

Leveraging Euro-Mediterranean Experiences to Support Sustainable Tourism Development in Algeria: A Vision in Light of SDAT 2030

توظيف التجارب الأوروبية لدعم التنمية السياحية المستدامة في الجزائر: في ضوء رؤية SDAT 2030

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Abstract:

This study analyzes Euro-Mediterranean experiences in sustainable tourism development, focusing on Spain, France, and Italy, to extract lessons adaptable to the Algerian context. Findings reveal that these countries adopted multi-level governance, long-term strategic planning, and precise financing and monitoring mechanisms, enabling a shift toward quality-oriented, sustainable tourism models. In Algeria, the SDAT 2030 plan represents an important step toward a national vision for tourism, yet a clear gap remains between theoretical frameworks and practical implementation. The study proposes practical measures to enhance governance, activate sustainability indicators, and develop financing and academic cooperation mechanisms, thereby strengthening Algeria's capacity to build an integrated and sustainable tourism model.

Key words: Sustainable Tourism, Governance, Euro-Mediterranean Experiences; SDAT 2030, Algeria.

ملخص:

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تحليل التجارب الأوروبية المتوسطية في مجال التنمية السياحية المستدامة، مع التركيز على إسبانيا، فرنسا، وإيطاليا، من أجل استخلاص الدروس القابلة للتكييف مع السياق الجزائري. أظهرت النتائج أن هذه الدول تبنت حوكمة متعددة المستويات، واستراتيجيات تخطيط طويلة المدى، وآليات تمويل ومتابعة دقيقة، مما مكنها من الانتقال إلى نموذج سياحي يركز على الجودة والاستدامة. في المقابل، يشكل مخطط SDAT 2030 في الجزائر خطوة مهمة نحو بناء رؤية وطنية متكاملة، غير أن فجوة واضحة لا تزال قائمة بين التصورات النظرية والتنفيذ العملي. وتوصي الدراسة بجملة من الإجراءات العملية لتحسين الحوكمة، تفعيل المؤشرات، وتطوير آليات التمويل والتعاون الأكاديمي، بما يعزز قدرة الجزائر على بناء نموذج سياحي مستدام ومتكامل.

الكلمات المفتاحية: السياحة المستدامة، الحوكمة، التجارب الأوروبية المتوسطية، الجزائر، SDAT 2030

1. INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, sustainable tourism has become one of the main pillars of economic, social, and environmental development strategies worldwide, due to its ability to generate wealth, create

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job opportunities, and promote cultural exchange, while at the same time preserving natural and cultural resources for future generations. This approach has attracted growing attention from international organizations such as the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) and the European Union, which have developed a set of principles and indicators aimed at ensuring the sustainability of tourism activities in all their dimensions.

The Euro-Mediterranean region is distinguished by its unique geographical and cultural characteristics, making it one of the most important tourist regions in the world. It combines exceptional natural diversity (coasts, mountains, mild climate...) with a rich cultural heritage, in addition to the development of tourism planning policies adopted by its countries over the past decades. These characteristics have enabled the creation of integrated tourism systems that have successfully reconciled tourism growth with environmental protection, through plans and strategies that combine academic theorization and field application. As a result, these experiences have become exemplary models that are emulated in many regions.

As for Algeria, interest in the tourism sector has taken on a clearer strategic direction over the past two decades, particularly with the adoption of the Schéma Directeur d'Aménagement Touristique (SDAT 2030), which serves as the reference framework for the development of the tourism sector at both national and local levels. However, achieving sustainable tourism development requires drawing on leading experiences, especially those that are geographically and culturally close, such as the experiences of Euro-Mediterranean countries, in order to extract effective mechanisms that can be adapted to the Algerian context.

From this perspective, this paper aims to shed light on successful Euro-Mediterranean experiences in the field of sustainable tourism development, analyze their components, and explore ways to use them to support and operationalize the objectives of Algeria's Tourism Development Master Plan (SDAT 2030).

Building on this context, the study seeks to address the following central research question:

How can successful Euro-Mediterranean experiences in the field of sustainable tourism development be utilized to support and implement the objectives of Algeria's Tourism Development Master Plan (SDAT 2030)?

To answer this research question, the study proposes the following hypothesis:

Drawing on Euro-Mediterranean experiences can contribute to improving tourism planning and implementation mechanisms in Algeria, thereby promoting the achievement of sustainable tourism development in line with the objectives of SDAT 2030.

Research Objectives

- Highlight the importance of sustainable tourism in comprehensive development.
- Shed light on the specific characteristics of the Euro-Mediterranean space in the tourism sector.
- Analyze successful Euro-Mediterranean models in achieving sustainable tourism development.
- Identify similarities and differences with the Algerian tourism reality.
- Provide practical proposals to benefit from these experiences in activating SDAT 2030.

Research Significance

- Highlighting the pivotal role of sustainable tourism in achieving economic, social, and cultural development.

- Shedding light on Algeria's tourism position and its untapped potential within the Euro-Mediterranean space.
- Benefiting from successful Euro-Mediterranean experiences as practical models that can be adapted to the Algerian context.
- Supporting the implementation of the Tourism Development Master Plan (SDAT 2030) through proposals based on proven practices.
- Providing a scientific contribution to the academic literature in the field of tourism and sustainable development.
- Equipping decision-makers and actors in the tourism sector with a practical vision to enhance the competitiveness of Algerian tourism.

2. Research Methodology

This study adopts a **qualitative, descriptive, and comparative analytical approach**, focusing on the systematic examination of successful Euro-Mediterranean experiences in sustainable tourism development and their applicability to the Algerian context.

The research relies on **secondary data** collected from a wide range of academic and institutional sources, including:

- Reports and strategic plans from international organizations such as UNWTO and the European Union,
- National tourism strategies and legislative texts from Spain, France, and Italy,
- Algerian policy documents, particularly the Schéma Directeur d'Aménagement Touristique (SDAT 2030), and
- Peer-reviewed studies and field evaluations addressing tourism governance, planning, financing, and sustainability indicators.

The data were analyzed using **comparative content analysis**, focusing on four main dimensions derived from the literature:

1. **Governance and institutional coordination,**
2. **Strategic planning and policy frameworks,**
3. **Financing mechanisms and sustainability tools,** and
4. **Monitoring, evaluation, and community engagement practices.**

These dimensions were used to identify **common success factors** in Euro-Mediterranean experiences and to compare them with the current Algerian tourism development context. This methodological framework will make it possible to draw **practical lessons** and formulate **context-specific recommendations** for enhancing the implementation of SDAT 2030.

3. The Theoretical Framework of Sustainable Tourism Development

3.1. Definition of the Concept and Its Dimensions

Sustainable tourism is defined as: "Tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities."

(UNWTO & UNEP, 2005, pp. 11–12)

The dimensions of sustainability in tourism are usually divided into three main dimensions: the economic dimension, the social (or cultural) dimension, and the environmental (natural)

dimension (UNWTO, 2024). These dimensions work in an integrated way to achieve development that does not harm resources nor burden society or the environment.

- **Economic Dimension:**

Concerns achieving sustainable investment returns, generating job opportunities, distributing benefits among different groups, and reducing economic leakage.

- **Social / Cultural Dimension:**

Focuses on preserving cultural identity, enhancing community participation, ensuring fairness in the distribution of tourism benefits, and improving the quality of life of local residents.

- **Environmental Dimension:**

Concentrates on protecting natural resources, reducing negative impacts (pollution, depletion, erosion, noise), and preserving biodiversity.

Some studies also refer to the institutional or governmental dimension as a supportive dimension that enables the integration of the three main dimensions (for example, in the guidelines for sustainable tourism investment) (UNWTO, 2024).

Moreover, the UNWTO guidelines for sustainable tourism investment consider four dimensions: governance, economic, socio-cultural, and environmental (UNWTO, 2024).

3.2. Internationally Adopted Indicators for Measuring Tourism Sustainability

One of the most important international reference frameworks for measuring tourism sustainability is the Statistical Framework for Measuring the Sustainability of Tourism (MST / SF-MST), developed by the UNWTO in partnership with international statistical bodies. This framework focuses on measuring the economic, social, and environmental dimensions of tourism in a way that allows for international comparability (UNWTO, 2024).

It includes a set of proposed indicators to evaluate performance in the field of sustainable tourism, such as indicators of tourism flows, net tourism expenditure, natural resource use, ecological footprint, impacts on biodiversity, and others (UNWTO, 2023).

Additionally, the European Union and its European guidebooks have developed special guidelines for destinations to measure sustainability. These contain environmental, social, and economic indicators and are used to assess the success of European tourism policies (EU Guidebook on Sustainable Tourism for Development).

3.3. The Relationship Between Tourism Development and Strategic Planning

Tourism development cannot be effective and sustainable without strategic planning. Strategic planning is considered a key tool for linking long-term visions with operational plans in the tourism sector.

In the context of hospitality and tourism, some scholars point out that the implementation of tourism strategies requires clear strategic management that includes setting objectives, allocating resources, monitoring implementation, and evaluation (Aladag et al., 2020).

Studies also confirm that strategic planning involving local stakeholders enhances the chances of sustainable tourism development by engaging the local community in formulating plans and decision-making (Simpson, 2001).

Furthermore, strategic management begins with understanding the tourism environment (opportunities and challenges) and mobilizing resources in an integrated manner to achieve long-term development goals (Strategic Management in Tourism – theoretical and practical comparisons) (Source: “Strategic Management Within the Tourism” and others).

4. Presentation and Analysis of Euro-Mediterranean Experiences

A. Italy: Linking Tourism with Local Development, the Cultural Approach, and Co-Financing

A.1 Linking Tourism with Local Development

Italy adopted an approach that makes tourism a lever for regional development by encouraging local initiatives and municipalities to develop integrated tourism products that respect socio-economic specificities. This is clearly reflected in the National Strategic Plan for Tourism 2017–2022 (**Piano Strategico del Turismo – PST**), prepared by the Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Tourism (MiBACT).

The plan highlights the need to strengthen links between tourism and local productive sectors, support networks of small and medium destinations, and develop “slow tourism” regions as a tool for sustainable development (MiBACT, 2017, pp. 18–21). It also defines the role of local authorities in designing tourism and innovation policies based on the model of “interconnected destinations,” which relies on the shared management of cultural and environmental resources (MiBACT, 2017, p. 22).

A.2 The Cultural Approach in Tourism Policy

The Italian experience is characterized by using cultural heritage as a central pillar of tourism development. Article 117 of the Italian Constitution stipulates that the protection of cultural heritage is a shared responsibility between the state and the regions, which strengthens the role of local authorities in cultural and tourism promotion.

Legislative Decree No. 42 of 2004 (**Codice dei beni culturali e del paesaggio**) states that the protection of tangible and intangible heritage is part of national tourism policy and must be managed in a way that integrates preservation with responsible tourism use (art. 6; art. 111). This legal framework has helped entrench “cultural tourism” as one of the most important forms of tourism in the country, especially in historic cities and World Heritage Sites (d.lgs. n. 42/2004, art. 6; art. 111).

A.3 Co-Financing and Innovative Initiatives

One of the distinctive features of the Italian experience in supporting sustainable tourism is **co-financing** between the state, local authorities, and the private sector. This is done through financial instruments such as **EU Structural Funds**, national programs to support small towns (**Borghi più belli d’Italia**), and cooperative initiatives with local associations.

For example, under the PST, the Italian government funded several projects to rehabilitate historical sites in small towns, with co-funding from the EU (FESR), the state, and regional authorities at varying rates (MiBACT, 2017, pp. 46–49). The Ministry of Tourism has also launched incentive programs for the private sector to invest in local cultural tourism projects, with mandatory compliance with sustainability standards (Ministero del Turismo, 2022, pp. 12–14).

B. Spain: Regional Planning, Community Involvement, and Ecotourism

B.1 Regional Planning and National Policy

Spain adopted an integrated national approach to redirect the tourism sector toward **qualitative sustainability**, embodied in the **Directrices Generales de la Estrategia de Turismo Sostenible de España 2030**, which provides a national framework linking the three sustainability goals (economic, social, environmental) to regional and local plans.

The focus is on shifting from a “quantity” mindset to one of “value and quality” (Spanish Ministry of Industry, Trade and Tourism, 2019, pp. 1–2; 11–16). The strategic philosophy is based on multi-level governance, enabling regions and municipalities to adapt national frameworks to their regional specificities. The plan defines implementation axes that include: collaborative governance, sustainable development, competitive transformation, and enhancing tourism products and intelligence (Spanish Ministry of Industry, Trade and Tourism, 2019, pp. 11–16).

Implementation relies on funding mechanisms and operational measures integrated with **EU programs**, such as NextGenerationEU, to finance projects for digital and environmental infrastructure modernization and support SMEs in the tourism sector (Gobierno de España; Ministerio de Industria, Comercio y Turismo, 2023).

B.2 Involving Local Communities (Host Communities) - Practices and Field Measures

Spanish evidence indicates that involving local communities in destination planning and management strengthens policy legitimacy and reduces tourism-related frictions.

A field study on the **Camino de Santiago** found that local residents tend to accept and participate in tourism initiatives under certain conditions, with varying levels of willingness depending on the type of involvement (Soares et al., 2021, Section 3.5).

Regional cases (e.g., **Galicia** and **Andalucía**) show practical consultation mechanisms such as observatories, municipal forums, and public–private partnerships, which institutionalize the participation of local stakeholders in planning, implementation, and performance monitoring (Regional plans; Soares et al., 2021).

Successful practices include:

- Establishing **local observatories** to measure economic, environmental, and social impacts.
- Conducting **regular consultation rounds** with municipalities, small operators, and civil society organizations.
- Implementing **training programs** to build the capacity of local populations to deliver sustainable tourism services (Soares et al., 2021; Regional Tourism Plans, various).

B.3 Ecotourism and Pressure Management (Case Studies: Balearic ITS, Islas Cíes, Local Operator Support)

Spain’s applications for managing tourism pressures combine financial, regulatory, and technical instruments:

- **Sustainable Tourism Tax (Impuesto sobre Estancias Turísticas / ITS) — Balearic Islands:** Since 2016, the Balearic Islands Government has applied a tourist accommodation tax whose revenues fund environmental protection projects, local infrastructure improvement, and destination sustainability programs. A special fund collects and allocates these resources to local environmental and social projects (Govern de les Illes Balears, 2016; CAIB communications, 2025). This tool is a practical model for financing mitigation and compensation measures to address overcrowding impacts.

- **Visitor Caps and Permits — Cíes Islands (Galicia):**

The Xunta de Galicia established an electronic pre-booking permit system for visits to **Islas Cíes** within the Parque Nacional Marítimo-Terrestre de las Islas Atlánticas, setting daily quotas during peak seasons to limit environmental degradation and protect sensitive habitats. Crossing fees fund protection measures (Xunta de Galicia, n.d.; park authorities). Media and analytical reports show that these caps reduce environmental pressure and improve visitor experiences.

- **Supporting Local Operators and Small Projects in Protected Areas:**

Spain integrates training and funding programs for operators in **Natura 2000** sites and protected areas to develop low-impact tourism products, improve local service quality, and provide alternative livelihoods for local populations (EU funds / national destination sustainability plans).

The combination of these tools (ITS funding, permit systems, and local operator support) has proven effective when local and regional administrations adopt **participatory approaches** and conduct regular performance evaluations (Govern de les Illes Balears, 2016; Xunta de Galicia, n.d.; Spanish Ministry strategic documents).

C. France: Tourism Laws, Heritage Preservation, and Tourism Diversification

C.1 Tourism Laws

The protection of cultural heritage in France is based on the **Code du patrimoine**, which defines the legal frameworks for listing, classifying, and preserving monuments. There are two main classifications:

- **Classé** (classified at the national level of interest)
- **Inscrit** (listed at the regional level of interest)

Procedures for classification, obligations, and restrictions related to works and property management are regulated by specific legal articles (Code du patrimoine, art. L621-1; art. L621-27).

This protection entails notification obligations, restoration requirements, and urban planning regulations. The law also defines the roles of the **central administration** (Ministry of Culture) and regional authorities in granting approvals or prior notifications for works (Intervenir sur un immeuble inscrit_ministère de la Culture; Code du patrimoine, art. L621-27).

C.2 Heritage Preservation (Financing and Support Mechanisms)

France relies on a public–private mix of mechanisms to finance heritage preservation. One of the most notable is the **Fondation du patrimoine**, created by law (loi n°96-590 du 2 juillet 1996) to mobilize private and public resources for maintaining “unprotected heritage” and supporting local restoration projects.

Official reviews (Cour des comptes) show that the foundation played a major role in funding thousands of restoration projects, with relative dependence on public resources and privatization. Its legal and financial structure has clearly defined characteristics and powers (Cour des comptes, 2013, pp. 1–3; Loi n°96-590, 1996).

The state also provides tax incentives and subsidies to support restoration through local and regional grant programs managed jointly by the ministry and regional bodies (Cour des comptes, 2013, pp. 1–4).

C.3 Tourism Diversification (National Plan and Sustainability Tools)

France adopted a national vision linking tourism growth with green and qualitative transformation through the Destination France / Atout France plan which is a long-term national strategy with dedicated funding. It aims to make France a “model destination for sustainable tourism” through five strategic axes, including:

- Enhancing the quality of tourism supply
- Supporting domestic destinations
- Managing pressure on sensitive sites
- Building professional capacities

(Atout France, Destination France plan, 2023, p. 1)

Atout France, in cooperation with regional partners, works on evaluation and certification tools for destinations and support programs for local projects (France Tourisme Durable, destination sustainability plans), aiming to redistribute tourism benefits toward inland regions and reduce overcrowding at major destinations (Atout France, 2023, pp. 1–2).

5. Common Strengths of Euro-Mediterranean Experiences

A review of Euro-Mediterranean experiences in sustainable tourism development (particularly in **Spain, France, and Italy**) reveals a set of structural features that underpin their success. These can be summarized in three main axes:

5.1 Multi-Level Governance and Policy Integration

Tourism strategies in these countries clearly rely on multi-level governance linking central government, regional authorities, municipalities, and the private sector.

- In **Spain**, the *Directrices Generales de la Estrategia de Turismo Sostenible 2030* serves as a national framework guiding regions and municipalities through joint coordination mechanisms (Spanish Ministry of Industry, Trade and Tourism, 2019, pp. 11–16).
- In **France**, the legal system empowers local actors to contribute to tourism policy implementation, particularly through the Code of Tourism, which defines the roles of regional and local authorities within the “national tourism catalogue” (Ministère de l'Économie et des Finances, 2023, Art. L131-1 to L132-3).
- In **Italy**, integration is achieved through national plans (Piano Strategico del Turismo) that provide a general framework while granting regions wide planning and implementation powers (Ministero del Turismo, 2017, pp. 6–10).

5.2 Adoption of Internationally Recognized Sustainability Indicators and Tools

These countries share a commitment to using internationally recognized sustainable tourism performance indicators (EU, UNWTO, GSTC) and embedding them in monitoring and evaluation plans.

- **Spain** links its national strategic axes to EU indicators (EU Tourism Dashboard) through NextGenerationEU funding mechanisms (Gobierno de España, 2023).
- **France** has integrated environmental and social indicators into its 2019–2023 national strategy to monitor emissions, manage resources, and measure cultural and social impacts (Ministère de l'Europe et des Affaires étrangères, 2020, pp. 14–18).

- **Italy** has developed a monitoring system within the PST 2017–2022 aligned with the GSTC framework, used by regional authorities to monitor environmental and social destination performance (Ministero del Turismo, 2017, pp. 20–25).

5.3 Active Community Engagement and Local Participation

Another common feature of successful Euro-Mediterranean experiences is effective community involvement in planning, implementation, and evaluation phases.

- In **Spain**, the Camino de Santiago case study showed that local participation in tourism planning enhances social support and reduces conflicts (Soares et al., 2021, Section 3.5).
- In **France**, municipalities and **Comités régionaux du tourisme** rely on consultation mechanisms and local councils to design projects and set development priorities (Ministère de l'Europe et des Affaires étrangères, 2020, pp. 20–22).
- In **Italy**, the cultural and local development approach involves civil associations and small businesses in developing tourism products and linking tourism to local development (Ministero del Turismo, 2017, pp. 35–38).

6. Lessons Learned from Comparative Experiences

Euro-Mediterranean experiences (Spain, France, Italy) highlight a set of key lessons that can be leveraged to develop tourism policies in Algeria, particularly within the framework of implementing the SDAT 2030 tourism development plan. These lessons can be summarized in four main axes:

6.1. Multi-Level Governance and Institutional Coordination

One of the main success factors in European experiences is the presence of a multi-level governance system linking national, regional, and local actors, and establishing sustainable partnerships with the private sector and civil society. In Spain, the National Sustainable Tourism Strategy 2030 enables the establishment of clear coordination frameworks through “sectoral conferences” between the state and the regions (Spanish Ministry of Industry, Trade and Tourism, 2019, pp. 11–16).

France, through the *Code du Tourisme*, has laid down a precise distribution of powers among different levels of public authority, defining the roles of municipalities and regional tourism bodies in planning and implementation (Ministère de l'Économie et des Finances, 2023, Arts. L131–L132).

Italy's strategic plan involves regional authorities in program design, allowing adaptation to local specificities (Ministero del Turismo, 2017, pp. 6–10).

6.2. Linking Tourism with Other Economic and Social Sectors

A key lesson is adopting an integrated approach that positions tourism as a driver for developing other sectors such as transport, culture, agriculture, energy, and vocational training. In France, transportation and cultural infrastructure projects were included in the 2019–2023 national tourism strategies to enhance the attractiveness of destinations (Ministère de l'Europe et des Affaires étrangères, 2020, pp. 14–18).

In Spain, tourism funding is embedded within NextGenerationEU plans, which also cover digital transformation, energy transition, and rural development (Gobierno de España, 2023).

In Italy, sectoral integration is a central axis of the *Piano Strategico del Turismo* through joint programs between the ministries of tourism, culture, and agriculture (Ministero del Turismo, 2017, pp. 20–25).

6.3. Financial Sustainability and Diversification of Funding Sources

Comparative experiences show that the sustainability of sustainable tourism projects depends on diversified funding mechanisms, including public funding, public–private partnerships, and European or regional funds.

In Spain, tourism financing is tied to EU programs (NextGenerationEU), ensuring medium- and long-term financial stability (Gobierno de España, 2023).

France has relied on a mix of central and local funding and private initiatives within its 2019–2023 strategy (Ministère de l'Europe et des Affaires étrangères, 2020, pp. 19–21).

In Italy, financial instruments dedicated to regional development were integrated into the national tourism strategic plan (Ministero del Turismo, 2017, pp. 28–30).

6.4. Regular Project Monitoring and Evaluation

Finally, these countries rely on periodic monitoring and evaluation systems using internationally recognized indicators (UNWTO, GSTC, EU Dashboard).

In France, regional authorities submit semi-annual evaluation reports to the central ministry (Ministère de l'Europe et des Affaires étrangères, 2020, pp. 22–24).

Spain has developed a follow-up system based on regional performance reports linked to EU indicators (Spanish Ministry of Industry, Trade and Tourism, 2019, pp. 30–33).

In Italy, the strategic plan obliges regions to conduct periodic evaluations of their programs (Ministero del Turismo, 2017, pp. 35–38).

7. The Reality and Prospects of Sustainable Tourism Development in Algeria

7.1. Overview of SDAT 2030: Objectives, Pillars, and Programs

The *Schéma Directeur d'Aménagement Touristique* (SDAT) à l'horizon 2030 serves as the national reference framework for tourism policy in Algeria and is embedded within the National Spatial Planning Policy (SNAT 2030). The plan sets clear quantitative and qualitative objectives, including:

- Modernizing and expanding accommodation capacity (creating about 75,000 quality beds, of which ~40,000 meet international standards),
- Generating hundreds of thousands of direct and indirect jobs, and
- Attracting around 10 million foreign tourists by 2030.

It also defines key axes and programs (e.g., creating *Pôles d'Excellence Touristique*, “model tourist villages” VTE, and expanding *Zones d'Expansion Touristiques*) and sets out investment promotion mechanisms (streamlining administrative procedures, investment incentives, and funding tools) to achieve these objectives (République algérienne / Troisième communication nationale, 2023, p. 63; Doumbouya, 2021, pp. 71–73).

7.2. Strengths and Weaknesses in Implementation

➤ Strengths

- **A unified national strategic framework:** SDAT provides a long-term vision that aligns sectoral goals within regional and national development plans, helping to channel investments and determine relative shares of destinations and projects (Doubouya, 2021, pp. 71–73).
- **Existence of approved on-the-ground projects and initiatives:** Thousands of tourism projects have been approved under investment promotion programs, and several provinces have started drafting local SDAT plans to translate the national vision into action (examples: Djelfa and Blida SDAT _ local implementation phase files) (République algérienne / Troisième communication nationale, 2023, p. 63; SDAT Djelfa, Phase 01, 2022).

➤ Weaknesses

- **Institutional implementation and coordination gaps:** Despite the existence of the SDAT framework, local studies and theses indicate weak coordination between central and regional authorities (lack of effective coordination mechanisms, unclear task distribution, and uneven administrative capacities across provinces) (Doubouya, 2021, pp. 99–104).
- **Shortage of human and technical capacities:** Field studies reveal a lack of specialized expertise in sustainable tourism planning and project management at the local level, alongside limited specialized training programs (Semaoune & Benslimane, 2020).
- **Insufficient or short-term funding approaches:** Operational long-term funding for SDAT projects remains difficult; the heavy reliance on individual or private investments without sustainable financing for public infrastructure undermines long-term returns (Local reports / academic analyses, 2019–2024).
- **Weak digital promotion and informational infrastructure:** Field evaluations and university theses show that official Algerian tourism websites and portals lack a strong digital presence compared to regional neighbors, negatively affecting destination appeal and international promotion (Doubouya, 2021, pp. 18–19).

7.3. The Gap Between Theory and Practice

➤ Why has SDAT not fully translated into concrete results?

- **Good design vs. weak follow-up mechanisms:** Although SDAT sets measurable indicators and objectives, the lack of unified national and regional evaluation systems limits the ability to accurately and continuously measure real progress. National and academic reports show an absence of regular, standardized, integrated progress reporting mechanisms (République algérienne / Troisième communication nationale, 2023, p. 63; Doubouya, 2021, pp. 99–104).
- **Funding and implementation – reliance on individual initiatives:** Many projects rely on private investment or local promoters, whereas major infrastructure and environmental projects require public resources and long-term funding strategies. This creates discrepancies between national plans and actual on-the-ground implementation (République algérienne / Troisième communication nationale, 2023, pp. 63–64).
- **Local engagement and participatory governance gaps:** Field studies (e.g., the Taghit case) show that positive attitudes toward principles like sustainable tourism do not always translate

into real commitment or capacity-building among local actors; moreover, there is a lack of financial mechanisms and tangible incentives for effective community participation (Semaoune & Benslimane, 2020).

- **Incomplete sectoral integration:** While an integrated approach linking tourism with transport, culture, agriculture, and energy is announced, its implementation requires inter-ministerial coordination and clear funding mechanisms in areas that still need effective execution and follow-up structures (Berghout & Guerziz, 2024; Doumbouya, 2021).

In summary, SDAT 2030 provides a strong strategic framework with clear measurable goals, and there are approved projects and provincial initiatives in place. However, translating plans into concrete results requires strengthening three critical elements:

- Sustainable and flexible funding mechanisms,
- Unified, periodic monitoring and evaluation systems, and
- Continuous capacity-building programs for local actors and regional institutions.

Drawing on Euro-Mediterranean lessons (multi-level governance, mixed financing, international monitoring indicators, and genuine community engagement) could help narrow this gap, provided that the next phase focuses on translating these lessons into actionable tools adapted to the Algerian context (Spanish & European lessons; République algérienne 2023; Doumbouya 2021).

8. Adapting Euro-Mediterranean Lessons to the Algerian Context

8.1. Practical Mechanisms for Adapting Successful Models to the Algerian Reality

An analysis of successful Euro-Mediterranean experiences highlights a set of principles that can be adapted to the Algerian context through clear, phased measures.

In the **short term**, it is necessary to strengthen the coordination framework between the tourism, environmental, and cultural sectors by establishing **joint regional committees** tasked with aligning tourism programs with local sustainability requirements. This aligns with the governance axis of the SDAT 2030 (Ministère de l'Aménagement du Territoire, de l'Environnement et du Tourisme, 2008, pp. 23–25).

In the **medium term**, the focus should be on activating **innovative financing tools**, such as regional funds to support sustainable tourism projects or public–private partnerships, similar to what is implemented in several Spanish and Italian regions (OECD, 2020, pp. 45–47).

In the **long term**, the objective is to develop **local cooperation networks** between municipalities, training institutions, and civil society to build sustainable capacities capable of ensuring the institutional continuity of tourism projects (UNWTO, 2018, pp. 51–53).

8.2. Proposals for Improving Local Tourism Governance

European experiences underline the importance of multi-level governance, which is based on a clear distribution of roles and responsibilities between the central level, local authorities, and the private sector.

In the Algerian context, tourism governance can be improved through:

- Granting municipalities broader powers in managing local tourism resources;
- Integrating civil society in the processes of preparing and evaluating tourism plans;

- Strengthening coordination between regional directorates and the ministry through shared digital platforms for project monitoring.

These measures are in line with SDAT 2030 regarding the gradual decentralization of destination management (Ministère du Tourisme et de l'Artisanat, 2018, pp. 34–36), and they are based on participatory governance principles adopted by the European Union (European Commission, 2016, pp. 12–15).

8.3. Activating Indicators to Measure Sustainable Tourism Performance

Indicators are a central tool for ensuring objective monitoring and evaluation of tourism projects. It is therefore recommended that Algeria adopt a national system of sustainable tourism indicators, inspired by the UNWTO and European Commission frameworks. This system would include:

- **Economic indicators** (local revenue, employment opportunities),
- **Environmental indicators** (resource consumption, waste management), and
- **Socio-cultural indicators** (local satisfaction, heritage preservation).

This system could first be implemented experimentally in selected model destinations such as Timgad or Ghardaïa, before being gradually expanded nationwide. This would make it possible to measure the gap between the objectives stated in SDAT 2030 and the actual results achieved on the ground (UNWTO, 2018, pp. 62–64; European Commission, 2016, pp. 20–23).

9. Conclusion

The study showed that Euro-Mediterranean experiences (particularly those of Spain, France, and Italy) offer leading models for using tourism as a tool for achieving sustainable development. This success stems from their adoption of multi-level governance, long-term planning visions, innovative financing mechanisms, and periodic monitoring and evaluation systems based on accurate indicators.

These countries have successfully transitioned from a tourism growth model focused on quantity to one emphasizing quality, added value, environmental respect, and cultural identity. The Spanish experience, through the *Estrategia de Turismo Sostenible 2030*, demonstrates the importance of a comprehensive national framework guiding local policies. French legislation reflects the strong link between tourism and cultural heritage, while the Italian model stands out as a successful case of integrating tourism with local development through co-financing and cultural approaches.

In the Algerian context, the SDAT 2030 sustainable tourism development plan represents a strategic step toward building a comprehensive national vision for the tourism sector. It defines clear quantitative and qualitative objectives and proposes operational pillars such as infrastructure development, the creation of model tourism hubs and villages, and investment promotion and public–private partnerships.

However, field observations reveal a tangible gap between the declared ambitions and actual outcomes, due to institutional, organizational, financial, and technical obstacles that limit the effectiveness of implementation and weaken progress toward sustainable tourism.

➤ **Main Findings**

- **Strategic vision clarity** in Algeria through SDAT 2030, which provides a comprehensive national framework but is not fully translated into tangible field achievements.
- **European models' effectiveness** lies in adopting precise planning and clear implementation mechanisms tied to periodic performance indicators, which has contributed to resource sustainability and improved tourism competitiveness.
- The **Algerian gap** stems from weak coordination between central and regional levels, limited local capacities, lack of long-term funding, and insufficient involvement of local communities and the private sector.
- **Adapting European experiences** to the Algerian context is feasible, provided they are integrated into **appropriate implementation mechanisms** that consider national political, economic, social, and administrative specificities.

➤ **Practical Recommendations for Decision-Makers and Researchers**

- **Strengthen multi-level governance** by establishing effective formal coordination mechanisms between ministries, regional bodies, and municipalities, with clearly defined responsibilities and precise performance indicators.
- **Adopt a national system of sustainable tourism indicators** inspired by EU and UNWTO models to enable regular and transparent performance monitoring and evaluation.
- **Establish a national sustainable tourism financing fund** that integrates public funding, private investment, and European/international financing mechanisms to ensure project sustainability and avoid reliance solely on individual initiatives.
- **Build human capacities** by creating continuous training programs in sustainable tourism planning, project management, and digital promotion, in collaboration with universities and national research centers.
- **Encourage local engagement** by incentivizing local communities, civil society, and the private sector to participate in planning and implementing projects, supported by clear financial and institutional incentives.
- **Improve digital infrastructure and international promotion** to make Algeria a more competitive destination regionally and internationally.

➤ **Future Cooperation Prospects**

The shift toward a sustainable tourism model goes beyond administrative decisions or centralized planning. It requires building a participatory ecosystem that brings together decision-makers, universities, research centers, local communities, and the private sector.

In this regard, the study calls for expanding academic and institutional cooperation between Algeria and Euro-Mediterranean countries, through joint research and field programs, and exchanging expertise on performance indicators, financing mechanisms, and governance systems.

Such cooperation would strengthen national capacities and keep pace with global transitions toward more sustainable and higher-quality tourism.

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