



The urban distribution of the Ziban region has historically been shaped by the natural resources and socio-economic potential of each settlement. Each community relied on key assets such as palm groves, agricultural practices, water resources, and other essential elements that contributed to their socio-economic development. The micro-region was traditionally divided into several *Zab*, each consisting of a cluster of small oases organized along the wadis. These oases historically operated as economically and politically independent entities. (BOUZAHER S. 2014) Each settlement maintained distinct architectural styles, spatial arrangements, and social structures.

However, these traditional cores are increasingly vulnerable to degradation and neglect by both local populations and governing authorities. This deterioration threatens not only the built heritage but also the socio-cultural identity of the region.

To address this challenge, this study advocates for the establishment of cultural tourist circuits that aim to both enhance visitor experiences and promote socioeconomic inclusion. The proposed model emphasizes the preservation of traditional cores while fostering economic opportunities for local populations.

The concept of cultural tourism, as applied in this context, extends beyond mere physical accessibility. Cultural tourism has a significant relationship with socioeconomic inclusion, contributing to sustainable development and social equity. It incorporates essential elements such as:

- **Promotes Inclusive Growth:** Cultural tourism fosters inclusive economic growth by creating jobs and generating income for local communities, especially in rural areas (Ottaviani et al., 2023) (Anneli Douglas, 2024).
- **Enhances Social Value:** It engages local communities in tourism activities, promoting cross-cultural exchanges and community development (Ottaviani et al., 2023) (Sihombing, and all, 2024).
- **Supports Cultural Preservation:** Cultural tourism helps preserve cultural heritage, which is essential for maintaining community identity and attracting tourists (Ottaviani et al., 2023) (Sihombing, and all, 2024).
- **Encourages Social Entrepreneurship:** It stimulates social entrepreneurship, enhancing social value creation and environmental sustainability (Ottaviani et al., 2023) (Lubberink R. 2019).
- **Contributes to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):** Cultural tourism can contribute to achieving SDGs, particularly Goal 11 (inclusive cities) and Goal 12 (responsible consumption) (Ottaviani et al., 2023).

By integrating these components, the proposed tourism model aims to empower local communities, enhance cultural heritage preservation, and establish a sustainable tourism economy.

## 1. Methodology

To facilitate the development of inclusive tourist circuits, a diagnostic analysis was conducted to assess the current state of cultural heritage sites and socio-economic conditions in the Zab Chergui region. This analysis was based on data from the Monograph of the Wilaya of Biskra (2022), which provided insights into resource distribution, cultural assets, and local economic potential.

The diagnostic approach focused on:

- Identifying and evaluating the architectural, cultural, and historical significance of traditional cores,
- Assessing the socio-economic conditions of local populations to identify potential beneficiaries of inclusive tourism initiatives, and
- Mapping available resources, including agricultural practices, artisanal expertise, and cultural traditions, to design comprehensive tourism circuits.

This evaluation enabled the identification of strategic opportunities to introduce inclusive tourism practices that align with sustainable development objectives and community engagement principles.

## 2. Analysis and Results

### 2.1 Diagnosis: Assessing the Potential of Zab Chergui by Commune

The significance of implementing effective strategies to enhance citizen well-being through tourism circuits is particularly evident in the Zab Chergui region. This approach aims to achieve multiple objectives: preserving lesser-known areas, promoting socio-economic inclusion, creating employment opportunities for marginalized groups such as migrants, and fostering intercultural interactions. These goals are deeply rooted in the region's rich landscape and socio-cultural potential, which serve as fundamental assets for the development of inclusive tourism circuits.

#### 2.1.1 Human, Natural, and Agrarian Potential

The available data illustrate the demographic distribution and palm tree population across the communes of Zab Chergui at the wilaya level. These figures also highlight key zones dedicated to agriculture and forestry (Table 1).

The eight communes that constitute the Zab Chergui region possess distinctive characteristics that set them apart from other localities, each contributing unique elements to the region's cultural and economic landscape:

- **Circuit 1 – Sidi Okba:** This commune boasts a total of **381,946 palm trees**, reinforcing its identity as a prominent oasis and a significant contributor to local agricultural production. Its extensive palm groves provide a strong foundation for tourism initiatives centered on oasis heritage and traditional agricultural practices.
- **Ain Naga:** This area features an expansive agricultural landscape, including **1,339.03 hectares of greenhouses**, making it a critical hub for intensive farming and crop production. This agrarian richness offers opportunities for agritourism and educational eco-tours.
- **Zribet El Oued:** Distinguished by its fertile agrarian fields and extensive cereal production, this commune presents valuable potential for promoting rural tourism. Leveraging its agricultural identity could attract visitors interested in traditional farming techniques and local gastronomy.
- **Khanget Sidi Nadji:** In contrast, this commune faces significant socio-economic challenges and lacks essential infrastructure and services. As a result, the region is increasingly vulnerable to depopulation and economic decline. Developing inclusive “one-day tourist routes” tailored to this area could revitalize the local economy, stimulate job creation, and improve residents' quality of life.

**Table 1: Human and Natural Potentialities of the Zab Chergui Communes**

Commune	Human Potential		Natural Potential	
	Population	Density (Hab/km <sup>2</sup> )	Total Palms	Forest
<b>Sidi Okba</b>	<b>46 774</b>	184,08	<b>381 946</b>	200,00
<b>El Houche</b>	7 416	9,82	156 441	<b>1 639,50</b>
<b>Chetma</b>	<b>19 191</b>	174,15	123 931	0,00
<b>Ain Naga</b>	16 796	33,08	126 396	380,00
<b>Zribet El Oued</b>	30 651	31,90	62 980	260,00
<b>Mzira</b>	10 620	21,20	32 649	<b>23 409,16</b>
<b>El Feidh</b>	17 800	12,94	66 498	<b>1 804,00</b>
<b>Khanguet Sidi Nadji</b>	4 243	52,97	22 720	0,00

Source: Author based on the Monograph of the Wilaya of Biskra, 2022.

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Incorporating inclusive tourism strategies—such as improving accessibility, developing community-centered tourism models, and promoting cultural heritage—would enable the intelligent utilization of these communes' unique resources. This approach not only fosters socio-economic growth but also ensures sustainable development with substantial benefits for local populations.

**Table 2: Agricultural Potential of the Zab Chergui Communes**

Commune	Agricultural Potential		
<b>Sidi Okba</b>	855	395,00	882,00
<b>El Houche</b>	2 723	29,00	770,00
<b>Chetma</b>	26	16,00	76,50
<b>Ain Naga</b>	2 739	<b>1 339,03</b>	1886,00
<b>Zribet El Oued</b>	5 249	682,00	4126,00
<b>Mzira</b>	1 983	<b>2 838,30</b>	4381,50
<b>El Feidh</b>	5 719	248,00	1861,00
<b>Khanguet Sidi Nadji</b>	125	3,00	135,00

Source: Author based on the Monograph of the Wilaya of Biskra, 2022.

The data demonstrate notable agricultural productivity and natural potential across the communes. (Table 2)Key findings include:

- **Sidi Okba** emerges as a major oasis with **381,946 palm trees**, positioning it as a strategic site for oasis tourism.
- **Ain Naga** boasts expansive greenhouse cultivation with **1,339.03 hectares**, supporting agritourism opportunities.
- **Zribet El Oued** and **Mzira** excel in extensive cereal cultivation and agricultural fields, providing a strong foundation for rural and heritage tourism.
- Conversely, **Khanguet Sidi Nadji** exhibits limited agricultural resources and essential amenities, underlining the need for targeted development strategies to mitigate socio-economic vulnerabilities.

The introduction of cultural tourism as a touristic circuits management strategy brings several benefits to a territory, Economic Growth, Cultural Preservation, Sustainable Development, Territorial Attractiveness and Community Empowerment.

### 2.1.2 Pastoral Potential

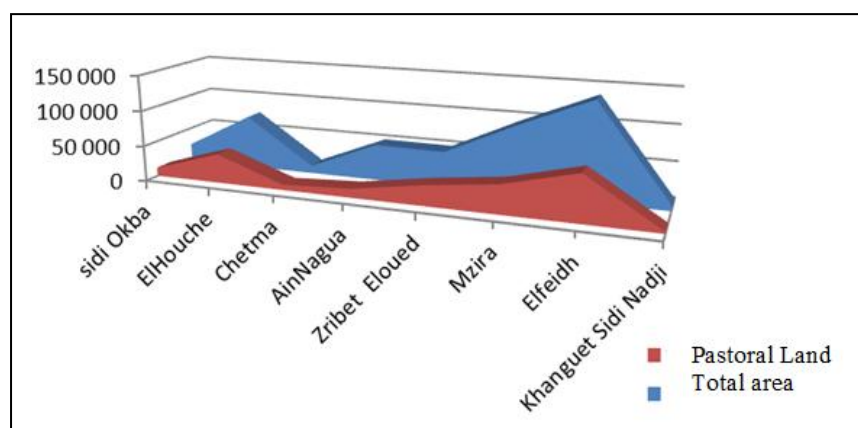
The pastoral landscape of the Zab Chergui region further enriches the potential for tourism development. As demonstrated in **Table 3**, approximately **46%** of the total land in the Zab Chergui is classified as pastoral (Graph 2). This extensive pastoral land base provides significant opportunities for activities such as eco-tourism, wildlife tourism, and open-space camping experiences.

**Table 3: Pastoral Potential of the Zab Chergui Communes**

Commune	Total Area (ha)	Pastoral Land (ha)	% Pastoral Land
Sidi Okba	25,410.00	11,898	46.82%
El Houche	75,490.00	41,195	54.57%
Chetma	11,020.00	7,583	68.81%
Ain Naga	50,780.00	12,673	24.96%
Zribet El Oued	50,090.00	28,211	56.32%
Mzira	96,080.00	40,061	41.70%
El Feidh	137,510.00	64,850	47.16%
Khanguet Sidi Nadji	8,010.00	2,485	31.02%

Source: Author based on the Monograph of the Wilaya of Biskra, 2022.

**Fig.2. Illustration of the proportions pastoral land**



Source: Author based on the Monograph of the Wilaya of Biskra, 2022.

Graph 1 illustrates that the communes of **Zribet El Oued**, **Mzira**, and **El Feidh** present the highest proportions of pastoral land, offering prime conditions for pastoral and open-space tourism development. (Fig.2.)

The expansive pastoral territories offer a range of tourism experiences aligned with the concept of **wildlife tourism**, as defined by Anglo-Saxon authors. This form of tourism, which typically spans **3 to 7 days**, emphasizes immersion in natural landscapes with minimal infrastructure intervention. It capitalizes on open wilderness, making it particularly suitable for activities such as:

- **Camping tourism** in expansive desert settings,
- **Guided trekking** led by knowledgeable local guides familiar with the region's terrain and cultural landmarks, and
- **Wildlife observation** in remote pastoral areas.

By promoting these tourism models, the Zab Chergui region can leverage its unique ecological and cultural characteristics to attract diverse visitor profiles while ensuring sustainable economic benefits for local communities.

### 2.1.3 Animal Potential

Wildlife tourism is a long-standing practice defined by visual and physical interactions with animals living in their natural environments. This form of tourism offers visitors immersive experiences, fostering an appreciation of local biodiversity. While traditionally centered on observing wildlife in their habitats, emerging trends reveal that tourists increasingly seek interactive experiences that extend to sharing daily activities with host families in agrarian communities. These interactions often involve participation in household chores, contributing to cultural exchange and local economic benefits.

**Table 4: Animal Potentialities of the Zab Chergui Communes**

Commune	Sheep	Cows	Goats	Camels
Sidi Okba	15400	421	16239	0
El Houche	42630	160	11363	527
Chetma	7785	139	8005	25
Ain Naga	11680	257	13860	239
Zribet El Oued	29650	297	26785	142
Mzira	11185	14	11,000	0
El Feidh	47248	197	29731	212
Khanguet Sidi Nadji	1108	0	630	0

Source: Author based on the Monograph of the Wilaya of Biskra, 2022

The Zab Chergui region possesses significant animal potential that could serve as a valuable asset for developing inclusive tourist circuits. Table 3 presents an overview of livestock distribution across the communes, highlighting the diversity of domestic animals in the region.

### 2.2. Key Findings and Tourism Potential:

- **Cattle Production:** The region houses approximately **1,485 cattle**, each producing between **7 to 10 liters of milk per day**. This presents opportunities for agritourism experiences, such as visits to local dairy farms or participation in traditional cheese-making processes.
- **Sheep and Goat Farming:** With substantial populations of **sheep** and **goats**, these animals are key contributors to the local red meat trade. Visitors could explore traditional herding practices, wool production, and meat preparation methods as part of cultural tourism experiences.
- **Equine Potential:** The presence of **horses** and **mules** in certain communes supports traditional agricultural practices. These animals could also facilitate equestrian tourism, including guided horseback tours across the scenic desert landscapes.

- **Camel Herding:** Notably, the communes of **El Houche** and **Ain Naga** maintain camel herds, a culturally significant feature in Saharan regions. Integrating these communes into inclusive tourist circuits offers opportunities for unique camel-back tours, heritage demonstrations, and local artisan markets showcasing traditional camel husbandry

### 2.3. Tourism Integration Strategy

To capitalize on this animal potential, a cultural touristic circuits can incorporate:

- **Camel Caravan Experiences:** Organized tours that include camel-back journeys through desert landscapes, combined with cultural storytelling and traditional music performances.
- **Farm Stays and Interactive Experiences:** Visitors can engage in farm activities such as feeding livestock, milking cows, or participating in traditional wool spinning and weaving workshops.
- **Culinary Tourism:** Promoting local food traditions through tastings, farm-to-table experiences, and demonstrations of meat preservation methods unique to the region.

By integrating these elements into the Zab Chergui tourism strategy, local communities can enhance economic prospects while offering authentic cultural experiences to visitors. This approach aligns with sustainable tourism principles by promoting heritage conservation and community empowerment.

## 3. Results: Implementation of Cultural Tourism strategy

The analysis of the potentialities of the Zab Chergui region reveals multiple opportunities for developing touristic activities aligned with sustainability, environmental conservation, heritage preservation, and social equity. To achieve this, we propose the following key tourism activities:

### 3.1. Nature-Based Tourism

Nature-based tourism emphasizes environmentally responsible travel to relatively undisturbed natural environments, with the primary objective being to observe, learn about, and appreciate biodiversity while ensuring its protection. As defined by Chopin (2019), this form of tourism encourages conservation while contributing to local economic growth.

Given the rich natural resources of the Zab Chergui, this type of tourism presents significant potential for development. It aligns with the growing demand for eco-tourism, one of the fastest-expanding sectors globally. Countries with abundant natural landscapes, particularly developing regions, can leverage this form of tourism as a powerful economic driver.

In the case of Zab Chergui, potential activities include:

- **Wildlife observation tours** showcasing the region's unique fauna and flora.
- **Hunting excursions** managed under controlled conditions to ensure sustainable practices.
- **Camping experiences** designed to immerse visitors in the region's distinctive desert landscape.

This form of tourism targets eco-conscious visitors committed to preserving ecosystems while enhancing the well-being of local populations (UNWTO, 2019).

### 3.2. Agritourism and Culinary Tourism

Agritourism, defined as tourism activities conducted on functioning agricultural holdings, offers visitors an authentic experience of rural life. This model not only fosters cultural exchange but also creates additional income for farmers by showcasing local traditions and agricultural practices.

Key agritourism activities in Zab Chergui could include:

- **Guided farm tours** to educate visitors about local agricultural practices, including palm cultivation, date production, and sustainable irrigation techniques.
- **Direct sales of farm products** to eliminate intermediaries and promote local economies.
- **Farm-to-table dining experiences** featuring traditional cuisine prepared with locally sourced ingredients.
- **Workshops on traditional agriculture** and animal husbandry, enhancing visitor engagement.

Particularly in the context of the Zab Chergui region, agricultural activities such as **phoeniculture** (date palm cultivation) and **extensive livestock farming** align well with agritourism development. Conversely, more intensive or mechanized forms of agriculture are less suited to this model.

Agritourism is designed to attract two primary visitor segments:

- **Short-term visitors**, such as tourists from other regions seeking enriching day-trip experiences.
- **Local residents**, who may visit more frequently without requiring extensive tourism infrastructure.

### 4. Discussion

The Zab Chergui region demonstrates considerable potential for the successful implementation of inclusive tourism circuits. Such initiatives provide mutual benefits for both host populations and visiting tourists. Key benefits include:

- **Economic Growth:** Tourism diversification introduces new income streams, reducing reliance on traditional economic activities.
- **Enhanced Social Well-being:** The increased flow of visitors offers opportunities for cultural exchange and social interaction, enriching the local community's lifestyle.
- **Boost in Agricultural Visibility:** Hosting tourists on working farms enhances public awareness of agricultural practices and the challenges faced by farmers.
- **Market Expansion:** By eliminating intermediaries, farmers can place their products directly on the market, increasing profitability.
- **Improved Public Perception:** Tourism initiatives can elevate the image of farmers and their contributions to society.
- **Community Engagement:** Engaging locals as guides, artisans, and hospitality providers strengthens social ties and encourages cultural preservation.

The proposed circuits are designed to span between **7 to 15 days**, ideally during the cooler months from **September to April**. This seasonal approach aligns with favorable weather conditions and agricultural cycles, optimizing the visitor experience.

In neighboring North African countries, similar tourism packages are priced between **€400 and €600** in Morocco and between **€300 and €700** in Tunisia, demonstrating the economic viability of such initiatives.

## Conclusion

cultural tourism in the oases of the Zab Chergui micro-region offers a promising strategy for fostering sustainable development and social equity. By integrating local communities into the tourism value chain, this model encourages economic growth while safeguarding cultural and natural heritage.

By leveraging cultural heritage sites and engaging local communities, these regions can achieve balanced growth while maintaining their unique cultural landscapes. Moving forward, the continued implementation of cultural tourism initiatives must prioritize:

- **Community participation and empowerment.**
- **Sustainable environmental practices.**
- **Respect for local traditions and heritage.**

By adhering to these principles, cultural tourism can serve as a transformative force, enhancing both the prosperity of local populations and the quality of visitor experiences in the remarkable landscape of the Zab Chergui.

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