

Review Article

# Management of Protected Areas and Ecotourism, What Relationship?

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## Abstract

In Morocco, the creation of National Parks is governed by the Dahir of September 11, 1934. These parks are the responsibility of the High Commissioner for Water, Forests, and the fight against desertification. Since the Rio Summit (1992), Morocco has developed a strategy for conservation and development of protected areas

Protecting and conserving the bio ecological qualities of the environment, Assuming international responsibility for maintaining global biodiversity, Supporting private and associative initiatives related to the protection of nature ... are, among other things, the objectives of setting up parks natural, without forgetting to initiate respectful travel vis-à-vis the environment without degrading natural areas, what is now called green tourism.

**Keywords:** National park; SIBE: "Site of Biological and Ecological Interest; Protected areas; Territorial management; Morocco; Green tourism; Khenifiss National Park; Toubkal National Park

## Introduction

The introduction of modern management techniques in the management of public services is one of the major principles of territorial management, which makes adjustments in the public domain, in particular:

1. Switch more from an authoritarian administration to a more welcoming and more citizen-friendly administration
2. Revise the administrative organization towards more flexibility and productivity
3. Introduce modern management techniques to achieve greater efficiency and effectiveness
4. Reform in the direction of adapting public action to the national and international environment, which is undergoing profound changes and combating mercilessly the lack of quality in the delivery of public services at all levels of government and citizen relations.

Territorial management thus opposes the principles of bureaucracy, which are centralization, the continuity of the relationship between the administration and the political authorities, prudence as well as close monitoring of processes [1].

Territorial planning has the possibility of being connected to a level of innovation. Each order of space at a certain level must be homogenized with orders already made at other levels for harmony.

When we talk about strategic management, it means a new way of managing what is done to achieve your long-term goals. "Innovation is one of the forces around which all processes of economic development and social well-being are articulated"

Taking into account the objective of improvement, development and realization, also, new objectives, strategic and innovative management is essential. Whether at the economic level or at the

social level, planning is very important for the present and the future.

Today, more importantly, it is not only the growth or development will gain a territory following a strategy and planning previously studied, but interdependence, autonomy. Each territory is specific, unique in itself, and the management of each must be unique, because in any case they will be complementary and interdependent with the other levels.

We need to build the city for two reasons:

5. Lower transport costs through the establishment of companies, which is no longer conditioned by this cost factor resulting in an unequal distribution of activity
6. Acceleration of urbanization causing a very high concentration of individuals that leads to dysfunction at the social level.

Morocco is counted Mediterranean countries by its ecological diversity, in terms of bio climate, morphology, vegetation and wildlife. This diversity is at the origin of the richness of the landscapes and the natural environments of high quality where there is an exceptional patrimonial richness in the field of the natural environment.

A park is a space that is structured in several areas, which is not uniform: there are highly protected areas and prohibited access, others that allow controlled access and others that are designed for tourism and discovery.

From 1942 to 2006, Morocco experienced the creation of nine national parks, under the National Parks Act dating back to 1934, namely [2-11].

## Manage protected areas

A park is a space that is structured in several areas, which is not uniform: there are highly protected areas and prohibited access, others that allow controlled access and others that are designed for

tourism and discovery. This transition space between land and water is an exceptional natural heritage because of its biological richness and natural function they fulfill.

According to the Protected Areas Act No. 22-07, a national park may be defined as follows: "A national park is a natural, terrestrial and / or marine area, in the absolute sense, intended to protect biological diversity, landscape and cultural values and geological formations of special interest, developed and managed for cultural, scientific, educational, recreational and tourist purposes, respecting the natural environment and the traditions of neighboring populations"

The establishment of a national park has four objectives:

1. Conserving, rehabilitating and conserving natural and cultural resources,
2. Contribute to sustainable local development by reconciling conservation needs with the need for economic and social development,
3. Promote awareness and increase the sensitivity of actors and visitors through an awareness and environmental education program
4. Develop scientific research

Law 22-07 on Protected Areas, published in the Official Bulletin of 19 August 2010, provides for the creation by the High Commission of twenty or so SIBE: Priority Sites of Biological and Ecological Interest by 2020, spread over 9 regions.

The management of protected areas in Morocco are managed by the High Commission for Water Forests and the fight against desertification, whose management method is based primarily on three major axes:

5. A clear definition of the objectives of conservation protection of the bio-ecological qualities of the environments.
6. Establishment of a management and management system based on the objective zoning system.
7. The creation of partnership reports, more or less contractual zed with users and operators.

The strategy relating to the protection and the heritage management of the natural environment, can be related to several general objectives, concerning Morocco and even the planet if one refers to the global ecological systems and to the last international decisions of which:

8. Assume international responsibility for maintaining global biodiversity.
9. Ensure the proper functioning of the general ecological water cycle for the whole country.
10. Maintain the productivity of the main ecosystems.
11. The establishment of a Reserves Park network is one of the useful answers that can satisfy the overall objectives mentioned above.

The management of this type of space requires taking into account a certain number of points which can be summarized as follows:

12. Provide urgent protection for the most degraded Ecosystems.

13. Put in place monitoring and conservative management of the most important ecosystems for Morocco.

14. Slow down and stabilize degradation processes in mountain forest sites, wetlands and coastal areas.

15. Organize at the national level the safeguarding of phylogenetic heritage.

16. Fight effectively against the disposition of faunal wealth, especially for large mammals and raptors.

17. Implement appropriate heritage management on the appropriate sites as defined by the national and natural park management plans for the study.

18. Ensure sound training in ecology and protected area management, technical staff and engineers under this allocation.

19. Mobilize technical officers responsible for administrations concerned by the environment, local elected representatives and authorities, representatives and users, on the need to rationally manage Morocco's natural heritage.

20. Support the national educational effort not an awareness of the problems of nature conservation.

21. Support private and associative initiatives related to the protection of nature.

### Toubkal national park

The national park of Toubkal was created in 1942, with 38.000 ha first national park of Morocco, it extends on the central part of the High Atlas between the valley of N'fiss in the West and that of L'Ourika to the East, which is equal to 380 km<sup>2</sup> (Figure 1).

Like a mountain park, the latter is particular because of its original characteristics. Reliefs, landscapes, rivers that provide irrigation in the valleys and plains of the park: Nfiss, Rherhaya, Ourika and Souss;

The main points sought in the park are the summit of Toubkal, landscapes of high mountains, Berber culture and sports activities (hiking and stops).

The presence of the Ifni lake at an altitude of 2600 meters, the richness of fauna and flora make the Toubkal National Park one of the potentially eco-tourism places.

Well known by "" the privilege site "of mountain tourism with 40,000 visitors a year.

Highest point of North Africa with its 4,167 meters of altitude, Jbel Toubkal gave its name, in 1942, to the first national park of the Kingdom of Morocco.

Covering nearly 38,000 ha, the Toubkal National Park is located 70 km south of Marrakech, in the portion that corresponds to Adrar n'Dern (Mountain Mountains).

Of exceptional biodiversity, this park welcomes many visitors, who can discover plateaus and cliffs alternating with gorges, where rivers flow with clear water, ensuring irrigation in the valleys and the plains of Piedmont.

**His missions:** The three major missions assigned to the Toubkal



**Figure 1:** Location of Toubkal National Park (Map).  
Source: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Toubkal\\_National\\_Park](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Toubkal_National_Park)

National Park as part of its Management and Development Plan, developed in 1996, revolve around the following environmental, cultural, economic and social actions:

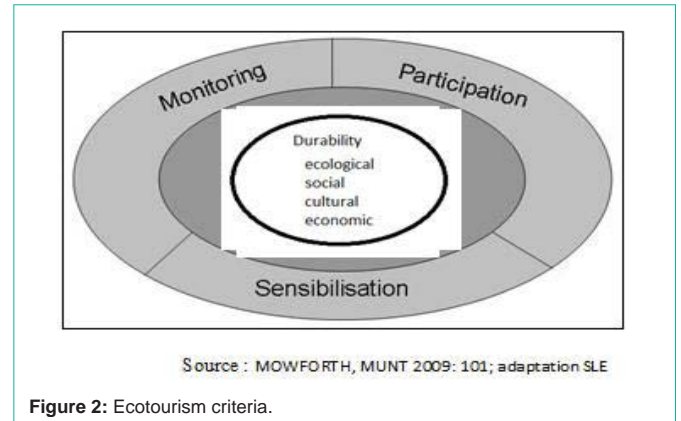
1. Conservation of high mountain biodiversity and development of scientific research;
2. To conserve and rehabilitate natural ecosystems characteristic of the Western High Atlas,
3. Protect and promote the repopulation of space by rare or endangered wildlife,
4. Facilitate and contribute to the development of scientific research and ecological monitoring,
5. Contribute to the safeguarding of representative elements of the cultural heritage of the region.

Socio-economic support and contribution to sustainable development in the region:

6. Synergy of actions and development actors at the Toubkal National Park area,
7. Diversification of revenue sources through rational exploitation of natural resources and their valorisation (“sector” approach),
8. Concerted management of natural resources,
9. Development of sustainable tourism.

Wednesday, May 11, 2016, at the Ecomuseum of Toubkal National Park, the High Commissioner for Water and Forests and the Fight Against Desertification Dr. Abdeladim L’Hafi and the Ambassador of the United States to Morocco, Mrs. Dwight L. Bush, have signed a twinning memorandum between the Great Basin National Park (GB) in the United States and the Toubkal National Park.

The two Toubkal and GB National Parks share common goals of conservation, restoration and enhancement of natural heritage, as well as education and participation in scientific research and sustainable tourism.



**Figure 2:** Ecotourism criteria.

The Memorandum will span five years and synergize the many issues and mutual concerns of the two protected areas, including aspects of visitor management, infrastructure development, habitat and species conservation and restoration, and partnerships with other protected areas. the different actors involved.

The areas of cooperation provided for in this Memorandum of Understanding relate to:

1. The exchange of information and experience in protected area planning and management techniques;
2. Capacity building in the form of internships stays and exchange visits;
3. Production and dissemination of communication media to make the two parks known to visitors.

Morocco and the United States will exchange knowledge and experiences to ensure that the natural and cultural treasures of these two national parks will remain.

**Ecotourism: a new form to have fun:** Ecotourism is a form of responsible nature tourism with a tourism activity that contributes to the protection of the environment and brings equitable benefits to local populations to improve their well-being.

Ecotourism therefore implies the active participation of local populations, a concrete commitment of tourists and operators in actions of nature protection and awareness of biodiversity and a search for equity in the sharing of the fruits of tourist activity.

At the World Ecotourism Summit (2002), ecotourism was defined as a form of sustainable tourism “that actively contributes to the protection of the natural and cultural heritage, which includes local and indigenous communities in its planning, development and development. And its exploitation and contributes to their well-being “. Similarly, for [7]. Ecotourism is a means of development for both local populations and the protected areas concerned.

According to these authors, it is an ideal component within a sustainable development strategy in which natural resources can be used as tourist attractions, without causing them harm. In addition, a fundamental argument in favor of ecotourism lies in the incentive for local tourism businesses to protect natural resources for a more reasoned and sustainable benefit (Figure 2).

The main aspects of sustainable tourism are therefore the protection of natural resources and local culture through the tourist promotion of the attractions of a region. The protection and conservation of natural resources are the result of a fair distribution of the benefits generated by tourism to the local population. The latter thus has alternative incomes which allow it, for example, to fall back on other activities than on the exploitation of natural resources.

In a context where ecotourism is a relatively new development practice (barely thirty years old), and is linked to a tourism industry that enjoys an almost untouchable reputation as a survival solution for fragile communities affected by climate change, inequalities of development, it is easy to attribute the term "ecotourism" as soon as a tourist activity proposes excursions in the nature. This is particularly the case of "nature tourism" and "sustainable nature tourism", defined by [7] as follows:

1. Nature Tourism: Refers to tourism based on visiting natural resources. Unlike ecotourism it does not necessarily imply the notion of protection or sustainability.

2. Tourism of a sustainable nature: Closer to ecotourism than "Nature Tourism", but this type of tourism does not necessarily take into account the direct relationship between the tourist and nature but uses processes that want to be less polluting. Thus an attraction requiring a strong mechanization can be considered as sustainable nature tourism, but creates a distance of the visitor compared to the natural environment.

However, some common trends emerge from all these definitions. In this perspective, [10,11] have established the essential principles for carrying out an ecotourism project:

1. Generate tourism activities that have a low impact on protected natural and natural resources and areas;
2. Integrate the different actors (individuals, communities, Eco tourists, tourism operators and government institutions) in the planning, development, implementation and monitoring phases;
3. Respect local cultures and traditions;
4. Generate sustainable and equitable revenues for local communities and for the most actors involved, including private tourism operators;
5. Produce income that will be used for the preservation of protected areas;
6. Educate all involved actors on their role in the preservation and management of the course, to maximize the chances of continuation of the project in the long term.

## Conclusion

It is very rich natural assets, lakes, forests, and the Sahara desert, not to mention the Atlantic and Mediterranean coasts, Morocco holds ecotourism potential of this country is still largely untapped.

Morocco is enjoying great growth, as there is huge potential for ecotourism: The geographical diversity is immense, with a rich marine ecosystem, and Morocco is one of the main migration routes for birds".

According to a 2003 study by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) on behalf of the Moroccan government, ecotourism is still in its infancy. This study shows a strong demand for ecotourism in Morocco by Moroccans and foreigners, because the country has a lot to offer in terms of natural resources. But this study also reports a lack of coordination.

Abdelatif Abouricha, spokesperson for the Regional Tourism Committee of Marrakech, said that despite the impressive natural potential of Morocco, ecotourism is still underdeveloped. But to the extent visitors come back, he seems to think that this sector has real potential. "Our figures on the Marrakech El Haouz region show that many tourists come back several times a year to visit again sites that offer sublime natural scenery. For us, this is a real encouragement," he says.

"If nothing is done to protect the environment, ecotourism will implode on its own," warns Abouricha.

"Ecotourism needs to be carefully planned by considering how many visitors a region can reasonably accommodate," said Eddie Bergman, director of the New York-based Africa Travel Association. He added: "When developing a destination, planning should always involve government, investors, and especially local communities."

This project focuses on the development and enhancement of ecotourism products in natural areas, including sites of biological and ecological interest (SIBE) of both regions, in addition to a national component to support the implementation of the ten-year plan in valuing biodiversity and promoting value chains.

It should also be remembered that the HCEFLCD has initiated various actions for the promotion of sustainable tourism in natural areas, ranging from the preservation and restoration of ecosystems to the development and equipping of protected areas with basic infrastructures necessary for their functioning.

In this sense, HCEFLCD's strategic vision is based on the positioning of protected areas on attractive, modern and alternative offers that respect the challenges of sustainable management for the benefit of local populations: Also, for the next decade 2015-2024, the HCEFLCD aims to enrich the Moroccan destination with a specific tourist offer "Protected Areas" that respects the challenges of biodiversity conservation and enhancement of ecosystem services for the benefit of local populations. This overall objective is broken down into four specific objectives: the development and equipping of natural areas, the development of value chains related to ornithological tourism, fisheries tourism and vision tourism, socio-economic development for the benefit of local populations and and lastly, the development of nature animation programs and visitor awareness.

Efforts are continuing to strengthen and network all these spaces; this will enable them to fulfill their role of conserving natural resources for sustainable local development. Indeed, Morocco's protected areas are created, developed and managed with a view to maintaining and enhancing their bio ecological and socio-cultural values. and combating desertification.

The valorization of a protected area can be done through the rational exploitation of certain natural resources and by the

development of economic activities compatible with the objectives of conservation. The most efficient economic activity, in terms of valorization of nature, remains nature tourism or ecotourism.

In addition to the network of national parks, Morocco has three Biosphere Reserves, which promote solutions reconciling the conservation of biodiversity and its sustainable use. These are the Arganeraie Biosphere Reserve (RBA), the Oasis Biosphere Reserve of Southern Morocco and the Mediterranean Intercontinental Biosphere Reserve (RBIM). A fourth Biosphere Reserve, known as the Cedar Biosphere Reserve, is planned in the Middle Atlas.

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