

Problem of Tourism Lands in Algeria: Case of the Expansion Zones and the Tourist Site in the Wilaya of Constantine

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Abstract

In the recent years, Algeria has had a real desire and an effective and ambitious political will, to stimulate and develop investment in the tourism sector, to promote the tourism attractiveness in a country that possesses all the qualifications, in order to promote its image abroad as a tourist destination, as Algeria adopted a comprehensive policy plan for tourism development, which aims to support and promote the sector, as well as preserving and controlling the tourism lands, through tourism expansion zones, which are one of the main pillars of the tourism lands.

The wilaya of Constantine has important natural and cultural tourism potentials and sites, which must be valued through the establishment of dedicated tourism expansion zones that serve as a preserved land for investment, diversification of tourism products and an essential factor for attracting tourists continuously throughout the territory of the wilaya.

Key words: Constantine; Tourism Lands; Expansion Zones and Tourist Sites; Tourism Development Scheme.

INTRODUCTION

Algeria has paid great attention to promoting tourism, by launching an ambitious and effective policy, aimed at developing and upgrading the tourism product and keeping pace with the global market. So, it incorporated tourism development into sustainability conditions, by promoting a quality tourism product, which is capable of meeting domestic and external demand; One of the most important conditions is the tourism lands, whether they are expansion zones or tourist sites, to develop investment in them and promote the elements of tourist attractiveness, which necessitates turning towards this resource, which is a sustainable wealth and its protection ensures the sustainability of the environment elements, for which the tourism lands is considered an incubator, in addition to the preservation of the country's cultural and natural heritage.

The wilaya of Constantine in general and the Constantine city in particular, as the main center of the wilaya, contains various historical, cultural, religious and ecological tourism potentials, which qualifies it to be a tourism pole. This requires the identification of the expansion zones and tourist sites which constitute an important land for the promotion of the tourism field across the wilaya's territory.

Definition of Tourism Lands

The tourism lands are an expression composed of two terms, the first which is land, means everything stable, static and cannot be transported without damage"¹.

The second term is tourism: "Tourism is the movement of persons who temporarily move away from their place of residence to reside elsewhere, as long as they use economic and cultural capacities, satisfying the demands of life, culture or personal desires whatever their kind."²

So, tourism lands are everything constant in the field of tourism, hotels, tourism complexes, cure baths and the villages realized as part of tourism investment. Or, is the real-estate composed of the lands which are designated and classified of a tourism character and for tourism exploitation³.

Formation of Tourism Lands

According to the article 19 of the Law No. 03-03, which stipulates: "Whatever the legal nature of the land within the tourism expansion zones and tourist sites"⁴, and the article No20. Which stipulates the following: "The buildable tourism lands consist of the lands reserved for this purpose in the tourism development scheme; it includes the lands belonging to public and private properties and those belonging to private landowners."⁵

The tourism lands specified under the tourism development scheme, such as tourism expansion zones or tourist sites, are classified as national public property, whether they are natural like beaches and seas, or artificial like public parks or cultural establishments; they may also belong to the State, wilaya or municipality, in the lands that have been de-classified as public property and are subject to sale, exchange or rent, in order to encourage the tourism sector through the Tourism Development Scheme, of the National Agency for Tourism Development, through amicable agreement. The tourism lands may also be situated within the tourism expansion zones or tourist sites; they are private properties which may be acquired by the National Agency for Tourism Development if required.⁶

Components of the Tourism Lands

The Tourism Expansion Zones and Tourist Sites (ZEST): (formerly ZET)

The Tourism Expansion Zones

The Tourism expansion zones are one of the main pillars of the tourism lands, defined by Law No. 03-03 Article 2 as follows: "Every region or extension of the territory that has natural, cultural, human and creative characteristics, which are suitable for tourism, qualified for the establishment or development of a tourism facility, which can be exploited in the development of one or more types of tourism with a profitability."⁷

Tourist Site

the tourist site: "any site or view characterized by tourist attraction, with its amazing appearance, or with its wonders, natural characteristics or constructions, recognized by its historical, artistic, mythical or cultural significance, and whose authenticity must be valued and preserved from damage or extinction by nature and man."⁸

Protected Zone

A protected area is "a part of the expansion zone or tourist site, which is unbuildable and requires special protection, in order to preserve its natural, archaeological or cultural qualifications"⁹.

The Field Distribution of the Expansion Zones and Tourist Sites in Algeria

The interest in tourism as a booster of development and an incentive of investment within the natural, environmental and cultural tourist places; in this context, the Algerian State has promulgated legal texts, the first of which is the Order No. 66-62,¹⁰ which stipulates in its article 8 : "In order to achieve a tourism regulation scheme, priority tourist areas and places shall be designated, under privatization measures for their protection. Efforts shall be done to equip them and invest in them."

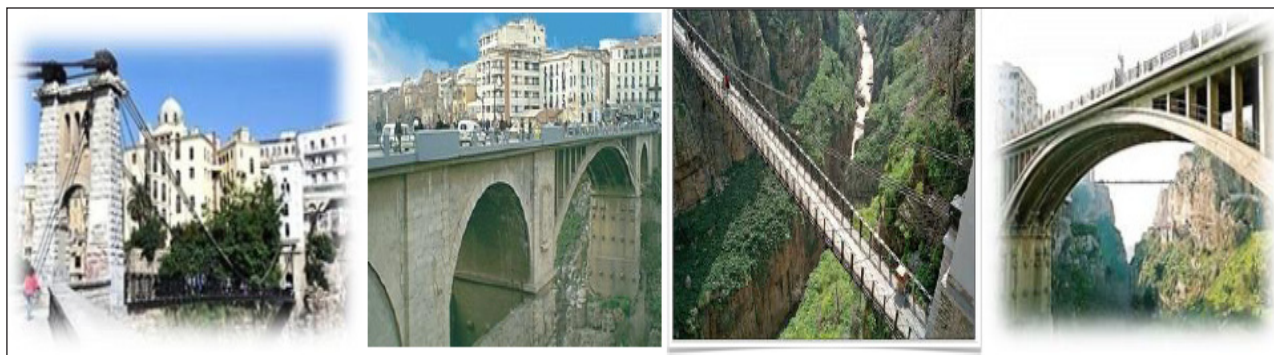
In this framework, Algeria's tourism sector has been divided into tourist zones; each region has its own advantages, enabling it to develop the type of tourism it has. Their number was 03 tourism expansion zones, in the first Executive Decree No. 75-66,¹¹ and after the issuance of the Executive Decree No. 88-23,¹² their number increased to reach 174 classified tourism expansion zones. Following the issuance of Executive Decree No. 10-131,¹³ 31 tourist areas were added to make their total number 205 classified tourism expansion zones, occupying an area of 53197.6 Ha, to reach later the number of 255 tourism expansion zones, according to the Executive Decree No. 16 of January 1st, 2016.

Tourism Potentials of the Wilaya of Constantine

We cannot talk about tourism in the wilaya of Constantine without mentioning its various tourist potentials, including historical, cultural, religious and ecological qualifications, which create a diversity and variation in tourism.

Constantine is characterized by the diversity and variation of its amazing natural sites, such as the antique rock, which is an important tourist site that tells the story of an ancient city that has worked to protect and naturally fortify it. Today it represents a wonderful panorama, full of cracks, holes, caves, and hideout that hide the secrets of the past civilizations and the traces of the various ages.

Due to the city's rugged location and the deep groove of sand valley, eight bridges were built on the city, giving it a breathtaking view for visitors, so the city is known as the antique rock city and the suspended bridges city; the most important bridge is the Sidi Rashed Bridge, the world's highest stone bridge, with 27 arches, the Sidi M'sid Bridge, also called the Suspended Bridge. Along the Valley of Sand, there is an 1800m tourist corridor interspersed with amazing views that often-tempted tourist.



Constantine also enjoys many religious, cultural and archaeological sites, such as the mosques that attest to the Islamic Civilization, such as the Great Mosque which was built in the 13th Century, El Emir Abdelkader Mosque, one of the masterpieces of the modern Islamic world, featuring a mosque and a modern University of Islamic Sciences. In addition to a series of Zouias. The ancient city is a moral and aesthetic heritage that forms the city's memory with all its cultural, social and civilization components. Constantine, like other cities and Islamic capitals, has known specialized markets.

Among the archaeological sites, we find the city of Tiddis, which was protecting the city of Cirta from foreign attacks; it is about 30 km far from Constantine, Through the National Road No. 27, with a high-rise rock mountain, on which are spread apparent traces in bright red, attesting to an ancient city that was known as the ancient city of Constantine, until it was discovered some of the writings that showed its real name(CASTELLUMTIDITANOUM{.

Massinissa mausoleum takes the form of a rectangle consisting of three stone rows; its features remained unknown until the beginning of the classification and research works in 1915, as well as a series of **tombs** characterized by great luxury.

The wilaya of Constantine enjoys also infrastructures such as the international airport, east-west highway, the railway network, the cableway line where the one can enjoy the vintage rock view, the tramway and the giant bridge, which facilitate the movement of national and foreign tourists, and through the hospitality structures of 25 hotels, with the capacity of 2490 beds, which offers 1054 jobs, in addition to the 103 tourism agencies which offer 812 jobs.¹⁴

On the basis of the foregoing, it can be said that the wilaya of Constantine has significant and diverse natural and cultural tourism potentials, in addition to the considerable infrastructures that are likely to make of it a tourist pole, which helps to encourage investment and attract tourists from within and outside the country.



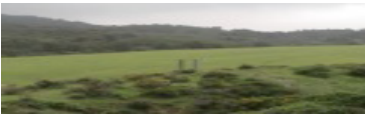
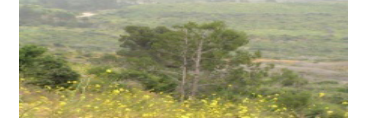



The Suggested Expansion Zones and the Tourist Site in the Wilaya of Constantine






Under the direction of the State's Policy and its interest in the tourism sector, the wilaya of Constantine is helping to revitalize this important sector, because of the region's resources and sites which enable it to be investment spaces. For this purpose, the concerned authorities have mobilized to promote tourism investment, by identifying the expansion zones and tourist sites that are an important land to promote the tourism policy. knowing that Constantine did not get any expansion zones under the Executive Decree No. 88-232. It remained disadvantaged until the promulgation of issuance of the Law No. 03-03, as the directorate of tourism of the wilaya of Constantine proposed 10 tourism expansion zones and sites across the wilaya's territory, which are shown in the(map No. 1) and in the (Table No. 1):



Figure 1. Map of The suggested expansion zones and the tourist site in the wilaya of Constantine. Source:www.mtp.gov.dz more author treatment.

Table 1. The suggested expansion zones and the tourist site in the wilaya of Constantine.

Expansion areas and tourist sites	Commune	Total area (ha)	Configurable area (ha)	Purpose of the site
	Constantine	5380	110	green tourism, relaxation, leisure and sports
	El Khroub	200	12	natural tourism, relaxation, leisure and sports and research
	Ain Smara	2800	12	natural tourism, relaxation, leisure and sports
	Constantine	300	20	natural tourism, relaxation, leisure and sports
	Constantine	200	10	natural tourism, leisure relaxation and sports
	El Khroub	70	70	relaxation, leisure and sports tourism
	Ibn Ziad	150	50	natural tourism, relaxation, leisure sports and rest

	Constantine	86		discovery, cultural and historical tourism
	El Khroub	50	38	cultural and research tourism
	Béni H'midène	60	10	cultural tourism, research tourism
	Ibn Ziad	02	02	Cultural tourism and green tourism
	Ibn Ziad	04	04	Cultural tourism and green tourism

Source: Directorate of Tourism of the Wilaya of Constantine, 2019

These expansion zones and tourist sites did not benefit of a development project from 2003 until 2014, when the Director of Tourism initiated the project to develop the tourism expansion zones for the zones of Djebel El Ouahch, El Meridjand Chettaba.

Development and Management of the Expansion Zones and Tourist Sites

“The development and management of the expansion area and the tourist site shall be in accordance with the specifications of the development scheme, prepared by the department in charge, in consultation and ratification through the regulation into force.”¹⁵

The Procedures for the Preparation of the Tourism Development Scheme (PAT) For Expansion Zones and Tourist Sites (ZEST)

The Tourism Development Scheme means “all the general regulations related to the development and use of a tourism expansion zone, and the specifications for the urbanization and construction, as well as the applicable easements with regard to the use and protection of the identified properties and lands, in accordance with the tourist nature of the site.”

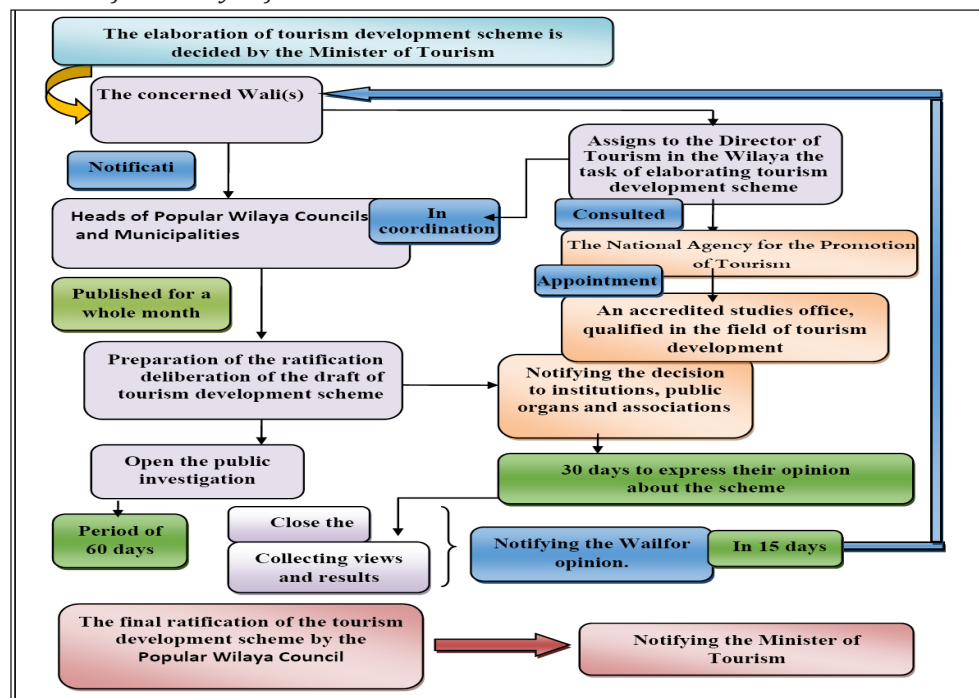
Table 2. Agenda for the study of the development of the tourist expansion zones

Djebel El Ouahch, El Meridj and Chettaba

Date	Agenda	Result
2014	Opening of a national tender for the “Study for the Creation of Tourism Expansion Zones in Djebel El Ouahch, El Meridjand Chettaba.	The tender was awarded on the ANAAT Studies Office, since tourism expansion zones were not previously classified, a second decision was taken to divide them into two parts. Share No. 01 Classification of Tourism Expansion Zones. Share No. 02 Study of Tourism Expansion Zones.

May 11 th , 2015	The members of the Committee went to the forest of Djebel El Ouahch, El Meridj and Chettaba in order to identify and designate tourism expansion zones related to the project "Study for the development of tourism expansion zones of Djebel El Ouahch, El Meridj and Chettaba.	As a result of determining the nature of land ownership surrounding the three forests and the refusal of forest representatives any development within the forest field, in accordance with the laws in force in the sector, it was decided to hold a working session with the Directorate of Land Surveying, in order to identify and delineate the precise boundaries of the three forests and to determine the ownership of the surrounding lands in order to allow the office of studies to know the space needed for the development.
July 22 nd , 2015	Meeting held at the headquarters of the Directorate of Tourism and Traditional Industries, concerning the project of "A study for the development of tourism expansion zones in Djebel El Ouahch, El Meridj and Chettaba", and after the presentation by the Office of Studies and the services of the Directorate of Tourism and Traditional Industries, and after discussion of the subject with the representatives of the variousservices.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Department of Forestry and Agriculture do not approve the proposed areas and this was in accordance with the laws in force. * Law No. 08/16 of August 3rd, 2008, containing the Land Directive Plan. * The instruction of Mr the Prime Minister No. 002 of May 12th, 2013.12/05/2013. * The instruction of Mr. the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development No. 558 of September 3rd, 2014. - Suggestion the possibility of replacing tourism expansion zones with recreational tourism zones, in accordance with the recreation zones proposed by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development - General Directorate of Forestry.
February 08 th , 2016		The Forest Directorate's rejection based on the laws in force, on the protection of the national forest heritage.

Source: The Directorate of the Wilaya of Constantine.



Scheme 1. Procedures for the preparation of the tourism development scheme

Source: Articles 5 to 15 of the Executive Decree No. 07-86 of March 11th, 2007, specifying the modalities of the elaboration of the tourism development scheme for the expansion zones and tourist sites, pp. 11-22, official journal No. 17.

In accordance with the procedures set out in the Tourism development Scheme identified above, the Directorate of Tourism of the wilaya of Constantine started in 2014 to apply it in the field, in coordination and consultation with the organs, institutions, economic operators and civil society, to allow them to express their views and concerns and to include their suggestions according to the agenda in table No. (2

Deduction

Algeria's zonage policy is not new but dates back to the 1960s. Three tourism zones have been identified and strengthened to reach 225 classified expansion zones. Till this date, the wilaya of Constantine has not enjoyed any tourist expansion zone as the rest of the country as a result:

- The Tourism Directorate does not take into account the nature and legal nature of the proposed land ownership, which has led to conflicts of interest between the actors (the Tourism Directorate and the Forest Department).

For the Directorate of Tourism, both Djebel El Ouahch, El Meridj and Chettaba are qualified to serve as tourist sites, according to article 8 of Law No. 03-03, of February 17th, 2003,¹⁷ "in order to protect and preserve its tourist character, parts of the national territory can be identified as expansion zones and tourist sites".

With regard to the disapproval by the Directorate of Forests, of the Tourism Expansion Zones Development Study Project, it was because it includes solid installations and this is inconsistent with the natural framework of the forest site. "All installations must be light, deconstructible and/or portable and compatible with the forest landscape. However, with the exception of sewage drainage systems, the potential capacity to be built according to the modalities specified in the preparation scheme, solid construction is strictly prohibited and expose who do it to the withdrawal of the exploitation permit".¹⁸

- Lack of experience and qualification in the administrative cadres of both the Directorate of Tourism and the Office of Studies for such studies.

- Reduction in the number of tourist sites proposed earlier, because of the lack of seriousness of officials in the sector and a rigidity in the administrative procedures between the date of the initial appointment of tourist sites in 2003, and 2014.

The sites of Djebel El Ouahch, El Meridj and Chettaba are under the guardianship of the Forestry Directorate; El Mrij Forest has been created as a site for recreation and amusement, as for the forest of Chettaba they are developing it as a hunting place.

The Tiddis and Masinisa sites are now under the guardianship of the Directorate of Culture, as a protection scheme (PPMVSA) was prepared.

CONCLUSION

The tourism lands are key factors for the recovery of tourism and its ownership is of a multi-legal nature. The tourism expansion zones are one of the main pillars of these lands. It is intended to allow the establishment or development of tourist establishments that can be exploited to develop one or more forms of tourism revenue.

The wilaya of Constantine has all the potentials of natural, cultural and historical attractiveness, which requires the identification of the expansion zones and tourist sites, but as a result of conflicts of interest between the actors (Directorate of Tourism and the Forestry Services), the wilaya is deprived of this important tourism land, which is one of the biggest catalysts of investment on both internal and external levels.

The aroused question is whether the wilaya of Constantine suffers really from a shortage or absence of lands intended for these types of projects and therefore will not enjoy any of the expansion zones and tourist sites (ZEST), which will reflect the significant shortage of tourism establishments, although it enjoys natural places and locations that rightly reflect an important aspect of investor attraction.

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List of Acronyms

ANAAT : National Agency of Development and Territory Attractiveness.

PAT : Tourism Development Scheme.

PPMVSA :Scheme of Protection and Valorization of the Archeological Sites and their Protection Zones

ZET : Tourism Expansion Zone

ZEST : Expansion Zone and Tourist Site.

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