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Investment Promotion and Regional Economic Intelligence: An Analysis of the Dakhla Oued Eddahab Regional Development Program

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Abstract

In the context of the implementation of advanced regionalisation in Morocco, particularly in the southern provinces, and the adoption of new territorial development measures tailored to regional specificities, the analysis of Regional Development Programmes (RDPs) is essential. These programmes constitute strategic instruments aimed at enhancing the economic attractiveness of territories, whilst addressing the challenges of competitiveness, equity and sustainability.

In this context, territorial economic intelligence (TEI) emerges as a key lever for supporting and optimising regional development policies. Applied to the Dakhla Oued Eddahab region, it helps to strengthen territorial competitiveness by promoting better use of local resources and facilitating the identification of investment opportunities. TEI is based on structured processes for the collection, analysis and dissemination of strategic information, enabling informed decision-making and the coordination of actions by various public and private stakeholders.

By integrating this approach into the RDP, the Dakhla Oued Eddahab region benefits from a more coherent regional governance framework, based on synergy between institutions, businesses and local stakeholders. This approach promotes investment, stimulates innovation and supports the development of productive activities, thereby contributing to sustainable and inclusive economic growth, as well as to the reduction of territorial disparities.

The aim of this research is to highlight the role of territorial economic intelligence (TEI) in the strategic positioning and promotion of the attractiveness of the Dakhla Oued Eddahab region. To this end, a forward-looking approach is employed to analyse the region's socio-economic characteristics and evaluate the RDP as a tool for strategic territorial planning. By 2030, territorial economic intelligence will be at the heart of economic diplomacy and territorial development policies, with an enhanced role for investment support institutions, notably the Regional Investment Centres.

Keywords: Territorial economic intelligence (TEI); regional development; territorial attractiveness; investment promotion; territorial governance.

Introduction

Beyond issues of territorial attractiveness through the strengthening of a territory's strategic positioning, the central issue arising from a company's choice of location within a territory is that of long-term knock-on effects, which will determine whether or not the territory retains its relevance and sustainability as a space for economic activity (COLLETIS, G., 1997). Indeed, it is not merely a question of attracting investors, but of ensuring their sustainability, by combining endogenous and exogenous dynamics and developing new approaches to territorial anchoring.

Nowadays, the region is regarded as a site-generating agent, which leads us to examine the methods adopted by local authorities to implement strategies designed to meet the needs of economic agents. In a context of regional economic competition, this involves local authorities and regional stakeholders offering local public goods and services to investors. Thus, regions are constantly competing to put forward the best offers and implement effective strategies to attract the investors best suited to their visions of socio-economic development, thereby ensuring a win-win relationship between the region and the business, where the latter contribute to wealth creation within the region (financial resources; factors of stability; job creation, etc.), whilst the regions offer businesses an environment conducive to their competitiveness.

In this paper, we propose to analyse regional attractiveness through the adoption of a regional economic intelligence approach within the Moroccan context, specifically focusing on the Dakhla Oued Eddahab region, one of the twelve new regions of Morocco established by the 2015 administrative reorganisation, and the second largest region in Morocco. From a socio-economic perspective, according to the HCP, the region leads the country in terms of GDP per capita. The relevant regional stakeholders implemented the first Regional Development Programme (RDP) in 2015–2016 to mark the 40th anniversary of the Green March, developed on the basis of a participatory and inclusive approach; The RDP for the Dakhla Oued Eddahab region is regarded as a socio-economic development framework that has enabled the planning of a series of projects of international scope to ensure the region's economic development by 2030.

The aim is to transform this significant part of the Kingdom into an African hub and thereby establish an intercontinental platform linking Africa to Europe, Asia and the Americas; the first Dakhla-Oued Eddahab Regional Development Plan (2016–2021) provided for the construction of the major Dakhla-Atlantic port. The construction of this world-class

port has enabled the development of the region's infrastructure and future-oriented industries, thereby enhancing the region's geographical and natural assets along the Kingdom's Atlantic axis towards West Africa; the region's land connection, in turn, is closely linked to the vast Saharan territories leading to the heart of the Sahelian zones. These ambitious projects must serve as factors of attractiveness for investors and help promote investment in this promising region; to this end, the establishment of a regional economic intelligence framework is of great importance to ensure the coherent and integrated development of the Dakhla Oued Eddahab region, with a view to addressing the factors hindering joint regional development. The research question adopted for this study is as follows:

To what extent does the implementation of a territorial economic intelligence approach enable the achievement of the Regional Development Programme's objectives regarding investment promotion?

To address this research question, we will provide a theoretical framework for the key concepts of this paper and their interactions, highlighting the adoption of the TEE approach in the Moroccan context, in particular initiatives aimed at attracting investors and developing the socio-economic situation within a territory, based on a territorial assessment grounded in a literature review and focusing on all the development plans and territorial strategies for the Dakhla Oued Eddahab region, as well as the prospects in this area, particularly in light of the 2016–2022 Regional Development Programme (RDP).

I. Literature Review

1- Territorial economic intelligence in the service of investment promotion.

1-1 Conceptual overview of territorial economic intelligence

The concept of territorial economic intelligence is problematic, particularly when it comes to identifying the appropriate semantic scope; thus, a theoretical exploration of territorial economic intelligence requires, first and foremost, a positioning in relation to other related concepts such as territorial intelligence and economic intelligence, which are considered to be sources of inspiration and creation for TIE insofar as they share the same methods and tools, whilst territorial intelligence is the process that ensures the convergence of information; communication and knowledge; it is a concept that brings the culture of monitoring to local development. It can therefore be said that territorial

intelligence is a component of territorial economic intelligence, the latter having formed the basis of several research studies and attracted the interest of many academics. Within the scope of this work, we have outlined the main definitions relevant to our research question:

According to **Yann Beratchini (2004)**: The IET is defined by two key factors: information and communication processes. According to this author, the IET is a concept that links monitoring to public action by adopting a strategic approach to the implementation of a territorial development project that addresses the following questions: what strategy? For which territory? How can coherence be fostered between territorial, national and international strategies? How can territories be promoted and enhanced in the context of globalisation? What will be the criteria for territorial attractiveness? How can new actors be engaged to promote territories?

Whereas **Demaziere & Faugouin (2005)** consider that: IET is analysed through two perspectives: The first concerns business leaders, who apply the methods and tools of economic intelligence within a territory; empirically speaking, this involves the creation of business clusters and competitiveness clusters, and establishing an informal communication link between the various businesses within these clusters to ensure knowledge sharing, and the second perspective concerns regional decision-makers, adopting a broader analysis of collective intelligence linked to the joint action of regional development stakeholders; it thus involves applying the concept of economic intelligence to regional decision-makers and, consequently, to their strategic decisions.

Following this same logic, **Chahbouni (2015)** defined TEE as a body of multidisciplinary information that enables a better understanding of territorial dynamics and helps the various territorial stakeholders to define, develop and implement territorial public policies consistent with national and international strategies.

Based on these definitions, we can see that the Territorial Economic Intelligence approach begins with the establishment of a system for anticipating all events that may occur, in order to address multiple challenges and implement public policies suited to the national and international context, using tools for collaboration and communication between the various territorial stakeholders to contribute to the enhancement and development of the territory. Furthermore, according to **Trogon, L. (2011)**, TIE is regarded as a combination of a set of actions involving the production,

mobilisation and pooling of knowledge to assist stakeholders in understanding their territory and in taking action and making decisions; this then constitutes *territorial engineering*, which enables act upon knowledge within the framework of *collective intelligence* to establish support systems adapted to their mode of development, based on spatialised collective learning and by understanding the territory through a dynamic and evolving vision, enabling the future of the territory to be imagined by identifying possible trajectories and creating a culture of uncertainty through territorial foresight to affirm the territory's strategic positioning. This positioning, which according to Meyronin, B. (2009) consists of endowing a territorial offering with distinctive characteristics likely to make it attractive to the target audience, differentiating it as much as possible from the offerings of competing territories¹

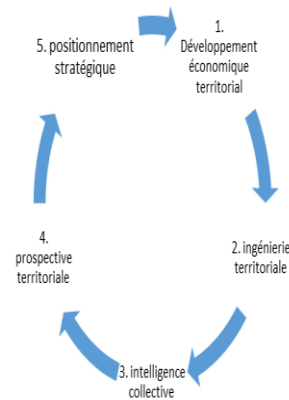


Figure 1: The IET and the dynamics of territorial development

Source: Author's own work

1-2 The tools, actions and actors of territorial economic intelligence

Building on the analysis by Jean-Jacques Gerardot, Eric Delbecque (2005) considers that territorial economic intelligence is based more specifically on the partnership between public authorities; local authorities and economic actors, in order to contribute collectively to the development of a concerted strategy for territorial economic development, by implementing tools for anticipation; territorial promotion; influence and awareness-raising, whilst ensuring economic security². According to Macron & Moinet (2007), this therefore involves eight actions:

- **Monitoring and vigilance:** the implementation of a forward-looking monitoring system to serve public and private stakeholders;
- **Diagnosis:** establishing an overview of the region by highlighting its characteristics; its resources; its strengths and weaknesses;
- **Coordination between public actors and public-private partnerships:** introducing regional public policies in coordination with state representatives within the region (local authorities) to ensure policies are appropriate to the reality and characteristics of the area that forms the basis of these policies, whilst fostering fruitful partnerships between public and private actors in the fields of research and training to create coordinated and innovative economic areas (competitiveness clusters; clusters, etc.);
- **Knowledge; Innovation and management of information flows:** establishing knowledge-sharing links between private sector stakeholders with the aim of ensuring regional roots and technological and organisational innovation;
- **Promotion; influence and competitiveness:** in order to serve the interests of the region, particularly its private and public stakeholders, a framework for influence and a policy must be established to promote the region's image and make it competitive and attractive;
- **Security and preservation:** securing support from the relevant public authorities to safeguard and preserve information and establish a secure economic policy that supports innovators.

The question to ask at this stage is: what role does regional economic intelligence play in promoting investment?

1-3 The importance of regional economic intelligence in promoting investment and strengthening the region's strategic positioning: the Moroccan experience

The promotion of investment through regional economic intelligence depends first and foremost on coordination between public actors and public-private partnerships, ensuring effective coordination between local authorities; central and decentralised administrations, as well as businesses. This coordination enables the implementation of major regional projects, by developing the telecommunications and transport infrastructure necessary for

the establishment of new investors and by upskilling the workforce to meet the needs of new professions in the labour market.

However, this proliferation of stakeholders involved in the economic development of their region calls into question and complicates the principle of adopting a common strategy; the structuring of these stakeholders and, consequently, of governance is necessary for the establishment of an efficient regional economic intelligence approach to achieve the objectives of regional stakeholders.

Thus, strengthening the region's strategic positioning and its attractiveness depends on three concepts in the field of regional economic intelligence³ : identifying the region's offering; meeting the expectations of the target population; and differentiation, which must be based on the selection of promising sectors and unifying projects. Admittedly, territorial economic intelligence helps to manage territorial dynamics and consequently to better define the territory's scope and adapt it to development strategies, based on the territory's strengths; however, each territory must target the types of businesses suited to its development and to the achievement of a win-win objective.

Morocco adopted a policy of decentralisation immediately upon gaining independence, a major historic undertaking aimed at accelerating economic development. The implementation of this project gained momentum in 2015 with the introduction of the organic laws governing local authorities. Indeed, whilst local authorities, particularly regional councils, had since 1992 been limited to responsibilities of a social and cultural nature, it is their new role in economic development that is now of interest.

Under the new organic law currently in force, local authorities, particularly the regional council, are now called upon to act as project incubators to ensure integrated regional economic development, by establishing the factors of attractiveness necessary to create a hub that inevitably drives investment. To this end, the regional decision-maker's mission is to empower all regional stakeholders (the population; civil society; the public and private sectors) and ensure their participation and contribution in the formulation of all regional development strategies, and more specifically the Regional Development Programme, by opting for participatory democracy and collective action. It is within this framework that regional economic intelligence is of paramount importance, as an approach that enables regional decision-makers to establish

effective coordination and cooperation links between all regional stakeholders.

It first emerged in Morocco in the 1990s, and this approach has its origins in the major project of advanced regionalisation, which aims to place citizens at the heart of the decision-making process at the institutional level and to boost investment by streamlining procedures within the territorial administration, particularly at the Regional Investment Centres, which have established a one-stop shop to speed up the decision-making process. Indeed, Morocco has made investment policy one of its priorities, as it enables regions to achieve a significant level of socio-economic development; this policy of opening up the Moroccan economy is reinforced by the creation of a secure business climate; the reforms undertaken in the Moroccan public administration and the new institutional organisation and legal instruments adopted since the drafting of the new constitution in 2011 and the organic laws of 2015, as well as regional development mechanisms (such as the Regional Development Plan), focused on leveraging regional strengths through a strategy of differentiation by promoting regional distinctiveness.

II. Methodology and development of research proposals

In line with our research question—the study of the impact of territorial economic intelligence on the achievement of the RDP’s objectives regarding investment promotion—we have adopted the following research proposals:

Proposal 1: the integration of a TEE approach into territorial development strategies leads to the development of the territory’s competitive advantage⁴.

Hypothesis 2: The adoption of a TEE approach enhances the region’s attractiveness in terms of investment⁵;

Proposition 3: IET promotes innovation within the territory;

Proposition 4: IET stimulates the promotion of local businesses within the territory.

The research question chosen for this study, together with the research propositions adopted, lead us to adopt the following analytical model by integrating IET tools and territorial development strategies:

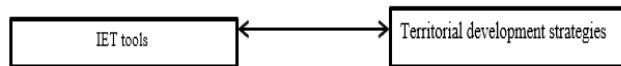


Figure 2: Analytical model

Source: Own work

To break down and analyse this model, we draw on the following variables:

Table 1: Variables of the analytical model

Outils d'IET	Stratégies de développement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attractivité des investissements • Avantage concurrentiel • Promotion de l'innovation • Promotion des entreprises locales 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Veille territoriale • Flux d'informations • Communication territoriale • Infrastructures territoriales

Source: Author's own work

3.1 Methodological approach:

In an attempt to analyse the impact of ETI mechanisms on the implementation of the RDP objectives for the Dakhla-Oued Eddahab region, in terms of territorial attractiveness in the context of investment, we adopt the following methodological approach:

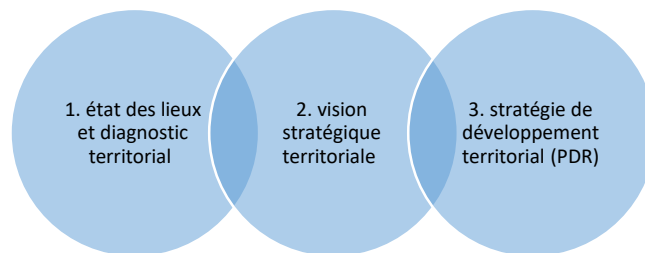


Figure 3: The methodological approach

Source: Author's own work

In the first phase of our methodological approach, our literature review draws on a range of sources, namely: the HCP census report; documentation and data from the Regional

Investment Centre; reports and studies by IRES and CESE; and the Report on the New Development Model for the Southern Provinces. As regards the second and third phases, our study is based on an analysis of the 2016–2022 Rural Development Plan (PDR).

3.2 The Dakhla-Oued Eddahab region, a study area with promising potential

Thanks to its economic potential, basic infrastructure and skilled and attractive human capital, the Dakhla-Oued Eddahab region possesses significant and distinctive resources and capabilities, which are likely to make it more dynamic and attractive and to lay the foundations for remarkable socio-economic development.

Table 2: The socio-economic potential of the Dakhla-Oued Eddahab region

The region's economy and basic infrastructure		Human capital development indicators	
Percentage of national GDP	1.0%	Population	142,955
Value of commercial fisheries as a percentage of national value	33%	Proportion of the young population	49%
Industrial zones	327 ha	Growth rate	3.7%
GDP per capita	64,000 dirhams	Poverty rate (the lowest in the country)	2.6%
Jobs in the industrial sector as a proportion of the regional workforce	4.7%	A-level pass rate	83.1%
		Illiteracy rate	22.3%
Landings of domestic PDMs	48%	The unemployment rate	10.1%

Source: Own analysis based on the HCP census and the PDR assessment

Whilst the impact of the IET approach on the achievement of the PDR's objectives regarding territorial attractiveness is theoretically partially confirmed, this remains to be demonstrated through the analysis and evaluation of the PDR and all the regional and national actions and initiatives implemented by the CRI.

3.3 National and regional initiatives to enhance the attractiveness of the Dakhla-Oued Eddahab region as an intercontinental hub

From the Royal Vision to the launch of the New Development Model for the Southern Provinces, via the provisions of the 2015 Organic Laws stipulating the implementation of feasible Regional Development Programmes aimed at establishing a new mode of territorial governance to improve the region's attractiveness and competitiveness and thereby achieve a significant level of growth, national and regional stakeholders have implemented a wide range of projects and major infrastructure works in the Southern Provinces, notably in the Dakhla Oued Eddahab region, with the aim of modernising its economy through the construction of new infrastructure.

3.3.1 The strategic vision of the New Development Model for the Southern Provinces

The NMDPS recommends the development of the Dakhla-Oued Eddahab region as a hub for socio-economic development, through:

- Infrastructure development and land-use planning: the Dakhla-Atlantic West Africa Free Zone project; the construction of the Tiznit-Laayoune-Dakhla expressway; the Dakhla Smart City project.
- Human capital development: the City of Trades and Skills; the construction of a range of healthcare facilities and support for social projects.

The aim is to position the region as a national, continental and international hub for several sectors of the future and to foster the creation of new value chains by extending the Tangier Med project to the south of the Kingdom and by establishing innovation centres to make the Dakhla-Oued Eddahab region 'the Silicon Valley of Africa', whilst developing air, road and maritime transport, through the development of renewable energy; research and development; and technological innovation ecosystems.

The strategic objectives of the NMDPS and this overall dynamic should contribute to strengthening and promoting the Dakhla-Oued Eddahab region as a promising investment destination, but these objectives can only be achieved through their implementation at the regional level, notably by the Regional Investment Centre (CRI) and the Regional Council.

3.3.2 Initiatives implemented by the Dakhla-Oued Eddahab CRI

The CRI is a key player in the process of enhancing the region's attractiveness and implementing a range of investment incentives. The Dakhla-Oued Eddahab CRI has launched a wide range of initiatives to help achieve the strategic objectives of the NMDPS by integrating and strengthening two units within its organisational structure:

- **The first unit: the “Investor’s Hub”,** focusing on: regional intelligence; assistance and support for investment projects; assistance with access to land; ensuring access to incentives (Under agreements signed with the State, any investment creating at least 150 permanent jobs or 50 to 149 jobs for investments of 50 million dirhams or more is eligible for: Total exemption from import duties and VAT on imported capital goods. Full exemption from VAT on locally purchased capital goods. Access to the investment support scheme); the streamlining and processing of authorisation applications and administrative procedures through the launch of the CRI-Invest.ma digital platform, which is now the sole digital channel for submitting and tracking investment applications and has enabled the complete digitisation and simplification of the investment process;
- **The second pillar is that of “economic and territorial development:** based on economic intelligence; market research and strategic data through the organisation of prospecting weekends to facilitate access to a curated sample of investors interested in the Dakhla Oued Eddahab Region by offering them tailored B2B programmes that enable them to meet all stakeholders, including public administrations, and also through the creation of a digital platform, DakhlaConnect. This platform facilitates B2B meetings between companies operating in the region, which are represented on an interactive map with a highly developed search function, the collection of statistics from other authorities, and the production of macroeconomic studies for the benefit of investors.

Thus, the CRI Dakhla Oued Eddahab ensures that investors have easy access to investment incentives:

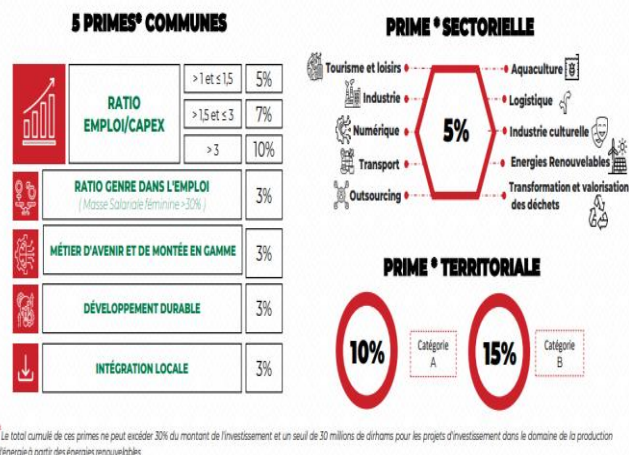


Figure 4: Investment incentives

Source: CRI Activity Report 2022

However, in accordance with Law 47-18, the CRI Dakhla-Oued Eddahab also supports micro-enterprises and SMEs through national programmes such as Intelaka and the organisation of training and support workshops:

FINANCING PRODUCT	2022	2021
Investment and operating Loans "Intelaka"	25	9,21
Investment and operating Loans "Intelak Al-Moustatmir Al Qarawi" for projects and companies in rural areas	1	0,094
Free Start-Up Loan	N.C	-
TOTAL	26	9,31

Figure 5: Trend in the number of SMEs and micro-enterprises benefiting from CRI programmes 2021–2022

Source: Dakhla-Oued Eddahab Regional Investment Centre Activity Report 2022

The results of these efforts by the CRI are remarkable, as shown in its annual activity report. According to this document, a significant increase has been recorded in business creation through the centre, with a 25% rise in 2021 compared to 2020, totalling 1,651 new businesses, 94% of which are locally owned; 71 businesses of African origin and 32 backed by European investors. This leads us to question the reorientation of efforts aimed at promoting investment attractiveness through the Regional Development Programme, in order to encourage Foreign Direct Investment.

3.3.4 The Dakhla-Oued Eddahab Regional Development Programme 2016–2021

Building on the core of the 2016–2021 Regional Development Programme (RDP), the strategic development vision for the Dakhla-Oued Eddahab region is structured around four operational priorities:

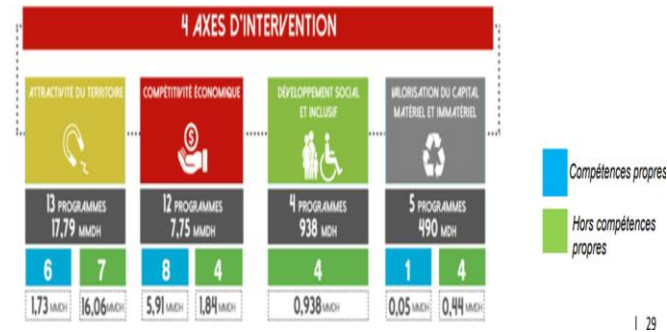


Figure 5: The Regional Council's areas of intervention under the 2016–2021 Regional Development Programme

Source: Dakhla-Oued Eddahab Regional Development Plan 2016–2021

As shown in the figure above, the Regional Council attaches great importance to enhancing the region's territorial attractiveness and economic competitiveness; this importance is reflected in the allocation of a substantial budget to these two priorities and the signing of a series of programme contracts and partnership agreements with state institutions and all relevant stakeholders (a key component of the territorial economic intelligence approach):

Table 2: Programme contracts aimed at enhancing the region's attractiveness

Axes stratégiques	Budget par axe en Mdhs	Part région en Mdhs	Projets	Budget en Mdhs	Part Région en MDhs
Attractivité et compétitivité du territoire	10 114,86	958,16	Nouveau Port Dakhla Atlantique	6000	-
			Nouveau Port Lamhiriz	150	-
			Connexion au réseau National d'Electricité	2372	450
			Mise à niveau urbaine et aménagement des VDP	1439,58	318,16
			Enseignement supérieur	97,5	-
			Formation professionnelle	39	10
			Soutien à l'emploi et entrepreneuriat régional	301,78	120
Travaux de routes et canaux dans la zone de projets de valorisation des petits pélagiques à Dakhla	60	60			

Source: Dakhla Oued-Eddahab RDP 2016–2021

Table 3: Partnership agreements aimed at enhancing regional attractiveness

Axes stratégiques	Budget par axe en Mdhs	Part région en Mdhs	Projets	Budget en Mdhs	Part Région en MDhs
Attractivité et compétitivité du territoire	29,6	29,6	Convention de partenariat et collaboration pour le financement des projets rentables dans le cadre du programme Transversal l'INDH-Province Aousserd	3	3
			Convention de partenariat entre la commission provinciale pour le D.H.P.O.E et RDEO pour le financement des projets rentables dans le cadre du programme Transversal INDH-RDOE-	7,8	7,8
			Convention de partenariat relative à l'appui de liaison aérienne Dakhla-Las Palmas	18,8	18,8

Source: Dakhla-Oued Eddahab RDP 2016–2021

However, the regional council has put in place a set of tools and identified the stakeholders who can contribute to the implementation of these programme contracts and partnership agreements, namely: regional development companies; Local Economy Support Funds; AREP and the Dakhla Bay Agency.

The identification of these stakeholders gives concrete form to the third action of "coordination between public actors and public-private partnerships" as a key step in establishing a territorial economic intelligence approach, as outlined by Macron & Moinet (2007) cited above, and validates the tool adopted as the analytical variable "communication and information flows" (see Table 1: Variables of the analytical model).

Thus, this programme has been divided into three phases: the first consists of drawing up an effective and efficient plan for the implementation of projects through the mobilisation of partners; securing funding; land acquisition and the completion of preliminary studies; the projects carried out in this phase primarily focused on the axis of territorial attractiveness, affirming its importance for the development of the region's economic competitiveness, which in turn constituted the second axis implemented within the framework of this phase.

4. Results and discussions: Evaluation of the 2016–2021 RDP

In terms of economic competitiveness, the 2016–2021 RDP for the Dakhla-Oued Eddahab region identified several avenues for development, notably encouraging investment in the region's growth sectors, introducing tax incentives for businesses; support for SMEs and micro-enterprises, the improvement of transport infrastructure and the strengthening of cooperation with relevant stakeholders in the region. The colossal efforts of all these stakeholders and the projects

nearing completion demonstrate that the region is a genuine investment hub and possesses the necessary assets to enhance its attractiveness; however, it is difficult to say whether this is directly linked to the RDP.

In terms of infrastructure improvements, the 2016–2021 Regional Development Plan (RDP) provides for investment in the road, water and electricity sectors, as well as the port and airport sectors. Some of these improvements have already been observed in certain sectors, notably: the Tiznit–Dakhla expressway and the seawater desalination project; the Dakhla Atlantic port; and Dakhla airport. As for the development of education, the Dakhla-Oued Eddahab region’s RDP also sets out strategies to improve access to education; investments have been made in the construction of new schools and universities, as well as the creation of a vocational and skills centre.

In conclusion, it is difficult to directly assess the effectiveness of the Dakhla-Oued Eddahab region’s Regional Development Plan (RDP) without more precise data and more in-depth studies; however, some progress can be noted in certain sectors identified by the RDP (infrastructure; academic and vocational training institutions, etc.). Nevertheless, there is still work to be done to achieve the strategic objectives by 2030.

Territorial Economic Intelligence, as an approach involving the collection and processing of strategic information to enhance a region’s attractiveness, can play a significant role in improving the region’s competitiveness.

Firstly, TEE can help identify the region’s strengths and weaknesses in terms of economic resources, market skills and factors of attractiveness. This analysis would help highlight key sectors for the region’s development; identify challenges and determine priorities for action to improve the region’s competitive positioning; and anticipate risks through the adoption of a strategic monitoring and intelligence system.

Furthermore, the IET can help strengthen links between local economic actors and public institutions by creating flows of strategic information to facilitate collaboration on joint projects; this collaboration is the key factor in creating innovative clusters aimed at improving the region’s competitiveness in global markets.

Finally, the IET can play a vital role in promoting the Dakhla-Oued Eddahab region to international investors and economic partners. The integration of a strategic monitoring system to anticipate and analyse global economic challenges, competitive trends and opportunities in the global market can

help the region develop targeted export strategies and attract foreign investors.

The IET can thus serve as a key driver of regional economic development for the Dakhla-Oued Eddahab region, enabling it to identify its strengths and weaknesses, strengthen its innovation clusters and enhance its appeal to international investors. In this context, a rethinking of the region’s strategic positioning is necessary, based on sectoral diversification and the development of cutting-edge industries, as well as the formulation of strategies incorporating an IET approach:

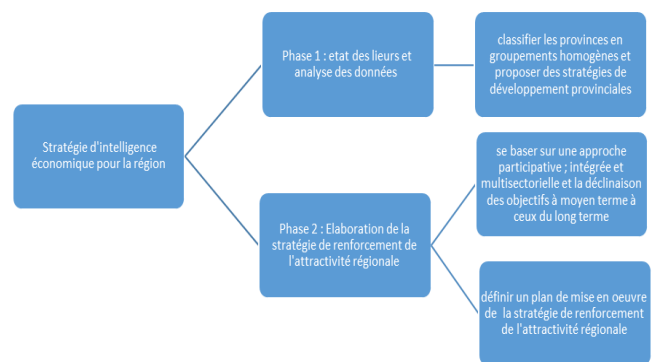


Figure 5: The phases of developing a territorial development strategy using an IET approach.

Source: Author’s own work

Conclusion

Territorial economic intelligence is a concept used to describe the capacity of a territory or region to collect, process, analyse and disseminate economic information relevant to improving the region’s competitiveness; the implementation of TET can have a significant impact on the effectiveness of a territorial attractiveness strategy; indeed, the implementation and increased effectiveness of a strategy to enhance territorial attractiveness are made more effective by TEE; the latter enables territorial decision-makers to gain a better understanding of the needs of existing investors and new opportunities; furthermore, TEE allows these same decision-makers to communicate effectively amongst themselves and with economic stakeholders regarding their market positioning. Similarly, TEE can help strengthen collaboration between different stakeholders, which can foster the development of innovation projects and specialised products or services in the region; and through a monitoring system, territorial economic intelligence can help identify and

anticipate the challenges of globalisation, particularly global competition.

However, according to Muselier & R., Bonneau, F. (2020), the practical implementation of TIE is difficult due to a lack of coordination among territorial stakeholders, as it can be affected by the size of the region; the presence of technological niches; and the geographical dispersion of territorial economic stakeholders.

Admittedly, the literature review highlights a wide variety of theoretical models for choosing a territorial promotion strategy, including, David Ricardo's model of comparative advantage, followed by the endogenous growth model based on the idea that a region's economic growth depends on its capacity to innovate, as well as the regional attractiveness model based on a region's ability to retain investors and economic actors, and finally, the territorial governance model, based on public-private partnerships to ensure the implementation of territorial economic development strategies through consultation with all stakeholders.

As a research perspective, we propose to analyse the set of indicators in greater depth and to assess the progress made in implementing the 2016–2021 Regional Development Plan (RDP) for the Dakhla Oued Eddahab region, whilst comparing its strategic priorities and the tools adopted for its implementation with the RDP newly adopted in 2023 by the Regional Council, whilst conducting semi-structured interviews with all stakeholders, based on a sample of businesses and investors, and proposing a concrete model for adopting a territorial economic intelligence approach to investment promotion.

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