

SCIENTIFIC REVIEW

**Abundance, Diversity, and Resilience of
Business Tourism Sites: Building Destination
Attractiveness under the Model of “Bottom-up
Destination Branding”**

DJOUHEUR Ziane¹, ADALA Laadjal², BRAHMI Mohsen³

¹Laboratory STRATEV, Abdelhamid Ben Badis University – Mostaganem, (ALGERIA),

²University of Continuing Education - Didouche Mourad, (ALGERIA),

³University of Sfax, (TUNISIA),

Emails: djouheur.ziane@univ-mosta.dz, laadjal.adala@ufc.dz,
brahmi.mohsen@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The study aims to provide a conceptual and analytical framework for understanding the relationship between tourism promotion and tourism institutions in the province of Mostaganem. It reviews the province’s tourism assets and institutional structures, clearly demonstrating the diversity and strength of its local tourism capital. However, this wealth has not yet been translated into a fully integrated and profitable industry.

The findings highlight that Mostaganem possesses abundant but underutilized tourism resources, both in terms of quantity (148 sites) and quality (including beaches, monuments, museums, religious sites, and entertainment facilities). This makes tourism promotion an urgent strategic priority. Furthermore, the diversity of



tourism assets enhances the resilience of the destination by reducing dependence on seasonal tourism and enabling adaptive and sustainable tourism development. The study also reveals a significant gap between the available resources and actual promotional performance. Due to a lack of coordination among local stakeholders and persistent institutional fragmentation, this wealth remains confined to reports and maps, surfacing in the minds of tourists only during the summer season.

Keywords: Tourism organizations, Tourism promotion, Resilient Destinations, Mostaganem, Regional tourism branding.

JEL classification: M30; M31

INTRODUCTION

In a world where nations are measured by their ability to market themselves and establish their mental presence before their physical one, tourism is no longer merely human movement toward a place; it has transformed into symbolic capital, a tool of soft diplomacy, and a strategic sector where economy intersects with culture, communication with planning, and impression with identity [20]. Amidst this profound transformation, tourism promotion has become not just a means to attract tourists, but a complex process of meaning-making, image formation, and decision-guiding. The tourist is no longer searching only for a place, but for the story told about the place. In this context, resilient tourism destinations are those capable of adapting to economic, environmental, and social changes while maintaining their attractiveness and competitiveness over time. Moreover, competition between destinations is no longer fought solely through prices and infrastructure, but through mental presence and

communicative distinction [8]. Therefore, modern tourism promotion tools have emerged not as complementary instruments, but as pivotal ones, because they craft the "first impression," which often proves to be the last.

At the heart of this communicative dynamic, tourism institutions stand as key actors, not only in service delivery, but in constructing perception, persuading the tourist, and ensuring sustained attractiveness [3]. When properly qualified and granted autonomy and professionalism, the tourism institution becomes a pillar in formulating the promotional scene, as it is most capable of monitoring market changes, keeping pace with new media, and adapting the message to the diversity of audiences. In the Algerian context, however, a gap remains between the abundance of natural and cultural assets and the weak tourism positioning locally and regionally. Studies indicate that this gap is largely attributed to the deficiency of institutional performance in promotion, and the absence of a unified vision and an integrated promotional identity managed by effective institutions with a genuine marketing orientation. Because concepts acquire their true meaning only when tested on the ground, the Province of Mostaganem was selected for this study, not merely as a promising coastal destination, but as a space where cultural heritage, diverse nature, and an emerging institutional structure intersect in a complex and incomplete relationship with the tourism promotion system [6]. Mostaganem today stands at a crossroads: it possesses the components of attractiveness, yet it has not yet solidified its position on the national tourism map; the reason lies not in the scarcity of resources, but in the fragility of the promotional discourse, the fluctuation of institutional action, and the absence of a unified communicative identity [9]. Therefore, the aim of integrating it into this research is to monitor how tourism is practiced in reality,

and how promotion can activate resources, transforming them from potential energy into an actual strategic lever.

- **Research Problem:** This study is founded on the following main question: "To what extent do tourism institutions contribute to promoting the tourism destination in the province of Mostaganem?"
- **Research Objectives:** This research seeks not only to examine concepts but to deconstruct the structure of the tourism promotional discourse and rebuild a new understanding of the role of the Algerian tourism institution as a marketing tool and an identity interface. It aims to provide a conceptual and analytical ground for understanding the relationship between tourism promotion and tourism institutions.
- **Methodology:** We employed descriptive and analytical approaches in this study, given their suitability for the research topic, to frame the study through the theoretical framework based on previous studies, addressing the conceptual framework of the subject. Additionally, we used the inductive approach to study the reality and prospects of tourism in the province of Mostaganem, and the role of its tourism institutions in promoting the tourism destination.

TOURISM PROMOTION: CONCEPT AND DIMENSIONS

The concept of tourism promotion refers to the set of communicative activities aimed at acquainting the tourists with the destination and motivating them to visit it, by highlighting its competitive advantages and constructing a positive image thereof. It constitutes one of the pillars of the tourism marketing mix [12]. It is exercised through diverse tools that integrate with one another

as part of an integrated promotional strategy. Modern tourism promotion is increasingly linked with the concept of destination resilience, as diversified and well-promoted tourism products help destinations withstand seasonal fluctuations, economic crises, and changing tourist preferences [14].

Tourism Institutions as Actors in Tourism Promotion

Tourism institutions are defined as all economic or social entities active in the design, provision, or support of tourism services and products directed at visitors or tourists. These include travel agencies, hotels, entertainment institutions, tourism associations, regional offices, and even wilaya (provincial) directorates of tourism ([1][3]).

While these institutions differ in their structure and roles, they share the characteristic of being the operational interface of the tourism destination; they are the ones who effectively undertake the task of implementing promotional strategies and formulating messages directed at local or foreign audiences. Researcher Philip Kotler noted that tourism institutions are considered "the acting hand that translates the destination image from planning to actual perception by the customer"[13].

The role of these institutions operates on several levels:

- Preparing offers that are directed and detailed according to the type of tourism;
- Defining the target segment and adapting communicative messages according to its characteristics;
- Using available promotional tools (advertisements, websites, campaigns, recommendations);
- Cooperating with other actors in the tourism value chain (transport, media, culture).

The strength of tourism institutions is not measured solely by their operational capacity, but also by their ability to build an integrated experience starting from the first piece of information the tourist receives and ending with what they share with others



after their visit. Therefore, tourism institutions are viewed today not merely as service providers, but as makers of tourism meaning and engineers of the destination's mental image [2].

Algerian Efforts in Business Tourism Promotion

In light of the challenges associated with reducing reliance on hydrocarbons, Algeria launched the "Schéma Directeur d'Aménagement Touristique" [17]. This represents a national strategic vision aimed at transforming tourism into a competitive productive sector, integrated with the national economy, and respectful of environmental and cultural dimensions [10].

Despite the declared ambition, field studies and monitoring of actual performance have revealed that the promotional dimension remains the weakest link, whether regarding the absence of a clear national tourism identity, limited Algerian participation in international markets and tourism fairs, or the scarcity of interactive digital content directed at foreign markets. Furthermore, local tourism institutions, particularly in coastal wilayas such as Mostaganem, continue to practice promotion within a limited, disconnected, and non-unified framework. This calls for a reconsideration of the implementation mechanisms of SDAT and the effective activation of its communicative tools [17].

BUSINESS TOURISM INSTITUTIONS IN ALGERIA: TRAJECTORY AND CHALLENGES

Tourism institutions in Algeria form the backbone of the tourism infrastructure, as they serve as the executive interface for promotional policies and the primary service providers for local and foreign tourists. The origins of these institutions date back to the post-independence era in 1962, when the Algerian state adopted a socialist model focused on nationalizing strategic sectors, including tourism. Consequently, the State was the exclusive actor in establishing hotels, managing tourism transport, and directing promotional activities.

Historical Origins and Early State Institutions

In this context, the "National Tourist Office" was established as the official executive body entrusted with the tasks of developing and directing the sector, especially regarding promotion and communication. Later, the Algerian National Tourism and Travel Agency (ONAT) [19] emerged as the commercial arm of the State for organizing domestic and international trips, reservations, and tourism offers. Furthermore, a chain of national public hotels was established, such as "El Aurassi," "Mazafran," and "El Djazaïr," all of which were managed directly by the State within a centralized model relying on public funding and full administrative supervision [16].

However, this management soon collided with a lack of flexibility, excessive bureaucracy, and the absence of a marketing culture, which caused many of these institutions to lose their effectiveness and transform into heavy structures with no qualitative impact on the national tourism landscape [15].

Main Types of Algerian Business Tourism Institutions

According to the institutional organization in Algeria, tourism institutions can be classified into three main categories:

- **Public institutions of an economic or administrative nature:** These include Wilaya Tourism Directorates, the National Tourist Office, and ONAT. They represent the official framework for planning, promotion, and the management of certain tourism facilities.
- **Private institutions (companies, travel agencies, hotels):** These emerged gradually after the economic liberalization in the 1990s and today include more than 3,000 licensed tourism agencies and hundreds of classified and unclassified hotels, although the performance of most remains weak and limited in reach [19].
- **Participatory institutions and tourism civil society:** These include local tourism associations, youth clubs, and

promotional initiatives by members of the diaspora. These institutions play an informal but influential role, especially in the fields of cultural and festive promotion.

Structural Challenges of Algerian Business Tourism Institutions

Despite the availability of a legal and constitutional framework supporting tourism, most Algerian tourism institutions suffer from chronic problems that hinder their effectiveness, among which we mention:

- Absence of competencies specializing in digital tourism marketing.
- Lack of funding and the inflexibility of financial and administrative systems.
- Weak linkage between public and private institutions.
- Conflict of competencies between central and wilaya authorities.
- Lack of supervision and control over private agencies.
- Fragmentation of promotional efforts and the absence of a unified national strategy.

Furthermore, a large number of tourism agencies still operate their activity within the limits of intermediary services (Hajj, Umrah, hotel reservations),(National Office of Statistics) without moving towards designing genuine promotional programs for domestic destinations, which renders them incapable of effectively contributing to revitalizing national tourism [7].

Reform Efforts for Business Tourism Institutions: Reality and Prospects

The Algerian authorities realized these deficiencies and launched the "Master Plan for Tourism Development (SDAT 2030)" in 2008, which included among its objectives the restructuring of the tourism institutional system through:



- Supporting partnership between the public and private sectors.
- Modernizing public institutions and converting some to a self-management model.
- Developing digital networks and providing training in tourism communication.
- Creating Tourism Expansion Zones (ZET) managed by specialized institutions.
- Empowering private agencies to play international promotional roles.

Although some indicators have shown relative progress in recent decades, such as the rise in the number of tourism agencies and the improvement of some hotel services, most strategic objectives remain far from being achieved on the ground due to weak implementation, limited human resources, and slow administrative reform [16].

It is evident from tracking the development of tourism institutions in Algeria that they have passed through two stages: the stage of comprehensive construction after independence, then the stage of institutional fragmentation after economic opening. Despite government efforts to restructure them, Algerian institutions still need a "qualitative leap" in their perception of their roles and functions, from service providers to strategic actors in crafting the national tourism identity, through modern tools, an integrated vision, and smart partnership with the private sector and civil society.[4]

THE ENTREPRENEURSHIP PLAN FOR TOURISM DEVELOPMENT (SDAT 2030) IN ALGERIA

What is SDAT 2030?

It is a comprehensive strategic framework launched by the Algerian Ministry of Tourism in 2008, aiming to transform tourism into a genuine lever for economic development and reduce dependence on the hydrocarbon sector. The plan came after years

of limited performance in the sector and in response to the weakness of the national tourism infrastructure, forming a roadmap extending to 2030. The SDAT was prepared in collaboration with local and international experts (particularly from France and the World Tourism Organization [21] and represents the first comprehensive government vision based on measurable goals and concrete projects [11].

Relationship of the Business Tourism Institutions in Mostaganem with the SDAT 2030 Strategy

Despite the ambitious goals and national vision carried by the SDAT 2030 plan to restructure the tourism sector in Algeria, activating its provisions at the local level still faces numerous challenges. This is clearly manifested in the Wilaya (province) of Mostaganem, which is considered one of the richest coastal provinces in terms of natural and cultural assets, yet has not succeeded in transforming into an attractive tourism destination according to the plan's standards.

Field studies show that tourism institutions in Mostaganem (hotels, agencies, tourism associations, wilaya directorates) [9] still carry out their role within a partial, traditional, and non-strategic framework, in the absence of effective coordination with SDAT objectives. Instead of being executive arms of the plan, these institutions often find themselves confined to seasonal service management without a genuine contribution to sustainable promotion, investment attraction, or the development of local tourism products.

- **Tourism Expansion Zones (ZET):** According to official reports, Mostaganem has recorded only limited project completion due to financing difficulties, slow land allocation procedures, and a lack of genuine support from technical services. This has led to the freezing or delay of investment projects that were supposed to change the tourism face of the province.



- **Digital Tourism Promotion:** According to surveys, local institutions do not possess a strong online presence and do not handle digital marketing professionally, even though SDAT emphasized the "necessity of updating tourism communication tools and linking them to international display platforms". Furthermore, unified campaigns or high-quality institutional content directed at the national or foreign market are absent, leaving the image of Mostaganem outside Broader tourism consciousness, despite its beaches, architectural heritage, and attractive local markets.
- **Training and Framing:** While SDAT called for enhancing local competencies and providing quality training in tourism, tourism institutions in Mostaganem suffer from weak human resources, lack of training, and absence of follow-up. Additionally, tourism associations in the province, despite their relative vitality, are not linked by any institutional partnership to apply the plan's objectives, rendering promotional efforts fragmented and uncoordinated.

In conclusion, the reality of Mostaganem appears as a local example showing that the gap between the national strategy (SDAT) and field practices remains wide, and that local tourism institutions have not yet translated their strategic role as true partners in implementing the plan. This is due to multiple factors, including weak vertical coordination with the Ministry, the absence of an integrated local investment vision, and administrative stagnation that shackles private sector initiatives [14].

Consequently, if SDAT 2030 represents the vision, its success at the local level depends on the ability of institutions, such as those in Mostaganem, to shift from traditional management to smart and effective tourism marketing based on innovation, partnership, and interaction with the regional and international tourism environment.



AN INNOVATIVE IDEA: CREATING A "LOCAL DESTINATION BRAND"

Concept of the Idea

In light of the absence of a clear national tourism identity and the weak coordination between tourism institutions, we propose the idea of the "Local Destination Brand" as a strategic solution to enhance local promotion and achieve integration between active entities in each province individually, such as Mostaganem, provided that they later integrate within a national framework. **Its objectives are:**

- Overcoming excessive centralization in promotion.
- Granting each province the ability to express its tourism specificity.
- Unifying local efforts under a common visual and communicative identity.
- Enabling local tourism institutions to work within a modern institutional framework.

Components of the Local Destination Brand

This model belongs to what is known as "**Bottom-up Destination Branding**" where a central marketing model is not imposed on local entities; rather, it is created locally and grown gradually. This bottom-up branding approach also contributes to destination resilience, since it empowers local actors, diversifies tourism narratives, and reduces dependence on centralized promotional systems. This model has been adopted in several countries that have succeeded in building strong local tourism brands, such as Bilbao (Spain), Paphos (Cyprus), and Cape Town (South Africa) [3].

Applicability in Mostaganem

The Wilaya of Mostaganem enjoys distinct attractiveness (nature, tranquility, culture, historical memory), but it lacks the



element of an "attractive institutional narrative". This idea can be adopted in Mostaganemby:

- Forming a local tourism committee comprising representatives of tourism institutions.
- Designing an intriguing visual identity.
- Launching a "Visit Mostaganem" website.
- Promoting the brand in an integrated manner; through events, influencers, and the diaspora.

Creating a "Regional Tourism Brand" for Mostaganem: An Innovative Approach to Local Promotion

In light of the precise diagnosis of the reality of tourism institutions in Algeria, and specifically in Mostaganem, and given the challenges facing tourism promotion at the local level—such as weak institutional coordination, lack of a unified promotional identity, and fragmentation of efforts—this study proposes an innovative approach based on creating what can be called a "**Local Destination Brand**". This approach aligns with global shifts in marketing thinking for tourism destinations, which no longer rely solely on national discourse but adopt a bottom-up model starting from local specificity and ascending towards the general national identity.

The Concept

A tourism brand is defined as: "A combination of visual, verbal, cultural, and experiential elements upon which the identity of the tourism destination is built, and through which it is represented to the audience in a way that distinguishes it from others and encourages visitation". The Regional Tourism Brand is a unified marketing identity for a specific province or region, built by consensus among local tourism actors (hotels, agencies, associations, wilaya authorities). It is used as a unified framework in the digital, communicative, and experiential promotion of the destination. It includes a name, logo, visual identity, promotional narrative, content plan, and performance evaluation system. This



identity does not conflict with the national strategy but rather complements it from the bottom up and activates it in the field, enhancing promotional decentralization and giving each region its own voice.

Tourism Brand and Destination Identity: From Symbol to Strategy

In an era where tourism is no longer just movement towards places but an experience of searching for meaning, belonging, and impression, the **Tourism Brand** has emerged as a central concept in modern tourism promotion. It acts as a strategic tool to assemble elements of tourism identity into a symbolic and communicative mold capable of enticing the tourist and engaging them mentally and emotionally before they set foot in the destination. The tourism brand is no longer just a logo or visual design; it is a complete semiotic system that reflects the essence and spirit of the place, translates the cultural and natural specificity of a destination, and re-presents it in the tourism market in a directed and effective symbolic language. It is an image that summarizes the story, conveys the experience, and creates a lasting emotional relationship between the tourist and the place.

The Relationship between the Tourism Brand and Identity

The tourism brand is based on two pillars:

1. **The Tourism Identity of the Place:** Includes its characteristics, values, and geographical, cultural, and social specificities.
2. **The External Mental Image:** How this place is viewed by the tourist or the external audience.

Between identity and image, the brand plays the role of the smart mediator that transfers the private to the universal, and the local to the global, according to a promotional strategy based on clarity, differentiation, and emotion.



Global Experiences in Building Tourism Brands

- **Malaysia:** "Malaysia, Truly Asia" highlights cultural diversity as an attractive force.
- **Spain:** "España Everything Under the Sun" summarizes warmth and openness.
- **Turkey:** "GoTürkiye" chose a modern, unified digital brand across all platforms. All these brands were not designed arbitrarily but were based on precise psychological, behavioral, and cultural studies regarding the target tourist audiences.

The Tourism Brand in the Algerian Context

Although Algeria launched the slogan "Algeria, Land of Legends" via the Ministry of Tourism, this slogan remained unsupported by an operational strategy and did not transform into an integrated institutional tourism brand, neither in terms of digital content, field campaigns, nor multilingual promotion. Furthermore, Algeria has not yet adopted the "Regional Brand" model, which allows each wilaya (Mostaganem, Bejaia, Tamanrasset, etc.) to build its own tourism identity within a unified national framework, as is the case in Germany, Spain, or Tunisia. To produce an effective national tourism brand, or supportive regional brands, it is necessary to:

- Start from an analysis of the true tourism identity of each destination.
- Precisely define the target audience (cultural, beach, environmental, religious).
- Involve local institutions, media, and civil society in shaping the message.
- Adopt a unified multimedia narrative (stories, photos, videos, testimonials).
- Adopt the principle of the "Living Brand" that evolves with changing markets and tourist behavior.

The Need for It in Mostaganem

In terms of natural and cultural qualifications, the Wilaya of Mostaganem is one of the richest Algerian coastal provinces. However, the absence of a clear tourism narrative about it, weak institutional promotion, and the lack of a unified framework uniting the promotional discourse of its tourism institutions render the local or foreign tourist unable to form a coherent mental image of it. Field study results show that most tourism institutions in the province rely on individual efforts in promotion without adopting a unified visual identity or narrative, making the destination ambiguous or incomplete in the recipient's mind.

Scientific Reference for the Model

This approach is based on what Simon Anholt [5] proposed in the context of nation branding, and what Morgan [18] developed in the field of local tourism brands, where they emphasize that "the tourism image is not built by decrees, but by stories told, experiences lived, and coordination that organizes".

Application Prospects

Tourism institutions in Mostaganem can benefit from this model by forming a "Local Tourism Brand Cell" comprising representatives of active entities, supported by the Wilaya Directorate of Tourism, to prepare an action plan with three (03) phases:

1. **Design Phase:** Establishing the visual identity and content.
2. **Activation Phase:** Launching the promotional campaign on digital platforms.
3. **Evaluation Phase:** Monitoring impact through visitor indicators, interaction, and satisfaction.

In this way, Mostaganem will not remain merely a destination waiting to be promoted from the capital, but will transform into an actor in telling its story, crafting its experience, and attracting its audience through its own tools.



TOURISM AND INSTITUTIONAL QUALIFICATIONS IN THE WILAYA OF MOSTAGANEM

In the context of our aim to highlight the multiple tourism potentials that the Wilaya of Mostaganem, we address the most important natural, cultural, and religious assets that make the province a promising tourism destination. In addition to the existing infrastructure, active institutions, and ongoing efforts made within the framework of local tourism development and national programs such as the Master Plan for Tourism Development [16].

The Wilaya of Mostaganem is considered one of the most prominent Algerian coastal provinces that combine natural, historical, religious, and cultural dimensions, making it a multi-dimensional tourism destination. Despite the richness of its tourism qualifications and the availability of significant infrastructure, it still requires genuine valorization efforts to place it within the major national and regional circles of sustainable tourism. In this axis, we highlight the most important wealth and facilities that Mostaganem possesses, and we address the existing institutional efforts, with an analysis of the reality of tourism development through available official figures.

Tourism Products of the Wilaya of Mostaganem and their Role in Building Destination Attractiveness

The Wilaya of Mostaganem embodies a complex and integrated model of a diversified Algerian tourism destination (see Figure 1), where elements of nature, history, religion, culture, and entertainment intersect, granting it, in principle, an advanced position on the national tourism map. It not only possesses a coastline exceeding 124 km in length, including 42 beaches or 50 licensed ones, but also abounds with rich cultural heritage, ancient religious sites, extensive forests, and rare ecological spaces. This makes it capable of accommodating multiple types of tourism products: from beach to rural, religious to cultural, and environmental to thermal, extending towards sports and recreational tourism. Such diversification enhances the resilience

of the tourism destination by reducing vulnerability to seasonal concentration and enabling year-round tourism activities.



Fig. 1: Sample of diverse tourism destinations in Mostaganem.

Source: Prepared by the researcher

Beach tourism is considered the leader in the province, given the high volume of seasonal turnout and the diversity of its beaches; however, this dominance has not yet been matched by a parallel marketing infrastructure. Most hotel establishments lack a digital identity and do not integrate these components in a coherent promotional narrative that makes Mostaganem a sustainable destination throughout the year. On the other hand, the cultural heritage of the place is excellent raw material for high-value promotion, as the province hosts theatrical, artistic, Sufi, and musical festivals, in addition to the richness of symbolic capital associated with great artistic names (Kaki, Sheikh Hamada, Bouadjadj...), which are elements capable of granting Mostaganem a "local cultural brand" if marketed intelligently.

As for **religious tourism**, the abundance of Quranic schools, Zawiyas (religious sites), shrines, and religious seasons such as "Waadats" (feasts) and the shrine of "Sidi Lakhdar Ben Khlouf" represent a spiritual resource that aligns with Algeria's conservative cultural identity. This can be activated within a specialized promotional vision targeting visitors from within the

country and from the Algerian diaspora abroad, who are looking for tourism that combines spiritual nostalgia and identity belonging.

Inrural and forest tourism, the province possesses a forest cover estimated at 32,700 hectares, comprising picturesque forests such as "Sadoua", "Stidia", and Ben Abdelmalek, which allows for the creation of ecotourism paths and natural recreation areas for families. Furthermore, **thermal tourism**, through the "Ain Nouissy" bath and thermal springs in "Sirat" and "Sidi Ali", opens horizons for low-cost therapeutic tourism that attracts specific age groups and supports the tourism season outside of summer.

One cannot overlook **sports and recreational tourism**, which has begun to take on an institutional character with the emergence of facilities such as "Mostaland" (Mostaland park receives an average of approximately 1.8 million visitors annually), the water city (aquapark), equestrian centers, stadiums, and sailing schools. This enhances the province's competitiveness in this tourism pattern, especially when targeting families and youth. Additionally, the province's possession of a wetland such as "El Macta" makes it a habitat for **ecotourism** and bird watching, which can be marketed internationally within lists of protected natural sites.

At the level of **infrastructure**, Mostaganem is considered one of the advanced provinces in terms of basic development: a road network extending over more than 2,000 km, a local airport (Aerodrome), an active railway line, and three ports (fishing, leisure, and travel). These are vital components that contribute to facilitating access and relieving logistical pressure, which are key factors in the tourists' decision. Furthermore, the port of Mostaganem witnesses a direct maritime line towards Valencia, which opens the door to revitalizing maritime tourism and attracting members of the Algerian diaspora residing in Spain, who represent a tourism segment that can be transformed into a recurring strategic resource if targeted with smart promotion. Despite all these assets, the Mostaganem tourism destination still suffers from the absence of a clear tourism brand and the failure to employ its promotional resources in a professional manner. This is

what this study attempted to highlight by linking promotion tools to the effectiveness of the mental image, and analyzing the impact of each tool (digital, advertising, direct...) in creating a realistic and sustainable impression. A province with such diversity does not only need the promotion of a place, but also the construction of an integrated tourism narrative about the Mostaganem experience, capable of convincing the tourist that Mostaganem is not just a beach, but an extended story between heritage, nature, and spirit, waiting for someone to market it with intelligence and responsibility.

Mostaganem and Tourism in Light of SDAT 2030: Strategic Ambition and Field Dysfunctions

Since Algeria adopted the "National Master Plan for Tourism Development (SDAT) 2030," state awareness of the importance of the tourism sector has been reinforced, not only as an alternative economic source to hydrocarbons but also as a tool to rehabilitate national heritage, achieve regional balance in development, and ensure international radiance for the Algerian destination. In this context, the Wilaya of Mostaganem formed a promising model among coastal provinces thanks to the richness of its natural resources and the diversity of tourism patterns capable of development, ranging from beach tourism to cultural, religious, and environmental tourism.

The **Local Master Plan for Tourism Development**, approved in 2016, identified five (5) specialized tourism development poles, including: the Beach Tourism Pole (covering 10 municipalities), the Climatic Tourism Pole (Dahra chain), the Ecotourism Pole (El Macta reserve), and the Cultural Tourism Pole. This conception reflects a genuine awareness of the diversity of assets; however, the field activation of these plans still experiences noticeable slowness due to reasons ranging from weak investment and lack of institutional coordination to the fragility of promotional attractiveness. At the level of **infrastructure**, significant development has occurred in the number of beaches allowed for swimming (from 21 in 2008 to 50 in 2024), with the province



receiving more than 15.8 million beachgoers in the summer of 2022, according to Civil Protection figures. The hotel sector also recorded considerable growth; the number of establishments rose to 41 hotels with a capacity of 4,841 beds, in addition to 19 summer camps with a capacity of 5,000 beds, 90 travel and tourism agencies, and 18 approved tourism routes. The province also employs over 200 workers in the tourism sector. However, despite this numerical momentum, challenges remain. Data on tourism projects for the year 2022 shows that 16 projects have not started, and 07 projects are stalled, compared to only 15 in progress. This reflects a clear gap between strategic conception and field implementation. Furthermore, imbalances are recorded in the exploitation of **Tourism Expansion Zones (ZET)**; out of 16 zones, 06 are frozen and 05 are in the process of approval, which hinders the dynamics of regional development in coastal areas. Meanwhile, Mostaganem is witnessing promising activity at the level of concerned bodies and institutions, where the Directorate of Tourism and Handicrafts play a pivotal role in preparing annual action plans, accompanying investment, coordinating with local actors, and activating the association movement. In the field of **promotion**, modern digital tools have begun to be adopted, such as the "Mostaganem My Destination" application and the inclusion of the province within the national "Algeria Trails" platform, alongside incentive campaigns such as the "Most Beautiful Coastal Municipality" competition. However, this effort remains below what is required, as the tourism attractiveness of Mostaganem remains weak on search engines, and it lacks visual content directed at foreign visitors or the Algerian diaspora abroad.

This statistical and analytical reality confirms that Mostaganem stands at a crossroads: it possesses all the human, natural, and institutional components to be a promising national tourism pole, but activating this ambition requires a bold executive strategy based on valorizing tourism diversity, attracting investment, and enhancing local identity through smart promotion, while integrating handicrafts as a complementary element in the tourist



experience. This is what we will attempt to touch upon within a practical conception based on the results of the field study.

Abundance and Diversity of Tourism Sites in Mostaganem: Uninvested Wealth and Absent Promotion

The Wilaya of Mostaganem is a living example of a tourism destination rich in resources but limited in promotion. Distributed across its vast municipal territory is a wide network of sites and tourism landmarks covering all possible patterns of attraction: from natural beaches to Ottoman monuments, from religious sites (Zawiyas) to recreational parks, and from historical caves to museums of the independence struggle, in a scene rarely repeated geographically and thematically within a single province.

The number of registered tourism landmarks and sites exceeds **148 sites and monuments**, spread across the province's thirteen districts. These sites are distributed between classified and unclassified locations, reflecting weak investment in national cultural classification, a factor that negatively affects opportunities to integrate them into promotion and tourism valorization programs.

Regarding **archaeological landmarks**, they are distributed across multiple historical stages: the Ottoman period (Bey's Palace, Bordj Mahal, Hammam Bouamrane), the Islamic period (Al-Badr Mosque, Dar El-Caid), and the Colonial period (churches, schools, administrative buildings), in addition to rare Roman and Phoenician sites such as the "Quiza Site" and "Kaf Boukatar." These are cultural treasures that have not yet been leveraged, neither in digital promotion nor in cultural tourism routes.

On the **religious side**, the province includes a network of Zawiyas and shrines extending across its entire territory (Alawiya, Issawiya, Tidjaniya, Senoussia, etc.). However, religious tourism remains popular and traditional, lacking a promotional structure directed toward the Algerian diaspora or visitors seeking spirituality and Algerian religious heritage.

Furthermore, the analysis of the geographical distribution of sites shows a concentration of qualifications in the coastal and central areas (Mostaganem District, Hassi Mameche, Ben Abdelmalek, Stidia), with a decline in tourism exploitation of the interior districts, despite their availability of natural and thermal sites that could be integrated into rural or therapeutic tourism programs.

CONCLUSION

After a detailed presentation of the concept of tourism promotion, leading to a precise diagnosis of the reality of Algerian tourism institutions and deconstructing their limited relationship with the Master Plan [16], it becomes clear to us that the tourism sector in Algeria does not suffer from a deficiency in potential, but rather from the absence of an integrated institutional marketing vision. Tourism institutions, which are supposed to be the "dynamo" of tourism movement in any country, still operate in Algeria according to classical, closed patterns with limited impact, linked more to the bureaucratic provision of service rather than marketing the tourism experience in its symbolic, cultural, and economic dimensions.

The study has shown that the Algerian state realized years ago the necessity of shifting to a balanced tourism economy and launched an ambitious national strategy to develop the sector. This appeared clearly in the case of the Wilaya of Mostaganem, which possesses geographical, cultural, and historical components qualifying it to be a national tourism pole. However, institutional performance therein remains modest and does not rise to the level of translating the SDAT 2030 vision into effective executive programs.

Based on this, the approach proposed within this research regarding the creation of the "**Local Destination Brand**" came as a project for local mobilization of institutional efforts and the construction of a unified communication identity at the province level. This idea represents an academic attempt to overcome the problematic separation between national planning and local

practice, and to transform tourism institutions from consumers of top-down directives into actors in formulating their image and promotional positioning. It can be said, then, that the study does not suffice only with reviewing the theoretical and comparative background of the subject of promotion and institutions, but proposes a foundational ground for thinking about reforming the Algerian tourism system from within, through:

- Consolidating the principle of professional promotion as a fundamental component in tourism management.
- Redefining the function of the tourism institution from a service provider to an image maker.
- Adopting participatory thinking between the public and private sectors.
- Adapting promotion tools to the spirit of the digital age and modern attraction conditions.

From this perspective, the reference to Mostaganem in this research was not merely a secondary case study, but a methodological attempt to monitor how theoretical problems manifest in a local context, and how the accumulation of institutional imbalances can empty tourism components of their developmental content. Mostaganem, despite the natural and cultural diversity it offers, remains unable to this day to build an integrated tourism narrative presented to the world, or even to the Algerian citizen, within a clear marketing identity. Nevertheless, this city still possesses a strategic opportunity to be the point from which a reformist experiment at the regional level begins, redrawing the relationship between the promotional act and the spatial approach, and granting the local tourism institution the role it has long been denied: to be the creator of the perception, not the executor of top-down dictations.

In conclusion, the success of Algerian tourism is not contingent on the nature and geography it possesses but is dependent on the ability of its tourism institutions to present these components to the world within a convincing story, an attractive brand, and



professional performance that transcends repetition, randomness, and individual diligence. Tourism resilience emerges in this context as the ability of destinations and institutions to sustain attractiveness, adapt to uncertainty, and continuously reinvent their tourism identity through innovation, coordination, and diversification.

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