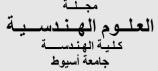


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The Role of Foreign Property Laws in Stimulating Sustainable Real Estate Development in Dahab, South Sinai governate, Egypt

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Keywords

Foreign property ownership laws, use rights, real estate investment, Dahab, Egypt, legal framework, regulatory environment, investor confidence, economic growth, urban development.

Abstract: This study investigates the impact of foreign property ownership laws and use rights on real estate investment in Dahab, Egypt—a prominent tourist hub on the Sinai Peninsula. The research addresses a core problem: the extent to which Egypt's legal framework supports or hinders foreign investment in Dahab's real estate sector. Adopting a comparative and policy-oriented approach, the study aims to identify key factors influencing investment, including regulatory clarity, legal transparency, investor protection, and policy coherence. By combining rigorous scientific methods with practical insights, this research provides a comprehensive roadmap for Dahab's sustainable development. The findings highlight the city's potential to become a global hub for tourism and real estate investment while preserving its unique cultural and environmental heritage. Implementing the Dahab Strategic Development Plan 2050—supported by a transparent legal framework and targeted investment strategies—will be instrumental in achieving this vision. This study not only contributes to the academic understanding of real estate investment dynamics but also offers actionable recommendations for policymakers, investors, and urban planners to ensure Dahab's long-term viability and prosperity. Developed in collaboration with the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics, the research offers a detailed demographic and spatial overview of Dahab's resident population and built environment. Key findings reveal that the majority of foreign residents in Dahab are connected to the local community through marriage, accounting for approximately 90% of the non-Egyptian population. Russian, British, and American nationals represent the largest foreign groups. While cultural diversity enhances the city's global appeal, it also presents economic and planning challenges, such as rising costs and growing pressure on services. The real estate sector shows signs of both growth and surplus: 4,605 buildings were surveyed, with a strong focus on residential use and a notable number of vacant or under-construction properties. The study emphasizes that while Dahab's real estate market presents both opportunities and risks, attracting and sustaining foreign investment requires a transparent legal framework aligned with Egypt's broader development goals.

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1. Introduction:

Foreign investments drive economic and social progress by facilitating capital inflows and stimulating growth. Consequently, many countries, including those in North Africa and the Gulf region, have implemented legal frameworks to attract foreign investment, acknowledging its potential to drive economic growth and development. Despite supportive legal frameworks from local governments, foreign investment in these regions still faces significant challenges. [1] The successful implementation of Egypt's Vision 2030 and the regional investment strategy hinges on attracting and securing foreign investment. [2] A robust legal framework is essential to achieving these objectives, because it directly influences investor confidence and decision-making. By identifying and addressing the primary obstacles to foreign investment, policymakers can create a more attractive investment climate and contribute to the region's economic growth and development. This research aims to assess the effectiveness of the legal framework in Dahab City in creating a conducive environment for foreign investment while identifying the primary obstacles hindering such investment. Dahab, a strategic location on the Sinai Peninsula, seeks to attract foreign investment to boost its real estate sector. [3]

Dahab is a coastal town on the Sinai Peninsula that has become a popular destination for both tourists and expatriates. Its unique blend of natural beauty, diverse culture, and a relaxed atmosphere has contributed to its growing popularity. In recent years, Dahab has experienced a surge in domestic tourism, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic, as individuals have sought refuge from urban environments and embraced a more tranquil lifestyle. The town's strategic location, coupled with its accessibility to various outdoor activities, such as diving, snorkelling, skateboarding, and hiking, has attracted a diverse community of both local and international residents. The availability of reliable internet connectivity has further enhanced Dahab's appeal to remote workers and digital nomads. [4] Many visitors to Dahab have been so captivated by its charm that they have chosen to extend their stays, purchase property, marry locals, and become long-term residents.[3]

Foreign property laws and utilization rights are pivotal in shaping the investment landscape in the city.[1] Dahab's transformation from a fishing village to a tourist destination has spurred government initiatives for economic diversification. Real estate development, especially in Dahab, is central to accommodating tourism growth and attracting foreign residents. [3]

Foreign investment in Dahab's real estate market is essential for sustainable development. Clear and secure property rights are crucial to investor confidence and risk mitigation. This research investigates the impact of legal frameworks on foreign investment decisions. By analysing existing literature, legal frameworks, and empirical data, this study aims to identify key factors influencing investment. Regulatory clarity, investor protection, and policy coherence are essential to attract foreign capital. This research provides insights and recommendations for optimizing the legal and regulatory environment and unlocking Dahab's full potential.

2. Literature review

2.1 The Role of Legal Frameworks in Attracting Foreign Investment

This research analyzes the legal framework for foreign investment in Dahab, Egypt. By adopting a comparative and policy-oriented approach, it seeks to understand the role of legal systems in stimulating foreign investment while identifying key challenges faced by foreign investors. Global integration and economic development are inextricably linked to attracting foreign investment. To foster a favorable investment climate, establishing a robust legal framework to safeguard

investment processes is imperative. However, recent global events such as the COVID-19 pandemic and the Gaza conflict have significantly impacted global FDI flows in the Arabian region. [6] As highlighted by Shahad Al-Qahtani and Mohamad Albakjaji in 2023 [1], FDI flows declined by \$1.5 trillion in 2019, significantly affecting emerging economies and their critical investment projects. [1]

2.2 Strong Property Rights Attract Foreign Investment

Foreign direct investment (FDI) has emerged as a crucial catalyst for economic growth and development worldwide. Governments increasingly recognize the significance of FDI in attracting capital, technology, and managerial expertise. A robust legal framework is widely considered a key determinant of FDI inflows because it can either deter or attract potential investors. This paper delves into the essential components of an ideal legal framework for FDI and examines the extent to which a state's legal efficiency influences its attractiveness as an investment destination [1]. Countries often seek assistance from development agencies to improve their legal systems. The ideal legal framework should be efficient and predictable, ensuring low transaction costs and minimizing uncertainty [5]. The key elements of an adequate legal framework include the following:

- Clarity and Stability: Laws should be clear, consistent, and stable to reduce the risk of arbitrary interpretation and enforcement.
- **Efficiency**: A streamlined legal system with efficient procedures and timely resolution of disputes can significantly enhance the investment climate.
- **Predictability**: Investors need confidence that legal rules will be consistently and fairly applied without undue interference from government officials.
- **Transparency**: A transparent legal system with clear rules and regulations can reduce corruption and promote good governance.
- **Independence of the Judiciary**: An independent judiciary is essential for ensuring impartial justice administration and protecting investor rights.

By implementing these principles, countries can create a more attractive investment climate and encourage FDI inflows. [1] & [6]

2.3 Geopolitical Influences on Foreign Property Rights: A Comparative Analysis

The four jurisdictions under consideration impose varying restrictions on foreign real estate ownership. Although general restrictions apply to all foreign nationals, Iran's regulations are particularly stringent, tying property rights to political relations and religious affiliation. Russia, in response to geopolitical tensions, has imposed additional limitations on foreign ownership, especially for individuals and entities from "unfriendly nations." All four jurisdictions prohibit foreign ownership of agricultural land. Iran extends this prohibition to water resources, whereas China maintains collective ownership of farmland. In Russia, foreign entities are limited to leasehold rights to agricultural land, and private forest ownership is not permitted. North Korea's unique economic system allows foreign investors to lease land for up to 50 years. The four jurisdictions also impose diverse restrictions on foreign real estate ownership beyond agricultural land. For instance, Iran limits foreign investment in real estate to residential and business needs, subject to government approval based on political considerations. China, while allowing foreign investment in urban land, grants only rights for specific periods. Security concerns have led Iran and Russia to impose additional restrictions on foreign real estate transactions, particularly for individuals and entities from certain countries. In North Korea, the state owns all land, and individual ownership is prohibited. Foreigners may only lease land for specific purposes and durations. Although China and Russia generally treat foreign real estate investments similarly to domestic ones, recent geopolitical events have led to additional limitations on foreign ownership in Russia. [7] The following comparative analysis highlights how different legal systems approach foreign property rights by imposing various restrictions on ownership and land use. Table 1 outlines the key similarities and differences in these policies across Iran, Russia, China, and North Korea.

Table 1: Comparative Restrictions on Foreign Real Estate Ownership in Selected Jurisdictions. [8]

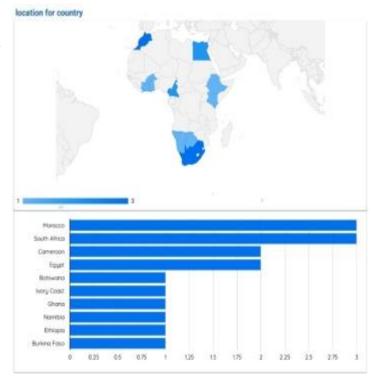
Country	Foreign	Agricultural	Leasehold	Geopolitical/Political	Other		
	Ownership of	Land	Duration	Restrictions	Notable Restrictions		
	Real Estate				Restrictions		
Iran	Restricted; government approval required; only for residential/business purposes	Completely prohibited, including water resources	Short-term leases only	Based on political relations and religious affiliation	Foreign investment decisions subject to national security		
Russia	Allowed with restrictions, especially for "unfriendly nations"	Only leasehold allowed; forest ownership not permitted	Limited-term leases	Additional limits for individuals/entities from certain countries	Urban real estate is treated similarly to domestic ownership with exceptions		
China	Permitted for specific uses; urban land rights only	Farmland collectively owned (no private ownership)	Fixed-period land use rights	General FDI screening process	State retains ownership; no private land ownership		
North Korea	Only lease rights allowed; no ownership	Not permitted	Up to 50 years	Highly centralized control			

Arising star in real estate investment. Africa's burgeoning population, rapid urbanization, and increasing economic growth present significant opportunities for real estate investment. While Africa's youthful population may not immediately suggest a traditional retirement market, the continent's long-term potential for real estate investment remains significant. Africa's Several key factors drive Africa's burgeoning real estate market. Rapid urbanization fuels demand for housing and commercial space, while strong economic growth attracts foreign investment. The continent's abundant natural resources provide further impetus for development. Supportive government policies and a growing middle class with increasing disposable income also contribute to the sector's growth. [9] While Africa presents significant opportunities for real estate investment, several challenges remain. Political instability, inadequate infrastructure, land tenure, and bureaucratic hurdles can hinder development. Despite these challenges, careful consideration of specific countries with stable political climates, strong infrastructure, and supportive legal frameworks can yield significant returns. Although Africa may not be the traditional retirement destination, countries such as South Africa and Mauritius offer attractive options for those seeking a retirement haven. For those considering retirement in Africa, countries such as South Africa, Mauritius, and Morocco offer promising retirement options. South Africa boasts a developed infrastructure, world-class healthcare, and a diverse culture. Mauritius is known for its pristine beaches, luxurious resorts, and stable economy. Morocco, with its blend of modern amenities and traditional identity, offers a unique retirement experience in cities like Marrakech and Agadir. [10] Several factors contribute to the appeal for foreign property ownership in Africa. The relatively low cost of living and property prices in many African countries make them attractive investment destinations. Additionally, some African countries have demonstrated political and economic stability, further enhancing their appeal to foreign buyers. <u>Cameroon, South Africa, Burkina Faso, Ivory Coast, Ethiopia, and Morocco</u> are six African countries where foreign ownership of property is permitted, as illustrated in the table. However, table no.2 also reveals restrictions on foreign land ownership in some of these countries, highlighting the need for careful consideration of specific legal frameworks and their implications for foreign investors. [11]

Table 2: Foreign Investment Regulations in selected Ranked African Countries. [8]

	South Africa	Burkina Faso	Ivory Coast	Ethiopia	Cameroon	Morocco	Botswana	Namibia	Egypt	Ghana	Kenya
		*		(<u>*)</u>	*	*		*	100	*	
Which African countries allow foreigners to purchase property?	~	~	~	>	~	~	×	×	~	×	×
Which African countries allow foreigners to purchase land?	~	×	×	×	>	~	~	~	×	>	~
Which African countries have the best foreign investment rankings?	~	×	×	×	×	~	×	×	~	×	×

The accompanying map visually depicts the geographic distribution of these countries, revealing a concentration of investment opportunities in Southern and Northern Africa, underscoring the diverse nature and regional variations within the African real estate market. This spatial distribution highlights the importance of considering regional factors conducting in-depth country-level analyses when evaluating real estate opportunities investment in Understanding the key components of real estate investment requires an examination of the various property types available, commercial. including residential, and land holdings, industrial, offering unique investment opportunities and associated risks.



Map no. 1: Mapping Investment Opportunities in Africa. [8]

2.4 Strategic Real Estate Investment: Legal Considerations and the Impact of Foreign Direct Investment

Real estate investments encompass a diverse range of property types, each offering unique characteristics and investment potential. Residential properties, such as single-family homes, multifamily dwellings, condominiums, and townhouses, generate income through rental streams. Commercial properties, including office buildings, retail spaces and warehouses, often yield higher rental returns when leasing to businesses. Industrial properties such as factories, logistics centers, and research facilities cater to manufacturing and distribution needs. In addition, undeveloped land presents opportunities for future development, sale, or agricultural use. Real estate investments integrate economic theory, financial principles, and market analysis to optimize asset allocation and achieve financial returns. A scientific approach to real estate investment involves systematic market trend analysis, comprehensive risk assessment, and strategic planning to maximize returns while mitigating risks. Table NO.3 provides an overview of essential considerations, including market analysis, valuation methods, risk assessment, and a range of investment strategies.

Table NO.3: Key Concepts in Real Estate Investment, Source: [8] conducted from Gallagher & Mohan, 2022, A comprehensive guide to key metrics in real estate investment evaluation, https://gallaghermohan.com/blogs/a-comprehensive-guide-to-key-metrics-in-real-estate-investment-evaluation, last access, May 2025

Market Analysis	Understanding economic indicators (GDP growth, employment rates, inflation), demographics (population growth, migration patterns), and supply factors (construction activity, land availability) to assess demand and supply dynamics.
Valuation Methods	Utilizing approaches such as Comparative Market Analysis (CMA), the Income Approach (based on rental income), and the Cost Approach (replacement cost minus depreciation) to determine property value.
Risk Assessment	Evaluating market risks (economic fluctuations), liquidity risks (difficulty in selling), credit risks (tenant defaults), and operational risks (maintenance issues
Investment Strategies	Employing strategies like Buy and Hold (long-term appreciation and rental income), Fix and Flip (short-term renovation and resale), Real Estate Investment Trusts (REITs), and choosing between commercial and residential properties based on market conditions.

Real estate investments offer significant benefits, including the following:

- 1. **Income Generation**: Steady rental income from residential and commercial properties.
- 2. <u>Capital Appreciation</u>: Property value increases over time due to location, demand, and improvements.
- 3. **Portfolio Diversification**: Low correlation with other asset classes reduces overall investment risk.
- 4. <u>Tax Advantages</u>: Deductions for mortgage interest, property depreciation, and maintenance expenses.
- 5. <u>Inflation Hedge</u>: Rising property values and rental incomes preserve purchasing power.
- 6. **Leverage**: Using borrowed capital to increase returns and expand investment opportunities.
- 7. **Control:** Greater decision-making power over property management and improvements.
- 8. **Economic Impact**: Job creation, infrastructure development, and increased tax revenues contribute to economic growth.

The legal framework governing foreign property ownership and use rights significantly influences real estate investment. Transparent and favourable laws, such as full ownership rights, efficient property registration, and investment incentives (tax benefits, residency programs), attract foreign capital. Foreign investments enhance market liquidity, diversify ownership, and drive economic growth through job creation and infrastructure development. Advanced analytical techniques, such

as econometric modelling, comparative analysis, and Geographic Information Systems (GIS), provide can provides into the impact of legal frameworks and guide policymaking.

Effective legal frameworks for attracting foreign direct investment (FDI) are complex issues. Although a well-structured legal system can enhance a country's investment climate, it is not the sole determinant of FDI flows. The Ideal Legal Framework is A Double-Edged Sword. While many development agencies advocate for legal reforms to attract FDI, it's important to consider the broader economic context. [1]. A focus solely on creating an 'ideal' legal framework may not always yield the desired results. Investors prioritize political stability, economic growth, and market potential over legal nuances. While a robust legal framework is essential for attracting foreign direct investment (FDI), it's important to recognize that it is not the sole determinant of FDI flows. [12] Investors, particularly those already operating within a country, may prioritize factors such as market access, infrastructure, and labour costs over the intricacies of the legal system. Their decisions are often influenced by their experiences and perceived risks rather than by the legal framework. Governments should strike a balance between creating a conducive legal environment and pursuing broader economic and social goals. While legal reforms can play a significant role, they should be aligned with the country's overall development strategy. [13] A robust legal framework is essential for attracting foreign direct investment (FDI). To foster a conducive investment climate, countries must prioritize clear and stable laws, efficient legal processes, strong property rights protection, transparency, and accountability. Adhering to international standards and best practices can further enhance a country's reputation and attract foreign investment. [1] & [6] In conclusion, while a well-designed legal framework is undoubtedly important, it is not the sole determinant of FDI flows. Governments should focus on creating a comprehensive investment climate that includes economic stability, infrastructure development, and skilled labour. By striking a balance between legal reform and broader economic development, countries can attract sustainable foreign investment and achieve their development goals.

Before presenting the Dahab case study, it is essential to develop a general strategic framework to guide decision-making in the real estate investment process and serve as a foundation for future investment policies. This framework consists of four key components: market analysis, valuation methods, risk assessment, and investment strategies. Market analysis involves examining economic indicators such as GDP growth, employment rates, and inflation, along with demographic factors like population growth and migration patterns, to assess demand and supply dynamics. Valuation methods include Comparative Market Analysis (CMA), the Income Approach (based on rental income), and the Cost Approach (replacement cost minus depreciation), to determine accurate property values. Risk assessment considers market risks (e.g., economic fluctuations), liquidity risks (e.g., asset disposability), credit risks (e.g., tenant defaults), and operational risks (e.g., maintenance issues). Investment strategies may include buy-and-hold (for long-term income and appreciation), fix-and-flip (for short-term profit), Real Estate Investment Trusts (REITs), and a choice between residential or commercial investments based on market trends. This strategic framework can be applied to Egypt's real estate market particularly in Dahab in future research to explore how such an approach can generate sustainable returns, support capital appreciation, promote diversification, and contribute to national development goals.

In conclusion, real estate investment is a multifaceted domain that requires integrated planning across market analysis, valuation, risk management, and strategy. Its benefits such as income generation, asset appreciation, diversification, and tax advantages make it a vital asset class. Establishing a robust legal framework and fostering a favorable investment climate are essential to attracting foreign capital and promoting sustainable economic development. By leveraging advanced analytical tools and aligning legal reforms with broader economic objectives, Egypt can create an environment conducive to real estate investment success.

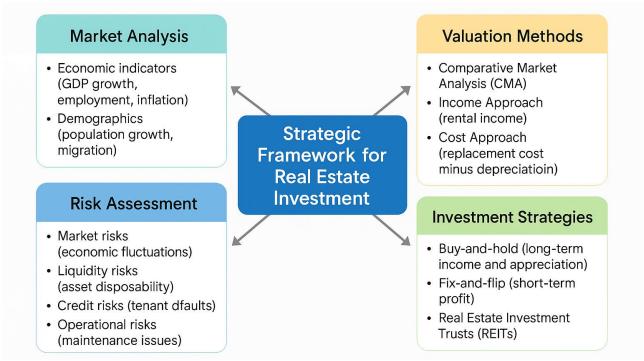


Fig no. 1: Strategic Framework for real Estate Investment. [8]

2.5 Legal Framework for Property Ownership in Egypt

The strategic framework outlined above can be now applied to the Egyptian real estate market, with a particular focus on Dahab, to evaluate its potential as a destination for foreign investment. This application identifies the key legal, economic, and demographic enablers and barriers that influence investment decisions in the region.

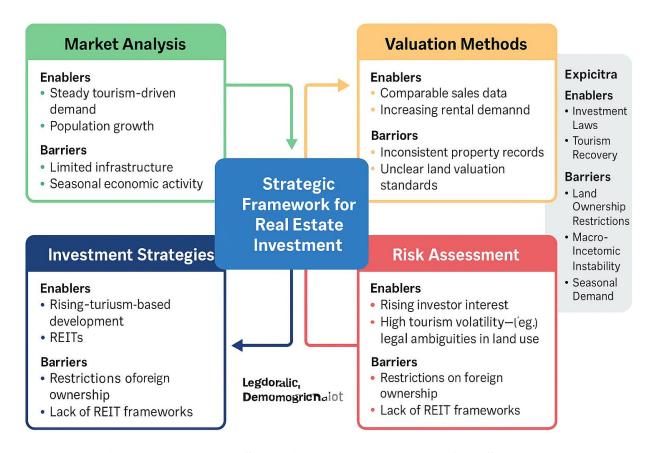


Fig no. 2: Integrated Strategic Framework: Dahab Case Study. [8]

Egyptian property laws are rooted in the Civil Code and are influenced by Islamic Sharia principles. Ownership can be transferred through various means, including inheritance, gifting, and sale, with the latter being the most prevalent method, typically executed via a sale agreement registered with a Notary Public. [14]

Historically, challenges such as high registration fees and opaque land records have impeded property ownership in Egypt. Many transactions were conducted through unregistered preliminary sale agreements, which limited purchasers' rights. Recent reforms have sought to mitigate these issues by reducing registration fees and streamlining the registration process. However, complexities in tracing property ownership through historical transactions remains a significant obstacle.

Foreign ownership of property in Egypt is subject to specific regulations and restrictions, particularly in the case of agricultural land and certain strategic areas. While Egyptian nationals and domestic legal entities have the right to own property in various forms, foreign investors must comply with specific legal framework. [15] Moreover, Ehab Taha and Salma Basset in 2015 identified six key restrictions and considerations for foreign investors in Egypt:

- 1. **Agricultural Land:** Foreign ownership of agricultural land is strictly prohibited under Law No. 15 of 1963.
- 2. **Desert Land:** The ownership of desert land is also restricted to Egyptian nationals and majority-owned Egyptian companies.
- 3. **Urban Property:** Foreigners can own urban property, including residential and commercial real estate, subject to certain limitations and conditions.
- 4. **Legal Framework:** Law No. 230 of 1996, amended by Law No. 14 of 2010, governs the foreign ownership of residential property, imposing restrictions on the size and number of properties that a foreign individual can own.
- 5. **Government Approvals:** Foreign real estate investments often require government approval, particularly for large-scale projects or strategic properties.
- 6. **Due diligence: Foreign investors should** conduct thorough due diligence to ensure compliance with all relevant laws and regulations. [14]

These restrictions aim to protect national security interests and ensure sustainable development. Key considerations for foreign investors in Egypt include conducting thorough due diligence to investigate the legal status of properties, consulting with local legal professionals to navigate the complex legal landscape, understanding tax implications, and staying informed about changes in property laws and regulations. By understanding the nuances of Egyptian property law and seeking expert advice, foreign investors can successfully acquire and own property in Egypt. This research also delves into the legal frameworks governing foreign property ownership and use rights in Dahab City, located in South Sinai, Egypt. Due to Sinai's unique historical context, the region has distinct laws and restrictions compared to other parts of Egypt. This study analyses these legal frameworks and identifies potential challenges, providing insights for policymakers and investors to optimize the investment climate in Dahab City. Addressing challenges such as bureaucratic hurdles, regulatory ambiguities, and economic fluctuations through policy reforms and administrative improvements can enhance investor confidence and contribute to the sustainable development of the region.

3.Methods and tools

3.1 Case study: Dahab City in South Sinai, Egypt

Dahab, on Egypt's Sinai Peninsula along the Gulf of Aqaba, has attracted scientific interest due to its unique environmental and socio-economic characteristics. The town's coral reef ecosystems have been the subject of ecological studies, particularly concerning the impacts of anthropogenic

activities. Research indicates that local eutrophication, possibly due to inadequate wastewater management, has led to significant declines in live hard coral cover, with turf algae increasingly dominating these benthic communities. This shift underscores the need for effective regional wastewater management to preserve marine biodiversity in Dahab.

Additionally, Dahab's development trajectory has raised concerns about the sustainability of its low-key, eco-friendly culture. The town, traditionally favored by individual and small-group tourists for its natural beauty and tranquil atmosphere, faces challenges from unchecked development. The expansion of hotels and other infrastructure, often without strict adherence to environmental regulations, threatens to alter Dahab's character and degrade its natural resources. This situation highlights the critical need for balanced development strategies that align economic growth with environmental conservation. Furthermore, Dahab is susceptible to natural hazards, particularly flash floods. Studies assessing the vulnerability of the Wadi Dahab Basin have revealed that approximately 72% of the town's infrastructure could be adversely affected in extreme flood scenarios. These findings emphasize the importance of implementing effective flood mitigation measures to safeguard the community and its assets. In summary, Dahab is a focal point for interdisciplinary research on marine ecology, sustainable development, and natural hazard vulnerability. Addressing the challenges identified in these studies is essential for ensuring the town's environmental integrity and socio-economic resilience. [16]

3.2 Assessing the Real Estate Investment Potential of Dahab, Egypt3.2.1 Analysing the Economic Role of Dahab City in South Sinai, Egypt

Historically, Dahab served as a vital maritime port on the Gulf of Aqaba, which was utilized by the Nabataeans from the 2nd century BC to 106 AD for storing goods before transporting them to the Suez port via the Sinai Peninsula. This strategic location positioned Dahab as a crucial link in the trade routes connecting East and West, as shown in Fig no.1. [3] & [17]



Fig no. 3: Dahab city location- South Sinai – Egypt – Africa. [18]

Dahab is currently a prominent tourist destination, renowned globally for its diving and adventure tourism. It has become a major hub for camping, safaris, and ecotourism. The city's diverse economic activities, including tourism, fishing, and local industries, contribute to its economic vitality. Dahab exhibits strong economic performance, outperforming both national and regional averages in terms of growth. Its high productivity, particularly in the tourism sector, and its diverse economic base contribute to its economic vitality. The city's workforce is heavily engaged in export-oriented activities, primarily tourism, and its per capita income exceeds the national average,

reflecting its robust economic standing. The following section concludes with the six main economic indicators. [3], [19] & [20]

Key Economic Indicators and Comparative Analysis

- **Economic Growth:** Dahab has consistently outperformed the national and regional average in terms of economic growth, with a rate of 9.2% compared to 6.1% for South Sinai and 2.4% for Egypt as a whole.
- **Productivity:** Dahab ranks among the top cities in Egypt in terms of productivity, with a score of 55, surpassing popular tourist destinations like Sharm El-Sheikh (58) and Hurghada (59).
- **Economic Clustering:** The city exhibits a high degree of economic clustering, particularly in the tourism sector, with a diversity of services and activities.
- **Labour Force:** A significant proportion of Dahab's workforce is engaged in export-oriented activities, primarily tourism.
- **Economic Diversification:** The city boasts a diverse economic base, with eight distinct economic sectors contributing to its overall development.
- **High Per Capita Income:** Dahab's per capita income is significantly higher than the national average, reflecting its strong economic performance. [3] & [20]

3.2.2 Dahab's Role in the Regional and National Economy

Dahab's strategic location and unique characteristics position it as a key economic driver for South Sinai and Egypt. The city is known for its exceptional diving activities, and it attracts global tourists. It also offers a range of adventure activities, making it a popular destination for safari and ecotourism. Furthermore, Dahab's serene environment and healthcare facilities appeal to retirees and wellness seekers. By leveraging these assets, Dahab can continue to grow as a significant economic hub, contributing to Egypt's overall development. Dahab plays a significant role in Egypt's national and regional development plans. Various strategic plans, including Egypt Vision 2030 and the South Sinai Governorate Development Plan, highlight the city's potential as a key economic driver. Dahab, a strategic location in South Sinai, Egypt, is poised to become a major international tourist destination, regional economic hub, and resilient city. With a focus on diving, safari, ecotourism, yachting, and maritime activities, Dahab seeks to attract foreign direct investment and foster local businesses. To realize this vision, significant investments in infrastructure, tourism facilities, and human capital development are crucial. Balancing tourism development with environmental conservation and empowering local communities are key challenges to addressing. By overcoming these challenges, Dahab can contribute significantly to Egypt's economic and social development. [3] According to Egypt's national plan, it aims to attract 57 million tourists by 2052. As part of this vision, the South Sinai Governorate is projected to reach a population of 1.3 million by 2052. Dahab, a key city within the governorate, is expected to accommodate a significant portion of this growth, with a target population of 165,000 by 2052. [20]Through a comprehensive analysis of Dahab's urban context, social and economic structure, and competitive advantages, the study has identified key strategies to attract foreign investment and drive sustainable development. To address the growing demand for housing and enhance the city's overall competitiveness, planners, in coordination with the South Sinai Governorate, have outlined a framework that focuses on attracting foreign investment through new projects aligned with the city's strategic plan. By offering various housing options, including those targeted at expatriates, Dahab aims to increase its resilience to economic, social, and environmental pressures and contribute to the realization of Egypt's National Plan 2052, as shown in the following satellite image. [19] & [16]

The Dahab Strategic Development Plan 2050 delineates a spatial framework for development, identifying key zones with specific land use designations. This spatial planning approach is essential for guiding the implementation of priority projects and ensuring their alignment with the overall vision for the city. Through the strategic allocation of projects within these designated zones, Dahab can optimize the benefits of development while mitigating potential adverse impacts

on the environment and social fabric. The subsequent elements will examine the localization of priority projects within the coastal, urban, craft and art, agricultural, and Mountainous Zones. as defined by the Dahab Strategic Development Plan 2050. The 2050 Dahab Strategic Development Plan incorporates a spatial framework that directs the city's development. This framework subdivides Dahab into distinct projects in a specific zone, each with its designated land use development and priorities, depicted in Map no.2. These projects are categorized into 7 main sectors and encompass approximately 40 projects:



Map no. 2: The localization of priority projects in the strategic plan for Dahab city in 2050, Source: [3].

1st Supporting cities with Facilities:

1- Reorganization of dive sites. 2- sewage treatment plant reallocates. 3- Sustainable mass transit service and parking. 4- Extension of the tourist walkway north and south. 5- Improving the efficiency and beautification of currency areas. 6- Supporting the power plant with a 250-MW

generating unit. 7- Establishment of building-level solar power generation stations (7115) for existing buildings. 8- Upgrading and reopening the southern entrance to the city from Sharm El-Sheikh to Wadi Dahab. 9- Sustainable service for internal and regional mass transit and the establishment of a network and 10 parking lots.

2nd Providing the housing sector and developing the already exist urban areas:

10- New Asala City. 11- New Currency City. 12- Mixed tourist investment housing areas. 13-Mixed used tourist investment housing areas. 14- New Dahab City, Western Expansions, South of Wadi Dahab. 15- Urban upgrading of tourism services around global diving sites. 16- Replacement and renovation of dilapidated buildings in the city. 17- Urban upgrading and development of the ancient port and turning it into a popular market. 18- Improving the efficiency and beautification of the areas of the Asala, Al-Malil, Al-Musbat, Al-Mashrabah, Al-Dharnouk.

3rd supporting cities with National and regional events:

19- Conference, festival, and celebrations. 20- A small conference, festival, and celebration canter with a global event agenda.

4th supporting the Environment:

21- Treatment plant transfer. 22- Tidal cells on roofs of buildings for energy generation. 23- Expanding the craft area as a green environmental park. 24- Establishing 40 greenhouses, animal production units, fodder production, and establishing a central nursery 19.

5th supporting the healthcare sector:

25 - A specialized international medical treatment city with Small international medical treatment centers and hospitals so it can invite international expertise.

6th supporting light industries, small workshops, and art and crafts zones:

26- Major regional trade center. 27- Commercial entertainment investment facade. 28- Major regional shopping mall, hypermarket, and central wholesale market. 29- Expanding the industrial craft zone to become a green environmental industrial park. 30- The new commercial and entertainment investment facade around Wadi Dahab after determining the path and protection works for the valley.

7th supporting tourism sector:

31- Integrated tourist centers. 32- The marina extends to 75 boats. 33- Small marina for yachts and tourist boats. 34- Mountain handicraft tourist camp safari tourism. 35- Accommodation (8-10) Resorts Tourist Housing 20. 36- A global entertainment center for adventure tourism. 37- Establishing a small tourist marina for yachts and tourist boats. 38- Accommodation (4-6) Bedouin mountain tourist camp for safari tourism. 39- Establishing a global entertainment and tourism center for adventure tourism in the Laguna area and adjacent areas. 40- Establishing 4 major integrated tourist centers for international and global tourism (hotels and hotel villages).

This proposed strategic plan presents a multifaceted approach to the development of Dahab City, encompassing infrastructure improvements, urban development, environmental sustainability, economic growth, and tourism development. By implementing these projects until 2050, Dahab can enhance its appeal as a world-class tourist destination, attract investments, improve the quality of life for its residents and visitors, and contribute significantly to the Egyptian economy.

3.3 The methodology employed for this study is grounded in a scientific approach to investigate Dahab's potential for real estate investment

A comprehensive, science-based approach is utilized in this study to examine the investment opportunities in real estate within Dahab, a seaside town located in Egypt's Sinai region. This study endeavours to assess Dahab's distinctive natural and cultural features, examine its investment potential, and determine methods for promoting long-term growth via international real estate

investment. The central premise suggests that a clear and secure legal system, combined with simplified regulatory procedures, will have a positive relationship with increased foreign investment in Dahab's real estate and greater investor trust in the area. This study adopts a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative research techniques to provide a holistic understanding of Dahab's real estate investment landscape. The methodology is structured into the following phases:

1. Data Collection

The research utilizes a variety of data collection techniques to guarantee thorough and trustworthy results.

- Structured Surveys: A survey was administered to 402 participants in Dahab, who were selected through random sampling to ensure demographic diversity. The sample includes locals, visitors, Bedouins, urban dwellers and individuals of various age groups. The survey captures socio-economic and demographic data, perceptions of property rights, investment climate, government services, and overall satisfaction with living conditions.
- Semi-Structured Interviews: Key stakeholders, including government representatives, tourism businesses, property agents, and community members, are interviewed to gain qualitative insights into Dahab's real estate potential, challenges, and opportunities.

2. Data Management and Analysis

- Geospatial Analysis: Data collected during field visits and surveys were recorded in a specialized Geodatabase using ArcMap. Geographic Information Systems (GIS) techniques are used to analyse spatial patterns, identify investment hotspots, and visualize findings using maps, charts, and dashboards.
- Qualitative Analysis: Interview transcripts and field notes are thematically analysed to identify recurring patterns, stakeholder perspectives, and key challenges.
- Quantitative Analysis: Statistical techniques are applied to survey data to assess preferences, satisfaction levels, and investment intentions. A SWOT analysis is conducted to evaluate Dahab's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats in the context of real estate investments.

The study tests its central hypothesis by analysing the correlation between respondents' perceptions of the legal framework (e.g., clarity, transparency, regulatory efficiency) and their interest in foreign real estate investment. Statistical tools, such as regression analysis, are used to quantify this relationship and validate the hypothesis.

The survey revealed the detailed demographic profile of the sample population as follows:

- Age distribution: The 51-60 age group was the largest (101 participants), followed by the 41-50 group (85 participants). Younger age groups (under 20 and 21-30) show lower participation, with a slight female majority.
- Education levels: Most respondents have "Higher Education" (168 participants), followed by "Intermediate" education (140 participants). Low representation is observed in the "No Education," "Illiteracy," and "Below Intermediate" categories, indicating a generally well-educated sample.

This demographic context is critical for interpreting the survey results and understanding perceptions of investment climate. The study aims to highlight Dahab's natural beauty, cultural heritage, and untapped real estate potential; identify strategies for attracting foreign investment while preserving the town's unique character; provide actionable recommendations for policymakers to enhance the legal and regulatory framework, thereby boosting investor confidence; and contribute to sustainable economic growth by promoting tourism infrastructure and creating authentic visitor experiences. By combining rigorous scientific methods with practical insights, this research seeks to position Dahab as a viable destination for foreign real estate investment, ensuring its long-term viability and economic prosperity.

4. Results and Discussion

A demographic analysis of Dahab as shown in chart no (1), Egypt, in 2024 revealed a diverse population composition. Conducted in collaboration with the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics, the study found that the city had 17,273 residents living in 3,614 households. The city has 3,183 Egyptian Households, 409 Other Arab Households, 25 Foreign Households, and 19 Dual Households. Egyptian Nationality households comprised the largest demographic, followed by other Arab nationalities, foreign nationals, and those with dual citizenship. This demographic diversity highlights the city's unique character as a tourist destination as well as part of an international community. Further analysis is warranted to explore factors influencing this demographic such composition. as economic opportunities, lifestyle preferences, and government policies. By distribution examining the of age, gender, occupation, and length of residence among nationalities, researchers can gain deeper insights into the social and economic dynamics of a city.

Chart no (2) provides insight into the key data that drive non-Egyptians to reside in Dahab. By analysing these data, we can understand the main drivers behind this large population's impact on the local community and economy. Data indicates that many non-Egyptians residing in Dahab were married to Egyptians. This accounts for approximately 90% of the total number of non-Egyptian residents. This leads us to predict that soon we may see a new community in Dahab, where foreigners predominate in the demographic structure, so foreign nationalities residing in the city will rank first over Egyptians residing in the city, other than the original Bedouin population. The new community will either be foreigners of Egyptian origin or dual nationalities. While there are additional reasons for the presence of foreigners in the city, such as a residence for work, accompanying the family, asylum, or medical and psychological treatment due to the great psychological comfort the city provides to its visitors and frequenters. Finally comes the reason for retirement for the elderly due to the tranquillity.



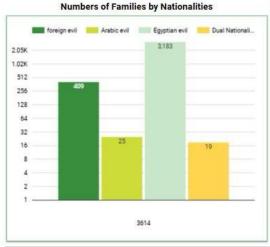


Chart no.1: Dahab's Family Demographic, Families' distribution by Nationality in 2024. [8]

purpose of residence of non-Egyptian

Total Number of Non-Egyption Residential

1,715

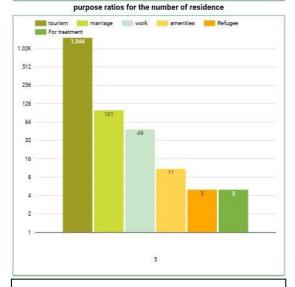
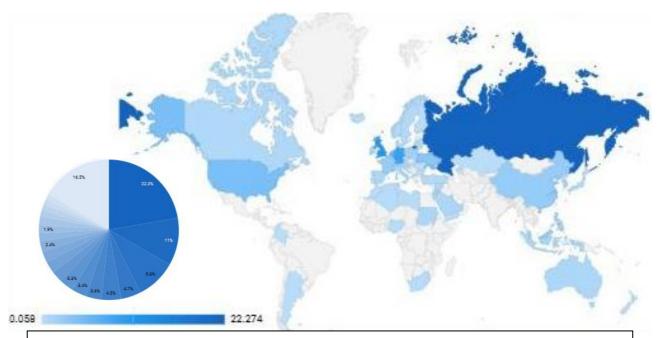


Chart no.2: Breakdown of residency purpose for foreigners in Dahab. [8]

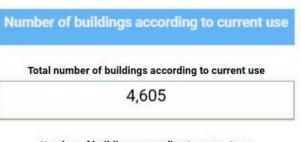
This research initiative, conducted in collaboration with the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics, aimed to identify and document the nationalities residing within the city, as shown in Map no (3) The collected data serves as a crucial foundation for social science researchers to analyse and predict the evolving social fabric of Dahab. Moreover, it provides valuable insights for urban planners and decision-makers to anticipate future demands, such as housing needs, service requirements, and the necessary infrastructure to accommodate the changing population structure. Dahab exhibits a notable diversity in its foreign resident population. As illustrated in the accompanying pie chart, the most prominent nationalities comprise Russian (22.3%), British (16.5%), and American (11%) residents. Several other nationalities contribute to Dahab's multicultural fabric, including German, Italian, Ukrainian, Israeli, French, Yemeni, Malaysian, Jordanian, Swiss, Polish, South Korean, Indonesian, and Belgian nationals. A further 4.7% of residents are categorized as "Others," indicating the presence of numerous nationalities with smaller individual representations.



Map no.3: Distribution of Nationalities residing in Dahab, Egypt. [8]

The accompanying geographic visualization complements the pie chart data, delineating the proportional representation of these diverse nationalities within the Dahab community. The map illustrates the percentage of individuals from each represented nationality on a chromatic scale, with darker hues corresponding to higher proportions. The map suggests that Russian nationals constitute a significant portion of Dahab's foreign resident population, as evidenced by the pronounced shading of the Russian Federation. North American nationals, likely from the United States and Canada, also appear to have a notable presence, as indicated by the intensity of shading in that region. Furthermore, depending on the specific parameters of the chromatic scale, residents from certain European countries may also represent a substantial segment of Dahab's foreign population. In summary, the map elucidates potential regional patterns in the nationalities comprising Dahab's diverse community, reinforcing the proportional representation highlighted in the pie chart.

Provides a comprehensive overview of the use of data recorded in the city of Dahab from 2024. See the numbers to reach a total of 4.605 usable buildings in the city, as shown in chart no (3) The data explains in more detail how this data is used, as it is divided into the original group. The total number of registered buildings in the city is 4,605, with residential use accounting for the largest proportion of the total buildings, whether for residential use only or for both residential and commercial use. While there are many buildings for commercial or industrial use. During the surveys, we found vacant buildings and buildings under construction: The data indicates that there are numerous vacant buildings or buildings that are still under construction. Analysing the results, we found a great focus on residential use, which reflects that the city is witnessing population growth and that there is an increasing demand for housing with a balance between residential commercial use, which confirms that the city enjoys diverse economic activity, taking into account the presence of a number of vacant buildings, which is an indicator of a surplus in real estate supply in some areas or may be the result of a slowdown in economic activity.



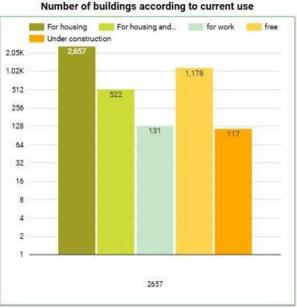


Chart no.2: Breakdown of buildings categories according to current use in Dahab. [8]

In both cases, the sale represents an opportunity for real estate investment in the city. Finally, under construction buildings were monitored, indicating ongoing investments in the real estate sector, indicating expectations of increasing demand for housing and facilities in the future.

5. Conclusions

This research employs a rigorous methodology to assess Dahab, Egypt's real estate investment potential, and its alignment with the Dahab Strategic Development Plan 2050. Using mixed-methods—including field visits, structured surveys, semi-structured interviews, and geospatial analysis—the study offers a comprehensive understanding of Dahab's socio-economic dynamics, real estate opportunities, and challenges. Key findings highlight the importance of a transparent legal framework, strategic spatial planning, and sustainable development practices in attracting foreign investment and fostering long-term economic growth.

The Dahab Strategic Development Plan 2050 categorizes the city into distinct zones—Coastal, Urban Core, Craft and Art Zone, Agricultural Zone, and Mountainous Zone—each with specific land use designations. This zoning approach ensures that development projects are strategically allocated to optimize economic, environmental, and social outcomes. This study validates this framework through GIS-based geospatial analysis, identifying investment hotspots and visualizing the distribution of 40 priority projects across seven sectors, including infrastructure, housing, tourism, and environmental sustainability.

A structured survey of 402 participants revealed a diverse demographic profile, with a significant proportion of foreign residents, particularly Russians (22.3%), British (16.5%), and Americans (11%). Many non-Egyptian residents are married to Egyptians (90%), indicating strong sociocultural ties and potential for a growing multicultural community. This diversity underscores Dahab's appeal as a tourist destination and its potential to attract long-term foreign investment. However, it also highlights the need for comprehensive urban planning to address housing demand, infrastructure, and service requirements.

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An analysis of 4,605 registered buildings in Dahab revealed a predominance of residential use, reflecting population growth and increasing demand for housing. The presence of vacant buildings and ongoing construction projects offers both opportunities and challenges. Although vacant properties indicate a potential surplus in real estate supply, ongoing construction signals active investment in the sector. These findings emphasize the importance of targeting real estate strategies to balance supply and demand, particularly in high-growth areas.

This study tests the hypothesis that a transparent and secure legal framework positively correlates with foreign real estate investment. The survey results indicate that clarity in property rights, regulatory efficiency, and investor confidence are critical factors influencing investment decisions. Qualitative insights from stakeholder interviews further highlight the need for streamlined processes and enhanced legal protections to attract foreign capital.

By combining rigorous scientific methods with practical insights, this research provides a comprehensive roadmap for Dahab's sustainable development. The findings highlight the city's potential to become a global hub for tourism and real estate investment while preserving its unique cultural and environmental heritage. Implementing the Dahab Strategic Development Plan 2050, supported by a transparent legal framework and targeted investment strategies, will be instrumental in achieving this vision. This study not only contributes to the academic understanding of real estate investment dynamics and offers actionable recommendations for policymakers, investors, and urban planners to ensure Dahab's long-term viability and prosperity.

6. Recommendations

- Government entities can use the data and surveys evaluated during the research period to better plan the services they offer to the city's residents. The tourism sector can easily assess the demand for tourism services and develop tourism products by surveying and analysing the data that their research confirms. In addition, many of them can be attracted thanks to the various innovations that improve the understanding of the demographic composition available to the city. Overall, these data provide a key picture of the population diversity in Dahab, which constitutes a valuable tool for researchers and industrialists alike.
- A more in-depth investigation into the motivations and demographic characteristics of foreign residents in Dahab is necessary. This should be accompanied by the development of programs to facilitate their integration into the local community, an assessment of service needs and the development of necessary infrastructure. Furthermore, a detailed study of the economic impact of mixed marriages on the city is crucial.
- Periodic updates are crucial for maintaining data accuracy and relevance of the data. By
 correlating those data with additional datasets, such as income and education levels, a more
 nuanced understanding of the city's socio-economic composition can be achieved. Additionally,
 these data can serve as a foundation for developing predictive models to forecast future land use
 trends
- Reforming land tenure policies in Sinai to include conditional freehold ownership for foreign investors—subject to security oversight—may balance national interests with investment incentives. Alternatively, a public-private partnership model, involving state-backed land

development with guaranteed lease rights, could be introduced, drawing on comparative models from the Moroccan Agadir region or Dubai's real estate governance.

7. Limitations

This study has several limitations that may have influenced the findings:

- 1-One of the limitations of this research is the primary focus on the legal permissibility of foreign property and land ownership. While table no.1 provides valuable information regarding which countries allow foreigners to buy property and land, it does not delve into the quality and efficiency of these legal frameworks. As emphasized by Al-Qahtani and Albakjaji (2023), a robust legal framework characterized by clear and stable laws, efficient legal processes, strong property rights protection, and transparency, is crucial for attracting Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). Further research is needed to assess the quality and effectiveness of these legal frameworks in different African countries to gain a more comprehensive understanding of their impact on foreign investment.
- 2-Time constraints: The limited timeframe for data collection may have restricted the sample size, and the depth of data collected from respondents.
- 3-Funding Constraints: Limited funding may have restricted the scope of the study, such as the number of locations surveyed, the use of more sophisticated data collection methods, and the ability to conduct more in-depth analyses.
- 4-Data Availability: Access to comprehensive and reliable data on relevant variables, such as tourism statistics, socio-economic indicators, and environmental data, may have been limited.
- 5-Respondent Bias: Tourist responses: Tourists' responses may have been subject to recall or social desirability bias.
- 6- Local Community Responses: Responses from local communities may have been influenced by social pressure or a desire to present a particular image of their community.
- 7- Geographical Limitations: Conducting research on the Sinai Peninsula, with its unique geographical and security challenges, presents logistical and safety concerns that may have affected data collection efforts.
- 8- Government Approvals: Obtaining necessary approvals from relevant government authorities for conducting surveys with tourists and local communities may have been time-consuming and presented bureaucratic challenges.

8. Further research

Further research will examine the multifaceted factors influencing intercultural marriages in Dahab by examining the sociocultural and economic drivers that contribute to their prevalence. This study will investigate the legal and social implications of these marriages on individuals, families, and the broader community, including their impact on existing laws and social norms. Additionally, the research will explore avenues for Dahab to leverage the cultural diversity arising from these marriages to foster social and economic development while simultaneously identifying and addressing the challenges faced by foreign residents, including legal, social, and cultural barriers to integration.

Understanding the factors influencing the distribution of building uses, analyzing the evolution of these patterns over time, and assessing the relationship between population growth and land use changes are crucial for future research aimed at informing urban planning and development strategies in Dahab.

9 Summary

This study provides a comprehensive roadmap for sustainable real estate development in Dahab by investigating the impact of Egypt's legal framework—particularly property ownership laws and use rights—on foreign real estate investment. The core research problem centres on the extent to which Egypt's current legal and regulatory environment supports or restricts foreign investment in Dahab's real estate sector. The hypothesis tested posits that a transparent, secure, and investor-friendly legal framework directly correlates with increased foreign real estate investment. The research objective is to evaluate how existing laws, particularly those regulating property ownership in strategic areas like South Sinai, influence investor confidence and decision-making. Dahab was selected as a case study due to its rising profile as a tourism and expatriate destination, its socio-economic diversity, and its inclusion in Egypt's long-term national development strategy. Using mixed methodsincluding demographic analysis, stakeholder interviews, field surveys, and geospatial mapping—the study collected and analyzed data in collaboration with the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics. Results indicate strong real estate demand, a multicultural demographic profile (with Russians, British, and Americans as leading foreign nationalities), and a housing market marked by both active construction and underutilized properties. Notably, approximately 90% of foreign residents are integrated into the local community through marriage, suggesting emerging sociocultural ties that may shape future development patterns. The research highlights Dahab's potential to become a global hub for tourism and real estate while preserving its unique identity. However, restrictive legal measures—such as the prohibition of foreign freehold ownership in Sinai under Law No. 14 of 2012, reliance on leasehold models, and the requirement for national security approvals—pose significant barriers to investor confidence. Although these laws are referenced throughout the analysis, the findings suggest that additional legislative clarity and comparative legal insights (e.g., from Morocco and the UAE) could enhance the formulation of practical, investororiented policies. In conclusion, the study confirms that while Dahab's natural and socio-economic assets position it for global investment, its legal framework requires reform to meet investor expectations. Implementing the Dahab Strategic Development Plan 2050, supported by transparent legal structures and targeted investment strategies, is essential to unlock the city's full potential. The study provides actionable recommendations for aligning national legal reforms with urban development goals, thereby securing long-term investment and promoting inclusive, sustainable urban growth in Dahab.

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