



reboot med



غرفة التجارة و الصناعة و الخدمات
لجهة طنجة - تطوان - الحسيمة



Policy recommendations for Morocco

Deliverable D4.1 : Towards Recovering, Experiencing and Boosting Ecotourism in the WestMed Area



Conselleria de Turisme,
Cultura i Esports
Agència d'Estratègia Turística



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I. Introduction and main objectives

The REBOOT MED project, "Recovering, Experiencing and Boosting ecoTourism in the WestMed area" aims to foster public-private partnerships to co-define action plans for the blue economy that can revive the tourism sector, as well as to incubate, accelerate, and test new sustainable tourism projects and packages across 10 pilot areas in six Western Mediterranean countries: France (Corsica), Italy, Spain, Tunisia, Morocco, and Mauritania.

The REBOOT MED Project has added significant value to the Chamber of Commerce, Industry, and Services of the Tanger-Tétouan-Al Hoceima Region (CCIS TTA - Morocco), which is a public institution representing the private sector. Among its primary missions are the enhancement of the attractiveness of its territory, as well as supporting and promoting local businesses, with the aim of contributing to green economic growth within a digital and circular context, while pursuing integrated, inclusive, and sustainable development. As a result, the goals and objectives of the REBOOT MED Project align perfectly with the missions and objectives of the CCIS TTA.

The close collaboration with the two ministries directly involved in the project, namely the Ministry of Tourism and the Ministry of Fisheries, provided a valuable experience for CCIS TTA. This opportunity also allowed for the establishment of partnerships with local actors, both public and private, concerned with the project's issues. It highlighted the importance of cooperation, the creation of synergies, and collective effort to develop and implement common projects aimed at actively involving citizens in the development of their local territory.

This document was developed in cooperation with the regional stakeholder group composed of representatives from the Tourism Delegation, the Maritime Fisheries Delegation, the CPT, the Provincial Council of Tétouan, the El Bourane Oued Laou Cooperative, the Regional Directorate of Equipment, and the Directorate of Water and Forests, in order to address the necessary political changes to diversify maritime and coastal tourism products with a green, digital, and circular economy approach in Morocco, particularly in the various sites of the Tanger-Tétouan-Al Hoceima Region.

II. Mapping of public policies and initiatives:

This orientation document, developed by CCIS TTA and the regional stakeholder group involved in REBOOT MED:

- 1. Highlights the importance of the 2023-2026 roadmap of the Moroccan Ministry of Tourism, Handicrafts, and Social and Solidarity Economy:** Moroccan tourism benefits from an incentive framework that attracts investors. This roadmap, aiming to welcome 26 million tourists by 2030, emphasizes sustainable tourism by reorienting the offer toward thematic products such as Nature, Trekking and Hiking, and Desert & Oasis Adventure, in line with the priorities of the REBOOT MED Project. These sectors respond to the growing demand for environmentally friendly tourism while highlighting Morocco's natural heritage.

It also integrates transversal sectors such as Sustainable Development, Handicrafts, and Alternative Accommodation, which support authentic and responsible tourism. Simultaneously, six levers of competitiveness, including infrastructure modernization and the stimulation of investments in entertainment, aim to generate 120 billion dirhams in revenue and create 200,000 new jobs.

This plan relies on a strengthened public-private partnership, ensuring economic development while preserving Morocco's natural and cultural resources, thus consolidating its position as an eco-responsible destination.

- 2. CCIS TTA welcomes the establishment of national and regional support mechanisms for tourism, such as:**

- A. National Mechanisms: Go Siyaha, Cap Hospitality, Cap Access**

The 2023-2026 tourism roadmap for Morocco places the tourist experience at the center of its new national tourism offering. Diversification of the activity portfolio becomes crucial to create unique experiences in Morocco's different regions.

- Go Siyaha: In this context, the Ministry of Tourism, Handicrafts, and the Social and Solidarity Economy launched the "Go Siyaha" program. This is a new support program deployed by the Maroc PME Agency to support tourism businesses wishing to offer innovative entertainment products and to help tourism businesses transition to more sustainable and innovative practices.

In order to strengthen the public-private partnership and assist existing businesses in scaling up, this program will also focus on providing technical assistance. Go Siyaha aims to accelerate the growth and competitiveness of tourism businesses to foster the creation of a new generation of activities and services that meet the new expectations of both national and international tourists. This new attractive and innovative framework will

encourage investment in the sector, contribute to the development of existing tourism offerings, and provide support for businesses throughout their projects.

- Cap Hospitality: In addition to Go Siyaha, there is another national mechanism called "Cap Hospitality." This is a debt mechanism for hotel upgrading. It involves renovating 25,000 hotel rooms, with loans ranging from 3 to 100 million MAD, with interest covered by the state.
- Cap Access: This is a bank loan combined with subordinated debt at 5.5% excluding taxes. It is a sectoral fund dedicated to tourism, emanating from the Mohamed VI Investment Fund. It concerns financing and equity participation in eligible projects.

B. Regional Mechanisms:

- Moukawala Siyahiya (Tourism Enterprise): This is a support for investment aimed at very small and medium-sized enterprises (TPMEs), targeting regional development companies (SDRs). It offers a subsidy of 10 to 50%, capped at 6 million MAD (for accommodation, entertainment, and innovation).
- Support mechanisms created at the level of the Tanger-Tétouan-Al Hoceima Region:
 - Tourism Enterprise Development Company: Created between the Tanger Tétouan Al Hoceima Regional Council, the Moroccan Tourism Engineering Company (SMIT), and CCIS TTA, it aims to support the tourism sector in the region by assisting SMEs and very small businesses. With a budget of 300 million dirhams, it offers an investment support mechanism, including subsidies ranging from 10 to 50% of project amounts. The program focuses on improving the competitiveness of tourism offerings, especially by developing circuits in natural and mountainous areas, and the creation of 2,000 direct jobs and over 600 tourism SMEs. In particular, the program plans the creation of six tourist circuits, such as "The Cascades and Moroccan Flavors of the Mediterranean" and "The Blue Park," to enhance the region's attractiveness. This mechanism contributes to the revival of sustainable tourism by stimulating investments and developing environmentally friendly tourism in less-exploited areas, with a direct impact on job creation and the sustainability of local businesses.
- Northern Morocco Development Fund – "Nord Dev": The Tanger-Tétouan-Al Hoceima Regional Council launched NORDEV, a regional development and investment fund dedicated to supporting businesses, attracting investment, and integrating the labor market, in partnership with the Wilaya of the

Region, the Regional Investment Center (CRI), and the Agency for the Promotion and Development of the North (APDN).

Aligned with the vision set out by the Regional Development Plan (PDR), the goal of NorDev is to support investment and employment in the Tanger-Tétouan-Al Hoceima Region through grants awarded to hundreds of projects across the 8 provinces and prefectures of the region: Al Hoceima, Chefchaouen, Ouazzane, Larache, Fahs-Anjra, Tétouan, M'diq-Fnideq, and Tangier-Asilah.

The NORDEV Fund is aimed at 4 categories of project holders or investors, whether national or international, and investments can be for new creations or extensions of existing projects:

- Cooperatives
- Self-employed entrepreneurs
- Very Small Enterprises (TPE)
- Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and Large Enterprises (GE)

Grants can be requested by:

- Moroccan citizens
- Foreigners residing in Morocco
- Moroccans residing abroad (MRE)
- Foreign companies wishing to invest in the region

The project subject to the NORDEV subsidy must necessarily be developed in one of the 8 provinces of the region. The objectives of this fund, currently in its project call phase, are consistent with the expectations and goals of the REBOOT MED project.

3. Highlights the importance of the Department of Maritime Fisheries in the development of ecotourism: A Key Player for the Development of the Sea and the Coastline: The Moroccan Department of Maritime Fisheries plays a crucial role in the development of ecotourism as a key vector for sustainability and the preservation of marine ecosystems. With the richness and diversity of Morocco's fishery resources along its coasts, it offers immense potential for promoting ecotourism activities such as diving, marine ecosystem discovery tours, and tourism linked to sustainable artisanal fishing.

The Department is responsible for establishing Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), especially in the Tanger-Tétouan-Al Hoceima region, thus contributing to the preservation of marine ecosystems while supporting the development of sustainable and artisanal fishing.

Through initiatives such as the Halieutis Plan and the Ibhar Plan, the Department aims not only to modernize the fisheries sector but also to ensure the sustainability and competitiveness of fishing while integrating environmentally friendly practices. These plans, funded by 5 billion dirhams, include actions for the modernization of the artisanal fleet and the enhancement of fishery products, in direct alignment with the goals of the

blue economy. Moreover, the Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) project contributes to sustainable coastal governance, enabling the reconciliation of economic development with the preservation of coastal areas, which are essential for ecotourism.

By supporting the establishment of MPAs and fostering the sustainability of marine ecosystems, the Department of Maritime Fisheries directly contributes to the creation of ecotourism destinations, providing a favorable environment for the growth of ecotourism and enhancing the attractiveness of Morocco's coastline.

III. Key policy messages

The CCIS TTA and the stakeholders involved in the drafting of this document hereby:

- 1. Support the protection and enhancement of the coastline through the adoption of a law on the protection and development of the coastline.** Indeed, the Moroccan coastline is currently governed by a series of fragmented, often outdated regulations, which are applied in a non-coordinated manner by various institutions. This situation hinders the sustainable management of this strategic resource. It is therefore necessary to implement an Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) approach to ensure a coordinated and sustainable approach that integrates the environmental, economic, and social aspects of the coastline.

A modernized legislative framework will strengthen the protection, planning, and development actions of the coastline, taking into account the challenges of the blue economy and the growing needs in sustainable tourism, particularly ecotourism.

To achieve this, it is crucial to engage in consultations with political groups within the National Assembly to accelerate the adoption of this legislation. This will strengthen the governance of coastal areas, preserve marine and coastal biodiversity, while supporting the development of sustainable economic activities such as ecotourism and preserving natural resources for future generations.

- 2. Call for strengthening the structuring and support for the development of pescatourism:** It is essential to structure and regulate pescatourism as a key complementary activity within the sustainable tourism sector and the blue economy. To ensure the optimal growth of this emerging sector, it is imperative to establish an appropriate regulatory framework that sets minimum standards in terms of hospitality, safety, and environmental sustainability. This includes the creation of mechanisms for issuing specific licenses that will allow fishermen to engage in this activity without administrative barriers.

Pescatourism, which allows tourists to participate in fishing activities and discover marine biodiversity, including the observation of marine mammals, constitutes an opportunity for income diversification for fishermen and strengthens the attractiveness of Moroccan coastlines. However, to avoid abuses and ensure the preservation of marine resources, it is crucial to implement strict monitoring and provide technical support to industry operators.

In this regard, it is recommended that professional chambers, in collaboration with parliamentarians, accelerate the development of specific regulations for pescatourism to frame and promote this activity while adhering to environmental standards. This legislation should include specific rules for boat operation, passenger safety criteria, and measures for marine fauna protection. This legal and regulatory framework will ensure the harmonious development of pescatourism while preserving marine ecosystems.

- 3. Encourage the institutionalization of Provincial Tourism Committees:** It is essential to generalize the creation of Provincial Tourism Committees in all provinces and prefectures of the Kingdom. These committees must include all local stakeholders and federate tourism initiatives by ensuring coherence between local needs, national orientations, and visitor expectations. They should play a key role in developing tourism development plans tailored to each territory, incorporating sustainability criteria and encouraging responsible tourism practices. By ensuring better local governance, these committees could promote inclusive tourism growth that benefits local communities.
- 4. Support the reconciliation of sustainability and profitability: Towards responsible tourism:** A strategy for reconciling sustainability and profitability must be put in place to ensure the harmonious development of the sector. This includes promoting an ecotourism and responsible tourism approach, where tourism operators (hotels, activity providers, etc.) are encouraged to adopt sustainable practices while maintaining profitability. The government should support initiatives that promote low environmental impact tourism products, while encouraging innovation in offerings tailored to new consumer demands (e.g., responsible tourism, sustainable fishing, and nature tourism).
- 5. Encourage the promotion of local governance and professional training:** The success of tourism policy depends on balancing international needs with local aspirations. It is therefore crucial to strengthen local capacities in tourism management by integrating local actors into planning and governance processes. Furthermore, training young people in the fields of sustainable tourism and ecotourism should be encouraged. Professional training programs, in partnership with public agencies such as ANAPEC, should be implemented to raise awareness among young people about opportunities in niche tourism, such as pescatourism, surfing, diving, etc., in order to foster local entrepreneurship and innovation.
- 6. Highlight the importance of supporting digital innovation and e-tourism:** To enhance Morocco's attractiveness as a digital and connected destination, it is imperative to support e-tourism through the implementation of a national web strategy. This includes the digitization of tourism services and the creation of digital platforms to facilitate interconnection between sector actors (hotels, guides, travel agencies, etc.). Modernizing websites and improving electronic payment networks are priorities for enhancing the e-tourist experience. The national strategy "Maroc Numérique 2030" should thus be strengthened with local coordination to meet the demands of a globalized and digitized tourism market.
- 7. Call to favor inclusion and support the development of local tourism SMEs:** Morocco should encourage the creation of sustainable tourism SMEs in coastal and rural areas by establishing accessible financing mechanisms and simplifying administrative

procedures. Young entrepreneurs should be trained and supported to exploit local tourism niches such as cultural tourism, ecotourism, and nature tourism. Additionally, branches of ANAPEC should be established in these high-potential tourist areas to assist young people in starting businesses and developing local tourism activities.

- 8. Call for strengthening inter-institutional cooperation for sustainable tourism:** It is crucial to strengthen cooperation between ministries responsible for tourism, the environment, fishing, and the blue economy to ensure the implementation of an integrated sustainable tourism policy. An integrated approach to coastal zone management (ICZM) and the establishment of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) could help preserve ecosystems while promoting environmentally friendly tourism. Provincial Tourism Committees should be involved in this approach to ensure consistency between local actions and national sustainability goals.

IV. Conclusion

The shift in consumer habits and expectations, with an increasing focus on environmental respect and the desire to preserve nature, will lead to changes in how tourism products are conceived, priced, communicated, and distributed. It is these modifications and the recommendations provided that could help redirect current trends.

Therefore, it is imperative for all stakeholders involved, whether directly or indirectly, with coastal and tourism activities, to adapt and learn to meet the emerging needs of consumers. This must be achieved by adopting a sustainable and responsible development approach to ensure the long-term viability of these activities.