

البحث الثالث - فردى  
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**Potentiality Assessment for Ecotourism in Rural Communities: A Case of Fayoum Governorate, Egypt**

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**Abstract**

Ecotourism is seen as one of the aspects of sustainable economic growth of rural communities. Although the rich natural, archeological, and cultural heritage of the Fayoum, ecotourism development faces a growing number of challenges; including poverty, depopulation, environmental changes, and lack of vision among official stakeholders. This study aims to assess the existing ecotourism development potentials in selected villages within the Fayoum governorate (Tunis, Nazla, and Abu Ghandir) through introducing the hurdles facing this development. This will evaluate the current situation of the three rural villages, the interest of specific stakeholders, the potential of each village as an ecotourism destination and the requirements to achieve the expected results. Situational analysis of rural communities was used to gather and analyze primary data, In-depth semi-structured Interviews with official stakeholders, group discussions with local communities and In-depth structured Interviews with foreign expatriates to collect information on their impressions of the villages visited. The study revealed major issues should be recovered from the viewpoints of local communities, official stakeholders, and expatriates and from the situational analysis of the villages.

**Keywords:** Ecotourism, Fayoum governorate, Local community.