

# Tourism as Soft Power Strategy in International Relations: Evidences from Europe and China

OLUMUYIWA A. AKANDE<sup>1</sup>, TAIWO S. ADELEKE<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1,2</sup>*Tourism and Development Programme, Department of Sustainability Studies, Faculty of Multi-Disciplinary Studies, University of Ibadan, Nigeria*

*Abstract- This research examines the use of tourism as a soft power strategy in international relations, with a comparative focus on Europe and China. While tourism is commonly perceived as an economic activity, this study highlights its strategic role in shaping national image, promoting cultural values, and supporting foreign policy objectives. European countries such as France, Italy, and Spain employ a decentralised, heritage-driven approach, using cultural tourism and international branding to enhance their global influence. In contrast, China adopts a centralised and state-led model, embedding tourism within initiatives such as the Belt and Road Initiative, Confucius Institutes, and international mega-events to strengthen its geopolitical presence and expand its soft power. The study will utilise a comparative methodology, including case study analysis, content analysis of tourism and foreign policy documents, and a review of soft power indices. Secondary sources such as tourism statistics, diplomatic records, and international media coverage will complement the primary data. By analysing these differing approaches, the research seeks to contribute to wider discussions on public diplomacy, cultural influence, and image-building in global affairs. The study ultimately aims to provide insights into the effectiveness and limitations of tourism as a soft power tool within an increasingly multipolar international system.*

**Keywords:** *Tourism, Soft Power, Public Diplomacy, Cultural Diplomacy, International Relations, Europe, China, Belt and Road Initiative, Confucius Institutes, Global Image, Foreign Policy.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, countries have increasingly relied not only on military and economic power but also on soft power to strengthen their global influence. Soft power, as originally conceptualised by Nye (1990, 2004), refers to a nation's ability to shape the preferences of others through attraction and persuasion rather than coercion. Contemporary debates emphasise that culture, values, and the credibility of foreign policy

remain central to a country's international appeal (Nye, 2021; Lukes, 2020; Zaharna, 2022).

Tourism, defined by the UN World Tourism Organization (UNWTO, 1994) as "the activities of persons travelling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business, and other purposes not related to the exercise of an activity remunerated from within the place visited," has long been regarded as an engine of economic growth. Yet scholarship from 2019 onwards highlights that tourism has evolved into a significant instrument of soft power (Avraham, 2021; Pan, Chen, & Ryan, 2022).

In the post-pandemic context, tourism is increasingly linked to nation branding, intercultural dialogue, and resilience-building. Countries use global events, heritage sites, and sustainability campaigns to project favourable images and strengthen diplomatic ties (Novelli & Ateljevic, 2022; Gómez & Martín, 2022). Tourism's ability to create people-to-people connections situates it at the intersection of economic recovery and international diplomacy (Hall, Gössling, & Scott, 2020).

This study examines how two major global players, Europe and China deploy tourism as a tool of soft power between 2019 and 2025. European countries such as France, Italy, and Spain rely on decentralised, locally driven strategies that showcase history, gastronomy, and cultural vibrancy to enhance international prestige (Brand Finance, 2024). By contrast, China pursues a centralised and state-led model, embedding tourism within national initiatives such as the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), Confucius Institutes, and digital diplomacy platforms (Chen, 2023; Li & Wang, 2024).

The core aim of this paper is to analyse and compare these contrasting approaches. It differentiates the use of tourism as a form of soft power diplomacy from reliance on hard power, while exploring how tourism intersects with other soft power elements. Through case studies, documentary evidence, and statistical data, the paper evaluates the effectiveness of European and Chinese strategies in shaping perceptions and strengthening international influence in the period 2019–2025.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### Theoretical Foundations of Soft Power

Nye's (1990, 2004) foundational theory of soft power remains highly influential, but recent scholarship has refined and extended it to reflect the realities of a more multipolar world. Nye (2021) re-emphasised the continued importance of credibility and trust in soft power projection, cautioning that attraction without authenticity risks being dismissed as propaganda. Scholars such as Lukes (2020) and Zaharna (2022) argue that soft power must be understood as relational and contextual, with its effectiveness varying across different audiences.

Cultural diplomacy, nation branding, and public diplomacy are often grouped under the umbrella of soft power. Melissen (2020) underscores that cultural diplomacy is particularly resilient in an increasingly fragmented world order, as it builds people-to-people connections that transcend political tensions. Within this framework, tourism operates not only as a cultural export but as an immersive form of diplomacy, engaging visitors directly in cultural experiences and everyday encounters (Wang & Ap, 2021).

### Key Components of Soft Power

According to Nye (2004), the major components of soft power include:

**Cultural Attraction** – The use of culture, heritage, values, and traditions as a source of appeal to foreign publics.

**Political Values** – The credibility of political systems (e.g., democracy, human rights, freedoms) as a model admired by others.

**Foreign Policy** – The extent to which a nation's external policies are perceived as legitimate, cooperative, and peaceful.

**Economic Influence** – The role of economic partnerships, investments, and reliability in shaping perceptions and trust.

### Tourism as Soft Power

Tourism has attracted growing scholarly attention as a vehicle of soft power in recent years. It contributes significantly to the shaping of national image by exposing foreign visitors to a country's cultural heritage, values, and traditions. Pan, Chen, and Ryan (2022) highlight that tourism functions as a form of "everyday diplomacy," fostering dialogue and mutual understanding through informal interactions. Similarly, Zhang and Ryan (2020) emphasise that tourism enhances cultural resonance by offering immersive experiences that leave long-lasting impressions of a nation.

Global mega-events such as the Olympic Games, World Expos, and international cultural festivals also serve as platforms for tourism-based soft power. These events are not only economic opportunities but occasions for states to showcase their achievements and cultural assets to the world (Grix & Brannagan, 2020). Yet their effectiveness depends heavily on the authenticity of the narratives they present and their alignment with broader foreign policy goals.

Tourism has also been analysed in the context of crisis recovery. Avraham (2021) notes that image-repair strategies in tourism have been crucial for countries recovering from crises such as terrorism, pandemics, or environmental disasters. This situates tourism not merely within cultural diplomacy but also as a tool for resilience and international solidarity (Novelli & Ateljevic, 2022).

## European Approaches to Tourism Diplomacy

European states have long harnessed tourism as an important instrument of soft power. France, Italy, and Spain continue to be among the world's most visited destinations, leveraging their historical, artistic, and culinary heritage to attract millions of visitors annually (UNWTO, 2023). Their tourism strategies are largely decentralised, with local and regional authorities spearheading initiatives. Avraham (2021) argues that such decentralisation allows for diverse and authentic narratives, enhancing credibility and reinforcing Europe's cultural leadership.

France relies on the global prestige of its art, fashion, gastronomy, and intellectual traditions; Italy positions itself as a living repository of world heritage; and Spain capitalises on vibrant festivals, linguistic diplomacy, and cultural diversity to strengthen its global relevance (Gómez & Martín, 2022). These strategies contribute to Europe's consistently high rankings in global soft power indices (Brand Finance, 2024).

Sustainability has also become an increasingly important feature of European tourism diplomacy. Hall, Gössling, and Scott (2020) stress that the integration of climate change adaptation and responsible travel strengthens Europe's appeal as a sustainable and ethical destination.

## China's Strategic Model of Tourism Diplomacy

In contrast, China adopts a centralised and state-driven approach to tourism diplomacy. Tourism is embedded within national initiatives such as the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), which promotes connectivity through infrastructure development, cultural exchange, and people-to-people ties (Winter, 2019; Chen, 2023). Confucius Institutes have also contributed by combining education, language promotion, and cultural outreach with tourism diplomacy (Hartig, 2021).

While China has significantly expanded its tourism footprint, critics argue that its approach often blends culture with political messaging, raising concerns about credibility and trust (Zhao, 2021). Geopolitical

tensions, human rights debates, and restrictive information environments further complicate China's soft power efforts (Callahan, 2022). Nonetheless, China continues to invest heavily in tourism promotion, framing it as a vital arm of its broader diplomatic strategy.

Recent studies suggest that digital technologies, such as smart tourism platforms and virtual cultural experiences, are becoming increasingly central to China's tourism diplomacy. Li and Wang (2024) contend that these tools enhance China's global reach while ensuring that narratives remain aligned with state objectives.

## Objectives of the Study

In light of the above, this paper will seek to conduct a comparative analysis of the use of soft power tool in international relations across Europe and China. The following are the specific objectives:

1. To critically examine the role of tourism in soft power diplomacy.
2. To compare and contrast the tourism-based soft power strategies in specific European countries such as France, Italy, Spain on and China.
3. To evaluate the efficiency of tourism diplomacy specifically when it comes to affecting international attitudes, enhancing bilateral and multilateral relationships and boosting geopolitical influence in the world stage.

## Research Questions

1. What role does tourism play in the practice of soft power diplomacy?
2. How do the tourism-based soft power strategies of France, Italy, and Spain compare with those of China?
3. To what extent is tourism diplomacy effective in shaping international attitudes, strengthening bilateral and multilateral relations, and enhancing geopolitical influence on the global stage?

### III. METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a qualitative research method and comparative research design to examine the use of tourism as a soft power strategy in international relations, with a focus on selected European countries: France, Italy, and Spain and China. Comparative research is appropriate for this study because it enables the analysis of differences and similarities across diverse contexts, while identifying patterns in the way's tourism contributes to international influence (Hantrais, 2021).

The choice of these countries is based on purposive sampling, a non-probability sampling technique that allows for the deliberate selection of cases that are especially informative for the research objectives (Etikan & Bala, 2019). China was selected as a representative of a centralised and state-led model of tourism diplomacy, where tourism is strategically integrated into broader national foreign policy initiatives such as the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and the activities of Confucius Institutes. By contrast, France, Italy, and Spain exemplify a decentralised, heritage-driven approach, where tourism promotion is largely managed by local and regional institutions, emphasising cultural identity, history, gastronomy, and regional diversity.

### IV. RESEARCH APPROACH

The study employs a comparative case study method, which is widely recognised for its value in exploring complex social and political phenomena across different national contexts (Yin, 2018; Gerring, 2022). This method facilitates in-depth analysis of the similarities, differences, and contextual factors influencing tourism diplomacy in Europe and China.

#### Data Sources

The analysis is based primarily on secondary data, drawn from a range of credible and traceable sources, including:

- Policy and strategic documents: National tourism plans, cultural diplomacy frameworks, and foreign policy statements.

- Institutional publications: Reports and publications from ministries of tourism, cultural boards, Confucius Institutes, UNESCO, and the UNWTO.
- Tourism statistics: Data provided by the World Bank, UNWTO (2023), and national tourism authorities in China, France, Italy, and Spain.
- Academic literature: Peer-reviewed journal articles, monographs, and recent case studies on tourism, soft power, and public diplomacy (2019–2025).

#### Analytical Framework

The countries are compared across five dimensions identified in the literature as critical to soft power analysis:

1. Governance structures – the degree of centralisation or decentralisation in tourism diplomacy.
2. Cultural messaging – the ways in which cultural heritage, events, and narratives are promoted.
3. Foreign policy alignment – the extent to which tourism initiatives are integrated with wider diplomatic and geopolitical objectives.
4. Public perception – how target audiences respond to tourism-based soft power initiatives.
5. Soft power outcomes – the observable effects on national image, influence, and global standing.

By combining these analytical dimensions, the study provides a holistic understanding of how tourism functions as a diplomatic and strategic instrument in a multipolar world.

#### Comparative Case Studies: Tourism and Soft Power in Practice

France, Italy, and Spain are selected as representative cases of Europe's decentralised model due to their rich cultural heritage, global tourism appeal, and well-established public diplomacy frameworks. China is chosen for its distinctive, state-driven model of tourism diplomacy, particularly its integration with the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and cultural institutions such as the Confucius Institutes.

China: Centralised Cultural Diplomacy and Strategic Tourism

#### Strategic Framework

China's tourism diplomacy is embedded within its wider foreign policy agenda, coordinated by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism and supported by the State Council. In recent years, China has increasingly presented tourism as part of its global narrative of connectivity, peace, and sustainable development (Chen, 2023; Li & Wang, 2024).

#### Key Tools and Initiatives

- **Belt and Road Initiative (BRI):** The Belt and Road Initiative is a global infrastructure development strategy adopted by the government of China in 2013 to invest in more than 150 countries and international organisation (James, M, Noah, B & Andrew, C, 2022). By 2024, more than 140 countries had signed cooperation agreements with China under the BRI, with tourism corridors and cross-border facilitation emerging as priority areas (World Bank, 2023). Tourism partnerships include visa liberalisation, joint promotion campaigns, and infrastructure development along BRI routes (Winter, 2019; Chen, 2023).
- **Confucius Institutes:** Confucius Institutes are educational and cultural institutions established by the Chinese government to teach people of other cultures and languages Chinese culture and language. As of 2023, approximately 498 Confucius Institutes and 773 Confucius Classrooms were active worldwide. Beyond language teaching, they increasingly integrate tourism promotion through cultural festivals, study tours, and exchange programmes (Hartig, 2021).
- **Mega-events:** Hosting major global events such as the Beijing 2022 Winter Olympics reinforced China's branding as a modern and capable power, though geopolitical boycotts highlighted ongoing challenges to its credibility (Brownell, 2022).

#### Narrative Control

China's promotion of tourism is tightly managed, highlighting carefully curated cultural symbols,

martial arts, tea culture, the Great Wall while downplaying contentious political issues (Zhao, 2021). This strengthens coherence but raises questions about authenticity.

#### Soft Power Implications

China's model is strategic and well-funded but remains contested. While it expands global outreach through tourism, criticism persists over censorship, human rights concerns, and the blending of culture with political propaganda (Callahan, 2022).

France: Cultural Sophistication and Global Brand Identity

#### Strategic Framework

France remains the world's most visited country, recovering rapidly from the COVID-19 downturn with nearly 80 million visitors in 2022 (UNWTO, 2023). Its decentralised tourism model involves significant regional participation, complemented by Atout France and cultural diplomacy networks like the Alliance Française (Brand Finance, 2024).

#### Key Tools and Initiatives

- **Art, Fashion, and Gastronomy:** France maintains global visibility through exhibitions, Paris Fashion Week, and Michelin gastronomy, positioning itself as a global hub of elegance and creativity (Novelli & Ateljevic, 2022).
- **World Heritage Promotion:** With 49 UNESCO World Heritage sites, France integrates heritage tourism with sustainability strategies under its 2030 National Tourism Plan (Ministère de l'Europe et des Affaires Étrangères, 2021).
- **Education Tourism:** French language immersion programmes and study-abroad exchanges continue to bolster cultural influence.

#### Soft Power Implications

France's tourism identity is grounded in liberal values, cultural prestige, and cosmopolitanism. Unlike China, it benefits from authenticity and voluntary appeal,

contributing to its consistent top ranking in global soft power indices (Brand Finance, 2024).

### Italy: Heritage, Nostalgia, and Experiential Tourism

#### Strategic Framework

Italy positions itself as the custodian of world heritage, with 59 UNESCO World Heritage sites as of 2023 (UNESCO, 2023). The Italian National Tourist Board (ENIT) collaborates with local authorities to promote heritage tourism, gastronomy, and creative industries, aligning with EU sustainability agendas (OECD, 2022).

#### Key Tools and Initiatives

- **Cultural Routes:** Initiatives such as the Via Francigena pilgrim route and wine and food trails reflect Italy’s emphasis on experiential and slow tourism (Gómez & Martín, 2022).
- **Experiential Tourism:** Campaigns such as “Live Italian” highlight emotional experiences tied to romance, lifestyle, and nostalgia, resonating with international tourists (Avraham, 2021).
- **Cultural Institutes Abroad:** Italian Cultural Institutes promote opera, language, design, and culinary diplomacy, often tied to tourism campaigns.

#### Soft Power Implications

Italy’s appeal is built on emotion, aesthetics, and heritage. Though less strategically coordinated than China’s model, its enduring cultural allure ensures resilience and global admiration (Pan et al., 2022).

### Spain: Vibrancy, Language, and Cultural Festivities

#### Strategic Framework

Spain uses a lifestyle-oriented model of tourism diplomacy, centred on festivals, sports, and language. Turespaña and Instituto Cervantes lead international campaigns, linking cultural promotion to tourism flows. Spain welcomed over 85 million tourists in 2023, surpassing pre-pandemic levels (UNWTO, 2023).

#### Key Tools and Initiatives

- **Festivals and Celebrations:** Iconic events such as La Tomatina, Las Fallas, and Semana Santa are marketed globally as unique cultural experiences (Gómez & Martín, 2022).
- **Language and Latin American Ties:** Spanish language education abroad, facilitated by Instituto Cervantes, remains a crucial soft power tool linked to educational tourism.
- **Sustainability and Innovation:** Spain is a pioneer in green tourism policies, investing in renewable energy infrastructure for destinations and sustainable coastal management (OECD, 2022).

#### Soft Power Implications

Spain combines vibrancy, inclusivity, and heritage with progressive policies, boosting its international image. Its decentralised but globally connected approach enables it to balance cultural authenticity with international competitiveness (Brand Finance, 2024).

### Comparative Analysis: China and Europe’s Use of Tourism as Soft Power

This section provides a critical comparison between China’s centralised, state-led model of tourism diplomacy and the decentralised, culturally embedded approaches seen in France, Italy, and Spain. The analysis focuses on five dimensions: governance structure, cultural messaging, alignment with foreign policy, public reception, and overall soft power impact.

#### 1. Governance and Strategic Coordination

China	Europe (France, Italy, Spain)
Highly centralised; tourism strategy coordinated by the Chinese Communist Party and state ministries	Decentralised; tourism strategies led by national boards but largely promoted by regional and local authorities
Strong integration with state ideology and	Driven more by cultural heritage, regional identity, and market

national development goals	demand than by foreign policy agendas
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China treats tourism as a formal extension of statecraft, whereas European countries treat it as a cultural and economic asset with indirect diplomatic benefits.

### 2. Cultural Messaging and Narrative Control

China	Europe (France, Italy, Spain)
Carefully curated image emphasizing harmony, unity, modernity, and national pride	Emphasis on authenticity, emotional appeal, historical depth, and regional diversity
Promotes traditional values within a politically safe narrative; sensitive topics avoided	Encourages openness, free expression, and local creativity in tourism experiences

European messaging is perceived as more spontaneous and credible, enhancing soft power appeal. China's message is powerful but can appear overly managed or propagandistic.

### 3. Tourism and Foreign Policy Alignment

China	Europe (France, Italy, Spain)
Tourism is explicitly tied to foreign policy through initiatives like the Belt and Road, Confucius Institutes, and state-run exchange programs	Tourism diplomacy is largely informal; soft power grows organically through cultural prestige, language, and art
Uses tourism to expand geopolitical influence, especially in Africa, Southeast Asia, and BRI countries	Strengthens existing alliances and builds goodwill, especially within the EU, Americas, and Asia

China's approach is proactive and strategic, whereas Europe's is passive yet consistently effective due to the enduring strength of its cultural capital.

### 4. Public Reception and International Perception

China	Europe (France, Italy, Spain)
Mixed reception globally; admired for scale and efficiency, but often distrusted for perceived political motives	Generally positive perception; seen as authentic, liberal, and welcoming destinations
Some soft power gains are hindered by human rights concerns and information control	European countries consistently top soft power indices due to high cultural trust

Tourism-based soft power requires more than visibility, it also depends on perceived credibility and cultural openness.

### 5. Soft Power Outcomes and Impact

China	Europe (France, Italy, Spain)
Improved regional influence and visibility, especially in Asia and Africa; rising but uneven soft power growth	Maintains global cultural dominance, with France, Italy, and Spain consistently ranked high in global soft power indices (e.g., Soft Power 30).
Strong infrastructure and diplomatic alignment; weaker on trust and emotional connection	Strong emotional resonance and global admiration; weaker strategic coordination.

China is gaining ground with structure and investment, while Europe retains an advantage through deep-rooted cultural influence.

## V. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### 1. The Role of Tourism in Soft Power Diplomacy

Tourism has become a recognised instrument for projecting cultural values, shaping perceptions, and fostering diplomatic relationships. The European

experience demonstrates how a decentralised, heritage-oriented model can organically generate goodwill, while China's state-directed approach shows how tourism can be strategically woven into foreign policy and broader national agendas.

For Africa, these insights reveal both opportunities and challenges. On the one hand, Africa possesses immense cultural capital ranging from Ethiopia's Timkat festival, Ghana's Homowo, Senegal's Gorée Island heritage, to South Africa's Robben Island which can serve as authentic vehicles of cultural diplomacy, similar to Europe's heritage-driven strategies. On the other hand, lessons can also be drawn from China's coordinated system. Embedding tourism within continental initiatives such as the African Union's Agenda 2063, or within subregional frameworks like ECOWAS, could provide Africa with a more unified soft power front and stronger visibility on the global stage.

In Nigeria, tourism holds particular promise for soft power projection. Nigeria's cultural richness illustrated by the Osun-Osogbo Sacred Grove, the Argungu Fishing Festival, the Calabar Carnival, Nollywood, and Afrobeats already resonates internationally. These cultural exports have contributed to Nigeria's reputation as a creative hub and strengthened informal forms of diplomacy. However, the current tourism model is fragmented across states and insufficiently aligned with national diplomatic objectives. Adopting elements of China's centralised coordination would allow Nigeria to better harness its cultural industries and heritage as instruments of soft power. Initiatives such as structured diaspora tourism, embedding Nollywood and Afrobeats into cultural diplomacy campaigns, and establishing cultural centres abroad would transform Nigeria's cultural influence into a deliberate diplomatic strategy.

## 2. Comparative Tourism-Based Strategies

When comparing approaches across Europe, China, Africa, and Nigeria, clear distinctions emerge. China relies heavily on institutional tools such as Confucius Institutes, large-scale events, and carefully curated cultural icons, producing a coherent but sometimes overly managed national brand. Europe's strength lies in authenticity and diversity: France leverages its art

and gastronomy, Italy its heritage and experiential tourism, and Spain its festivals, language, and lifestyle.

Africa reflects Europe's authenticity through its diverse festivals and heritage tourism, but its fragmented systems and weak regional cooperation hinder its global impact. Nigeria, though rich in cultural exports with Nollywood and Afrobeats achieving international penetration, faces similar challenges. Without centralised coordination, much of Nigeria's cultural influence remains unstructured and underutilised as a tool of diplomacy. Stronger alignment between culture, tourism, and foreign policy could elevate Nigeria's standing and reposition it as a continental leader in tourism-driven soft power.

## 3. Effectiveness in International Relations

The effectiveness of tourism diplomacy varies across regions. China's approach ensures visibility and influence, particularly in developing countries, but its credibility is often questioned due to political overtones. Europe, conversely, continues to benefit from trust and authenticity, enabling France, Italy, and Spain to maintain consistently high rankings in soft power indices. Africa's gains are less consistent, with countries making strides in cultural diplomacy but constrained by infrastructure gaps, insecurity, and limited policy coherence. Nigeria stands out as a country with extraordinary cultural assets, but without cohesive strategy, its potential soft power remains underexploited.

## 4. Broader Implications for Soft Power

The comparison highlights that sustainable soft power requires both strategic planning and authenticity. China demonstrates the benefits of structure and investment, while Europe shows the enduring appeal of cultural trust and credibility. For Africa, the way forward lies in blending both models, retaining authenticity while building stronger regional frameworks. Nigeria, in particular, is positioned to lead by combining its cultural dynamism with more coordinated state support. By doing so, it can convert cultural vibrancy into tangible diplomatic capital and reposition tourism as a core pillar of its international engagement.

## CONCLUSION

This study has examined the use of tourism as a soft power instrument in international relations, comparing European and Chinese approaches while extending the analysis to Africa and Nigeria. Europe demonstrates that decentralised, heritage-driven tourism can generate long-term cultural credibility and trust, while China shows that centralised, state-led tourism can rapidly expand global visibility and align with foreign policy goals. Both models reveal the growing importance of tourism as more than an economic activity, but rather a strategic tool of diplomacy.

For Africa, tourism provides a dual pathway. On one side, cultural authenticity offers a credible foundation for soft power, as festivals, heritage sites, and music create people-to-people bonds. On the other, regional coordination through frameworks such as Agenda 2063 can transform Africa's diverse tourism offerings into a collective diplomatic force. For Nigeria, the challenge is to bridge cultural vibrancy with structured strategy. By aligning its globally influential cultural exports, such as Nollywood and Afrobeats, with a national tourism and foreign policy agenda, Nigeria can reposition itself as a continental leader and strengthen its international influence.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### 1. For Policymakers in Africa and Nigeria

Africa should adopt a coordinated regional tourism brand under the African Union and regional blocs, while Nigeria should establish a clear national tourism diplomacy policy that aligns with foreign relations objectives.

Nigeria should prioritise infrastructure development, improved security, and streamlined visa policies to make its tourism sector more competitive and attractive.

### 2. For Cultural and Diplomatic Institutions

Expand cultural centres abroad that highlight African and Nigerian heritage, music, and cinema as integral parts of soft power diplomacy.

Promote diaspora tourism and intercultural exchange programmes to strengthen ties with global communities.

### 3. For Tourism and Creative Industry Stakeholders

Leverage Nollywood and Afrobeats as tourism drivers by linking film festivals, concerts, and cultural expos with official diplomatic initiatives.

Encourage storytelling campaigns that present authentic narratives of Africa and Nigeria, countering negative stereotypes and enhancing global image.

### 4. For Future Research

Investigate the role of digital diplomacy and social media in shaping Africa's and Nigeria's tourism narratives.

Explore the potential of youth mobility, climate-conscious tourism, and mega-events in advancing Africa's tourism-based soft power.

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