

## Developing the Nature based Tourism in Minia Governorate: An Analysis of Tourism Potentials and Constraints

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### Abstract

Nature-based tourism is an important component of the tourism industry in the world and its features vary from one destination to another. However, nature-based tourism destinations are not appropriately developed due to structural and operational difficulties related to local planning. In Minia governorate, location, quantity and quality of natural resources and their required infrastructure for tourism development have not been well documented. So that, this paper identified the potentials and problems which face the governmental authorities in developing and promoting nature-based tourism. Moreover, the nature based tourism activities that are most suitable to be developed in Minia governorate have been determined. The collected data depended on in depth interviews depended on questionnaires with governmental authorities related to nature based tourism development in Minia governorate and the main branches of these authorities in Cairo. These interviews were undertaken from February to April 2020. Analysis of these interviews explained that Minia governorate has many natural attractions for developing nature-based tourism activities. On the other hand, it illustrated three main issues constraining the development of nature-based tourism. These obstacles are lacking of adequate financial resources, lacking of coordination and overlapping of competencies between the authorities responsible for the development of nature-based tourism and lacking of tourist awareness of the importance of nature-based tourism development.

### 1. Introduction

Nature-based tourism is travelling for recreation that depends on the natural resources either as the setting for activities or where the natural resources are the main component of the tourist activity (Zeitlin and Burr, 2011).

According to Hall and Boyd (2005); Zeitlin and Burr (2011); Wolter (2013); Albayrak (2016), there are many nature based forms of tourism such as adventure

tourism, wildlife tourism, safari tourism, agricultural tourism, marine tourism, nature-based tourism, ecotourism and protected areas tourism.

Nature-based tourism has economic importance as it provides the country with foreign currency and jobs. Moreover, it is considered as an economic activity for many developing countries and also for the higher income countries such as Australia. The country can develop a type of tourism which depends on its existing natural, cultural and heritage assets. Furthermore, the existing resources need development of new man-made tourism attractions to support each other (Tisdell, 2013).

The nature-based tourism based on providing more direct income and benefits to local communities while maintaining the natural assets. In other words, the main component of nature-based tourism is to conserve the resources. It cannot continue without preserving the natural resources (Yildirim et al., 2008).

Nature-based tourism includes environmental, social and economic aspects. It applies the sustainable tourism components. Therefore, it achieves a balance between using the natural resources without degrading them and the welfare of local communities (Marzuki et al., 2011).

Minia has many monumental sites as Tal El Amarna, Ashmounin, Touna El Gabal, Melloui Museum, Beni Hassan Region, Bahnsa Region, as well as many mosques, churches and monasteries (Minia governorate, 2019).

Moreover, it has unique natural attractions such as the Nile, areas of agricultural lands and the desert which represent the great part of the Minia's land (Minia Governorate and Ministry of State for Environmental Affairs, 2008). The current research aims at determining the potentials of developing nature-based tourism in Minia governorate and identifying the problems which face this development.

### **Research Problem**

Nature-based tourism supports the sustainable tourism as it can provide environmental, social and economic advantages for tourism destinations. Nature-based tourism has been suggested as a tool to solve the obstacles that developing countries face in protecting their natural heritage and at the same time in improving the economic standard of local people (Savage, 1993; Lee, 2009; Marzuki et al., 2011).

The historical and tourism significance of Minia is illustrated by the completion of the Egyptian-Pharaonic, Greek, Roman, Christian and Islamic eras. Minia has many monumental sites as well as many mosques, churches and monasteries. Moreover, it has several natural attractions (Office of Tourism Management, Minia governorate, 2019). These attractions are considered basic for developing nature-based tourism activities. On the other hand, most of the touristic trips to Minia are cultural trips. Thus, the current research tries to know the potentials of nature-based tourism in Minia governorate and problems which facing developing nature-based tourism activities in this governorate.

### **Research Objectives**

The research objectives are as follows:

1. Determining the potentials of the nature based tourism in Minia governorate.
2. Identifying the most nature based tourism activities that are suitable for Minia governorate.
3. Investigating the obstacles which face the development of nature based tourism in Minia governorate.
4. Putting a plan for developing nature-based tourism in Minia governorate.

### **Research Questions**

There are six questions for the research as follows:

1. What are the nature based tourism potentials in Minia governorate?
2. What are the most nature based tourism activities that are suitable for Minia governorate?
3. What are the advantages of developing nature based tourism in Minia governorate?
4. What are the disadvantages of developing nature based tourism in Minia governorate?
5. What are the constraints which face the development of nature based tourism in Minia governorate?
6. How can the nature based tourism be developed in Minia governorate?

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1 Nature- Based Tourism Definitions**

According to Hall and Boyd (2005), nature-based tourism is illustrated as any form of tourism activities that depends on the natural environment. It involves tourism in natural setting such as adventure tourism, tourism that relies on specific natural resource as safari, wildlife tourism, nature-based tourism and marine tourism. Finally, it includes tourism that is developed to conserve natural areas such as ecotourism and protected areas tourism.

Nature-based tourism is defined as tourism which directly relies on the use of natural assets in undisturbed natural areas including scenery, topography, water resources, flora, fauna, wildlife and protected areas (Lee, 2013). Moreover, nature based tourism is defined as outdoor tourism activities in natural areas. The Protected area is a place of unique natural, historical, or geological importance. It has been declared as a protected area to conserve its natural resources and properties (Wolter, 2013).

Albayrak (2016) added that Nature-based tourism is about travelling to destinations that are attractive for tourists in terms of outdoor activities such as bird watching, climbing, stargazing, hiking, camping, fishing, kayaking, and visiting parks. Since destination attributes and attractions in natural areas are often the reasons of visit.

Nature-based tourism is any sustainable tourism activity or experience that are related to the natural environment whether for relaxation, discovery or adventure (Marzuki et al., 2011). Nature-based tourism relies on the natural assets offered by the destination. Conserving these resources is important in the long run, and may be an essential component to develop nature-based tourism (Zeitlin and Burr, 2014). Thus, nature-based tourism includes three elements: education, recreation and adventure.

## **2.2 The Growth of Nature-Based Tourism**

United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and Conservation International have explained that most of tourism's growth is taking place in and around the world's surviving natural areas (The International Ecotourism Society and TIES, 2005; UNWTO, 2005). According to TIES (2005); UNWTO (2005), nature-based tourism has grown significantly with annual growth rates of 10 to 30%. This percentage is maximizing as nature-based tourism continues to develop fast.

According to Tisdell (2004) and Marzuki et al. (2011), Nature-based tourism and recreation activities have grown recently because incomes have risen globally, and individuals have become better educated. Many studies explain that tourists who have more education and higher incomes are more likely to participate in nature-based tourism than those with less education and lower incomes. Moreover, the diversification of tourism markets as people look for new experiences, adding variety to their experiences help to the growth of nature-based tourism. Furthermore, changing environmental values and ethical attitudes to natural environment.

With regards to the potential economic benefits derived from this high interest in nature-based tourism, the evidence reveals that a great proportion of capital expenditure flows to local people relative to other forms of tourism. The services which are related to nature-based tourism as eco-lodges, local products and the other services depend on local hiring and local products, and sometimes put much money into the local economy (TIES, 2005).

The Eco tourists are more concerned with and aware of environment than other tourists. They have high educational level and income. Experienced nature tourists travel more than others and are willing to pay more than general tourists. They go in a trip on a small number. Therefore, they have relatively little impacts on environment (UNESCO, 2008).

The nature-based tourism destinations and activities will gain more benefits if they implemented the ecotourism. These benefits are promotion and protection of local biodiversity, earning foreign currency, creating direct and indirect jobs, establishing small-scale local businesses, developing local eco-entrepreneurship and creating the possibility of positioning locally produced products within an international marketplace (Marzuki et al., 2011).

## **2.3 Nature-Based Forms of Tourism**

According to Hall and Boyd (2005); Zeitlin and Burr (2011); Wolter (2013); Albayrak (2016), nature forms of tourism are wildlife tourism, adventure tourism, safari tourism, agri-tourism, marine tourism, nature tourism, ecotourism, protected areas, mountaineering, snorkeling, fishing, skiing, hunting, biking, paddling or

rafting, bird watching, climbing, stargazing, hiking, camping, kayaking, and visiting parks.

Adventure tourism is an activity on which tourists travel to a certain destination to practice the adventure activities exist in this destination. There are two types of adventure tourism namely 'hard' and 'soft' adventures. Hard adventure requires some experience and skills related to certain activity. These activities could be caving, climbing and trekking. Soft adventure is not necessarily requiring previous experience such as bird watching, fishing, hiking, horseback riding, sailing and scuba diving (Swarbrooke, et al, 2012, p. 33).

Agri-tourism can be demonstrated as " The activities that occur when people link travel with the products, services, and experiences of agriculture (Maetzold, 2002, p. 84). Agri-tourism may provide new tools to use farm or agribusiness. Agri-tourism activities are (Blacka et al., 2009):

- Lodging and camping (bed and breakfast, camp sites, farm vacation: farm stays, feeding animals, picking fruit/vegetables, etc.).
- Special events and festivals (music festivals, holiday celebrations, harvest festivals, etc.).
- Recreation activities and events (fee fishing, skeet shooting, canoe livery, biking, horseback riding, fee hunting, bird watching, hiking, rock climbing/rappelling, etc.).

Wildlife tourism is defined as a type of nature based tourism which includes interaction and viewing wildlife (animals and plants) in their natural habitat (Lima and Green, 2017).

Desert tourism involves diversity of products, adventure activities, experiences and environments. Desert tours became a great attraction for tourists. The tourists can enjoy the nature, entertainment activities and meet local people. Therefore, the desert tourism activities as mentioned by Turtureanu (2005); United Nations Environment Programme (2006); Ibrahim (2009); Kenya Association of Tour Operators, KATO (2013) are represented in:

- Recreational activities: such as biking, camel riding, or take low-level aeroplane, helicopter or balloon. Safari could be performed through desert jeep or wildlife excursion. There are also trekking, camping and sometimes boat tours on lakes.
- One-to-three-day tours: that use local accommodation. They sometimes include bike, horse or camel rides or short hiking. These tours depend on vehicle travel with local guides.
- individual and motorized tours: travelers often use their own vehicles or rent a vehicle without a driver. These tourists are independent and are often experienced travelers.

- Four days to three weeks tours: are organized by specialist tour operators with local people to discover the desert. Travelers move around on foot, in vehicles or by riding horses or camels.

Marine tourism means traveling away from one's place of residence for recreational activities depend on marine environment such as diving, snorkeling, fishing, yacht cruising, whale watching, water sports and other activities (Orams,1999). Nature tourism include safe forms of exercise such as hiking, biking, sailing, and camping (Hall and Boyd, 2005).

The Ecotourism was defined as "responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the well-being of local people (Rome, 1999, p.4). There are four criteria for ecotourism (Wood, 2002):

- Travelling to enjoy the natural or cultural aspects of the site.
- Focusing on maintaining resources and taking care of determining the carrying capacity and ability of the natural resource to sustain itself.
- Participation of the local population.
- Education.

According to IUCN (2008), protected area is “A clearly defined geographical space, recognized, dedicated and managed, through legal or other effective means, to achieve the long-term conservation of nature with associated ecosystem services and cultural values”. There are many advantages of tourism in protected areas as follows (Šolar, 2011):

1. Protected areas help to achieve ethical responsibility to respect nature and provide opportunities to learn about the environment.
2. They provide significant economic benefits to the surrounding communities.
3. They offer the world a model of how people can live in harmony with the nature.
4. Staff, visitors and locals gain high awareness of the environment and protected areas.
5. Improving conservation of nature because tourism sector sees the clean and pristine environment as its basic attraction.

#### **2.4 The Importance of Nature-Based Tourism Development**

Tourism is the largest industry in the world, and nature-based tourism (NBT) is one of the fastest growing segments of the industry. The first objective of developing NBT is to increase understanding of nature through a direct interaction with the natural environment (Line and Costen, 2014). Activities in natural areas have emerged as a reaction against other mass tourism experiences. The development of nature-based tourism achieves economic benefits from the protection of natural assets. Moreover, it directly helping both local communities and governments in achieving sustainable environmental development. Furthermore, it provides revenue to preserve resources. Tourism may indeed contribute to the local economy, generating employment and

income. Nature-based tourists may visit a particular place with preferred natural attractions to achieve their desire in enjoying nature-based recreation experiences (Laarman and Gregersen, 1994; Lee, 2009; Marzuki et al., 2011). Nature-based tourism development can play a relevant role in the environmental education of tourists, providing unique experiences of direct interaction with nature and perceiving in 'first hand' the importance of Nature's sustainable development and management, as a way to protect and conserve the environment (Araujo, 2017).

## **2.5 General Principles and Requirements of Nature-Based Tourism Development**

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife developed the five-steps to develop nature based tourism. They illustrated that nature-based tourism development is a process which takes a long time and it may take several years to see results. These steps are (Zeitlin and Burr, 2011):

### **Step 1: Assess the Raw Material**

Nature-based tourism development project requires assessing the existence of the attractions and services necessary for successful development. First, preparation of the natural attractions in the area, the issues of private and public land ownership associated with these attractions, and the aspects of the managing lands on which these occur (e.g., allowable recreational activities, specific management goals). Moreover, the existence of services and infrastructure to facilitate tourism activities should be assessed (e.g., lodging, roads, restaurants). Finally, the benefits of developing nature -based tourism should be evaluated.

### **Step 2: Imaging the Finished Product**

It is important to formulate an image of the desired outcomes and benefits of nature-based tourism development. This assessment should be conduct with the tourism industry stakeholders to determine the benefits and negative effects to each of them.

### **Step 3: Draft a Plan**

In this step, all involved stakeholders should collaborate to write a tourism development plan and determine timetable, budget and funding resources. This should include specific objectives and means of reaching these objectives, and who will be responsible for achieving these goals.

### **Step 4: Implement – Making it Happen**

In this step, regular meetings between those involved are important to quickly address problems that don't go according to plan. Make a point of facilitating regular communication between all collaborators.

### **Step 5: Evaluate the Success**

This step involves evaluating the degree to which the nature-based tourism development has met the objectives which established earlier. By investigating the reasons for unmet objectives, the collaborators can adjust plans in order to accomplish the goals more effectively in the future. This five step process is best viewed as a continuous cycle, where Step 5 leads back into Step 1 in order to continuously adapt to changes conditions and objectives.

Regional development of nature-based tourism depends not only on the human-made capital (built infrastructure) and natural capital (natural resources and high value species), but also on human resources (professional skills, training and education) and social capital (Sawatsky, 2008). Table 1 shows the requirements for nature-based tourism development.

**Table 1**

Requirements for developing nature-based tourism

Analytical framework	Requirements for developing nature-based tourism
Physical and technological characteristics	1-Existence of assets and other natural resources 2-Infrastructure 3-Local and regional economic advantages
Institutional structure	1-Effective planning and management 2-Securing of property rights 3- Regulations
Characteristics of the user community	1-Social capital 2- Local people involved at most stages 3- Environmental awareness 4- Human resources, training and entrepreneurs 5- Partnerships

Source: Sawatsky (2008).

## 2.6 The Consequences of Nature-Based Tourism

Tourism activities which relies on the natural environment cause pressure on the attraction on which they depend (Cole, 2004 cited of Buckley, 2004). The increasing popularity of nature-based tourism in the marketplace may become a threat to the natural resource upon or around which such tourism is based. In turn, this may threaten the long term viability of the tourism operation itself (Renn and Walker, 2008). According to Powell (2005); Marzuki et al. (2011), nature-based tourism visitation may cause environmental, social and economic impacts. Environmental impacts include increased wildlife mortality; reduced wildlife reproduction; vegetation trampling and destruction; introduction of exotic species; contamination of air, soil, and water; habitat destruction; and alteration of wildlife behavior. Moreover, social impacts represented at degradation of traditional social structures, displacement and poverty. Economically, NBT may provide limited economic impact on local communities and limited economic benefits to local ecological tourism operations. Renn and Walker (2008) suggested that appropriate planning policies, processes and protections are critical to avert this potential disaster. The continuous environmental assessment of the areas being exposed to nature-based activities must be seriously considered.

## 2.7 Previous Studies Related to Developing Nature-Based Tourism

The paper of Marzuki et al., (2011) examined the problems which facing decision makers to develop and promote nature-based tourism in Northern Peninsular Malaysia. A study of nature-based tourism in the State of Perlis was conducted to explore approaches used by government agencies in the development process. They



conducted a series of semi-structured interviews with government officials. Analysis of these interviews demonstrated three main governmental limits hindering the efficient development of nature-based tourism activities within Perlis. These are identified as [1] the weaknesses of government policies and guidelines, [2] disorganized administrative systems and [3] lacking operational financial resources.

Chan (2016) paper discussed the potential of developing sustainable nature-based tourism in Hong Kong from the perspective of local community and tourist. Two demand-side and supply-side models depend on satisfaction with nature-based tourism development in Hong Kong were presented. These two models connect the nature-based tourism attributes, user perceptions of importance and performance levels of the attributes, and the assessment of the nature-based tourism condition. The performance scores are revealing the satisfaction of the locals and the tourists of developing nature-based tourism in Hong Kong. This study found that the institutional issues of policy support, government supervision, and the promotion of a quality tourism service are essential for an all-round sustainability of Hong Kong's nature-based tourism. Moreover, this study explained that Hong Kong has several natural attractions. So, one of the keys to success is to improve the quality of tourism services, the tourism authorities in Hong Kong is to increase the tourist awareness of the readily available nature-based resources. It is of importance to strike a balance between the tourist demand and the local perception in achieving sustainability of nature-based tourism.

## **2.8 Minia governorate**

Minia governorate has the basic attractions that support putting it on the touristic investment map which increases the significance of developing the tourism activities.

### **2.8.1 The geographic location and population**

It is far from Cairo 247km. The borders of Minia are Beni Sweef governorate is from the north, Giza governorate and New Valley governorate from the west, Red Sea governorate from the east and Assuit governorate from the south. The total area of Minia is 32279 km. Agricultural land represents 1840km and the rest part is desert areas. It is obvious that the desert areas represent great part of Minia. Minia's population is the second biggest governorate in Upper Egypt after Giza. Large percentage of its population is 82% from the rural areas and the rest of the governorate is the urban area. Minia has nine centers. They are Edwa, Maghagah, Bani Mazar, Matai, Samalout, Minia, Abu Kourkas, Malawy and Deer Mawas (Minia Governorate and Ministry of State for Environmental Affairs, 2008; The Environmental Management Unit, 2008).

### **2.8.2 The economic activities**

The main economic activity is the agriculture followed by the service sector and the industrial field. There are 103,000 fishermen work in the river Nile while there are 84 fisheries. Minia is famous for the bees' cells as it has about 210 thousand cells. Minia is connected with the other governorates through regional roads and national railway (Minia Governorate and Ministry of State for Environmental Affairs, 2008; The Environmental Management Unit, 2008).

### **2.8.3 Nature- based tourism attractions and activities**

Minia governorate has the beautiful Nile that is surrounded by wonderful green sites along its banks. The governorate enjoys a moderate dry climate most of the year, so the Nile tourism is one of the tourism's forms in which the tourist can enjoy water, mountains and green areas at the same time. There are 11 Nile islands within the governorate, but they are not yet utilized. Moreover, Minia's hotels, floats and Nile cruises resting standing along the Nile banks provide an opportunity for tourists to enjoy the sun, the climate and sun baths (The Environmental Management Unit, 2008; Farag and Al-alfy, 2013).

Moreover, the west and the east sides of Minia include a large part of desert areas which have various topographic, geographic and wildlife resources. The desert of Minia has many different natural resources such as the stones, marble, ground water and minerals. Such desert areas support the development of this governorate, especially the valleys with its natural assets of rocks, minerals and ground water (The Environmental Management Unit, 2008).

The governorate is famous with several kinds of wildlife along the Nile, and in the valley. Birds are the biggest animal category in Minia. There are more than 90 kinds of birds whether resident or migrant (The Environmental Management Unit, 2008).

### **2.8.4 Environmental projects in Minia governorate**

There are several environmental projects were established in Minia as some public parks. Moreover, streets were planted with trees. Kornish El- Nile was also developed to be an elegant feature in Minia governorate. Furthermore, several factories were established such as a factory for recycling wastes of agriculture and a factory for recycling garbage (The Environmental Management Unit, 2008). The main priorities of the environmental action plan in Minia governorate are (Minia Governorate and Ministry of State for Environmental Affairs, 2008):

1. Active saving and managing of the environmental issues as solid waste, sanitation, etc.
2. Managing the natural and cultural resources in sustainable manner.
3. Controlling and minimizing the pollution which effects on the natural environment.
4. Improving planning and allocating resources and increasing the participation in planning and executing.
5. Raising the environmental awareness and training.
6. Activating the laws and environmental regulations.
7. Improving poor areas.

## **3. Methodology**

For fulfilling the objectives of the research, both primary and secondary data were used. Primary data depended on qualitative approach which based on in-depth interviews. An interview is a main method of qualitative research in which the

researcher has data directly from the interviewees. In recent times, several ways are available to conduct an interview not only a meeting. It can be conducted through phone or e-mail or any forms which use the internet and telephone without personal attendance. In-depth interview is a tool of having more detailed information or understanding of a particular topic. In this type of interviews, the participants are encouraged to talk too much about the subject of the study (Srivastava and Thomson, 2009; Alshenqeeti, 2014; Showkat and Parveen, 2017). The current study aimed to determine the potentials of nature-based tourism and the most suitable nature-based tourism activities which can be developed in Minia governorate. Moreover, it tried to know the obstacles which facing the development of nature-based tourism in Minia governorate.

### **3.1 The Sample of the study**

The sample of the study was the governmental authorities which related to developing nature- based tourism in Minia governorate. These authorities are Office of Tourism Management, Tourism Promotion Authority and Environmental Affairs Agency in Minia governorate. Moreover, the main branches of Tourism Promotion Authority, Tourism Development Authority and Environmental Affairs Agency in Cairo are an important authority in the research to determine its role in developing nature- based tourism in Minia governorate.

### **3.2 Designing and Conducting an In-depth Interview**

In the current research, In-depth interviews were conducted with staff and managers in governmental authorities which related to developing nature-based tourism in Minia governorate. An In-depth interview include closed and open-ended questions. The purpose is to provide an atmosphere where the interviewer and interviewees can discuss the topic in detail (Srivastava and Thomson, 2009; Alshenqeeti, 2014). The interviews aimed at illustrating how the interviewed staff and managers think about the potentials of nature- based tourism in Minia governorate. Furthermore, they were asked to identify, from their point of view, the problems which facing the development of nature- based tourism in Minia governorate. Prior to the interview, it was tested through a pilot study. This pilot study was conducted with five staff in Office of Tourism Management and The Tourism Promotion Authority in Minia governorate. The pilot test showed no problems with wording or understanding.

An In-depth interview in this study includes seven closed questions about the natural attractions and services available to develop nature-based tourism activities in Minia Governorate. Moreover, the questions included advantages, disadvantages of developing nature-based tourism and procedures taken by governmental authorities to develop nature-based tourism. Furthermore, the interviewees were asked about nature-based tourism activities that are most suitable to be developed and the authorities that can participate in the development of nature-based tourism in Minia governorate. Finally, they were asked to identify the difficulties facing the development of nature-based tourism in Minia governorate. Two open ended questions were asked about existance of developing plan for nature- based tourism in Minia governorate and suggestions to develop this type of tourism. Twenty five interviews were conducted from February to April 2020.

### 3.3 Analyzing data of Interviews

The closed questions were analyzed by SPSS version 22 and qualitative data from interviews (open ended questions) were analyzed through the qualitative analysis. Qualitative analysis means analysing the questions to identify the main themes that emerge from the answers given by the respondents.

### 4. Findings and Discussion

After analyzing the interviews, the following results were extracted:

**Table 2**  
Reliability of research dimensions

N of items	Cronbach's Alpha
48	.849

Table two shows the internal reliability of the items which was measured by the Cronbach's alpha. The estimated value of Cronbach alpha for the items of the research was higher than 0.7 which indicated that the current study variables are reliable and there is internal consistency between them.

**Table 3**

The attractions and services available to develop nature-based tourism activities

Attractions and services	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Mean	St. Deviation	Attitude
	%	%	%	%	%			
The unique geographical site	45	45	10	-	-	4.35	.670	Strongly agree
The River Nile	40	45	15	-	-	4.25	.716	Strongly agree
Agricultural lands	25	65	10	-	-	4.15	.587	Agree
Desert areas	30	50	10	10	-	4.00	.917	Agree
The islands of the River Nile	5	80	10	5	-	3.85	.587	Agree
Parks	-	70	25	5	-	3.65	.587	Agree
Different accommodations	15	40	30	15	-	3.55	.944	Agree
Restaurants	10	75	10	5	-	3.90	.640	Agree
Roads and transportation network	10	60	20	10	-	3.70	.801	Agree
Water and sanitation network	-	50	25	25	-	3.25	.850	Neutral
Good network of communications	-	50	25	25	-	3.25	.850	Neutral
Different resources of electric power	-	30	65	5	-	3.25	.550	Neutral

Table 3 clarifies the attractions and services available to develop nature-based tourism in Minia. The unique geographical site ranked first with a mean score 4.35 followed by The River Nile with a mean score 4.25. Water and sanitation network, Good

network of communications and Different resources of electric power ranked last between the respondents with the same mean score of 3.25.

The interviewees added other attractions and services available to develop nature-based tourism in Minia. These items are such as Villages of a special nature that depend on environmental resources in traditional industries and the sunny weather throughout the year. The first question of the research was answered through table no. 3.

**Table 4**

The advantages of developing nature-based tourism in Minia governorate

Advantages	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Mean	St. Deviation	Attitude
	%	%	%	%	%			
Environmental education through interaction with nature	20	60	10	-	10	3.80	1.105	Agree
Preserving the natural resources for present and future generations	35	40	15	10	-	4.00	.973	Agree
Increasing the number of tourists visiting the governorate	40	50	10	-	-	4.30	.656	Strongly agree
Creating jobs and improving the standard of living of local people	30	55	5	10	-	4.05	.887	Agree
Increasing the national income of Minia Governorate	35	50	5	-	10	4.00	1.196	Agree

Table 4 shows that increasing the number of tourists visiting the governorate is the first advantages of developing nature-based tourism (mean =4.30). The respondents agreed that Environmental education through interaction with nature (mean = 3.80), preserving the natural resources for present and future generations (mean =4.00), creating jobs and improving the standard of living of local people (mean =4.05) and increasing the national income of Minia Governorate (mean =4.00) are advantages of developing nature-based tourism in Minia governorate.

The interviewees explained other advantages such as developing attractive environmental industries for tourists, paying attention to the governorate's infrastructure and increasing tourist awareness. Moreover, they added other advantages as putting Minia on the tourist map and benefiting from the existing natural attractions. Through this table, the question no. 3 of the research was answered.

**Table 5**

The disadvantages of developing nature-based tourism in Minia governorate

Disadvantages	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Mean	St. Deviation	Attitude
	%	%	%	%	%			
Degradation of some natural resources	-	35	20	20	25	2.65	1.225	Neutral
Changes in the lives of residents as a result of interaction with tourists	5	35	35	20	5	3.15	.988	Neutral

From the data collected in table 5, the respondents were neutrally in all items which related to the disadvantages of developing nature-based tourism in Minia governorate. The interviewees clarified other disadvantages such as tourists accumulate in certain areas, which affects their ecosystems and a relatively long time is needed to benefit from positive returns of developing nature-based tourism. Table 5 helped in answering question no. 4 of the research.

**Table 6**

Procedures taken by governmental agencies to develop nature-based tourism

procedures	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Mean	St. Deviation	Attitude
	%	%	%	%	%			
Preparing project ideas for developing nature-based tourism	-	70	30	-	-	3.70	.470	Agree
Providing areas for tourism investment in the governorate	10	70	20	-	-	3.90	.552	Agree
Promoting natural resources available in the governorate	25	50	25	-	-	4.00	.725	Agree
Raising the awareness of tourists and locals about the importance of nature-based tourism	15	50	20	5	10	3.55	1.145	Agree

As related to the findings it table 6, the respondents agreed that the governmental agencies promote natural resources available in the governorate (mean = 4.00), provide areas for tourism investment in the governorate (mean =3.90), prepare project ideas for developing nature-based tourism (mean = 3.70) and raise the awareness of tourists and locals about the importance of nature-based tourism (mean =3.55) to develop nature-based tourism.

**Table 7**

The most suitable nature-based tourism activities to be applied in Minia

Activities	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Mean	St. Deviation	Attitude
	%	%	%	%	%			
Adventure Tourism	-	60	5	20	15	3.10	1.209	Neutral
Rural tourism	30	55	5	-	10	3.95	1.145	Agree
Safari Tourism	45	50	5	-	-	4.40	.598	Strongly agree
Nile tourism	25	75	-	-	-	4.25	.444	Strongly agree
Fishing	-	30	15	35	20	3.05	1.050	Neutral
Mountaineering tourism	10	40	20	30	-	3.30	1.031	Neutral
Cycling	5	75	15	5	-	3.80	.615	Agree
Camping	20	60	20	-	-	4.00	.648	Agree
Visiting parks	10	70	15	5	-	3.85	.670	Agree
Nile sport	-	-	35	30	35	3.05	.686	Neutral

The following table 7 shows that means statistics of the most suitable nature-based tourism activities that can be applied in Minia governorate. The respondents were strongly agree that Safari Tourism (mean =4.40) and Nile tourism (mean =4.25) can be applied in Minia governorate. These activities were followed by camping (mean = 4.00), Rural tourism (mean =3.95), Visiting parks (mean =3.85) and cycling (mean =3.80). On the other hand, the respondents were neutrally in the potential of apply Mountaineering tourism (mean = 3.30), Adventure Tourism (mean =3.10), Fishing (mean =3.05) and Nile sport (mean =3.05) in Minia governorate.

The interviewees added that watching the migratory birds during the season of bird abandonment, especially in the western desert of the governorate can be applied in Minia governorate. The question no. 2 of the research was answered through table 7.

**Table 8**

Obstacles of developing nature-based tourism in Minia governorate

Activities	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Mean	St. Deviation	Attitude
	%	%	%	%	%			
Lack of adequate financial resources	30	60	10	-	-	4.20	.615	Strongly agree
Lack of trained employees	30	45	15	10	-	3.95	.944	Agree
Lack of adequate tourism services	10	45	20	25	-	3.40	.994	Agree
The small number of tourists coming to Minia	-	65	10	15	10	3.30	1.080	Neutral

continued

Lack of tourist awareness of the importance of nature-based tourism	30	50	10	10	-	4.00	.917	Agree
Deficiency of the tourism marketing of Minia governorate specially for natural attractions	5	70	15	10	-	3.70	.732	Agree
Complexity of the procedures for the development of nature-based tourism	15	55	25	5	-	3.80	.767	Agree
Lack of response by the concerned authorities to projects and ideas related to developing of nature-based tourism	25	40	20	5	10	3.65	1.225	Agree
Lack of coordination and overlap of competencies between the authorities responsible for the development of nature-based tourism	30	50	15	5	-	4.05	.825	Agree

Table 8 clarified that the Lack of adequate financial resources is the first obstacles of developing nature-based tourism in Minia governorate. It is followed by lack of coordination and overlap of competencies between the authorities responsible for the development of nature-based tourism ( mean =4.05), lack of tourist awareness of the importance of nature-based tourism (mean =4.00) , lack of trained employees ( mean =3.95), complexity of the procedures for the development of nature-based tourism (mean =3.80), deficiency of the tourism marketing of Minia governorate specially for natural attractions (mean =3.70), lack of response by the concerned authorities to projects and ideas related to developing of nature-based tourism (mean =3.65) and Lack of adequate tourism services in the current time (mean =3.40). On the other hand, the small number of tourists coming to Minia (mean =3.30) is the last obstacle of developing nature-based tourism. The interviewees showed other obstacle such as the absence of a comprehensive plan for developing infrastructure in the governorate. The question no. 5 of the research was answered through this table.



**Table 9**

The authorities which can contribute to the development of nature- based tourism

Authorities	Yes	No
	%	%
Tourism Administration in Minia Governorate	100	-
Tourism Promotion Authority in Minia governorate	80	20
Tourism companies in Minia	65	35
Local people in Minia governorate	55	45
Tourism Promotion Authority in Cairo	50	50
Environmental Affairs Agency	80	20
Tourism Development Authority	55	45

The table 9 shows the authorities which can contribute to the development of nature-based tourism. It is found that 100% of the respondents agreed that Tourism Administration in Minia Governorate can contribute to the development of nature-based tourism. It is followed by Tourism Promotion Authority in Minia governorate (80%), Environmental Affairs Agency (80%), Tourism companies in Minia (65%) and Local people in Minia governorate (55%).

The interviewees added other authorities which can help in developing of nature-based tourism. These authorities are such as Ministry of Investment and International Cooperation; Investors or civil associations that adopt the establishment of environmental hotels and development of handicraft industries from natural environment products.

### **The opinion of interviewees about the possibility of developing nature- based tourism in Minia Governorate**

The interviewees in Tourism Administration, Tourism Promotion Authority and in Environmental Affairs Agency in Minia Governorate clarified that environmental profile of Minia governorate includes a complete description of the tourist attractions with a focus on cultural tourism. On the other hand, it doesn't include nature-based tourism. Nile tourism stopped for several years but returned to work again between Cairo and Aswan passing through Minia. The idea of safari and camping activities in Minia governorate was suggested by officials of Tourism Administration in Minia Governorate to the concerned authorities in Cairo but there is no response. In addition, the officials of Environmental Affairs Agency in Minia Governorate explained that nature-based tourism is represented in the protected areas and Minia has no protected areas.

All interviewees in minia governorate implied that there is no comprehensive tourism development plan of Minia governorate but there is development plan for specific areas as Tona El- Gabal, Bahnasa, etc.

Other interviews were conducted with officials in Tourism Promotion Authority, Environmental Affairs Agency and in Tourism Development Authority in the main branches in Cairo. They showed that the goal of the tourism development strategy is to achieve continuous development that is based on environmental planning, and is directed to preserve the natural resources that make up the capital of tourism

development. They clarified that nature-based tourism not only the protected areas, but it includes many activities such as safari tourism, camping, Nile tourism, etc that can be developed in Minia. Moreover, they added that there is possibility to establish compound of environmental hotels in Minia governorate. They explained that developing nature-based tourism should be based on analyzing the global tourism market, supply, demand and opportunities of investment. Developing nature-based tourism in Minia required the selection of priority areas and sites of a special nature.

They agreed that traveling in natural areas supports the prosperity of nature-based tourism and leads to setting sustainable standards that enable future generations to enjoy the same wonderful natural attractions. The Nile and the desert in Minia make it a great place to explore nature.

### **The interviewees' suggestions for the development of nature-based tourism in Minia Governorate**

The interviewers suggest some recommendations as:

- Conducting seminars and conferences on nature-based tourism.
- Development of infrastructure in the governorate and providing more tourist services in Minia Governorate.
- Establishment of environmental hotels and organizing exhibitions of products based on nature.
- Developing tourism awareness of nature-based tourism and good marketing of tourism activity in the governorate and especially for nature-based tourism.
- Increasing tourism investments in the governorate, especially within the natural areas.
- Improving the social and economic return of local communities and preserving the customs and traditions that characterize these societies.
- Sustainable use of natural areas and ecosystems according to their carrying capacity.
- Integrating local people and the civil institutions in preparing a plan for developing nature- based tourism in the governorate.
- Benefiting from the experiences of developed countries in this field.
- Taking into consideration the scientific research presented by the concerned authorities for the development of nature-based tourism.
- Providing sufficient financial resources and facilitating the necessary procedures for developing nature-based tourism.
- Establishing environmental hotels depend on local people in everything related to these hotels (building, operation, etc.).

**Table 10**

SWOT Analysis for Minia governorate

<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Minia's proximity to Cairo and other governorates.</li> <li>2. The diversity of the attractions of nature-based tourism.</li> <li>3. The presence of many agricultural areas.</li> <li>4. The climate of Minia in general is moderate most months of the year.</li> <li>5. The desert represents a large part of Minia Governorate, and it contains various natural attractions.</li> <li>6. The presence of the Nile islands, which are considered protected areas.</li> <li>7. Nile cruises from Cairo to Aswan passing through Minia.</li> <li>8. The presence of virgin areas not polluted.</li> <li>9. Development of the Nile Corniche.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Lack of some infrastructure services.</li> <li>2. Lack of a clear tourism development plan for nature-based tourism.</li> <li>3. The limited number of tourists coming to Minia in the current time.</li> <li>4. Lack of financial resources related to investment for developing nature-based tourism.</li> <li>5. Insufficient tourist services and facilities in the governorate for the growth of tourism movement.</li> <li>6. Lack of trained employees.</li> <li>7. Lack of awareness of employees of the importance of nature-based tourism to the governorate.</li> <li>8. Minia governorate is lacking facilities for walking in the countryside, riding horses and bicycles.</li> <li>9. There are problems related to cleanliness.</li> <li>10. The presence of some forms of pollution in the governorate.</li> </ol>
<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Threats</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The possibility of increasing the number of tourists to Minia in the coming years.</li> <li>2. Developing a promotional plan for the nature-based tourism attractions by the concerned authorities.</li> <li>3. The possibility of exploiting conferences and national festivals to promote nature-based tourism.</li> <li>4. Approving the responsible authorities for some ideas that related to nature-based tourism development.</li> <li>5. Holding exhibitions to encourage displaying of local products such as handicrafts, food products, textiles, and other products that depend on the natural environment.</li> <li>6. The possibility of supporting the private associations and sector for developing nature-based tourism.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1- Seasonality of tourism activity in the governorate.</li> <li>2- There is a competition with other tourism destination in the activities of nature-based tourism.</li> </ol>

**Table 11**

The suggested plan for developing nature-based tourism in Minia governorate

<b>Executive steps</b>	<b>The responsible authority</b>	<b>How to implement</b>
Developing the infrastructure elements in the places where nature-based tourism will be created	Ministry of Electricity Ministry of Transportation Ministry of Water Resources and Irrigation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Providing sanitation and potable water networks.</li> <li>– Paving roads to reach the nature-based tourism areas easily.</li> <li>– Provide the required budgets.</li> </ul>
Developing means of transportation and roads that leading to nature-based tourism areas	Ministry of Transportation Ministry of Tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Laying and paving roads and bridges.</li> <li>– Providing tourist transport companies in Minia governorate</li> </ul>
Accommodations development	Ministries of Investment and Tourism	Encouraging investors to establish luxury and environmental hotels.
Introducing the possibilities of nature-based tourism in Minia in various countries of the world to enhance global awareness of these ingredients	Ministry of Tourism Egyptian Tourism Promotion Authority and its offices abroad	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Participating in tourism exhibitions and magazines to announce nature-based tourism sites in Minia.</li> <li>– Inviting decision-makers and tour operators to know about the potentials of Minia Governorate in nature-based tourism.</li> </ul>
Spreading awareness of the importance of nature-based tourism in Minia	Ministry of Tourism Egyptian Tourism Promotion Authority and its offices abroad Ministry of Education Ministry of Higher Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Developing the skills of the human resources especially in places where the nature-based tourism pattern is held.</li> <li>– Encouraging the host community to keep places and streets clean.</li> <li>– Carrying out cleaning campaigns in the streets and making boards about the natural areas.</li> <li>– Raising the awareness of the local people and students about the importance of nature-based tourism through seminars and workshops</li> </ul>
Create a promotion plan for the nature-based tourism	Ministry of Tourism Egyptian Tourism Promotion Authority and its offices abroad	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Studying the targeted markets to know their needs and requirements.</li> <li>– Creating a competitive advantage by mixing the natural and human capabilities and providing information about the competing markets to find new sources for excellence.</li> <li>– Media promotion through newspapers and magazines to spread the culture of nature-based tourism.</li> <li>– Online promotion.</li> <li>– Holding competitions and festivals that promote nature-based tourism in Minia</li> </ul>

Note: This plan was suggested by the researchers. The suggestions of officials in the interviews was taken into consideration in this plan. The question no. 6 of the research was answered through table 11.

## **5. Conclusion**

The research illustrated that there are many attractions and services available to develop nature-based tourism in Minia governorate. Moreover, many advantages can be achieved from developing this type of tourism are such as increasing the number of tourists and preserving the natural resources. On the other hand, disadvantages can produce form tourists accumulation in certain areas, which affects their ecosystems and developing nature-based tourism needs a relatively long time to benefit from its positive returns. The governmental authorities can take many procedures to develop nature-based tourism as promoting natural resources available in the governorate, providing areas for tourism investment and preparing project ideas for developing nature-based tourism. The most suitable nature-based tourism activities that can be applied in Minia governorate are safari tourism, Nile tourism, camping, rural tourism, watching the migratory birds during the season of bird abandonment.

Lacking adequate financial resources, lacking coordination and overlap of competencies between the authorities responsible for the development of nature-based tourism, lacking of tourist awareness of the importance of nature-based tourism are the most obstacles of developing nature-based tourism in Minia governorate. There is no development plan for nature-based tourism in Minia and the environmental profile of Minia governorate doesn't include description of nature-based tourism or natural attractions. The development of nature-based in Minia should be based on analyzing the global tourism market, supply, demand and opportunities of investment. Developing nature-based tourism in Minia required the selection of priority areas and sites of a special nature. The points of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of Minia governorate to develop nature-based tourism were determined. Finally, a plan for developing nature-based tourism in Minia governorate was suggested.

## **6. Recommendations and the future research**

The study concluded the most important recommendations that must be followed to develop nature-based tourism in Minia Governorate as follows:

### **First: At the level of the governmental sector**

1. Working on setting policies related to nature-based tourism, which consist of a set of laws and legislations
2. Awareness for all segments of society through all print, audio and visual media.
3. Working to attract and encourage investments in the field of nature-based tourism, by providing incentives and facilities to Egyptian and Foreign investors.
4. Attention to the issue of treating and recycling wastes.
5. The necessity of introducing the concept of nature-based tourism within the academic subjects in the various academic stages and showing its environmental, cultural, social and economic impacts.

6. Paying attention to develop and provide the infrastructure, including roads, electricity, water and sanitation on which the tourism activities depended on.
7. Setting a comprehensive plan for tourism development in Minia Governorate. This plan required:
  - A. The participation of the various stakeholders in setting the tourism development plan such as tourism companies, the local community, tourists, governmental authorities related to tourism, etc
  - B. Setting criteria for assessing the environmental impact of the nature-based tourism activities that are practiced when preparing the plan.
  - C. The necessity of having a trained work team and academics to implement the plan.
  - D. There must be a marketing strategy for nature-based tourism in this plan.

### **Second: At the level of the private sector**

1. Extending the establishments that respond to environmental tourism principles such as eco-hotels and environment-friendly resorts.
2. The necessity of diversifying the tourism product and making use of the available natural ingredients such as mountains, Nile River, agricultural areas, and deserts. These attractions can be used to carry out nature based activities as mountain climbing, water sports, rural tourism, Nile tourism, safaris, etc.

The future researches can investigate the development of nature-based tourism in another governorate in Egypt. On the other hand, the other researches can evaluate the possibility of developing other types of tourism in any governorate which have the ingredients for specific type of tourism.

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## تنمية السياحة القائمة على الطبيعة في محافظة المنيا: تحليل الإمكانيات والمعوقات السياحية

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### المفص

تعد السياحة القائمة على الطبيعة جزءاً مهماً من صناعة السياحة العالمية وتختلف مقوماتها من مقصد سياحي لآخر، ومع ذلك لم يتم تطوير السياحة القائمة على الطبيعة في المقاصد السياحية بشكل مناسب بسبب العديد من القيود الإدارية والتشغيلية في عمليات التخطيط المحلية في محافظة المنيا، لم يتم توثيق موقع وكمية ونوعية الموارد الطبيعية والبنية التحتية اللازمة لتنمية السياحة بشكل جيد. لذلك حدد هذا البحث الإمكانيات والمشاكل التي تواجه الجهات الحكومية المتعلقة بالسياحة أثناء تطوير وتنشيط السياحة القائمة على الطبيعة. علاوة على ذلك تم تحديد الأنشطة السياحية القائمة على الطبيعة والأكثر ملاءمة لتنميتها في محافظة المنيا. اعتمدت البيانات التي تم جمعها على مقابلات شخصية متعمقة معتمدة على الاستبيانات مع الجهات الحكومية ذات الصلة بتطوير السياحة القائمة على الطبيعة في محافظة المنيا والفروع الرئيسية لهذه الجهات الحكومية في القاهرة. أجريت هذه المقابلات في الفترة من فبراير إلى أبريل 2020. وأوضح تحليل هذه المقابلات أن محافظة المنيا بها العديد من عوامل الجذب الطبيعية اللازمة لتنمية أنشطة سياحية قائمة على الطبيعة. من ناحية أخرى أوضح ثلاث قضايا رئيسية تعوق تنمية السياحة القائمة على الطبيعة، وهذه المعوقات هي نقص الموارد المالية الكافية، وعدم التنسيق وتداخل الاختصاصات بين الجهات المسؤولة عن تنمية السياحة القائمة على الطبيعة، ونقص الوعي السياحي بأهمية تنمية السياحة القائمة على الطبيعة.

### معلومات المقالة

#### الكلمات المفتاحية

السياحة القائمة على الطبيعة؛ الإمكانيات؛ المعوقات؛ الهيئات الحكومية؛ محافظة المنيا.

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