Tourism professionals in Morocco talk about the need to diversify the tourism offer and move towards ecotourism. This is particularly the case for the Agadir destination, whose product has not really evolved over the last 20 years, a product that is essentially based on the seaside, while this one (the destination) has enormous assets, particularly the mountainous hinterland natural; the unique and fascinating fauna and flora without forgetting the very welcoming inhabitants. However, the National Park of Souss Massa, given the beauty of its natural landscapes, its remarkable flora and fauna, can be seen as an important component and promoter for the ecotourism offer of the region. Nevertheless, it is not enough for a territory to have cultural, natural, and human potential to develop high value-added tourism and make it accessible on the market (Marir, 2011). Despite the attractive potential of this territory, most people are unaware of its existence. Therefore, an empirical study was conducted during this study aimed to describe the type of customers interested in the product “National Park” and promotional tools to put in place to make it more attractive.

Keywords: ecotourism, protected areas, Souss Massa National Park, seaside destination, tourists’ behavior

Introduction

Tourism is a means of spatial planning and development; it enhances territories and populations in a
sustainable manner (Arib, 2005). Nevertheless, it is not enough for a territory to have cultural, natural, and human potentials to develop tourism with high added value and make it accessible on the global market (Marir, 2011).

Ten km from the city of Agadir there is a National Park of 33,800 ha bringing together beach, nature, and dunes with also a local culture and tradition. Except that unfortunately, most of the national and international tourists ignore the existence of this natural attractiveness. In fact, tourists are seeking for a unique and authentic experience other than tourism of sun and sea. That said, the destination managers must offer a product that will appeal to this target, and Souss Massa National Park seems to be the perfect answer for this request. Hence the following questions to ask: What are the expectations of this category of consumers? What products attract this tourist target in the national park? Are these tourists willing to pay more for an original experience? What type of communication do they offer to publicize the park? And what are their recommendations to improve the quality of the “Park” product and make it more attractive?

However, the objective of this study is to propose a new tourist offer which allows the Agadir destination to emerge from its crisis and offer another type of alternative tourism other than the seaside sun and beach product.

**The Purpose of Ecotourism**

**Emergence of Ecotourism**

Ecotourism is often seen as a quick fix capable of reconciling economic development, environmental protection, and the well-being of communities (Honey, 1999). Moreover, this orientation towards this new type of tourism is due to the appearance of a new public concerned about the environment and which demands more journeys to the natural areas with a population local’s meeting (Orams, 1995; Weaver, 1998; Honey, 1999).

However, there is no agreement on the origin of ecotourism (Fennell, 1999), some authors believe that Hetzer in 1965 was the first one who has combined the terms ecology and tourism to clarify the relationship between tourists, environment, and cultural aspect (Fennell, 1998). But in 1976 Budowski was cited as the precursor of this concept (Blamey, 2001; Orams, 2001; Honey, 1999). Otherwise this concept appeared in English, thanks to Romeril in the 1980s (Blamey, 2001), then a few years later, the Mexican Ceballos-Lascurain, adopted the Spanish word ecoturismo.

Despite the debate (s) on the origins of this term, the foundations of ecotourism took shape during the 1970s and 1980s when the environmental movement began to surface and consequently induced this type of tourism. In fact, it is considered the opposite of mass tourism and whose objective is to highlight a variety of principles associated with the concept of sustainable development (Blamey, 2001). However, the concept of ecotourism has developed in order to integrate the ideas of conservation of fauna and flora biodiversity, especially in protected areas, and to take also into account the cultural aspect in a framework of sustainable development. Besides, allowing the creation of economic benefits while integrating local communities (Lequin, 2001; Blangy, Dubois, & Kouchner, 2002; Augier, 2005). Except that the problem that exists between most researchers and even professionals is that they confuse between the concept of ecotourism and other types of alternative tourism such as sustainable tourism, nature tourism, adventure tourism, and community tourism. According to Orams (1995, p. 3): “At one pole, all tourism maybe viewed as ecotourism, and at the other, no tourism maybe viewed as ecotourism”. 
Conceptual Framework of Ecotourism

Appearing in the 1980s, the term of “ecotourism” was cited first by international institutions of biodiversity conservation such as the IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources), WWF (World Wildlife Fund), as well as by international organizations promoting tourism such as the World Tourism Organization and the Society for Ecotourism. However, the definitions concerning this activity have been indicated in nature conservation works as well as in practical guides for the development of ecotourism (Lindberg & Hawkins, 1993; Wells & Brandon, 1992; Ceballos-Lascurain, 1996). First of all, the father of ecotourism Ceballos-Lascurain (1991, cited in McCool & Moisey, 2001, p. 41) defined ecological tourism or ecotourism as that “tourism that involves travelling to relatively undisturbed or uncontaminated natural areas with the specific object of studying, admiring and enjoying the scenery and its wild plants and animals”. On the other hand Ziffer (1989) emphasizes the socio-cultural aspect of the indigenous while basing on the natural history of a region, according to him, it is necessary to enhance the culture of a country or a natural site, support and develop the local community financially and commercially.

In addition, the International Ecotourism Society states that this type of tourism is based on the environmental dimension and the well-being of the community (The International Ecotourism Society, 1991). While the World Conservation Union demonstrates that ecotourism is a kind of responsible travel that allows enjoying the natural beauty and cultural manifestations offered by a region that provided at the same time the conservation and preservation of the environment of this natural area with the involvement of the indigenous population in tourism projects (UICN, 1996). For his part, Blamey (2001) thinks that ecotourism is a means of implementing renewable development approaches thanks to income from tourist consumption, since it can be the key of survive for disadvantaged regions, and this, by creating a dynamic development that tourism international is unable to provide (World Bank, cited by Dehoorne, Saffache, & Augier, 2007).

What we can say is that the concept of ecotourism is complex, always evolving, it does not relate to a universal definition, and the destinations which opt for this type of tourism define it according to their needs and their understanding of this term to create their own definition (Couture, 2002). Otherwise, other authors have proposed other definitions of this concept. Considered one of the three income-generating activities equal to beekeeping, aromatic, and medicinal plants (Froger & Andriamahefazafy, 2003), ecotourism is an activity based on nature, in which the main motivation of tourists is to take advantage of the natural beauty, wild plants, and animals as well as the sharing of the traditional cultures of these regions (Kurt, 1993; UNWTO, 2010), furthermore, this type of tourism awakens in travelers a sense of ecological responsibility and environmental practices (Orams, 1995). It stands out as a better solution for combining the environment and development (Denais, 2007) provided that there is collaboration between local communities, tourism stakeholders and resource protectors in order to complete the vicious circle of sustainable development (Breton, 2004). As for Goodwin (1996), he explains how ecotourism contributes to the preservation of natural areas and to the improvement of local population living by generating money to protect biodiversity, by involving indigenous people in tourism projects and by giving them a source of motivation to boost their interest in preserving the environment. On the other hand, Ross and Wall (1999) assume that ecotourism is a virtuous model since it will make it possible to combine three aspects at the same time (economic, social, and ecologic), in other words to economically enhance biodiversity by creating income for local populations while preserving the natural environment of a natural area.
Basically, ecotourism is an activity which is practiced in natural environments and which makes it possible to reduce ecological damage while promoting the well-being of local communities, including their natural and cultural heritage, and this by involving them in tourism projects and planning (Denais, 2007). This has been confirmed by Honey (1999) in its definition where it considers ecotourism as “responsible travel to natural areas which conserves the environment and improves the welfare of local people.” “Many see it as a panacea for developing nations—a source of clean development that can bring wealth to rural communities while simultaneously helping to preserve pristine environments” (p. 11).

In their, the different approaches, cited above, allowed us to propose our own definition of ecotourism: “Ecotourism is an ambiguous term, inspired by sustainable development, it reveals an activity that takes place in a natural environment, intended for a target of responsible tourists who are motivated by the observation and contemplation of landscapes, learning and studying the fauna, flora and wild animals as well as meeting host populations and discovering new cultures. In addition, this activity must respond to the principles of sustainability so that it contributes, on the one hand, to the development of the local community through the creation of income and the enhancement of their tradition, on the other hand, practitioners of this activity are required to respect the environment and the biodiversity of the natural environment visited in the same way as the cultures and traditions of the natives who reside there”.

The Different Dimensions of Ecotourism

According to the definitions cited in the literature, we can see that there is agreement among all the authors regard ecotourism activity (Blamey, 1997), this agreement is reflected in the fact that the Ecotourism must be practiced in a natural environment as well as it must meet the educational, cultural, and environmental criteria of travelers and the local population. Without forgetting that this activity must generate income for the communities that reside in these natural spaces by involving them in local ecotourism projects (Blamey, 2001; Ross & Wall, 1999; Wallace & Pierce, 1996; Weaver, 2002). That said, Blamey (1997) claims that three dimensions constitute the essence of the concept of ecotourism: Nature-oriented tourism; Educational component & Need for sustainability(Blamey, 1997; 2001). Whereas for Denais (2007), the principles of ecotourism are classified as follows:

- Nature and culture;
- The well-being of host societies;
- Responsible tourists;
- Participation of the local population;
- Durability;
- The art of meeting.

For his part Sarrasin (2007) believes that ecotourism appears as a solution to a problem whose construction remains fragile, this fragility is mainly based on the desire to reconcile three very distinct objectives: Socioeconomic development, Space fitted out for tourists and Conservation of biodiversity. As for Gagnon and Lapointe (2009), they have set up four Met principles for the development of ecotourism:

- Preservation of the environment;
- Involvement and integration of indigenous people in local economic development;
- Meeting the needs of the local population;
- Offer a unique and authentic experience to tourists.
Whereas for Nicolas Fabiola (2006), the main key principles of ecotourism are the following:

- Protection and enhancement of natural and cultural heritage;
- Education of tourists and natives;
- Appropriation of the activity by the local population;
- Well-being of the local population;
- Travel intended for small groups.

In another point of view, Charbonneau (2008) presents his part, the principles of ecotourism as follows:

- Socially and environmentally responsible products and services;
- Participation of all actors;
- Respect for host populations;
- Appropriate marketing;
- Fair distribution of benefits;
- Tourist education;
- Sustainable management.

As a matter of fact, all these comments lead us to conclude that each author offers principles according to his own vision and philosophy in order to develop ecotourism in a natural environment; therefore, we have established a scheme to encompass the main primordial dimensions for the development of ecotourism and which are cited in the literature.

![Figure 1. Ecotourism dimensions.](image)

**Case Study Souss Massa National Park**

**Presentation of the Souss Massa National Park**

The wetland of the Souss Massa/Agadir region covers an area of 34,000 ha, and is located in south-west Morocco, between the Oued Souss (Agadir) on the north side and Sidi Moussa Aglou (Tiznit) on the side South. In 1991, this protected area officially became Souss Massa National Park (PNSM), which has been on the Ramsar list since January 2005. In addition, the park has 300 species, including 13 endemic to southwest Morocco. 46 species of Mammals, 40 species of Reptiles and Amphibians, and 9 species of Fish, more than 275 species of Birds observed and many species of Lepidoptera. In addition, the bald Ibis is the emblematic bird of the park which shelters the most important and the only viable colony in the world. The PNSM is also attractive
for its cultural heritage, which manifests itself in the large number of mosques, cemeteries, and mausoleums which attract several pilgrims during various events (mwassem, etc.). There are also seven villages inside the park with around 2,500 inhabitants who add this traditional and original touch with their different local products including Argan oil and mussels.

**Methodology**

For our research methodology, we opted for a quantitative method in order to identify the levels of satisfaction and dissatisfaction of tourists, to identify their behaviors, and to collect relevant information in an effective and efficient manner. Otherwise, the questions allowed us to collect information on several criteria such as the reason for visiting Agadir, the length of stay, the interest in visiting the hinterland, in particular the national park, and this for residents and non-residents. In addition, we spread our survey over three months March, April, and May. However, it was not a random choice, as these three months correspond to the peak season, that is, the increase in tourist flows. Moreover, the questionnaire is divided into three main parts: the first part was intended to identify the travel aspects of the interviewees (General information about the destination of Agadir); while the second part aimed to assess the level of knowledge about the national park; and finally the last part is used to identify the interviewers. In fact, the main objective of this survey is to understand the different expectations and needs of this category of tourists and this in order to offer a tourist offer that meets their requirements and that responds correctly to the principles of sustainability.

**Conduct of the Investigation**

**Survey sample**

Before conducting our survey, it was first necessary to define the sample that will be studied and analyzed. For that, we developed a questionnaire consisting of value-scale questions, closed questions, and other open questions. We were able to complete the questionnaire despite some obstacles that we encountered during the course of this survey. We interviewed 700 tourists with different nationalities in Agadir destination and its surroundings, but only 686 tourists responded to our survey. Nevertheless, our objective was to discover the
position of the “National Park” Product in the minds of resident and non-resident consumers, and to target the different profiles of tourists to deduce those who can become potential customers of the park.

**Sampling**

Size: 686 individuals, national and international residents in Agadir city and its surroundings.

**Distribution period:** the survey took place over a period of approximately three months. The peak of responses was obtained during the month of April, and mainly on weekends and holidays.

![Period of survey distribution](image)

The study sites: there are six, supermarkets (Marjane d’Agadir and Aswak Salam de Talberjt), the Coastal ride, Camping caravaning, Imi Ouadar beach, Atlantica park, PNSM, Souk el Hed, and four of the large hotels classified four and five stars in Agadir, but the majority of the responses were obtained on the coastal walk.

**Data processing**

After collecting all the questions, we processed and analyzed the data collected via the Sphinx software.

**Presentation and Analysis of the Results of the Study**

**Cross analysis of results**

Table 1

| Hinterland tour/location | Residents | Non-residents | Total |
|--------------------------|-----------|---------------|-------|
| Yes                      | 188       | 309           | 497   |
| No                       | 40        | 149           | 189   |
| Total                    | 228       | 458           | 686   |

*Note.* The values in the table are the number of citations for each pair of terms.

**Analysis**

We crossed the location of our interviewees with the fact that they have already visited the hinterland of the destination. According to the results, 82% of the residents have already organized outings to the hinterland, 18% of the residents admit never having left Agadir (among these 18% we will find that most are students coming from another city or from another foreign country). Regarding non-residents, we obtained a percentage of 67% who have already visited the hinterland of Agadir, and the rest (33%) have never had the opportunity to
visit the surroundings of the city. This means that the hinterland of the destination interests several people from our interviewed population, and the park does indeed have a potential clientele that we seek to define after this analysis.

![Figure 3. Hinterland visit x location.](image)

Table 2

**PNSM Visit X Action Plan (Have You Already Visited It?/In Your Opinion What Are the Areas for Improvement Within The Park?)**

| Already visited PNSM/action plan | No response | Access road | Signage | Promotion/advertising | Catering (on site, around, etc.) | Other: specify… | Total |
|---------------------------------|-------------|-------------|---------|----------------------|---------------------------------|------------------|-------|
| Yes                             | 15          | 57          | 72      | 53                   | 41                              | 15               | 253   |
| No                              | 204         | 7           | 7       | 8                    | 7                               | 3                | 236   |
| Total                           | 219         | 64          | 79      | 61                   | 48                              | 18               | 489   |

*Note.* The values in the table are the number of citations for each pair of terms.

![Figure 4. PNSM visit x action plan.](image)

**Analysis**

After interviewing the people who visited the park, we tried to extract a set of points of view on the different tracks to be developed to better meet the requirements of current and potential tourists. In view of the results, it seems essential that the park revises its promotion policy, the park according to visitors is not easily accessible, it is not known to the majority of people, residents or non-residents, this is due to the lack of signage
and advertising qualified as insufficient, it is necessary to tackle the various promotional tools to guarantee a wider dissemination of the PNSM offer. It is also necessary to provide the park with facilities whose objective is to facilitate the visit to tourists.

Table 3

**PNSM Products X Nationality (Which of These Products Are You Interested in?/What is Your Nationality?)**

| PNSM Products/ nationality | Moroccan | French | German | English | Belgian | Russian | Other: specify… | Total |
|----------------------------|----------|--------|--------|---------|---------|---------|-----------------|-------|
| No response                | 23       | 30     | 10     | 24      | 11      | 12      | 16              | 126   |
| Bird watching              | 199      | 134    | 16     | 34      | 17      | 12      | 38              | 450   |
| Gazelle watching           | 204      | 121    | 16     | 30      | 18      | 15      | 27              | 431   |
| Coastal cliffs             | 137      | 93     | 15     | 20      | 14      | 9       | 17              | 305   |
| Wetlands (Oued Massa, OuedSouss) | 141  | 89     | 13     | 25      | 13      | 9       | 15              | 305   |
| The dunes                  | 137      | 98     | 17     | 20      | 16      | 11      | 20              | 319   |
| Total                      | 841      | 565    | 87     | 153     | 89      | 68      | 133             | 1,936 |

*Note: The values in the table are the number of citations for each pair of terms.*

**Figure 5. Planning x nationality.**

**Analysis**

In this analysis, we are interested in the recommendations of our sample according to their origin. Concerning the facilities, Moroccans would like to have in the PNSM: A cafeteria with 196 votes, as well as sanitary (151), security (148) and ease of access to the territory (137). For the Foreigners tourists, they are opting for sanitary in the first place, then accessibility to the park, followed by a cafeteria and security.

**Analysis**

We note that social networks are the most chosen means, it is the preferred communication tool and advised by the interviewees, especially among young people who belong to an age group of less than 35 years, this is due to several reasons: the 21st century has known a technological progress which has upset the way of life of populations and has given birth to a generation called generation Y, who depends a lot on the use of new technologies including smartphones which are means essential and which allow their user to stay connected to social networks since they are efficient and less costly, such as: Facebook, Instagram, Website… etc.

Magazines and brochures are considered to be attractive means of communication especially for people over the age of 60, in other words seniors or Baby boomers, but what is also remarkable is that people between
the ages of 25 and 35 years old find that these communication tools are essential and should be present in different places: Airport, Information kiosk and tourist establishments (CRT, Tourism Delegation, Hotels, camping...etc.). These paper supports are credible; their content is a kind of promise on the part of the National Park.

Table 6

| Communication X Age | Less than 25 years | Between 25 and 35 years | Between 36 and 45 years | Between 46 and 60 years | More than 60 years | Total |
|---------------------|--------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------|-------|
| No response         | 12                 | 59                     | 21                     | 20                     | 15               | 127   |
| Poster on coastal walk | 36               | 39                     | 56                     | 49                     | 28               | 208   |
| Information signs at the entrances to the city | 47             | 48                     | 41                     | 34                     | 35               | 205   |
| Information panels in the city center (Au Souk…) | 35           | 28                     | 37                     | 33                     | 31               | 164   |
| Information center (information kiosk) | 10           | 21                     | 39                     | 29                     | 29               | 128   |
| Brochures/magazines | 26               | 52                     | 40                     | 38                     | 60               | 216   |
| Newspapers         | 6                 | 9                      | 5                      | 9                      | 10               | 39    |
| Electronic journals | 14               | 10                     | 20                     | 11                     | 8                | 63    |
| Social networks/official website/applications | 72            | 89                     | 66                     | 40                     | 19               | 286   |
| Airport             | 18               | 23                     | 27                     | 24                     | 15               | 107   |
| Total               | 276              | 378                    | 352                    | 287                    | 250              | 1,543 |

As for the posters on a coastal walk, they are chosen by people whose age range is between 36 and 45, because these are the easier means that attract the attention of passengers in a way that they allow access to information. The choice of the posters location on the coastal walk is a strategic place since it is a tourist area. Therefore, young people under 35 years have suggested that the information boards at the entrances to the city can be a good idea to inform the entrants of the existence of the national park.

Otherwise, for the target group 36 and 45, they actually opted for the creation of kiosks in order to establish direct contact (face to face), which facilitates and clarifies the information. The same age group
suggests that the airport can be the perfect place to promote the National Park product since it is considered the first contact for tourists. Besides those means, electronic newspapers are also recommended. That said, for the resident baby-boomers category, they preferred promoting the park in a more traditional way: newspapers or on television, since it is the most accessible tool for them.

Table 7

| Location/communication | Residents | No-residents | Total |
|------------------------|-----------|--------------|-------|
| No response            | 21        | 108          | 129   |
| Poster on coastal walk | 89        | 119          | 208   |
| Information signs at the entrances to the city | 92 | 113 | 205 |
| Information panels in the city center (Au Souk,…) | 69 | 95 | 164 |
| Information center (information kiosk) | 36 | 92 | 128 |
| Brochures/magazines | 69 | 147 | 216 |
| Newspapers            | 17        | 22           | 39    |
| Electronic journals   | 33        | 30           | 63    |
| Social networks/official website/applications | 118 | 168 | 286 |
| Airport                | 21        | 86           | 107   |
| Total                  | 565       | 980          | 1,545 |

Note. The values in the table are the number of citations for each pair of terms.

Figure 7. Location x communication.

Analysis

According to the results, we note that a significant number of different targets whether resident, national, or international have chosen social networks/website and application as a suggestion for fleet communication, they find that digital is the most fluid means that easily allows accessibility to information concerning not only the park, but also about the destination, its offers, news, events, etc. This tool give them more options compared to other tools, such as online booking, expressing their opinions, sharing their experiences, without forgetting the primary reason; most of the people interviewed are from millennial or generation Y. Through our study, we were able to identify the various concerns and criticisms of tourists regarding their needs and expectations in terms of the PNSM product, whether in terms of facilities, the offers offered, or the communication to be established, this said in the purpose of facilitating their access and guaranteeing them an experience in good conditions.
Summary and General Recommendations

The data collected through this survey are important for the park as well as for local tourism stakeholders. They make it possible to provide information on customers’ expectations with the aim of facilitating decision-making, defining the directions to be taken and the projects to be developed. Through the questionnaire, we sought to identify the different expectations, the communication tools of most interest to the respondents, and also to know their desires in terms of souvenir products and amenities.

According to this analysis of the results, it appears that tourists choose Agadir since it is a seaside and relaxation destination, its assets are varied including its beautiful climate, its tranquility, its hospitality of its inhabitants and its nature (.). (t)That said, Souss Massa National Park is an area that has undeniable advantages, especially since most of them have expressed interest in visiting the hinterland. Most of the tourists interviewed are under the age of 45, they are parents with children, which could be an advantage for the product Souss Massa National Park, it is in this context that the park should offer offers to families among its services offered.

In addition, it appears that most of the interviewees were unaware of the existence of the PNSM, even the residents; this is due to the lack of communication between the park and a large audience, the lack of signage, etc. Hence the importance of thinking of a well-structured promotion strategy covering the expectations of the public who would be part of a potential clientele, and of thinking of promotional and symbolic tools, since the study showed us that a good many people are ready to buy souvenir products. It also emerges from the imperative study the need to consider corrective actions in order to improve and address the problems that somehow block the growth of tourism activity in the park as well as its location and visibility, short and long term. To do this, we suggest a list of more selective, personalized, pragmatic, and practical recommendations which is as follows:

Regarding amenities:
- Development and maintenance of access roads,
- Set up directional signs to facilitate accessibility to the park,
- Set up a rest area with chairs and tables,
- Provide a large space reserved for parking,
- Make food vending machines available to visitors,
- Provide facilities for disabled people,
- Build additional sanitary facilities to those that already exist,
- Build kiosks or points of sale for local products,
- Provide a kiosk or point of sale in downtown Agadir to facilitate the purchase of tickets to reserves,
- Plan buses going from the hotel zone to the park (Shuttles), eg.: 2 times per week.

Regarding the offer/price:
- Offer tourists a very rich and varied tourist offer in terms of products, services, and experiences, in order to create the desire and trigger the act of reservation.
- The tourist offer for nationals is limited, which is why it is necessary to offer a special offer (circuit) suitable for resident Moroccan families with a price reduction.
- Plan circuits of two days and one night in a partner hotel where authenticity reigns and where the values released by the park are present.
THE CASE OF SOUSS MASSA NATIONAL PARK

Regarding promotion:
- Develop a clear and relevant promotional strategy to publicize the park,
- Consider making partnerships and collaborations, with TOs and travel agencies,
- Establishment of information centers and kiosks,
- Communicate about the park by highlighting its environment which is quite rich and varied,
- Reinforce the presence of the PNSM in Web 2.0,
- Launch the website and ensure it is updated,
- Integrate the local population in the promotion policy in order to achieve their objectives,
- Sensitize the local population, and guides on the nature of information to convey,
- Provide special advertising campaigns to provoke the need among Moroccans.

Conclusion

In Agadir destination, the mass tourism model, in particular the seaside is experiencing a crisis. This model no longer ensures an advantageous competitive position at destination. Therefore, alternative solutions are imperative. That said, the development of the hinterland as a new tourism product seems to be the competitive advantage compared to other competing destinations. The example of Souss Massa National Park is very significant in this regard. It is an authentic offer, a unique experience and an exceptional product that the destination can offer to tourists in order to enhance the hinterland. However, such a product of this value was unknown and ignored, even by residents of the region. Furthermore, to get out of this lack of awareness of the value of Souss Massa National Park, the park management decided to carry out a prospecting study with 700 resident and non-resident tourists, with the aim of identifying potential customers of this new offer. This study made it possible to reveal the behavior of tourists, their motivations, the type of communication to use, their heritage situations and the services to be offered to them when visiting the park, as well as their suggestions for park development, etc. That said, the results of the study were optimistic in that the tourists interviewed were very interested in visiting the park and its natural biodiversity. However, to develop ecotourism in this protected area, the park must implement a well-structured promotion strategy in order to conquer new international markets. This objective can only be achieved with the participation of all managers and professional players.

As a summary this work allowed the park to get a more precise idea of the measures to be taken to fill the gaps and encourage ecotourism activity in this protected natural area (Moreover, this type of encouragement will obviously have a positive impact on the park).

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