



Atlantic Sahara

Sustainable Tourism Development Strategy

**The new model for
sustainable
tourism destination
development in
Morocco**

A Quadruple-bottom line Approach

In early 2009, *ecoplan:net* was hired by the *Agency for the Social and Economic Development of the South of Morocco* (L'Agence du Sud) to prepare an overall sustainable development strategy for the this last frontier for tourism development in Morocco. The client was particularly concerned about the impact of tourism on both the fragile desert and coastal ecosystems as well as the local nomad populations and Sufi saints religious sites.

All proposed infrastructure development and programs were based on supporting 'quadruple bottom-line procedures and practices' including:
environmental protection and enhancement, social enrichment, responsible economic growth and carbon emission reduction .



Destination Resources

The region possesses an exceptional variety natural and cultural resources including the unique opportunity to combine an Atlantic Coastal experience with the desert ecology of the vast Western Sahara.

The region is also known as the birthplace for many renowned Sufi saints which attract thousands of their descendants to the region each year.

The coastal community of Tarfaya is where 'The Little Prince, the 4th best selling book in the world, was written. Khnifiss National Park also provides access to the biodiversity of the coastal lagoons and the Atlantic Ocean.

Nevertheless the region is threatened by several forces including reduced rainfall, loss of oasis vegetation, urban migration and advanced desertification.

3 Development Poles

Proposed development projects focused on 3 distinct Activity Poles; **Laâyoune**, the gateway, major service center and expression of local culture, **Es-Smara**, the center for spiritual tourism and desert ecology and **Khnifiss National Park** and the adjacent coastal community of Tarfaya .



Tour Itineraries

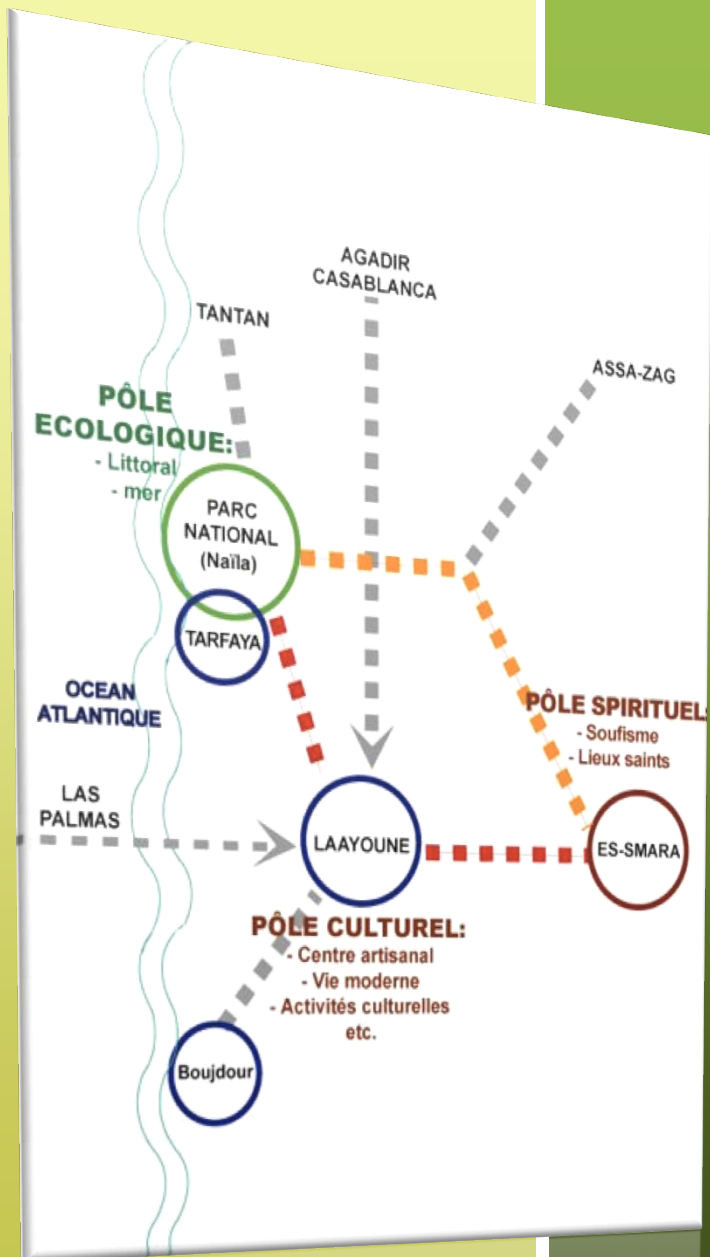
The proposed strategy is based on the development of 4 unique tourism circuits.

- 1. Coastal and Desert Circuit** connecting the 3 poles and offering a variety of cultural, spiritual and ecological programs and attractions (8 days)
- 2. A Spiritual Tourism Itinerary** including visits to select sacred sites in the Es-Smara area (4 days)
- 3. A Desert Ecology itinerary** (5 days)
- 4. A Coastal Marine Ecotourism Package** (5-day) associated with Khnifiss National Park and adjacent communities.

Action Plan

A detailed 3 phase, \$11 million development program was outlined including feasibility analysis, planning + design and investment requirements for:

- 1. Infrastructure** (e.g. ecolodge, visitor centers, interpretive kiosks, campgrounds and trail construction)
- 2. Training Program Design/Delivery**
- 3. Marketing and Community Awareness**



For more information please
contact:
James **MACGREGOR**
Temara, Morocco

jmacgregor@ecoplannet.com