

The Development of The Offshore Hosting Industry in Mauritania

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Abstract

The offshore hosting industry in Mauritania is a relatively new and rapidly developing sector. In recent years, the Mauritanian government has taken steps to promote the country as an attractive location for data centers and offshore hosting services. This includes offering tax incentives and simplifying the process for obtaining licenses and permits. Mauritania's strategic location, with its proximity to Europe and the Middle East, and its access to multiple submarine cables, makes it an appealing option for companies looking to host their data and servers offshore. Additionally, the country has a relatively stable political environment and a growing infrastructure, which further adds to its appeal. A number of international hosting companies have already established a presence in Mauritania, and local companies are also beginning to offer offshore hosting services. These services include dedicated servers, virtual private servers, and cloud hosting, among others. However, it's important to note that while the offshore hosting industry in Mauritania is growing, it is still in its early stages and faces challenges such as lack of awareness, lack of skilled workforce and limited connectivity options. The offshore hosting industry in Mauritania presents a significant opportunity for the country to diversify its economy and attract foreign investment. With the right support and infrastructure in place, it has the potential to become a major player in the global offshore hosting market.

Keywords: Offshore hosting industry, Data centers, Digital infrastructure, Foreign investment

Introduction

The offshore hosting industry has been gaining traction in recent years as a viable option for businesses looking to reduce costs, increase security, and improve performance. Mauritania, a country located in West Africa, is one of the emerging players in this industry (Bouasria et al., 2020; Corten, 2014). Despite being a relatively small player in the global market, Mauritania has been making significant strides in developing its offshore hosting industry. Mauritania's strategic location, coupled with its political stability and favorable business environment, has made it an attractive destination for offshore hosting.

Sacco (2020), Barakat et al. (2026), Nyarko-Boateng et al. (2020) said that, the country's telecommunications infrastructure has also been improving, with the government investing in the development of fiber-optic networks and international connectivity. These factors, combined with the country's low operating costs, have created a conducive environment for the growth of the offshore hosting industry in Mauritania. The offshore hosting industry in Mauritania is still in its infancy, but it has already attracted several international players. These companies are taking advantage of the country's favorable business environment and low operating costs to offer high-quality hosting services to clients around the world.

Historical and Economic Context of Mauritania

Mauritania, officially the Islamic Republic of Mauritania, is a country in West Africa bordering the Sahara to the north and the Atlantic Ocean to the southwest. Its area is about 1 million square kilometers, with an estimated population of 4.5 million inhabitants in 2021 (Ramage et al., 2021; Angel et al., 2021). The history of Mauritania is marked by centuries of nomadism and trans-Saharan trade. The country became a French colony in 1920 and gained independence in 1960. Since then, Mauritania has experienced contrasting economic development, with a strong dependence on the exploitation of natural resources, such as iron, gold, and oil. The gross domestic product (GDP) of Mauritania was about \$5.5 billion in 2020, with a GDP per capita of approximately \$1,200. The services sector represents about 43% of GDP, followed by the industrial sector (37%) and the agricultural sector (20%). Mauritania's main trading partners are the European Union, China, and the United Arab Emirates.

Strengths and Weaknesses of the Mauritanian Economy

The Mauritanian economy possesses several structural strengths that provide a solid foundation for long term economic development. One of its most important advantages is the abundance of natural resources, including substantial reserves of iron ore, gold, copper, and offshore petroleum. The mining sector, in particular, has become a major contributor to national income, export earnings, and government revenue, making it one of the primary drivers of economic activity (Ericsson & Löf, 2019; Olalekan et al., 2016). Beyond its mineral wealth, Mauritania also benefits from a strategic geographic location, serving as a gateway between North Africa and Sub Saharan Africa while maintaining direct access to the Atlantic Ocean. This advantageous position creates opportunities to strengthen international trade, fisheries, maritime transportation, and regional economic integration. In recent years, improvements in political stability have further enhanced investor confidence and supported the implementation of economic reforms aimed at promoting sustainable growth. Moreover, Mauritania possesses considerable tourism potential through its extensive Atlantic coastline, vast desert landscapes, and protected natural parks, all of which represent valuable assets for diversifying the economy beyond the extractive industries.

Despite these advantages, the Mauritanian economy continues to face a number of structural weaknesses that constrain its long term development. A major challenge is the country's heavy dependence on the extraction and export of natural resources, making economic performance highly vulnerable to fluctuations in international commodity prices (Venables, 2016; Tröster & Küblböck, 2020; Yating et al., 2022). During periods of declining global demand or falling mineral prices, government revenues, export earnings, and overall economic growth tend to weaken significantly. Another persistent concern is the high level of unemployment, particularly among young people, which limits income generation and contributes to social and economic inequality. At the same time, inadequate infrastructure remains a substantial obstacle to economic expansion.

Deficiencies in transportation networks, port facilities, airports, and supporting logistics increase production and distribution costs while reducing the country's competitiveness in regional and global markets. Furthermore, poverty continues to affect a significant proportion of the population, with approximately one third of Mauritians living below the national poverty line. This situation reflects unequal access to employment opportunities, education, healthcare, and basic public services, highlighting the need for more inclusive development policies that can translate economic growth into broader improvements in living standards. Collectively, these structural constraints demonstrate that while Mauritania possesses considerable economic potential, sustained investment in economic diversification, human

capital development, and infrastructure modernization will be essential to achieving resilient and inclusive growth.

Opportunities and Threats for the Development of the Offshore Hospitality Industry in Mauritania

The offshore hospitality industry in Mauritania has promising opportunities for expansion, supported by the country's unique natural assets and evolving economic landscape. Mauritania's extensive Atlantic coastline, rich marine biodiversity, and well preserved national parks provide an attractive foundation for the development of coastal tourism, marine recreation, and eco tourism. These natural attractions offer considerable potential to attract both domestic and international visitors seeking authentic and environmentally sustainable travel experiences. In addition, the country's improved political stability over recent years has contributed to a more favorable investment climate, encouraging private sector participation in tourism related infrastructure and hospitality services. Stable governance enhances investor confidence and facilitates the implementation of long term tourism development strategies, which are essential for establishing a competitive offshore hospitality sector (Lyssimachou & Bilinski, 2023; Wang et al., 2023; Julianti & Pinpak, 2024).

Another important opportunity arises from Mauritania's fisheries cooperation with the European Union, which has strengthened the marine economy and stimulated investment in coastal regions. The growth of fisheries and related maritime activities creates additional demand for accommodation, restaurants, transportation services, and recreational facilities, thereby generating positive spillover effects for the hospitality industry. Furthermore, increasing offshore oil exploration and production activities have introduced new market segments, including business travelers, technical personnel, consultants, and international investors who require high quality hospitality services. This growing demand presents opportunities for hotels, serviced apartments, conference facilities, and other supporting tourism services to diversify their customer base beyond traditional leisure tourism.

Despite these favorable prospects, several significant challenges continue to constrain the development of Mauritania's offshore hospitality industry (Sidi & Sharofiddin, 2024; Davidson & Sahli, 2015; Ould, 2023). One of the most notable threats is the intense regional competition from neighboring countries such as Senegal and Cape Verde, both of which have more established tourism industries, stronger international branding, and better developed hospitality infrastructure. These destinations benefit from greater accessibility, wider tourism promotion, and more diversified visitor experiences, making it more difficult for Mauritania to compete for international tourist arrivals. Infrastructure limitations also remain a major barrier to industry growth. Inadequate port facilities, limited airport capacity, insufficient transportation networks, and the uneven distribution of tourism support services reduce accessibility and increase operational costs for hospitality businesses. These constraints may discourage both investors and international visitors, limiting the country's ability to capitalize on its natural tourism assets.

In addition, security concerns, including the continuing risks associated with terrorism and maritime piracy in parts of the broader West African region, may negatively influence international perceptions of Mauritania as a safe travel destination. Such concerns can reduce tourist confidence, increase insurance and operational costs, and discourage foreign investment in tourism related projects. Another strategic challenge stems from the country's continued dependence on extractive industries, particularly mining and offshore petroleum. The dominance of these sectors often directs public investment, policy attention, and financial resources toward resource extraction rather than tourism development. As a result, opportunities to diversify the economy through sustainable tourism may receive insufficient

institutional support. Addressing these interconnected challenges will require integrated policies that prioritize infrastructure modernization, destination marketing, security enhancement, environmental sustainability, and economic diversification to strengthen the long term competitiveness of Mauritania's offshore hospitality industry.

Analysis of the Offshore Hospitality Industry in Mauritania

The offshore hospitality industry in Mauritania remains at an emerging stage of development when compared with more established tourism destinations in West Africa. International tourist arrivals remain relatively modest, reflecting the country's limited global visibility, developing tourism infrastructure, and historical security concerns. Nevertheless, the sector demonstrates considerable long term potential due to Mauritania's strategic Atlantic coastline, unique desert and marine ecosystems, expanding maritime economy, and increasing international business activities associated with fisheries and offshore energy exploration. Ahmad et al. (2024) and Baker et al. (2019) said that, recent improvements in political stability, together with gradual investments in transport infrastructure and tourism facilities, have created a more favorable environment for private investment. As global tourism increasingly shifts toward sustainable coastal tourism, ecotourism, and authentic cultural experiences, Mauritania is well positioned to develop a distinctive offshore hospitality sector that complements its broader economic diversification strategy. To understand the industry's future prospects, it is necessary to examine its principal stakeholders, the competitive environment, the critical determinants of success, and the strategic measures required to strengthen its international competitiveness.

Key Players in the Offshore Hospitality Industry in Mauritania

The development of Mauritania's offshore hospitality industry depends on the interaction of multiple stakeholders from both the public and private sectors. International hotel operators play an important role by introducing globally recognized service standards, advanced management practices, and established reservation systems that enhance the country's attractiveness to foreign visitors. The presence of internationally recognized hospitality brands also strengthens investor confidence by demonstrating the viability of the local tourism market while contributing to improvements in service quality and customer satisfaction. These hotel operators often serve as catalysts for the broader development of supporting businesses, including restaurants, transportation providers, and tourism related services.

International airlines represent another fundamental component of the offshore hospitality ecosystem because they determine the accessibility of Mauritania to global tourism markets. Airlines connecting Nouakchott with Europe, the Middle East, and other African countries facilitate the movement of tourists, business travelers, technical specialists, and investors involved in offshore industries such as fisheries and petroleum exploration. Improved air connectivity not only increases visitor arrivals but also encourages greater integration of Mauritania into international tourism networks, thereby supporting year round demand for accommodation and hospitality services.

Travel agencies and international tour operators also contribute significantly by designing tourism products that combine Mauritania's coastal attractions, marine resources, desert landscapes, and cultural heritage into comprehensive travel experiences. Their international marketing networks increase the country's visibility among prospective travelers who may otherwise have limited awareness of Mauritania as a tourism destination. By collaborating with local tourism enterprises, these organizations help diversify tourism products while extending visitor length of stay and increasing tourism expenditures within the local economy.

Public institutions constitute the regulatory and strategic foundation of the industry. Government agencies responsible for tourism, investment promotion, cultural heritage, and

environmental management establish the policy framework that guides tourism development while ensuring sustainability and resource conservation. Their responsibilities include infrastructure planning, destination branding, tourism regulation, investment facilitation, and international promotion. Effective coordination between government institutions and private stakeholders is therefore essential to create an integrated tourism ecosystem capable of supporting sustainable offshore hospitality development.

Competition and Cooperation in the Offshore Hospitality Industry

Competition within Mauritania's offshore hospitality industry is becoming increasingly dynamic as international investors recognize the country's untapped tourism potential and expanding maritime economy. Regional destinations such as Senegal, Morocco, and Cape Verde continue to maintain significant competitive advantages through their well developed tourism infrastructure, stronger destination branding, and more diversified tourism products. Consequently, Mauritania faces the challenge of differentiating itself by emphasizing its distinctive combination of Atlantic coastal landscapes, desert environments, cultural heritage, and emerging marine tourism opportunities.

Although competitive pressures remain substantial, cooperation among stakeholders offers equally important opportunities for industry development. Public private partnerships can mobilize financial resources and managerial expertise for the construction of hotels, marinas, transportation facilities, and coastal recreational infrastructure that individual stakeholders may be unable to develop independently (Kang et al., 2019; Lisovska et al., 2025). Such collaborative initiatives reduce investment risks while accelerating the modernization of tourism facilities and supporting services.

International cooperation also plays a strategic role in strengthening the offshore hospitality sector. Partnerships with foreign governments, international development organizations, and multinational tourism enterprises provide access to technical expertise, investment capital, capacity building programs, and destination marketing initiatives. Collaborative programs focusing on sustainable coastal management, environmental conservation, digital tourism promotion, and workforce development can substantially improve the industry's long term competitiveness while ensuring responsible utilization of Mauritania's natural resources.

Cooperation among local communities, private businesses, and public authorities contributes to more inclusive tourism development. Community participation enhances cultural authenticity, encourages local entrepreneurship, and promotes equitable distribution of tourism benefits. Such an inclusive development approach strengthens social acceptance of tourism expansion while supporting environmental sustainability and preserving Mauritania's unique cultural and natural heritage.

Keys to Success for the Development of the Offshore Hospitality Industry

The sustainable development of Mauritania's offshore hospitality industry depends primarily on the availability of a skilled and adaptable workforce capable of delivering services that meet international hospitality standards. Human capital development remains essential because tourism is fundamentally a service based industry in which customer satisfaction is closely associated with employee competence, communication skills, intercultural understanding, and professional ethics. Continuous investment in vocational education and hospitality training can improve labor productivity while increasing employment opportunities for local communities, particularly young people entering the labor market.

Technological readiness represents another critical determinant of industry success. Modern hospitality businesses increasingly depend on reliable digital infrastructure to support

reservation systems, electronic payment platforms, customer relationship management, digital marketing, and operational coordination. Improvements in broadband connectivity and telecommunications infrastructure enable tourism enterprises to participate more effectively in international digital marketplaces while enhancing service efficiency and customer experience. Continued expansion of digital infrastructure will therefore strengthen Mauritania's competitiveness in the rapidly evolving global tourism industry.

An enabling regulatory and fiscal environment further supports industry growth by reducing investment barriers and increasing business confidence. Transparent regulations, simplified licensing procedures, investor protection mechanisms, and competitive tax incentives encourage both domestic and foreign investors to participate in tourism related projects (Shen & Vanhullebusch, 2015). Stable governance and predictable public policies reduce uncertainty and allow investors to undertake long term investments in accommodation facilities, recreational services, and tourism infrastructure with greater confidence.

Political and social stability constitutes another indispensable condition for successful offshore hospitality development. Tourism demand is highly sensitive to perceptions of safety and security, making political stability one of the most influential factors affecting destination competitiveness. A peaceful social environment, effective governance, and strong public institutions improve the country's international reputation while encouraging tourists, investors, and multinational hospitality companies to establish long term engagement in Mauritania. Together, these interconnected factors create the institutional and economic conditions necessary for sustainable growth within the offshore hospitality industry.

Strategies for the Development of the Offshore Hospitality Industry

The long term competitiveness of Mauritania's offshore hospitality industry requires an integrated development strategy that simultaneously strengthens investment, institutional capacity, infrastructure, and international market positioning. One strategic priority involves promoting Mauritania more effectively to international investors by highlighting its strategic Atlantic location, expanding maritime economy, unique natural attractions, and favorable investment opportunities. Well coordinated investment promotion campaigns can attract foreign direct investment that supports hotel development, coastal tourism infrastructure, conference facilities, and complementary tourism services.

Strengthening international partnerships should also become a central component of national tourism policy. Collaboration with multinational hospitality companies, international financial institutions, development agencies, and neighboring countries can facilitate technology transfer, knowledge sharing, destination marketing, and infrastructure financing. Such partnerships contribute not only to increased investment but also to improved managerial capabilities and adoption of international best practices throughout the tourism value chain.

Equally important is sustained investment in education and workforce development. Expanding vocational training programs, hospitality management education, foreign language instruction, and digital competencies will improve service quality while enhancing employment opportunities for local populations. Developing a highly skilled workforce allows Mauritania to compete more effectively in regional tourism markets while ensuring that economic benefits generated by tourism remain within local communities.

Continued modernization of transportation, telecommunications, and tourism infrastructure should be accompanied by regulatory reforms that promote transparency, administrative efficiency, and investor confidence. Expanding airport capacity, improving port facilities, upgrading digital connectivity, and strengthening road networks will significantly improve destination accessibility and visitor satisfaction. At the same time, maintaining competitive

fiscal incentives, streamlining investment procedures, and ensuring regulatory consistency will encourage sustained private sector participation. Collectively, these strategic initiatives provide a comprehensive framework for transforming Mauritania's offshore hospitality industry into a resilient, internationally competitive, and sustainable contributor to national economic diversification and inclusive development.

Current Trends and Future Prospects for the Development of the Offshore Hospitality Industry in Mauritania

Summary of Key Findings

The analysis presented throughout this study demonstrates that Mauritania possesses a strong foundation for the long term development of an offshore hospitality industry that complements the country's expanding maritime and offshore economic activities. Its strategic position along the Atlantic coast, combined with abundant marine resources, growing offshore energy exploration, and improving political stability, provides favorable conditions for attracting both tourism and business related travel. These comparative advantages create opportunities for the hospitality sector to serve not only leisure tourists but also professionals, investors, and technical personnel engaged in offshore industries, thereby broadening the market base for hotels, restaurants, conference facilities, and other tourism related services.

The findings further indicate that government initiatives have played an increasingly important role in creating a more supportive investment environment. Through institutional reforms, investment promotion policies, and efforts to improve the regulatory framework for offshore energy and tourism development, Mauritania has demonstrated its commitment to diversifying the national economy. The establishment of specialized investment promotion institutions and the implementation of policies designed to attract foreign direct investment have strengthened investor confidence and encouraged greater participation from international stakeholders (Dickinson et al., 2023). These developments provide a positive institutional foundation for expanding hospitality services that support both tourism and offshore industrial activities.

Despite these encouraging developments, the study also identifies several structural constraints that continue to limit the sector's competitiveness. Inadequate transportation infrastructure, limited digital connectivity, shortages of skilled hospitality professionals, and relatively low international destination recognition remain significant barriers to growth. Furthermore, the economy's continued dependence on extractive industries exposes national development to fluctuations in global commodity markets, emphasizing the importance of accelerating economic diversification through tourism and hospitality. Addressing these constraints will require coordinated investments in infrastructure, education, technology, and institutional capacity to ensure that industry expansion is both sustainable and inclusive.

The findings suggest that the future of Mauritania's offshore hospitality industry is promising, provided that current reforms continue and strategic investments are maintained. By integrating hospitality development with offshore energy, fisheries, coastal tourism, and environmental conservation, Mauritania has the opportunity to establish a diversified and resilient tourism economy. Such an integrated approach would not only strengthen national economic growth but also enhance employment creation, regional development, and international competitiveness over the long term.

Future Prospects for the Development of the Offshore Hospitality Industry in Mauritania

The future prospects for Mauritania's offshore hospitality industry are closely linked to the continued expansion of global offshore energy activities and the increasing importance of West Africa as a destination for investment and maritime commerce. Growing international demand

for offshore oil and gas exploration, renewable marine energy, and fisheries development is expected to generate higher volumes of business travel, foreign investment, and international collaboration throughout the region. As these sectors expand, demand for high quality accommodation, business conferencing facilities, transportation services, and professional hospitality solutions is also expected to increase. This trend positions Mauritania to benefit from the growing interaction between offshore industrial development and the hospitality sector.

Mauritania's strategic Atlantic location further strengthens its future growth potential by enabling the country to function as a regional gateway connecting North Africa, West Africa, Europe, and international maritime trade routes. Combined with its substantial offshore hydrocarbon reserves and rich marine resources, this geographic advantage enhances the country's attractiveness for multinational corporations, international investors, and development partners. Continued exploration of offshore energy resources is likely to stimulate additional investment in supporting infrastructure, including hotels, serviced apartments, logistics facilities, restaurants, and business service centers designed to accommodate international professionals working in offshore industries.

Government commitment will remain a decisive factor in determining the pace and sustainability of industry development. Recent institutional initiatives aimed at promoting investment in hydrocarbons, mining, and related economic sectors demonstrate a proactive approach toward improving the national investment climate. By simplifying administrative procedures, strengthening regulatory transparency, and encouraging foreign direct investment, public institutions can create conditions that support the parallel growth of offshore industries and hospitality services. Continued policy coordination between tourism authorities, investment agencies, and infrastructure planners will be essential for maximizing the economic benefits generated by offshore development (Laskowicz, 2021).

Nevertheless, realizing these positive prospects will require overcoming several persistent structural challenges. Infrastructure modernization remains a priority, particularly in airport capacity, port facilities, road connectivity, utilities, and digital communications that directly influence visitor accessibility and service quality. Equally important is investment in human capital through hospitality education, technical training, foreign language proficiency, and digital competencies to ensure that the local workforce can meet international service standards. Strengthening regional cooperation with neighboring countries, international tourism organizations, and multinational investors will further facilitate knowledge transfer, technology adoption, and collaborative destination marketing. If these strategic priorities are addressed effectively, Mauritania will be well positioned to transform its offshore hospitality industry into a competitive, sustainable, and significant contributor to national economic diversification and long term socioeconomic development.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the offshore web hosting industry in Mauritania is still a relatively new and developing field. However, with its advantages such as affordable hosting costs, a growing network infrastructure, and a strict privacy policy, this West African country presents significant potential for businesses and individuals looking for a reliable and secure hosting solution. Mauritania benefits from a strategic geographic location, with direct connection to submarine cables linking Europe to Africa, offering fast and stable connectivity. Additionally, the Mauritanian government has recently implemented tax incentives to attract foreign investments in the ICT sector, which should further stimulate the growth of the offshore web hosting industry in the country. However, it is important to note that offshore web hosting also carries risks, such as less stringent privacy and data security laws and regulations, as well as

challenges like language barriers and time zone differences. Therefore, it is essential to conduct thorough research and consider all factors before making a hosting decision. The offshore web hosting industry in Mauritania is an area to watch closely, with significant growth potential and unique advantages for businesses and individuals seeking an affordable and secure hosting solution

Suggestion

Invest in Infrastructure: The Mauritanian government should invest in the necessary infrastructure to support the development of the offshore hosting industry, such as ports, airports, roads, and communication networks. **Strengthen Technical Skills:** It is essential to strengthen the technical skills of Mauritanian workers to meet the needs of the offshore energy sector. The government should therefore invest in training and education to develop local skills. **Strengthen Regional and International Cooperation:** Mauritania should strengthen its regional and international cooperation to attract foreign investment and promote the development of the offshore energy sector. **Promote Transparency and Accountability:** The Mauritanian government should promote transparency and accountability in the offshore energy sector to attract foreign investments and ensure sustainable practices

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