainable Development**

1. The Role of Ecotourism in Economic Diversification to Achieve Sustainable Development
2. Factors for the Effectiveness of the Tourism Investment Sector

##### **Axis 1: The Conceptual Framework of Ecotourism**

1. Definition of Ecotourism



- German scholar Fueller defines ecotourism as *"a phenomenon of the modern era that stems from the increasing need for relaxation, recreation, a change of atmosphere, the appreciation of nature's beauty, and the joy and pleasure of staying in areas with special natural characteristics."*<sup>1</sup>
- Ecotourism involves implementing the principles of sustainable tourism in general, with a specific focus on **environmental protection at the destination**. It encompasses all forms and types of tourism to ensure that the destination remains suitable for visitation. This necessitates establishing behavioral guidelines and regulations that tourists and visitors must follow to help preserve the environment.<sup>2</sup>
- Ecotourism is a **type of tourism that centers the natural environment as the main destination** for the visitor or tourist. It aims to explore the natural systems, species, features, and elements (physical, animal, plant) and cultural aspects of the environment. The goal is to enjoy these attractions in a refined manner and in ways that **do not destroy or hinder the renewal, development, or transmission of these elements to future generations**, while ensuring **local community involvement in the benefits and responsibilities** of this tourism<sup>3</sup>.
- Ecotourism is a **human activity** practiced under rules and regulations designed to **protect and preserve wildlife and natural life**, enhance quality of life, prevent pollution, and maintain ecological balance—not just for current generations, but also for future ones<sup>4</sup>.
- Ecotourism is an **economically beneficial activity** with multiple dimensions. It combines tangible material returns with ethical and moral values. Through these values, **the protection of environmental integrity becomes a noble principle** upheld by the tourism practice.
- Ecotourism **bridges authenticity and modernity**, as it combines traditional natural heritage with contemporary experiences, creating a unique pattern of **harmony, coherence, and cultural integration**.
- Ecotourism is more of a **moral and ethical commitment than a legal contractual obligation**. Therefore, this type of tourism is governed by **values and principles**, as it fosters a **continuous and deep connection between humans and their surrounding environment**<sup>5</sup>.

## 2. Types of Ecotourism<sup>6</sup>:

- **Natural Ecological Tourism**
- **Climatic Tourism**
- **Biological Tourism**
- **Birdwatching Tourism**
- **Star Gazing Tourism (under clear skies)**
- **Tangible Cultural Tourism**

<sup>1</sup> Mostafa Youssef Kafi, *Sustainable Ecotourism: Its Challenges and Future Prospects*, Syria: Dar Raslan for Printing, Publishing and Distribution, 2014, p. 25.

<sup>2</sup> Mostafa Youssef Kafi, *Sustainable Ecotourism: Its Challenges and Future Prospects*, Syria: Dar Raslan for Printing, Publishing and Distribution, 2014, p. 36.

<sup>3</sup> Fouad Ben Ghodban, *Sustainable Ecotourism between Theory and Practice*, Jordan: Dar Safaa for Publishing and Distribution, 2013, p. 68.

<sup>4</sup> Ben Khadija Mounsef and Ouled Zaoui Abdelrahman, *Ecotourism: A Modern Approach to Contribute to Achieving Sustainable Development*, *Annals of the University of Guelma for Social and Human Sciences*, Issue 14, March 2016, p. 223.

<sup>5</sup> Nouredine Charf, *Ecotourism in Protected Areas and Its Role in Developing Sustainable Tourism: The Case of National Parks in Algeria*, *Journal of Economic and Administrative Research*, Vol. 13, No. 01, 2019, p. 164.

<sup>6</sup> Fouad Ben Ghodban, *Sustainable Ecotourism between Theory and Practice*, Jordan: Dar Safaa for Publishing and Distribution, 2013, pp. 71–79.

- 
- Intangible Cultural Tourism
  - Environmental or Semi-Environmental Sports and Recreational Tourism
  - Environmentally Friendly Marine and River Tourism
  - Camping Tourism, Festival and Event Tourism
  - Museum and Art Exhibition Tourism (Permanent and Seasonal)
  - Eco-Hotel or Environmentally Friendly Lodging Tourism (or Semi-Environmental Specialized Hospitality)
  - Scientific Environmental Activities Tourism
  - Heritage Practice Revival or Reconstructed Traditions Tourism
  - Photography Tourism
  - Agricultural and Rural Tourism
  - Desert Tourism

### 3. Importance of Ecotourism<sup>7</sup>:

- In the context of growing globalization and rising disposable income, **tourism has become one of the largest and fastest-growing sectors** in recent decades. In 2011, tourism contributed **5% of global GDP** and accounted for **6-7% of total global employment**. Demand is expected to continue rising due to increasing household incomes in emerging economies—supporting recreational activities—and the growth of international trade, which drives business travel. Given its size, the tourism sector has **tremendous potential for economic growth, diversification, and transformation of economic structures**<sup>8</sup>.
- **Balanced ecological tourism** is a relatively new phenomenon. It aims to explore, study, and reflect on **nature, plants, and animals**, while also providing relaxation for humans. One of the key benefits of implementing ecotourism is that it **links local community investments and productive projects with environmental protection**, biodiversity, and cultural diversity in tourist areas. This is done within a unified development model by designing tourism programs that direct tourism toward **environmentally unique sites**, with a strong emphasis on engaging in **creative and enjoyable tourism behaviors—without compromising or harming the environment**<sup>9</sup>.
- It is a **process of expanding the scope of economic activities** in both the production and distribution of goods and services, allowing the economy to grow by creating opportunities for various economic activities on a wide scale, generating employment opportunities, stabilizing the economy against economic fluctuations, and maintaining the growth outlook for nations.<sup>10</sup>

---

<sup>7</sup> United Nations, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, Trade and Development Board, Trade and Development Commission, "Sustainable Tourism: Contribution to Economic Growth and Sustainable Development," Geneva, March 14–15, 2013, pp. 3–5.

<sup>8</sup> Fouad Ben Ghodban, *Sustainable Ecotourism between Theory and Practice*, Jordan: Dar Safaa for Publishing and Distribution, 2013, p. 67.

<sup>9</sup> Bouzeid Sofiane, *Ecotourism as a Mechanism for Achieving Sustainable Tourism*, *Strategy and Development Journal*, Vol. 13, No. 01, January 2023, p. 116.

<sup>10</sup> Dhib Souria and Laaj Radia, *Private National Tourism Investment Between Reality and the Challenges of Economic Diversification – The Case of Annaba Province*, in *The Tourism Sector and the Challenges of Economic Diversification in Algeria*, Faculty of Economic, Commercial and Management Sciences, Ziane Achour University, Djelfa, Vol. 01, March 2022, p. 231.

## 2. Objectives of Economic Diversification

- **Protecting the local economy from external shocks<sup>11</sup>:**

This goal is particularly important for **rentier economies**, which are prone to economic, political, and natural crises characterized by instability. These economies are often subject to negative impacts and various crises, which can be mitigated through economic diversification policies to achieve greater stability.

- **Enhancing the role of the private sector:**

States aim to **strengthen the effectiveness of the private sector**, as it contributes to the employment of more local labor and has the capacity to build a broad economic base that supports the diversification of national wealth sources<sup>12</sup>.

- **Boosting the role of investment in economic activity:**

Investment—whether local or foreign—aims to **develop and efficiently utilize available economic resources** with high effectiveness and productivity. The goal is to **achieve the highest possible economic and social growth rates** and increase the **competitiveness of the local economy**.

### Axis 3: The Impact of Ecotourism on Achieving Economic Diversification Policy and Activating Sustainable Development

#### 1. The Role of Ecotourism in Economic Diversification for Achieving Sustainable Development

- **Improving the balance of payments and providing foreign currency:**

Countries aim to **improve their balance of payments** by initiating investment projects, since tourism activities generate revenues and involve expenditures. These financial flows are recorded as part of the goods and services section in the balance of payments, making tourism a key component.

- **Tourism investments represent an important source of foreign currency**, which many countries seek to obtain due to the importance of tourism revenues. These revenues play a **fundamental role in creating surpluses in the balance of payments**, thus positively impacting the country's **tourism standing** compared to other tourist destinations<sup>13</sup>.

- **Increasing and developing the Gross National Product (GNP) of the state.**

- **Improving and increasing the Gross National Income (GNI) of the state.**


- **Developing the structure of national production and local products**, and influencing the distribution of priorities in spending, consumption, saving, and investment<sup>14</sup>.

<sup>11</sup> Mehidi Hasnia, The Strategy of Economic Diversification in Algeria: Tourism as a Model, Al-Muqaar Journal for Economic Studies, Tindouf University Center, Issue 03, December 2018, p. 03.

<sup>12</sup> Dhib Souria and Laaj Radia, Private National Tourism Investment Between Reality and the Challenges of Economic Diversification – The Case of Annaba Province, in The Tourism Sector and the Challenges of Economic Diversification in Algeria, Faculty of Economic, Commercial and Management Sciences, Ziane Achour University, Djelfa, Vol. 01, March 2022, p. 230.

<sup>13</sup> Ziane Abdelhalim et al., The Tourism Sector and the Challenges of Economic Diversification in Algeria, in The Tourism Sector and the Challenges of Economic Diversification in Algeria, Faculty of Economic, Commercial and Management Sciences, Ziane Achour University, Djelfa, Vol. 01, March 2022, pp. 70–71.

<sup>14</sup> Lakhoudari Nassima et al., Investment in the Tourism Sector as a Mechanism to Achieve Sustainable Development – A Case Study of Algeria, in The Tourism Sector and the Challenges of Economic Diversification in Algeria, Faculty of Economic, Commercial and Management Sciences, Ziane Achour University, Djelfa, Vol. 01, March 2022, p. 247.

- 
- **Raising the economic return generated from engaging in ecotourism activities**, whether for businesses, governments, or individuals working in tourism-related projects.
  - **Improving the future prospects of ecotourism** and maximizing gains from its practice, given its significance as an important economic activity.
  - **Ecotourism is one of the most important fields**, both in improving development performance and in providing the funds needed to finance sustainable economic development projects. It also helps in **discovering investment opportunities** of various types, purposes, and scopes<sup>15</sup>.

## 2. Factors for the Effectiveness of the Tourism Investment Sector

The contribution of the tourism sector to **economic growth, job creation, capacity building, and poverty reduction** depends on the following factors:

- **The extent to which the tourism sector is integrated into the national economy**, through forward and backward linkages with other sectors, and its integration into regional and global value chains.
- **How tourism-generated revenues, including foreign currency, are used**—particularly in **financing infrastructure development** and supporting local enterprises, especially small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)—to **enhance skills and build institutions necessary for a vibrant local economy**.
- **The policies and strategies adopted by governments**, and whether they **encourage local and foreign investment** in tourism, support the **transfer of technology and knowledge**, promote **labor-intensive activities**, and **target regions where poor populations live and work**.
- **National efforts aimed at ensuring the sustainability of economic activities**, and achieving economic, social, and environmental goals<sup>16</sup>.

## CONCLUSION

Through this intellectual and cognitive momentum, it becomes clear that ecotourism is an effective strategic tool in economic diversification policies, especially in developing countries that seek to reduce dependence on rent-based sectors. This is achieved by combining the preservation of natural resources with revenue generation. Moreover, ecotourism contributes to achieving harmony and balance between the economic, social, and environmental priorities of sustainable development.

Despite all the benefits that ecotourism brings to communities and countries, it still faces multiple challenges that require joint efforts from various political, economic, legal actors, and stakeholders in society.

The most prominent obstacles are linked to weak environmental legislation, lack of environmental awareness among tourists and local communities, and climate changes that affect the sustainability of natural resources. Therefore, there is an urgent need to adopt policies that encourage investment in ecotourism and the tourism industry, develop sustainable infrastructure, and provide awareness programs for local communities to promote environmental and cultural awareness.

Achieving a balance between economic development and environmental preservation requires a solid legal and legislative framework related to environmental issues, in addition to strengthening partnerships between the public and private sectors, along with the availability of sustainable tourism programs that respect local specificities. When these conditions are met, ecotourism can positively contribute to achieving sustainable development goals and enhancing the well-being of local communities across nations.

---

<sup>15</sup> Hamza Dradka et al., *Ecotourism*, Amman: Scientific Hurricane Publishing House, 1st edition, 2014, pp. 61–62.

<sup>16</sup> United Nations, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, Trade and Development Board, Trade and Development Commission, "Sustainable Tourism: Contribution to Economic Growth and Sustainable Development," Geneva, March 14–15, 2013, p. 08.



## REFERENCES LIST:

### 1. Sources:

- United Nations, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, Trade and Development Board, Trade and Development Commission, "Sustainable Tourism: Contribution to Economic Growth and Sustainable Development," Geneva, March 14-15, 2013.

### 2. References:

#### Books:

- [1] Hamza Daradkeh, et al., *Ecotourism*, Amman: Al-Issar Scientific Publishing and Distribution House, 1st edition, 2014.
- [2] Fouad Ben Ghodban, *Sustainable Ecotourism: Between Theory and Practice*, Jordan: Safa Publishing and Distribution House, 2013.
- [3] Mostafa Youssef Kafi, *Sustainable Ecotourism: Challenges and Future Prospects*, Syria: Raslan House for Printing, Publishing and Distribution, 2014.

#### [4] Articles and Journals:

- [5] Ben Khadija Mounsef, Ouled Zaoui Abdelrahman, *Ecotourism: A Modern Approach to Contributing to Sustainable Development*, Annals of Guelma University for Social and Human Sciences, Issue 14, March 2016.
- [6] Bouzid Sofiane, *Ecotourism as a Mechanism for Achieving Sustainable Tourism*, Strategy and Development Journal, Vol. 13, Issue 01, January 2023.
- [7] Dhib Souria and Laâdj Radia, *Private National Tourism Investment Between Reality and the Challenges of Economic Diversification - Case Study of Annaba Province*, in *Tourism Sector and the Challenges of Economic Diversification in Algeria*, Faculty of Economic, Commercial and Management Sciences, Ziane Achour University - Djelfa, Volume 01, March 2022.
- [8] Ziane Abdelhalim et al., *The Tourism Sector and the Challenges of Economic Diversification in Algeria*, in *Tourism Sector and the Challenges of Economic Diversification in Algeria*, Faculty of Economic, Commercial and Management Sciences, Ziane Achour University - Djelfa, Volume 01, March 2022.
- [9] Lakhdari Nassima et al., *Investment in the Tourism Sector as a Mechanism for Achieving Sustainable Development - A Case Study of Algeria*, in *Tourism Sector and the Challenges of Economic Diversification in Algeria*, Faculty of Economic, Commercial and Management Sciences, Ziane Achour University - Djelfa, Volume 01, March 2022.
- [10] Mehidi Hassania, *Economic Diversification Strategy in Algeria - Tourism as a Model*, Al-Mouqar Journal for Economic Studies, University Center of Tindouf, Issue 03, December 2018.
- [11] Nour El-Din Charaf, *Ecotourism in Protected Areas and Its Role in Developing Sustainable Tourism - The Case of National Parks in Algeria*, Journal of Economic and Administrative Research, Vol. 13, Issue 01, 2019.