

## **The Strategic Partnership for Managing the Tourist Destination as A Market the Electronic Portal "Algeria Tourist Routes "a Model**

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### **Abstract:**

This research paper aims to demonstrate the importance of strategic partnerships in the development of tourism services through destination management, by integrating partners' resources to enhance tourism activity and offer a mix of tourism products and services that facilitate the identification of attractions for tourists. To highlight this significance, we examined the e-portal project "*Algeria Tourist Paths*", which falls within the program for modernizing the tourism sector in Algeria and the implementation of the Algeria Destination Plan, in collaboration with the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO). The study found that, following the implementation of this project, the number of tourist routes in Algeria increased from 28 to 377 within three months of the portal's launch. This development is expected to advance and elevate the tourism sector, positioning it as a genuine economic pillar, while generating new developmental dynamics, particularly in creative sectors contributing to wealth creation and employment opportunities.

**Keywords:** Strategic partnership; Tourism services; "*Algeria Tourist Paths*" project.

### **1. Introduction:**

Globalization and digitalization have fundamentally reshaped the global business environment, generating new challenges while significantly intensifying competition across sectors, particularly within tourism. As one of the most dynamic industries worldwide, tourism plays a pivotal role in stimulating economic development in many countries through its direct and indirect contributions to gross domestic product (GDP), employment creation, and regional development. In this increasingly competitive context, the adoption of strategies grounded in sound marketing principles has become indispensable for the success of tourism activities aimed at attracting visitors to specific geographic areas. Tourists are no longer passive consumers but represent the core element of the tourism system, whose expectations, experiences, and perceptions directly influence destination competitiveness and sustainability.

Accordingly, the identification, positioning, and promotion of tourist destinations have emerged as central components of tourism policy and marketing strategies implemented by tourism organizations and public authorities. Destination management has thus evolved into a strategic function that requires coordinated collective action and the active involvement of multiple stakeholders, including public institutions, private enterprises, local communities, and supporting organizations. Effective destination management seeks to ensure the harmonious integration of tourism products and services

in order to meet tourists' needs, enhance service quality, and deliver a coherent and differentiated destination experience.

Within this framework, many countries—including Algeria—have increasingly relied on strategic partnerships with international tourism companies and global organizations as a key mechanism for tourism development and competitiveness enhancement. In leading tourism destinations such as France, Italy, and Spain, stakeholder collaboration has become an essential governance principle rather than a discretionary option, as traditional, fragmented business models have proven insufficient to address complex tourism challenges or capitalize on emerging opportunities. Consequently, the integration of partners into the development, management, and promotion of tourism services has become a strategic imperative for improving destination attractiveness, strengthening international positioning, and increasing tourist flows in a sustainable manner.

Based on the above, the following research question arises: **To what extent does strategic partnership contribute to the development of tourism services through destination management?**

### **Research Hypothesis:**

To address this question, we formulated the hypothesis that, to develop its tourism services and improve the marketing of its destinations, Algeria implemented the “Algeria Destination Plan,” adopting a strategy focused on enhancing its tourism excellence hubs. This strategy includes several investment projects, most notably the e-portal project “*Algeria Tourist Paths*”, with contributions from all stakeholders and partners from both the public and private sectors, in cooperation with the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO). To examine the issue and test the validity of this hypothesis, this research paper is divided into the following sections:

- Conceptual and theoretical framework for tourism and strategic partnership.
- Development of the tourism sector in Algeria.
- The importance of strategic partnerships.
- The e-portal project “*Algeria Tourist Paths*”.

## **2. Tourism:**

### **2.1. Definition of Tourism:**

Tourism has been defined in various ways as a collection of phenomena and activities that facilitate the movement of tourists from their places of residence to areas of attraction. Some notable definitions include:

- The German scholar Joubert Feuler (1905), one of the pioneers in defining tourism, described it as: “Tourism, in the modern sense, is a natural phenomenon of contemporary times, aimed at relaxation, changing one’s environment, cultural awareness, appreciation of natural beauty, and the joy derived from it” (Kafi, 2009, p. 14).
- The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) defined tourism as: “the movement of people from one place to another for various purposes, for a period not less than twenty-four hours and not exceeding one year” (Williams, 2003, p. 03).
- The Austrian scholar Herman Fon Sholar (1910) defined it as: “a set of economic phenomena resulting from travelers’ arrival in a specific area or country, their stay, and departure, with related derivative effects” (Tawfiq, 2008, p. 23).

- A.Koller (1941) described Swiss tourism as comprising individuals temporarily residing in Switzerland away from their permanent residence for purposes such as:
  - Health, recreation, or cultural fulfillment.
  - Professional reasons (business trips, diplomatic missions, meetings, and conferences).
  - Educational purposes for students and researchers.
  - Political reasons.

Mass tourism emerged in the 1950s, initially targeting a few thousand distinguished individuals; today, after approximately sixty years, it has evolved into a full-fledged industry (Brice Duthion, 2016, p. 09).

## **2.2. Marketing of Tourism Services:**

### **2.2.1. Tourism Service:**

Tourism encompasses various services and activities provided by tourism authorities, ensuring facilities and different types of comfort to meet the needs and desires of local and international tourists. These services are key components in shaping a positive tourist experience and encouraging repeat visits.

- Tourism services are also defined as: *“products offered by organizations, centers, and tourism authorities, each according to its specialty, whether natural, archaeological, or religious tourism, aimed at providing experiences and information to tourists”* (Khalil, 2006, p. 36).
- Additionally, tourism service is described as: *“an intangible activity aimed at satisfying desires and needs when marketed to the end consumer in exchange for a monetary payment”* (Al-Saidi, 2008, p. 55).

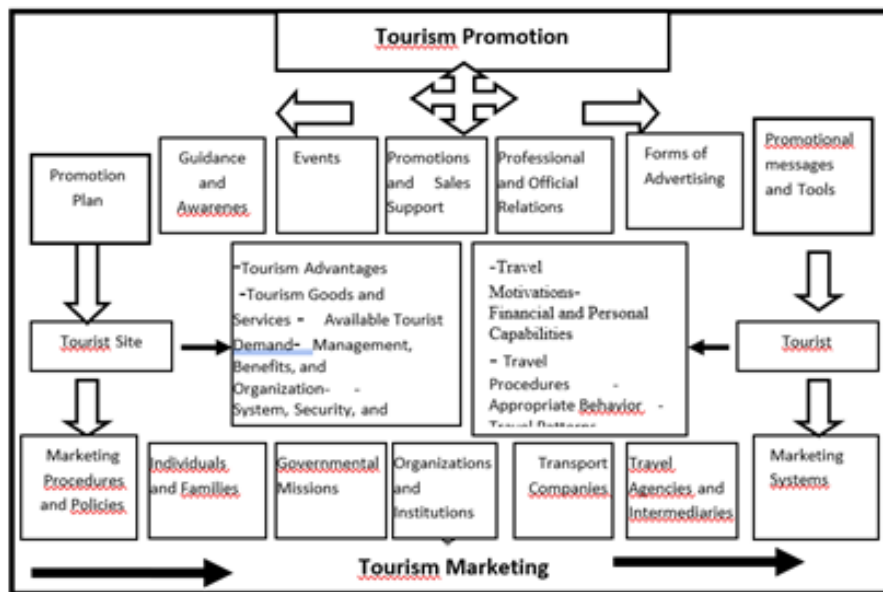
### **2.2.2. Tourism Marketing:**

Modern marketing pioneers, P. Kotler and B. Dubois, defined marketing as: “an economic and social mechanism enabling individuals and groups to satisfy their needs and desires through the creation of demand and exchange of valuable goods and services” (Kotler & Dubois, 2006, p. 06).

Tourism marketing, specifically, is the managerial and technical process through which a tourism organization or center identifies current and potential target markets, builds communication systems with these markets, and influences tourists’ desires, needs, and motivations both locally and globally. Tourism products must align with these motivations to achieve maximum satisfaction and realize organizational objectives.

- Krid Pendrof defined tourism marketing as: “the coordinated practical implementation of business policy by tourism enterprises, whether public or private, at local or international levels, aimed at satisfying a group of consumers (tourists) while achieving a suitable return that ensures business continuity” (Interview, Tourism Industry: Knowledge Treasures, 2007, p. 51).
- J.J. Shwars defined it as: “a set of strategies that guide a tourism product to a specific consumer, ensuring the product meets quantitative and qualitative requirements” (Interview, Tourism Industry, p. 51)

(Figure 1): Tourism Marketing



Source: Abdelmajid Elani, 2008, p. 66)

The diagram presented by Abdelmajid El-Aani (2008, p. 66) illustrates the essential components of tourism marketing. It highlights the interplay between the key elements that influence tourism demand and supply, including tourism products and services, tourist benefits, available demand, and management and organizational aspects. The diagram also emphasizes the supporting systems, security, and activities that facilitate a positive tourist experience. On the demand side, factors such as travel motivations, financial and personal capabilities, travel procedures, appropriate behavior, and travel patterns shape tourists' decisions. Additionally, it identifies the main actors in tourism marketing, including tourists (individuals and families), government missions, organizations and institutions, transport companies, travel agencies, and intermediaries. Collectively, these elements are coordinated within marketing systems to implement effective tourism marketing strategies, ensuring that destinations are attractive, accessible, and well-managed.

## 2.3. Tourist Destination:

### 2.3.1. Destination Management:

Tourist destinations are central to tourism activity and remain a key focus for researchers due to their importance in tourism marketing. Marketing destinations today is a critical challenge for sustaining the development and advancement of Algeria's tourism sector, as the country possesses diverse natural and tourism assets complemented by offerings from tourism companies and agencies. Definitions of a tourist destination vary:

- Sotiriadis & Shen (2017) note that the tourism industry is extensive and complex, with fierce competition, where each destination strives to improve efficiency and competitiveness. Destination Management Organizations (DMOs) are governance structures led by local authorities with stakeholder participation worldwide. Some DMOs are governmental, others semi-governmental, and some take the form of public-private partnerships or development organizations, aiming to enhance organizational performance through coordination and integration of destination elements.

- Zach (2012) emphasizes DMO collaboration with partners as essential for creating cohesive tourism products and competitive destinations.
- Gretzel (2012) describes destination management as a collaborative process requiring reconciliation of differing stakeholder interests and active engagement in decision-making and policy formation.
- Morrison (2013) states that DMOs are responsible for planning, managing, and marketing destinations through stakeholder coordination at all levels.
- Beritelli (2007) highlights that DMOs enhance destinations by managing key activities such as financing, strategic planning, marketing, decision-making, and product development.
- Kotler et al. argue that some tourists consider the mode of travel itself—e.g., cruise ships or private planes—as the actual destination, offering varied experiences that enrich the travel experience (Kotler, 2017, p. 510).
- Robinson (2012) classifies destination definitions into two groups: demand-oriented definitions focusing on the destination as a set of unique experiences arising from travel to specific geographic areas, and supply-oriented definitions reflecting the destination as a location where activities and products are developed for tourists, with planning and management often undertaken by public and private operators (Salmi, 2021).

### 2.3.2. Digitization of Destinations:

Digital advancements, ICT tools, and social media contribute to facilitating tourist destination identification and enhancing the appeal of services and offers through images and videos shared by travel agencies. Information technology developments provide stakeholders with opportunities to create digital business environments and collaborative networks that address challenges posed by the dynamic nature of global tourism.

### 2.4. Development of the Tourism Sector in Algeria:

Tourism is a sector of strategic importance, increasingly recognized as a key driver of economic diversification beyond oil revenues. Algeria has recently integrated tourism as a primary source of revenue to increase national GDP, creating economic, social, and environmental benefits, including foreign currency earnings and job creation. Algeria's significant natural and cultural assets position it as a major tourist destination in North Africa.

To elevate Algeria as a reference tourist destination, the government has mobilized all sector stakeholders through investment projects, including the *2030 SDAT Tourism Master Plan*, aimed at sustainable tourism development, and recently launched the *Algeria Destination Marketing Strategy* and *Tourism Investment Guide*, in partnership with the UNWTO. The e-portal project "*Algeria Tourist Paths*", implemented from March 2022, digitizes the sector using a Geographic Information System (GIS) to manage regions, sites, and tourism facilities, forming the focus of this study.

### Tourism Statistics in Algeria (Recent Data) :

Tourism Indicator	Value	Year/Period	Main Tourist Regions Concerned
Total tourist arrivals	3 548 000	2024	Coastal areas (Algiers, Oran, Bejaia), Sahara (Tamanrasset, Djanet), Cultural cities (Constantine, Tlemcen)



Foreign tourists (subset of above)	2 454 000	2024	Sahara (Djanet, Tamanrasset), Coastal cities, Heritage sites
Algerian diaspora tourists (return visits)	1 093 000	2024	Major urban and coastal regions
ourists in Sahara (2024–2025 season)	48 000	2024	Djanet, Tamanrasset, Adrar, Illizi
Tourism projects under implementation	2 143	2024	Nationwide (coastal, Saharan, mountain regions)
Number of travel agencies	5 570	2024	Nationwide (high concentration in Algiers, Oran, Constantine)

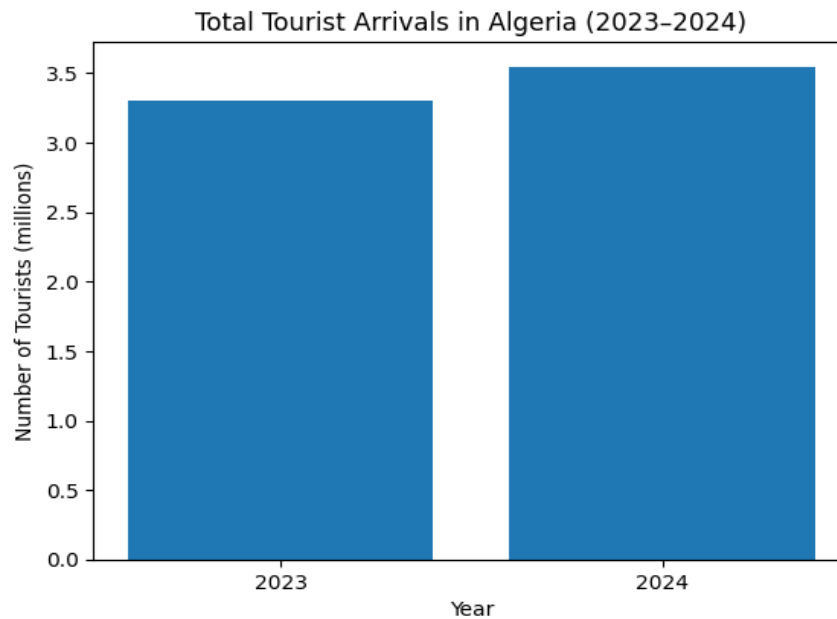
(Figure 1: Key tourism sector statistics in Algeria, 2024, Source: Ministry of Tourism and Traditional Industries, <https://www.mta.gov.dz>)

Table X provides a comprehensive overview of the main tourism indicators in Algeria by integrating demand-side variables (tourist arrivals) with supply-side indicators (tourism projects and travel agencies), while also highlighting the spatial distribution of tourism activities across key regions. The data reveal that Algeria recorded approximately 3.55 million tourist arrivals in 2024, with foreign tourists accounting for the largest share. This confirms a gradual recovery of international tourism flows and aligns with global post-pandemic trends observed in emerging destinations (UNWTO, 2023).

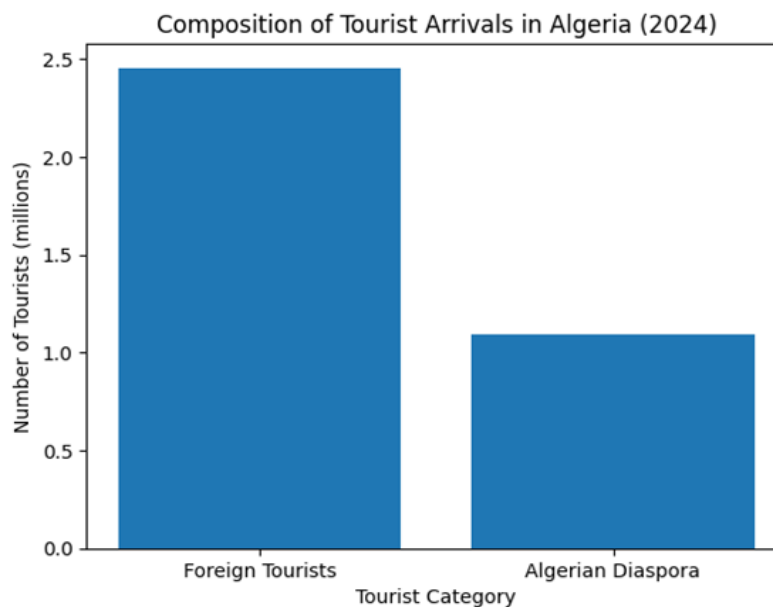
From a spatial perspective, tourism activity in Algeria remains highly concentrated in coastal cities, major urban centers, and selected Saharan destinations. This uneven territorial distribution reflects structural challenges commonly identified in developing tourism economies, where infrastructure, accessibility, and service quality tend to favor a limited number of regions (Sharpley, 2018). Despite the strategic importance attributed to Saharan tourism, the relatively modest number of foreign visitors in desert areas suggests that this segment has not yet reached a level capable of generating strong multiplier effects for local development.

On the supply side, the high number of tourism projects under implementation and the significant expansion of travel agencies indicate a strong institutional commitment to strengthening tourism capacity. However, as emphasized in the tourism economics literature, quantitative expansion of infrastructure does not necessarily translate into improved performance unless accompanied by effective governance, coordination among stakeholders, and market-oriented planning (Dwyer & Forsyth, 2011; WTTC, 2024). The coexistence of growing investment levels with moderate tourism inflows points to a structural gap between tourism potential and actual outcomes.

Overall, the table highlights a critical issue at the core of this research: the misalignment between tourism development strategies and measurable performance indicators. Addressing this gap requires not only increased investment but also improved destination management, diversification of tourism products, and stronger integration of regional tourism policies, in line with international best practices.



The bar chart illustrates the evolution of total tourist arrivals in Algeria between 2023 and 2024. It shows a clear upward trend, with tourist arrivals increasing from approximately **3.3 million in 2023** to about **3.6 million in 2024**. This growth indicates a positive recovery and strengthening of the tourism sector, which may be attributed to improved tourism promotion, gradual enhancement of tourism services, and increased international and domestic mobility. The rise in arrivals also suggests growing interest in Algeria as a tourist destination, reflecting the potential impact of digital initiatives, destination management efforts, and partnerships aimed at enhancing the country's tourism attractiveness.



The bar chart presents the composition of tourist arrivals in Algeria in 2024 by tourist category. It indicates that **foreign tourists** constitute the largest share of arrivals, with approximately **2.45 million visitors**, while the **Algerian diaspora** accounts for around **1.1 million arrivals**. This distribution highlights the growing importance of international tourism in Algeria's overall tourist inflows, while also underlining the significant contribution of Algerians residing abroad. The results suggest

opportunities for differentiated tourism strategies, combining international market promotion with targeted services and offers tailored to the needs and travel motivations of the Algerian diaspora.

### **3. Partnership and Strategic Partnership:**

#### **3.1. Definition of Partnership:**

Given the numerous and overlapping definitions of partnership, key definitions include:

- First appearing in the dictionary in 1987 as: “*a system bringing together economists and social scientists*”. In international economic relations, the term was first used by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) in the late 1980s (Shantouf, 2016, p. 514).
- Gulati (1998) defines it as a voluntary agreement between institutions involving the exchange and joint development of technology, products, or services.
- S. Dameron (2001) defines it as a medium- or long-term cooperative agreement between two or more legally independent entities, whether competitors or potential competitors, intending to generate joint profits through a shared project.
- E. Brousseau (1996) describes partnership as a deliberate transfer of complementary activities to other institutions to achieve collective results.

#### **3.2. Definition of Strategic Partnership:**

Although often labeled strategic, literature suggests partnerships are instruments of strategy (Doz, 1996, pp. 55–83). Porter (1986) and Fuller (1986) assert that coalitions are understood within the framework of comprehensive institutional strategy. Harrigan (1986) supports this, noting that sectoral requirements and competitor characteristics make partnerships strategic. Strategic partnerships allow organizations to acquire resources and skills from partners, combining or exchanging competencies unattainable individually.

#### **3.3) Partnership with the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO):**

In the Algerian context, the “**Algeria Tourism Routes**” electronic gateway project is part of ongoing efforts to overcome the limitations of traditional tourism promotion and the lack of institutional coordination that have historically characterized destination management. The adoption of a **participatory digital approach**, integrating public and private stakeholders, represents an effective mechanism for addressing the fragmentation of tourism supply and the weak international image of Algeria as a tourism destination. Furthermore, the partnership with the **World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)** constitutes a key lever for strengthening destination management through the transfer of international expertise in tourism governance, route planning, and the development of integrated tourism information systems, thereby supporting data-driven decision-making and enhancing service efficiency (UNWTO, 2019; UNWTO, 2021). The electronic platform also contributes to showcasing the diversity of Algeria’s tourism product—particularly cultural, natural, and Saharan tourism—while linking these assets to local service providers, thus increasing local value creation and improving the tourist experience across all stages of the travel journey. This orientation is consistent with the literature emphasizing that digitalization and stakeholder integration within the destination management framework are critical determinants of competitiveness and sustainability in emerging tourism destinations (Buhalis, 2000; Pike & Page, 2014). Accordingly, the “Algeria Tourism Routes” project can be regarded as a strategic tool for modernizing destination management



in Algeria, improving service quality, and reinforcing tourism's contribution to economic diversification.

### **3.4. Importance of Strategic Partnership:**

Strategic partnerships provide organizations with opportunities, including:

#### **3.4.1. Competency Development:**

- **Individual Competence:** A combination of learnable behaviors, attitudes, skills, knowledge, experience, and innate talents aimed at achieving specific objectives effectively (Charles et al., 2015, p. 11).
- **Collective Competence:** Resulting from the collaboration of multiple individual competencies, forming a unique composite capable of addressing broader challenges (Boterf, 2002, p. 154).
- **Organizational Competence:** The ability to combine and utilize resources efficiently for value creation, not merely the quantity of resources (Anne, 2008, p. 3; Lehmann, 2013, p. 97).

#### **3.4.2. Source of Added Value:**

Partnerships enhance performance through collective effort, resource integration, and trust, generating added value and knowledge transfer among partners (D. Blankenburg Holm, 1999; Walker, 1988; Hall, 2006; Douglas et al., 2009). Collaborative experience accumulation can positively impact market performance (Kale et al., 2002; Anand & Khanna, 2000; Brulhart, 2005; Dyer & Singh, 1998).

#### **3.4.3. Achieving Competitive Advantage:**

Strategic partnerships can mitigate competitive threats, offering "*collaborative advantage*" by enhancing partner benefits while reducing competitor gains (Teng, 2003; Duthion, 2016). Studies highlight partnerships' role in outperforming competitors through coordinated collaboration (Perrault, 1977; Durrand, 1991; Harrison, 1998).

For tourism institutions, strategic partnerships enhance individual and collective skills, enable cost-sharing, increase investment returns, reduce risks, provide access to partner resources, and foster innovation and market intelligence.

## **4. The E-Portal Project "*Algeria Tourist Paths*":**

Algeria's tourism sector faces challenges despite its exceptional natural and cultural resources, including the Sahara, Tassili and Hoggar regions, and Roman heritage sites recognized by UNESCO. The UNWTO ranks Algeria among the world's top tourism destinations, second only to Italy for Roman heritage. The government seeks to develop the sector due to its significant role in economic growth.

The Ministry of Tourism and Traditional Industries (2022) launched the *Algeria Destination Marketing Strategy* in collaboration with the UNWTO and the e-portal "*Algeria Tourist Paths*". The project modernizes and digitizes the sector, providing a public service platform for tourism, enabling tourists to select suitable destinations and itineraries. The portal includes 26 digital platforms, 58 local websites, and a GIS system for managing sites and facilities. The pilot version launched in March 2022 featured 281 tourist routes, rising to 377 within three months.

## 5. Conclusion:

This study highlights Algeria's reliance on strategic partnerships to develop tourism services and enhance the country's image as a tourist destination. Algeria leverages its resources to attract investment, with key initiatives including the 2022 *Algeria Destination Plan*, the Tourism Investment Guide, and the e-portal "*Algeria Tourist Paths*", supported by public and private stakeholders and the UNWTO.

The portal modernizes and advances the sector, implementing GIS for destination management, facilitating tourist itinerary selection. Key outcomes include:

- Algeria's adoption of partnership strategies to enhance tourism services and identify excellence hubs through the 2022 Destination Plan.
- The e-portal increased tourist routes from 281 to 377 in three months, surpassing the target of 365.
- The 26 digital platforms contributed to 1,123 site visits in June 2022.
- Information for 58 local destinations was integrated, and 116 user accounts were created for portal managers.

By implementing these projects, Algeria fosters initiative, investment freedom, and transparency, promoting local and foreign investment in tourism. Recommendations for sector stakeholders include:

- Expanding partnership strategies to leverage shared resources, expertise, and technology while reducing investment risks.
- Strengthening tourism and hospitality academic programs as strategic economic pillars.
- Conducting continuous training for sector personnel.
- Utilizing national expertise rather than relying on foreign consultants.
- Training specialized guides, particularly for heritage sites, addressing the shortage of only 200 guides nationwide.
- Enhancing hotel and resort services to meet international standards.

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