

Sustainable Development of an Insular Region: Heritage and Identity Enhancement of Kerkennah Islands

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Abstract : Kerkennah Islands are a group of islands lying off the eastern coast of Tunisia, 15 miles from the Sfaxian coast. This archipelago covers an area of 150 square kilometres, and it consists of two main islands : The Gharbi and The Chergui . It also covers twelve more islets. Kerkennah is endowed with an exceptional cultural, natural and ecological potential, essential for the sustainability of the island community. Hence ,the inhabitants there have mobilized the natural resources of their land for decades. However, today, and despite these heritage treasures, Kerkennian islanders are facing social, economic and environmental challenges which are currently hindering the development of the traditional activities of fishing and farming. Other than being isolated and having a non-diversified economy, we cite the erosion of the stream banks, the exodus of young people and the population aging. "This study find the solutions that are likely to allow a sustainable development of the island territory, its enhancement and the strengthening of its identity. It is also necessary to study the key factors impacting the archipelago's cultural tourism of decision makers and citizens. First, we will present the archipelago. Second, we will describe its tangible as well as intangible heritage. Then, we will present the new modes of the site exploitation. Finally, we will identify some new projects paving the way to a sustainable tourism in Kerkennah such as Borj EL Lahssar archaeological digs and Kerkennah insular heritage museum. To conclude, the archipelago of Kerkennah needs to reintegrate all its historical, architectural and archaeological assets in order to enhance its cultural tourism based on the cultural circuits of the territorial identities and the island values.

Keywords : kerkennah, identity, heritage, historical architectural

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