

الآلهة والعبادة



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

ECONOMIC GROWTH THROUGH SUSTAINABLE TOURISM PROJECT

PROJECT SUMMARY
DECEMBER 2014



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CONTENTS

6	PROJECT PARTNERS
10	ACRONYMS
12	PRESERVING AND PRESENTING JORDAN'S HERITAGE AND CREATING JOBS THROUGH TOURISM

IMPROVING THE TOURISM EXPERIENCE AROUND JORDAN

18	.....	PETRA DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL MANAGEMENT
22	.....	BETTER EXPERIENCE, LOWER SITE IMPACT
24	.....	PETRA VISITOR ARRIVAL COMPLETELY TRANSFORMED
28	.....	UPDATING THE STRATEGY FOR MANAGEMENT OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL HERITAGE IN JORDAN
29	.....	ENHANCING MANAGEMENT AND OPERATION OF JORDAN'S NATIONAL MUSEUM
32	.....	BETTER VISITOR INFORMATION AT JORDAN'S TOURIST ATTRACTIONS

MARKETING JORDAN AND PRESENTING NEW EXPERIENCES

42	.....	STIMULATING GROWTH BY IMPROVING TRAVELERS' PERCEPTIONS OF JORDAN AS A DESIRABLE, STABLE DESTINATION
48	.....	CULTIVATING NEW MARKETS WITH STRONGER TOURISM PROMOTION AND SALES
50	.....	BUILDING TOURISM SECTOR CAPACITY TO DEVELOP NICHE MARKETS
62	.....	EXPANDING JORDAN'S TRAVEL AGENT NETWORK IN THE U.S. AND OTHER MARKETS
62	.....	PROMOTING TOURISM HANDICRAFT SECTOR
63	.....	PROMOTING AQABA AS A DESTINATION

IMPROVING TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY EDUCATION IN JORDAN

- 68 EXCELLENCE IN TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY VOCATIONAL TRAINING
- 80 REFORMING HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM PROGRAMS AT EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

IMPROVING QUALITY AND DEVELOPING THE WORKFORCE

- 96 PROMOTING GOOD ENVIRONMENTAL PRACTICES IN HOTELS
- 97 DEVELOPING THE TOURISM WORKFORCE THROUGH INDUSTRY-BASED TRAINING
- 101 ESTABLISH ON-THE-JOB TRAINING CERTIFICATION THROUGH PATHWAYS TO PROFESSIONALISM
- 104 NEW CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM FOR JORDAN'S RESTAURANTS
- 106 PROMOTING GENDER EQUITY IN THE TOURISM WORKPLACE
- 107 BUILDING CAPACITY OF COMMUNITY-BASED COOPERATIVES IN TAFILEH & AJLOUN
- 109 PROMOTING MINISTRY OF INTERIOR'S TOURISM GRANTS WITH THE EUROPEAN UNION

TOURISM AWARENESS AND STATISTICS

- 114 NATIONWIDE CAMPAIGNS
- 118 HIGHLIGHT FROM THE NATIONAL TOURISM AWARENESS SURVEY 2014
- 120 SUPPORT TOURISM RESEARCH AND DECISION-MAKING THROUGH TOURISM SATELLITE ACCOUNTS

- 125 GRANTS AWARDED BY THE USAID ECONOMIC GROWTH THROUGH SUSTAINABLE TOURISM PROJECT**
- 127 THE TEAM THAT MADE IT HAPPEN**

PROJECT PARTNERS

The USAID Economic Growth Through Sustainable Tourism Project has been implemented in partnership with Government of Jordan, the private sector and local communities across the kingdom.

Government of Jordan Partners

- Ministry of Tourism & Antiquities (primary counterpart)
- Ministry of Labor, Center of Accreditation and Quality Assurance
- Ministry of Education
- Ministry of Higher Education & Scientific Research
- Ministry of Interior: Local Development Units
- Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation - IRADA
- Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority
- Department of Antiquities
- Department of Statistics
- Directorates of Education in Ajloun, Aqaba, Tafleh
- Employment -Technical Vocational Educational and Training (E-TVET) Fund
- Petra Development & Tourism Region Authority
- Petra National Trust
- Jordan Tourism Board
- Jordan Food & Drug Administration
- Vocational Training Corporation
- Higher Education Accreditation Commission
- Ajloun Governorate
- Ajloun Municipality
- Central Bank of Jordan
- Higher Council for Youth
- Higher Council for Population
- Tafleh Governorate
- Tafleh Municipality

Educational Institutions

- University of Jordan, Amman and Aqaba
- Yarmouk University
- Al Balqa University
- Al Hussein University, Wadi Musa
- Al Quds College
- Jordan Applied University College for Hospitality and Tourism Education
- Madaba Institute for Mosaic Art and Restoration
- Secondary Comprehensive School for Females (Fundukia), Aqaba
- Royal Academy of Culinary Arts
- Tafleh Technical University

Tourism, Heritage, Community and Non-Profit Organization

- Jordan Inbound Tour Operators Association
- Jordan Hotel Association
- Jordan Restaurant Association
- Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature
- Jordan Handcraft Producers and Traders Association
- Jordan Micro Credit Company - Tamweelcom
- Jordan National Gallery of Fine Arts
- Jordan River Foundation
- King Hussein Foundation
- Aqaba Development Company
- Aqaba Hotel Association
- Ayla Oasis Development Company
- Brooke Animal Hospital, Jordan
- Community Centers, Tafleh and Ajloun
- Fakherdein Group
- Saraya Holdings
- Save the Children
- Better Business, Jordan
- Solimar International, USA

Hotels

- Days Inn Hotel, Aqaba
- Hilton Double Tree Hotel, Aqaba
- Intercontinental Hotel Group
- Kempinski Hotel, Aqaba
- Movenpick Hotel, Aqaba
- Radisson Blu, Aqaba

International Partners

- United Nations World Tourism Organization
- UNWTO Themis Foundation TeqQual
- USAID Youth Work Jordan Project
- United Nations Development Program
- George Washington University
- Smithsonian Institute
- California State University East Bay
- European Delegation
- International Labor Organization
- Italian Embassy - Cooperation for Development

ACRONYMS

ACED	Aqaba Community and Economic Development
ASEZA	Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority
BDC	Business Development Center
CAQA	Center of Accreditation and Quality Assurance
CBO	Community-Based Organization
CTO	USAID Cognizant Technical Officer
DOA	Department of Antiquities
DMC	Destination Management Companies
EGST	Economic Growth Through Sustainable Tourism Project
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
GAM	Greater Amman Municipality
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GNP	Gross National Product
GOJ	Government of Jordan
HEAC	Higher Education Accreditation Commission
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IMP	Implementation and Monitoring Plan
JHTEC	Jordan Hospitality and Tourism Education Company
JITOA	Jordan Inbound Tour Operators Association
JRF	Jordan River Foundation
JTB	Jordan Tourism Board
JTBNA	Jordan Tourism Board North America
JNA	Jordan National Agenda
MOE	Ministry of Education
MOHE	Ministry of Higher Education & Scientific Research
MOPIC	Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation
MOTA	Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities
MSME	Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises

NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NTS	National Tourism Strategy
PAP	Petra Archaeological Park
PDTRA	Petra Development and Tourism Management Association
PMP	Performance Monitoring & Evaluation Plan
PNT	Petra National Trust
PRA	Petra Regional Authority
PSD	Private Sector Development
RACA	Royal Academy of Culinary Arts
RSCN	Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature
SITE	Society of Incentive Travel Excellence
SOW	Scope of Work
TSA	Tourism Satellite Accounts
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
UNESCO	United Nations Education, Scientific and Educational Organization
USG	United States Government
VTC	Vocational Training Corporation
WB	World Bank
WHC	World Heritage Committee
WRPA	Wadi Rum Protected Area
WTO	World Tourism Organization

PRESERVING AND PRESENTING JORDAN'S HERITAGE AND CREATING JOBS THROUGH TOURISM

USAID has long supported Jordan's tourism sector, which is the country's largest economic sector, the second largest earner of foreign exchange after remittances and the largest generator of private sector employment.

In 2002 – 2005 a Jordan National Tourism Strategy was developed and launched by HM King Abdullah II at the 2005 World Economic Forum and its implementation was supported by the first USAID tourism project known as Siyaha (2005-2008). The USAID Jordan Tourism Development Project II (2008-2013) built on this success and resulted in several great achievements. The 18-month USAID Economic Growth Through Sustainable Tourism Project (2013-2014) continued that work to improve Jordan's competitiveness as an international tourism destination in order to boost the country's GDP, create jobs and engage women and youth.

Partnering with the tourism sector for an improved tourism economy

The project worked in partnership with the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities on initiatives to further develop the country's tourism sector and bring several tourism initiatives, for which the foundation was laid under the previous tourism project, to fruition. These included implementing a new national restaurant classification system, improving destination marketing, building tourism human resource capacity, diversifying vocational training in tourism and hospitality and enhancing the visitor experience at key attractions. Support at tourist sites included upgrading site management and interpretation with a focus on Petra, Ajloun and Madaba.

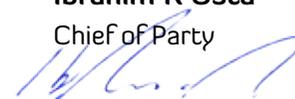
Key achievements in developing Jordan's tourism sector

The following are highlights from this report:

- The Petra Visitor Center building was revamped and upgraded, vastly improving the entry to this historic site and introducing visitors to the ancient city through engaging interpretation and a museum-like experience.
- In partnership with the Smithsonian Institution, a new design concept was developed for the Jordan Museum to enhance its presentation of Jordan's history through an improved storyline, exhibit designs and a comprehensive business plan. Now a solid plan has been presented for the museum to develop a world-class experience.
- 200 million positive impressions were created to improve traveler perceptions of Jordan in multiple markets as a desirable and stable destination. To achieve this, 600 travel journalists and bloggers from 25 countries visited Jordan and published positive articles about it. This included major brands and media such as Columbia Sportswear, National Geographic Traveler en Español, Family Travel Network and Forbes Magazine.
- A cooperative marketing campaign with North American tour operators promoted destination Jordan to around 5 million North American travel consumers, while a campaign implemented in partnership with TripAdvisor reached a further 5 million within the US, UK and German travel markets.
- Support to Jordan's tourism vocational training centers continued, from which more than 8,500 students have graduated since the start of the initiative in 2006 with a 70% employment rate. New specialized hospitality programs were introduced, covering Arabic food and bakery and pastry.
- A Pathways to Professionalism scheme was introduced for Jordan's 5* hotels to enable on-the-job training leading to certification. The new scheme was successfully piloted with the Intercontinental Hotel Group and more than 50 hotel workers were certified through it as a result.

Explore the following pages to learn more about these and many other initiatives, and to meet some of those who benefitted from USAID's investment in tourism.

Best regards,
Ibrahim K Osta
Chief of Party





▲
The magnificent Treasury at Petra, Jordan

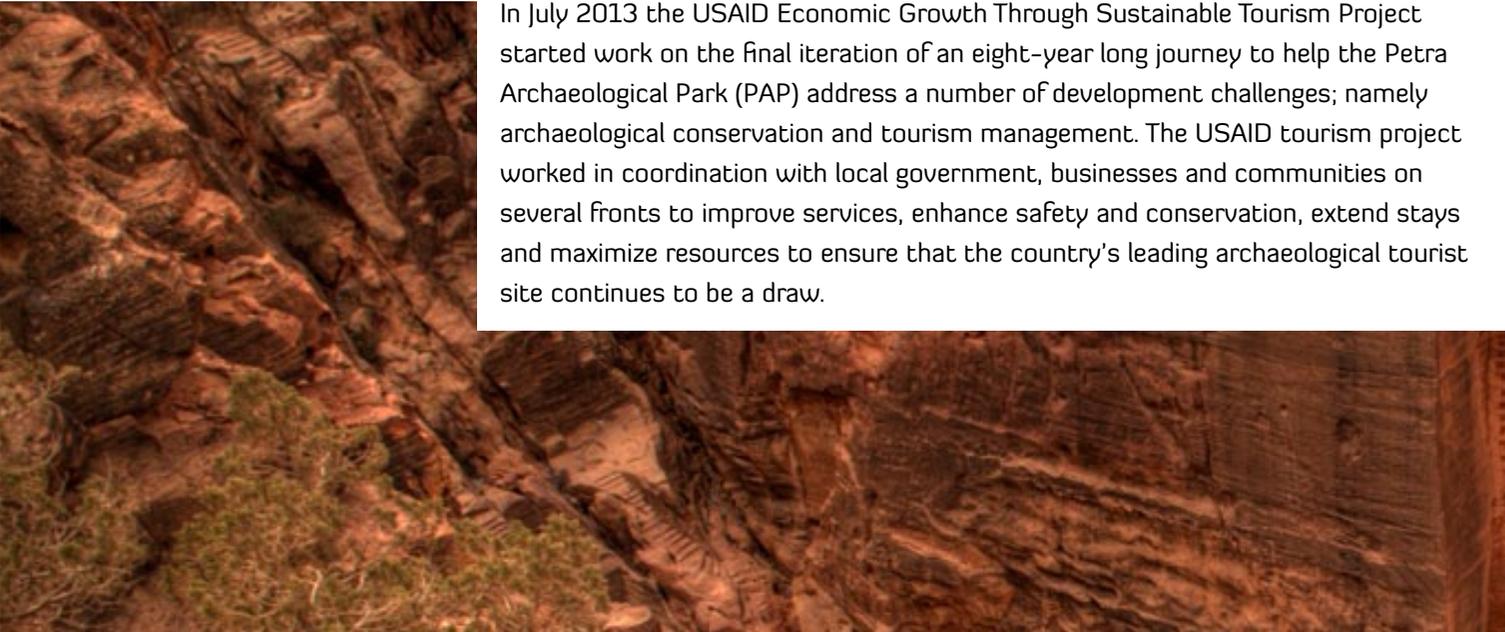


IMPROVING
THE TOURISM
EXPERIENCE
AROUND
JORDAN

Jordan boasts a wealth of archaeological, historic, cultural and natural attractions that collectively draw millions of visitors each year. These support the country's tourism economy, which is the second highest employer. The USAID Economic Growth Through Sustainable Tourism Project has worked to improve the visitor experience at several sites while prioritizing the preservation of these unique historic treasures. This work has encompassed Jordan's most famous attractions such as Petra, Wadi Rum and Jarash, as well as the popular tourist destinations of Aqaba, Ajloun and Madaba, and lesser known sites such as Um Al Jimal. Efforts included conservation planning, developing visitor centers and enhancing the visitor experience at existing attractions by introducing new services and facilities and providing enhanced information and interpretation. The USAID tourism project also helped to build the institutional capacity of national authorities through training, study tours and developing heritage management strategies and action plans.

PETRA

DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL MANAGEMENT



In July 2013 the USAID Economic Growth Through Sustainable Tourism Project started work on the final iteration of an eight-year long journey to help the Petra Archaeological Park (PAP) address a number of development challenges; namely archaeological conservation and tourism management. The USAID tourism project worked in coordination with local government, businesses and communities on several fronts to improve services, enhance safety and conservation, extend stays and maximize resources to ensure that the country's leading archaeological tourist site continues to be a draw.

Maintaining Petra's UNESCO World Heritage status



To help maintain the status of the Petra Archaeological Park as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, USAID supported a wide range of activities to address World Heritage Committee (WHC) requirements. Having provided technical support to the Petra Development and Tourism Region Authority (PDTRA) to develop the Petra Region Master Plan, the USAID tourism project helped finalize and implement several sub-components of the master plan, including buffer zone alignment and regulation, a crucial UNESCO requirement. The project also drafted the State of Conservation report due to be submitted to the WHC in February 2015.



Buffer zone to protect Petra

The Petra Archaeological Park buffer zone was one of UNESCO's World Heritage Center requirements and was designated by the Government of Jordan. This buffer zone created the conditions necessary to protect the Petra Archaeological Park. It enabled more efficient, effective, sustainable and environmentally responsible plans and policies. As a result PDTRA is better able to monitor developments around PAP. In addition, more environmentally accepted tourism practices and developments are encouraged within the zone, attracting support from interested national and international entities.

The USAID Economic Growth Through Sustainable Tourism Project delivered a PAP buffer zone study, and designated an experienced urban and tourism planner to enable PDTRA to initiate the required buffer zone planning process and the delivery of the Buffer Zone Plan as well as its legal documentation. The USAID tourism project's extensive technical support included: repairing the buffer zone plan terms of reference and request for proposals; the tendering process; participating in the technical evaluation committee; providing on-job training for PDTRA staff; submitting technical advice to PDTRA on the Urban Expansion Study; and coordination and communication with various stakeholders.





Action plan to conserve the site

The USAID tourism project completed a conservation action plan in collaboration with Jordan's Department of Antiquities (DoA) and Cultech, a local NGO specializing in conservation, to adopt preservation measures for Petra in response to requirements set out by the World Heritage Committee (WHC). This conservation plan is an important working document that feeds into an overall site management plan addressing other areas that include operations tourism management, socio-economic elements, natural resources and the preservation of artifacts. Support included developing implementation strategies and action plans for conservation work addressing significant areas of weakness that require further detailed studies, such as risk analysis, condition assessment and conservation policies.

Training Petra conservation staff

Field training was provided to PAP conservation staff and cultural resource management graduates from Yarmouk University, on monitoring and evaluation of site condition and stone assessment. Protocols were also developed by the USAID project to strengthen collaboration between PAP and the DoA. PAP site use regulations and instructions were updated. Further training was conducted to develop the capacity of 11 PAP technical maintenance staff, and five graduate students from Al Hussein Bin Talal University, on cyclical maintenance for the site and monuments.

BETTER EXPERIENCE, LOWER SITE IMPACT

Identifying an alternative PAP exit road

Establishing an alternative exit from Petra was identified as a key way to improve the visitor experience as it would reduce foot traffic along the main path and lessen negative impact on the site. The Turkmaniyah road was identified as an alternative exit, and the USAID project worked closely with PDTRA and other stakeholders to develop a plan for implementing the alternative exit solution. The project presented detailed engineering drawings to the DoA that include measures to protect the integrity of the site and the safety of the Turkmaniyah Tomb, which lies along that route.

Updated site use regulations

The USAID tourism project assisted PDTRA to develop and regularly update site use instructions for the park. The purpose is to ensure sustainable use of the park and to equip PAP management with the tools to monitor site use practices. The instructions cover retail activities such as horse, carriage and camel rides, guides and camping, and film production and events.





Care for Petra tourism campaign

To tackle some of the major challenges to the visitor experience and improve the conditions and welfare of working animals, reduce child labor and prevent further damage to the archaeological site, a campaign was designed to raise awareness and foster responsible attitudes, behaviors, initiatives and actions from tourists, the tourism industry, Park authorities, governmental bodies and other key stakeholders. A campaign taskforce led by PAP consisted of national and international organizations that collaborated to address three core issues. The “Care for Petra: Children, Animals, Heritage” campaign was developed with the support of Bait Al Anbat, the Brooke, the International Labour Organization, the Jordan Tourism Board, the Jordan Tour Guides Association, the Petra National Trust, Save the Children, SPANA-Jordan, UNESCO Amman and the USAID Economic Growth Through Sustainable Tourism Project. A range of campaign communications materials, such as flyers, banners, an animation, and activities were developed and distributed to raise awareness, inform and recruit active support. Launched in October 2014, the Care for Petra campaign relies on simple and clear messages that are memorable, easy to understand, engaging and encourage positive action.

PETRA VISITOR ARRIVAL COMPLETELY TRANSFORMED

“ We are excited about this wonderful center that vastly improves the visitor entrance to Petra. We now have the opportunity to display hundreds of precious Nabataean artifacts that were previously stored out of public view. This center is part of wider efforts to overhaul the entire Petra area in terms of conservation and visitor facilities, from master planning to local community engagement. We thank our partners who have worked with us every step of the way for a better Petra for Jordanians and the world. ”

H.E. Mohammad Al Nawafleh,
PDTRA Chief Commissioner
On the opening of the Petra Visitor Center



Petra's existing visitor center has long been in need of a complete revamp to offer visitors the world class experience they expect and that the popular tourist site deserves. The USAID tourism project first started an initiative in 2010 to help PAP management find a solution to the need to overhaul the visitor center, in terms of improved reception, ticketing, information, facilities, guiding and understanding of the site.



Previously, a new visitor center had been planned to replace the existing one, at an estimated \$15 million cost and plans stalled due to lack of funding. In response to this challenge, USAID developed a design to revamp the existing center and add on the needed services and facilities for a significantly enhanced experience at a fraction of the cost. From planning to design, construction and interpretation, USAID provided guidance, consultation and implementation throughout the entire process.

Since 2013, the USAID Economic Growth Through Sustainable Tourism Project has worked to complete the interior panel designs and interpretation. This included developing the interpretive storyline, content and designs for the panels. The enhanced Petra Visitor Center was officially opened by His Majesty King Abdullah II in October 2014.

The stunning redesign of the Petra Visitor Center is testament to an immense achievement by all stakeholders and partners involved, including the Petra National Trust, Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, Department of Antiquities, USAID tourism projects, the conservation community, local community, UNESCO and other archaeology-related organizations and NGOs.



US Ambassador to Jordan, Alice Wells, tours the Petra Visitor Center.

STUNNING REDESIGN OF PETRA VISITOR CENTER BREATHES NEW LIFE INTO PETRA EXPERIENCE



Petra is one of the most famous archaeological sites in the world. Capital city of the Nabataean Arabs, Petra is located 262 km south of Amman, Jordan. A unique example of an ancient civilization, Petra was carved into sandstone mountains more than 2,000 years ago, possibly as early as 312 BC. A UNESCO World Heritage Site and named one of the new Seven Wonders of the World, Petra is one of Jordan's most valuable treasures and its greatest tourist attraction, visited by thousands of tourists from all over the world each year.

A USAID tourism project initiative that began in 2010 to help Petra Archaeological Park (PAP) management revamp the Petra Visitor Center concluded in 2014 with the complete transformation of the visitor center into a world class facility that provides improved reception, ticketing, information, facilities, guiding and understanding of the site.

"The visitor center is the first thing people see when they visit Petra, so it is important that it creates a good first impression. If a tourist leaves the center with a positive impression, this reflects well on his or her overall visitor experience, which helps to indirectly promote the site through word of mouth," explained Dr. Emad Hijazeen, Deputy Chief Commissioner of Petra Archaeological Park.

The enhanced Petra Visitor Center was officially opened by His Majesty King Abdullah II in October 2014. The new center offers a museum-like experience that presents visitors with the fantastic history of Petra and the Nabataean civilization, along with some of the ancient city's most wonderful artifacts. It also prepares visitors to truly appreciate the magnificence of what they are about to see.

"The visitor center was carefully designed to provide tourists with a comprehensive impression of the whole site, by presenting the historical background of the area, and the progression of successive civilizations throughout the ages," said Dr. Emad Hijazeen.

The USAID tourism project designed the center and developed its interpretation. The design is based on the concept of upgrading the facade and image of the building and introducing a fast-track path for visitors who do not opt to tour the building. Inside the building additional functions were introduced, including visitor interpretation, ticketing and orientation. The upgraded visitor centre offers state-of-the-art interpretation showcases and panels telling the story of Petra. It boasts a fully-fledged collection of never before seen archaeological artifacts from the Nabataean era. The surroundings of the building were completely renovated, introducing an arrival plaza with water fountains, shaded theatre as well as service and retail spaces that are planned for cafes and handicrafts sales. The new arrival plaza enhances the 'sense of arrival' to the Petra Archaeological Park and offers a nighttime entertainment venue for tourists.

"The information presented at the visitor center shows visitors that Petra is not only about the

Treasury. There are over 800 facades and thousands of sites within the 264,000 square meters that make up the Petra Archaeological Park. This is just one aspect of the great Nabataean kingdom. It also adds value to the site in terms of heritage, history, culture, economy, local community and livelihoods, in addition to site preservation and the role of tourists to protect and help sustain the site," according to Dr. Hijazeen.

The redesign of the Petra Archaeological Park (PAP) Visitor Center and Plaza was accomplished through the commitment, dedication and cooperation of a large number of stakeholders and partners in this initiative; including the Petra National Trust, Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, Department of Antiquities, USAID Economic Growth Through Sustainable Tourism Project, the conservation community, local community, UNESCO and other archaeology related organizations and NGOs.

"We believe that enhanced experience resulting from the revamped Petra Visitor Center will ultimately result in longer stays and repeated visits by tourists," concluded Dr. Emad Hijazeen.

What tourists had to say about the new Petra Visitor Center:

"I have been coming regularly to the site for two years now and this is a very impressive addition to support visitor understanding. Very comprehensive and beautifully presented. Well done!" said Angela Fitzgerald, an expatriate living in Amman.

"Very interesting museum, it gave us a lot of knowledge about the history of people and Petra city. Thanks a lot for this deep work in this history," said Paulina Labovitsky from Boston, USA.

"The museum's information was insightful and clear with lots of information. I learned many things I did not know before. The guides and people were very helpful and very friendly. I would highly recommend anyone to come and speak to the staff and see the information in the museum. It was very great," said a tourist at Petra.

UPDATING THE STRATEGY FOR MANAGEMENT OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL HERITAGE IN JORDAN



The Department of Antiquities' (DoA) '2014-2018 Archaeological Heritage in Jordan Strategy' was developed previously with support from the USAID tourism project, in partnership with DoA, MoTA, Jordan Inbound Tour Operators Association, PAP, Wadi Rum Protected Area and the Baptism Site among others. Following on from this, a retreat was held to take the next steps towards implementing the strategy. Discussions centered on how heritage can be a tool for economic development, tourist perceptions of the Jordanian heritage experience and the need to update the strategic heritage management plan. The strategic objectives for management of archaeological heritage include site conservation, site management and uses, museums and artifacts, sustainable tourism at sites, research and excavations, law, administration and capacity building, public awareness and cooperation between stakeholders and local communities. Detailed action plans were developed to achieve the five identified strategic objectives. The 2014-2018 'Archaeological Heritage in Jordan Strategy' and corresponding action plans were launched in December 2013. The USAID tourism project also provided support to DoA to strengthen its institutional capacity through several activities.

ENHANCING MANAGEMENT AND OPERATION OF JORDAN'S NATIONAL MUSEUM



Displays at the Jordan National Museum.

The Jordan Museum is the steward of an unparalleled collection of the country's artifacts and material culture. Its mission is to enable the Jordanian people to appreciate and preserve their national identity. The USAID Economic Growth Through Sustainable Tourism Project provided support to build institutional capacity for the effective management and operation of the Jordan Museum through several activities, as well as support to revitalize the visitor experience.

In partnership with the Smithsonian Institution, the USAID tourism project developed a new conceptual design solution to revitalize the Jordan Museum's exhibits, along with a complete design for an orientation hall and recommendations to upgrade displays as well as revise the museum's storyline, which showcases the compelling stories of Jordan's history and heritage. A comprehensive business plan for the museum was also put forward. These

recommendations were based on a thorough assessment carried out with USAID tourism project support of the museum's operational setup, exhibition area and storyline. The initiative is helping to build the capacity of Jordan's heritage sector, and enrich the Jordan Museum experience, thus raising Jordan's profile as a major cultural draw while acting as a driver of growth in downtown Amman. The USAID tourism project also supported the development of a ticketing system at the Jordan Museum.

The USAID tourism project supported the participation of 10 specialists from the Jordan Museum, Department of Antiquities, Petra Archaeological Park and a private museum in a study tour to the United States, visiting more than 15 renowned US museums and related institutes. Participants were exposed to international best practices in museum operations, curation and programming.

MUSEUM STUDY TOUR TO USA

Representatives from the Jordan Museum, Department of Antiquities, Petra Archaeological Park and a private museum were exposed to best practices in museum operations, curation and programming through a study tour of 15 museums in Seattle, Los Angeles and Washington DC, including Smithsonian museums.

“We were impressed by the 15 museums we visited; how they exhibit themes, display items, develop gallery sections, match the exterior design with the theme, create simple, short and attractive interpretation signs, the role of a museum curator, and many other areas. Now we’ve learned which galleries should be available in Petra, how to choose their locations and what themes to display.”

Eng. Tahani Al Salhi

Director of Cultural Resources Management



“We are considering replicating some of what we learned during the trip. One is how to interact with visitors and gain their feedback using modern technologies. We are now working on developing the timeline already available at the museum and providing exhibition design tools to produce the storytelling materials ourselves. There are also efforts to cooperate with local museums around Jordan.”

Mr. Tammam Khasawneh

Restoration Consultant at the Jordan Museum



“The trip was an eye-opener in terms of developing museums and archaeological sites. I’ve been passing new ideas and comments onto some relevant entities, such as the Jordan museum and the Umayyad sites project, in terms of providing better interpretation, site improvement, creating themed shops, ensuring accessibility for people with disabilities, and many other suggestions.”

Samia Khouri

Director of Public Relations at the Department of Antiquities



“The Japanese American Museum was close to our core work, which is showcasing civilizations and people’s heritage. We benefited from the technologies adopted at the American museums. We have already initiated innovative efforts to promote voluntership, spread tourism awareness among students and make better use of social media platforms to increase awareness as well as the number of visitors.”

Mr. Bashar Twal

Managing Partner for La Storia Cultural Museum

HERITAGE SITE MANAGEMENT AND PROTECTION UK STUDY TOUR

Representatives from the Department of Antiquities, Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, Petra Archaeological Park and the Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority visited a range of heritage sites in the UK, including the iconic London attractions, the Shakespeare Visitor Center in Stratford Upon Avon, Stonehenge and the Roman baths of Bath. They met with experts from these sites, learning best practices in heritage site management.

“We were introduced to better ways of utilizing archaeological sites in terms of providing excellent tourism services, which is urgently needed in Jordan. We are considering a site management plan for developing the Ayla archaeological site based on our recent experience on the tour.”

H.E. Sharhabeel Madi

ASEZA Commissioner for Economic Development & Investment Affairs

“The tour was beneficial and a benchmark to work on. It provided us with the best practices that can be applied in Jordan, in terms of managing international heritage sites, engaging local communities and NGOs in site management and operation, enhancing the visitor experience at museums, providing facilities at tourism sites in addition to income-generating services.”

Jihad Haroun

Director of Excavations and Surveys at the Department of Antiquities

“The tour was very useful, especially in terms of enhancing the visitor experience. We were introduced to improved site management and operation systems and better ways to ensure site sustainability, enhance presentation and interpretation, provide better services, improve site trails, storylines, develop tourism products and attraction points to support the basic product, and offering handcraft shops. There are many of these things that we can replicate in Jordan.”

Ayman Abu Kharoub

Projects and Technical Development Director at MoTA



BETTER VISITOR INFORMATION AT JORDAN'S TOURIST ATTRACTIONS



▲ Interpretation sign installed at Madaba Archaeological Park

MADABA

Improving interpretation at the Madaba Archaeological Park

The USAID Economic Growth Through Sustainable Tourism Project built on previous efforts to contribute to the overall development of Madaba as a tourist destination by improving site presentation and interpretation at the Madaba Archaeological Park. This park encompasses the remains of several Byzantine churches, including the fantastic mosaics of the Church of the Virgin and the Hippolytus Hall. Several buildings adjacent to the complex house the Madaba Institute of Mosaic Art and Restoration for the restoration and conservation of ancient mosaics. Based on recommendations from the Mosaic Art and Restoration Interpretation Center Strategy, the USAID tourism project developed a complete design solution to re-use an existing vernacular house located within the Madaba Archaeological Park as an interpretation facility. The package integrated the interior spaces and details with the interpretive panels and exhibits. In addition, 10 information panels, were produced and installed, giving visitors the opportunity to better understand the history of the important structures they are seeing.

JARASH

Design of the interior of the Jarash visitor center.

The USAID tourism project supported several key MoTA and DoA initiatives to enhance the tourist experience at Jarash, a city remarkable for supporting 6,500 years of unbroken human occupation and an important heritage and tourism site.



Enhancing the Jarash visitor center

The USAID tourism project took the lead in supervising the design and development of the Jarash visitor center. The existing center was poorly presented, under-utilized and not well-incorporated into the site visit. The USAID tourism project supervised the process of developing a conceptual architectural design solution for the optimal use of the existing facility. The project also revised architectural drawings, interpretive content and graphic design illustrations. This will significantly improve the visitor experience.

Transforming the Ottoman building

The USAID tourism project also provided support to MoTA and DoA to upgrade the Ottoman building in Jarash for use as an interpretation point for visitors. This support included interior rehabilitation works and the development of interpretation themes and content for various new display areas within the building, which MoTA will implement.

A tourist reads a newly installed sign at Ajloun Castle



AJLOUN **Developing interpretation at the castle and visitor center**

Ajloun Castle was a fortress built by the nephew of Salah Eddin Al-Ayyubi in AD 1184-1185 to protect the country against Crusader attacks from the south and west. The castle is open to visiting tourists and houses a museum displaying interesting artifacts from various periods of the region. The USAID Economic Growth Through Sustainable Tourism Project provided support to the DoA and the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities by developing interpretation material for the castle and for the nearby Ajloun Visitor Center. Interpretive content for 26 signs was developed by the project and the signs were designed, produced and installed inside the castle and the visitor center. The new signs are improving the site and providing a more engaging experience for visitors.

Um Jimal at night.



UM JIMAL **Enhancing the visitor experience**

The Ambassador Fund invested in research and enhancement works at Um Jimal through the Michigan-based Calvin College. To help improve the visitor experience at the site, the USAID tourism project produced text and graphics for six interpretation signs, based on content provided by Calvin College.

The Aqaba Fort.



AQABA Improving Aqaba Fort and Sharif House museum experience

The fort, or castle, in Aqaba was originally built by the Mamluk Sultan Qansweh Al Ghuri in the 14th century and is the scene of a great Arab Revolt victory in 1916 when this heavily defended Turkish stronghold fell to a daring Arab camel charge. Adjacent to the fort is the Aqaba Archaeological Museum, also known as the Sharif Hussein House Museum, as it was formerly the residence of Hussein bin Ali, the Sharif and Emir of Mecca from 1908 until 1917. As King of Hejaz he initiated the Arab Revolt in 1916 against the Ottoman Empire during the course of the First World War.

The USAID tourism project provided support to ASEZA to develop the Fort and Sharif Hussein House Museum into a more alluring tourist attraction. This support included developing a site improvement plan to enhance facilities. The site management plan was refined to incorporate landscape solutions and further documentation of site history and archaeology. A site survey documented the existing Sharif Hussein building and its exhibition assets to feed into the site improvement plan. USAID presented ASEZA with a finalized fort and museum improvement plan package, which includes conceptual designs for the upgrade of the museum along with interpretation themes.

WADI RUM





Maintaining Wadi Rum's UNESCO World Heritage status

Wadi Rum has been inhabited by humans for thousands of years, and today a few Bedouin tribes still live there, making their living by operating jeep tours, campsites, hiking and rock climbing services. The USAID tourism project provided support to ASEZA to ensure that Wadi Rum's UNESCO World Heritage status is maintained. Terms of reference were developed by the project for the alignment of the Wadi Rum buffer zone, with the purpose of providing additional protection to the Wadi Rum Protected Area (WRPA).



▲ Guides participate in field trip as part of bird watching training for guides



MARKETING
JORDAN AND
PRESENTING
NEW
EXPERIENCES

The USAID Economic Growth Through Sustainable Tourism project has worked on a number of ways to stimulate growth and improve travelers' perception of Jordan as a safe, stable and attractive destination. Marketing Jordan effectively and presenting new experiences helps to increase the number of visitors. Due to persisting regional turmoil, which continued to cause a drop in the number of visitors to the country, the USAID tourism project supported initiatives to promote Jordan as a safe, stable and desirable tourism destination to combat misconceptions about its stability. Tour operators and service providers were helped to effectively reach new target audiences in the US and Europe. The USAID tourism project also worked with local industry partners to attract visitors from new markets by translating promotional material into Spanish. The project helped to promote new niches such as adventure and luxury, while creating fresh interest within established markets such as faith-based travelers. This was achieved by educating international travel agents about Jordan's unique and diverse tourism products and services to help them sell the Jordan tourism product. International destination promotion remained a priority, and the USAID tourism project supported Jordan's national tourism industry players to reach international markets through trade and consumer shows in order to enhance Jordan's global image as an attractive tourism destination.

STIMULATING GROWTH BY IMPROVING TRAVELERS' PERCEPTIONS OF JORDAN AS A DESIRABLE, STABLE DESTINATION



In partnership with

Jordan Tourism Board 

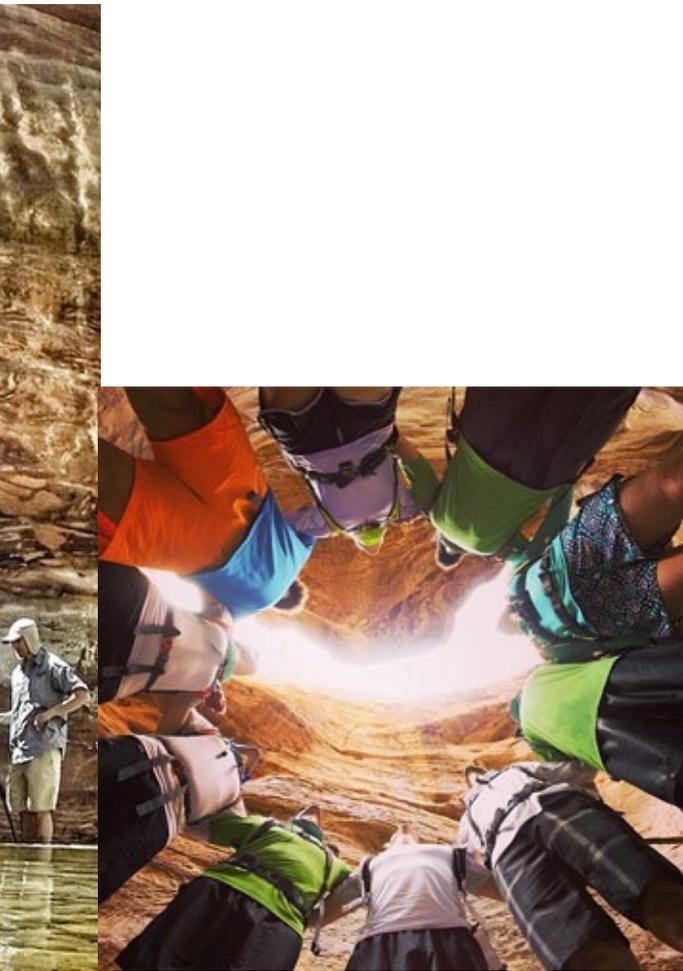
 **Columbia**

▲ *Columbia Omnitel participants during their visit to Jordan in April 2014.*

More than
120 million
travel consumers around
the world were reached
through marketing
and communications
campaigns
supported by USAID

Changing travelers' perceptions of Jordan through press trips

The USAID tourism project awarded the Jordan Tourism Board (JTB) a grant to co-host three trade trips that aimed to promote and boost sales of Jordan as a tourism destination within the North and South American markets. The 2014 Papal visit to Jordan was featured through a familiarization trip by Mexico's top travel media writers and TV reporters, who also showcased all of Jordan's faith-based biblical sites. A TV crew for a South American travel show filmed in Jordan and featured the destination in its show, airing to more than 60 million viewers in 20 central and South American countries. Columbia Sportswear rewarded the 10 winners of its Omnitren brand ambassador program – who are also adventure travel bloggers – with a 12 day tour of Jordan, which generated over 6 million impressions on social media to date and was highlighted in a large budget production video highlighting Jordan's beauty and diversity.



SOCIAL MEDIA SCRIBES TAKE ADVENTURE TOUR OF JORDAN



"From terrain, to people, to history and culture, Jordan is extremely beautiful and, unfortunately, a well-kept secret."

Those were the words of Jon Bausman, an adventure blogger who joined a 12-day tour of Jordan with 10 U.S. adventure travel bloggers as winners of Columbia Sportswear's Omnigames competition.

The trip, which was co-hosted by the USAID Economic Growth Through Sustainable Tourism Project and the Jordan Tourism Board (JTB), aimed to boost exposure of Jordan and its tourism products and experiences in North America through written, photographic and video stories that relate the bloggers' experiences during the trip.



'I Am #OMNITEN' Trailer
<http://youtu.be/ZddUE00huFE>

YouTube



This group of winners was joined in Jordan by a six-member film crew who documented their adventures in a film that has been distributed via social media channels and the Columbia website, www.columbia.com. Photos and articles shared on Twitter and Instagram alone have generated around 6 million impressions. The hour long-film was officially launched through Google+ hangouts, for people to be able to interact with the Omnitent Ambassadors and find out more about their experience in Jordan. Through the Google+ hangout they highlighted Jordan's safety, friendliness of people, fantastic food and incredible sites.

"The Kingdom of Jordan and its myriad of adventure activities serve as the perfect backdrop for our film, which tells the story of 'Trying Stuff'. Through the eyes of ten adventure-loving bloggers, we explore deserts, canyons, and seas. From the metropolitan cities of Aqaba and Amman to the far removed wadis, we showcase the breathtaking landscape, as well as the cultures, personalities, and hospitality of Jordanian people," said Scott Trepanier, Senior Manager of PR & Promotions at Columbia Sportswear Company.

This is the second time Columbia Sportswear has chosen Jordan for its Omnitent Adventure Program, in partnership with JTB and USAID.

As part of a series of grants to the JTB,

the USAID tourism project is helping improve Jordan's image as a safe and desirable destination, boost exposure on Jordan and its tourism products and experiences, increase stories on Jordan in travel media, and expand the reach of JTB North America.

"We're always looking for new, creative ways to attract people to Jordan, and our collaboration with Columbia Sportswear has been a great success," said JTB Director Dr. Abdel Razzaq Arabiyyat, noting that media familiarization (FAM) tours such as this, are an effective way to promote Jordan as a destination to wider audiences. *"Thanks to USAID for their continuous support,"* he added.

The Omnitent-games / Omnitent-ten program began in 2012, when Columbia challenged itself to find ten people who love the outdoors and live to "try stuff". Every six months Columbia Sportswear selects ten influential outdoor enthusiasts to join its #Omnitent brand ambassador program. Columbia Sportswear has chosen Jordan for the second year in a row as a destination for their Omnitent Adventure Program, in partnership with Jordan Tourism Board and with support from the USAID Economic Growth Through Sustainable Tourism Project.

Providing visitors with memorable experiences through Art of Concierge training

Hotel concierge staff around Jordan participated in a training program on “The Art of Concierge”. This was implemented by the USAID tourism project and JTB to improve the quality of service provided by concierges, who are the frontline employees of hotels and visitor centers. It has helped the participants to better promote Jordan’s popular attractions and to encourage tourists to try new Jordanian experiences. Participants can now provide professional guidance to guests, presented in an informative and engaging style. By providing visitors with accurate and informative details on touristic, shopping and dining attractions in Amman, Petra and Aqaba, the training helped staff understand how to see the difference between an average stay and an excellent visitor experience.



▲ Hotel concierges complete the “Art of Concierge workshop” in Aqaba in September 2014.



▲ Jordan display at EIBTM travel exhibit.

Stimulating tourism growth through participation in travel exhibits

The USAID tourism project supported the Jordan Tourism Board and tourism trade to participate in four travel exhibits in 2014, including ITB in Berlin, the World Travel Market in London, EIBTM in Barcelona and IMEX in the USA. Participation in IMEX was under the Destination Dead Sea theme. These exhibits enable direct access to European and U.S. markets and enable the tourism trade to promote Jordan as a safe and desirable tourism destination to a wide audience. This in turn attracts more visitors and stimulates growth of Jordan's tourism industry.

Helping the tourism industry to better manage crisis situations

A tourism crisis refers to a wide range of issues that might deter tourism to a specific country or location, such as natural disasters, fires, accidents and injuries, health or security fears. Jordan's tourism industry is better prepared for any tourism crisis after participating in a program to improve tourism crisis management in Jordan. The program was conducted by the University of Florida's Tourism Crisis Management Institute (UF-TCMI), one of the world's leading authorities in its field, and was implemented by ASEZA, JTB and the USAID tourism project. The program helped prepare Aqaba and the Jordan tourism industry in general to effectively and professionally manage different crisis situations. It also taught participants how to set up an integrated crisis messaging system and interact with local and international media in the event of a crisis.

CULTIVATING NEW MARKETS WITH STRONGER TOURISM PROMOTION AND SALES



Promoting Jordan through TripAdvisor

The USAID tourism project provided JTB with grant support for a number of social media campaigns that promoted Jordan as a tourism destination. A campaign on TripAdvisor.com, one of the leading travel review sites in the world, was targeted to the North American market and resulted in around 23,000 media impressions. Around 17,000 direct page views were recorded. A European-focused TripAdvisor.com campaign reached over four million people in Jordan's key source markets of UK, Spain, Italy, Germany and France.

Cultivating new markets through trade familiarization trips and consumer shows

In 2014 Jordan's tourism industry worked intensively to tap into new niche markets, such as the luxury travel market, and to widen its access to the U.S., European and Spanish-speaking markets through a number of educational trips, new promotional materials and media channels in multiple languages, as well as participation in key consumer trade shows.

JTB hosted trade trips from the U.S. with USAID tourism project support, to help boost promotion and sales of Jordan as a tourism destination.



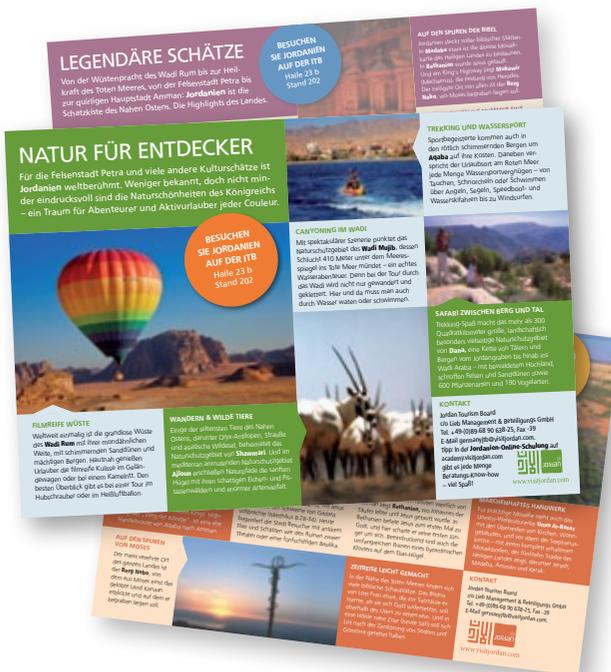
Participation in consumer trade shows enables JTB and Jordan's travel trade to reach consumers directly. JTB participated, with USAID tourism project support, in the New York Times Travel Consumer Show and ITB Travel Show in Berlin. ITB is one of the world's largest travel shows with a reach of around 125,000 consumers and Jordan was featured in dedicated "advertorials" in FVW, ITB's official and most read magazine.

Jordan Tourism Board North America (JTBNA) is working to cultivate new markets in Mexico, as well as Spanish-speaking communities in North America. With USAID tourism project support, JTBNA developed a Spanish language microsite of its English "My Jordan Journey" website and created new social media channels for Mexican and Hispanic communities in North America. Spanish speaking travelers are now able to find relevant and interesting material about Jordan and its tourism products and experiences.

The project also facilitated discussions and an agreement between ASEZA and Turkish Airlines to co-host six trade and media familiarization trips from different source markets.



The Jordan stand at the New York Times Travel Consumer Show.



Increasing sales with cooperative marketing activities

Related tourism businesses – even those on separate continents – can greatly benefit from combining their marketing efforts, and creating efficient and cost-effective cooperative marketing campaigns that prove highly convenient for consumers. With this in mind the USAID tourism project helped JTB and JTOA establish eight joint marketing campaigns between Jordanian and North American travel agents and tour operators, focusing on social media and different offline and online channels. This succeeded in reaching over 132,500 travel agents and 40,000 group leaders across the U.S. with attractive promotional deals for trips to Jordan. The eight campaigns reached almost 310,000 direct consumers and resulted in over 18,056,000 online impressions.

Cooperative marketing campaigns were established with these North American travel agents and tour operators:

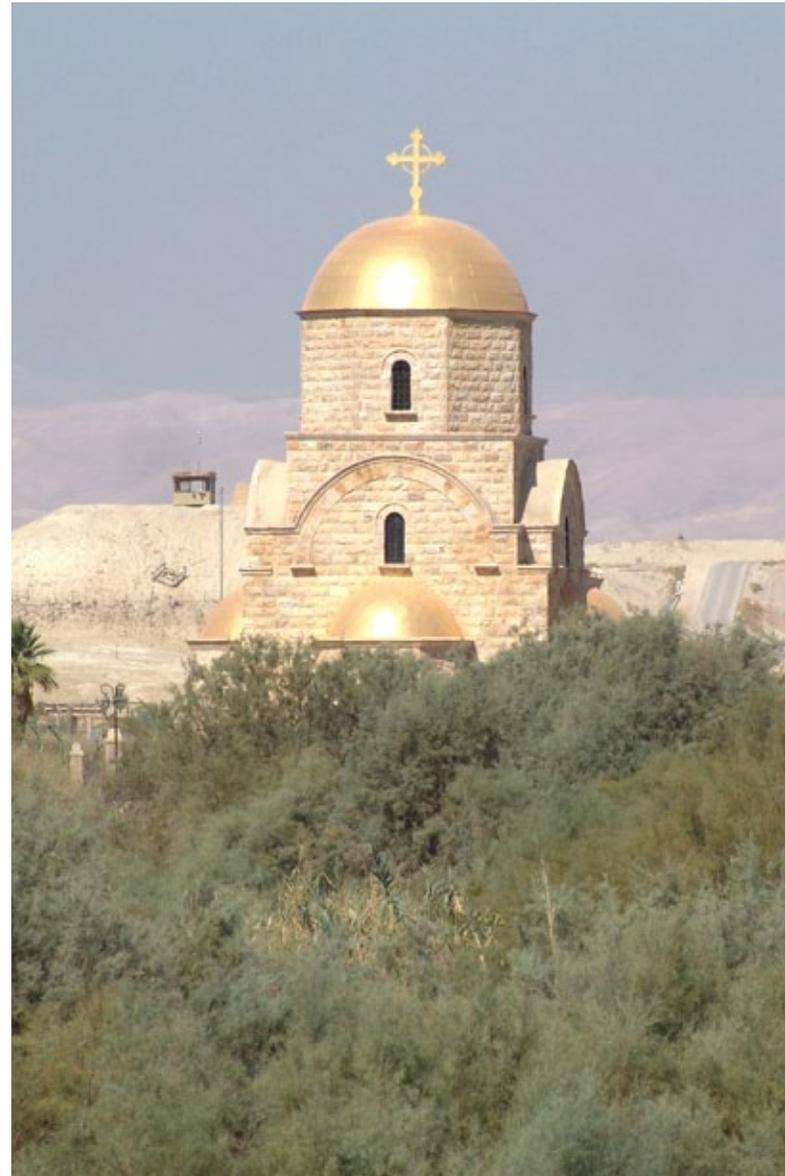
- Sunnyland Tours
- Cox & Kings
- Amparo
- Group IST
- G adventures
- Mega Travels
- A&K
- Indus
- Goway
- Collette
- Tour East

BUILDING TOURISM SECTOR CAPACITY TO DEVELOP NICHE MARKETS

Promoting Biblical tourism to Jordan

Jordan has a multitude of tourism sites to appeal to faith-based travelers of all denominations, particularly those interested in visiting Biblical sites, and should rank amongst the top destinations for this travel segment. However, less than 5% of total overnight visitor arrivals to Jordan visit the Baptism Site of Jesus Christ, despite visits by three popes and authentication by religious leaders around the world.

To help promote Biblical attractions a complete resource on Biblical sites in Jordan was produced and distributed to local tour operators and tour guides to improve their knowledge about Jordan's faith-based tourism sites. This will help them better promote the Kingdom as a Biblical Holy Land to encourage more visitors. The resource will help tour operators and guides understand the needs and expectations of religious tourists to encourage more faith-based groups and Biblical pilgrims to visit Jordan through expanding their knowledge of all Biblical sites in Jordan, including new discoveries, better understanding of the expectations of different denominations as well as newly designed themed itineraries.



▲ *The Orthodox Church at the Baptism Site in Jordan.*



▲ Bird watching guides during field training in March 2014.

Training Jordanian guides to lead bird-watching tours

Seventeen tour guides graduated from Jordan's first Certified Bird-Watching Training Course, enabling them to take bird enthusiasts to the Kingdom's best bird-watching sites. The course was conducted by Baraka Consulting for Sustainable Tourism Development under BirdLife International's Migratory Soaring Birds project and supported by the USAID tourism project, the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature (RSCN) and endorsed by the Ministry of Tourism. During training, the guides were taken to seven leading bird-watching sites across Jordan by a team of experts to teach them how to plan and execute a bird-watching tour for enthusiasts.

Bird watching is one of the world's largest and most popular forms of nature travel. The availability of specialized guides in Jordan will allow tour operators to offer new programs for domestic and overseas visitors who want to go birding on the migratory route along the Great Rift Valley, home to 434 species of birds, including 98 rare species.

The availability of this niche guiding expertise in Jordan was announced in the international publications *Adventure Travel News* and *Adventure.travel*, reaching an audience of 200,000. An indirect outcome of the training program is that 12 tour operators now offer bird watching tours, and 6 of those offer itineraries dedicated to bird watching in Jordan.

JORDAN'S NATURE GUIDES TO LEAD NEW BIRD WATCHING TOURS



Seventeen national tour guides graduated from Jordan's first training program to certify them as highly specialized bird-watching guides and enables them to lead groups of international bird watchers on tours around Jordan's important bird areas. Bird watching is a major component of wildlife tourism and is one of the most rapidly growing pastimes in the world. This is good news for sustainable tourism, as birding can play a significant part in the tourism industry by creating direct and indirect economic benefits for communities in developing countries.

However, Jordan has yet to capitalize on its full potential to attract the lucrative bird watching market despite it being uniquely situated on the bird migratory route along the Great Rift Valley and being home to some unique and globally endangered bird species. The good thing about bird watching, however, is that very little investment or major infrastructure is actually needed to develop bird-watching as a niche tourism product. What has been holding back Jordan's growth in this area is the lack of trained and specialized guides to lead bird-watching groups once they are in Jordan. That is all set to change as the newly graduated specialized bird watching guides have begun to welcome dedicated bird watching groups to Jordan and are organizing new tours and itineraries to ensure an unforgettable bird watching experience in Jordan.

Nadia Alalul spent a year in South Africa training to become a certified nature guide before returning to Jordan. She said of the course: *"The course was a fantastic experience. If I was to compare with the advanced bird training I received in South Africa I would say that they are on the same level. We had the opportunity to visit seven key sites across the kingdom with experts in this field. Jordan has much to offer in the way of bird watching and is an untapped market. This course has shown tour guides in Jordan what to expect, how to plan and execute a professional bird watching tour for enthusiast bird lovers, and so has raised the bar for such an experience across the board."*

Abdul Rahman Mustafa, a local tour guide who graduated from the training said: *"About a year ago I heard from Baraka that they would be delivering this training course and I eagerly awaited it. I joined the program as I am a nature tour guide and I wanted to learn about bird watching. The practical experience was very useful for me personally as it changed the way I see birds and nature, and their connection to habitats."*

The Certified Bird Watching Training Course will create new opportunities for new and existing guides who will benefit from a new source of income through birding tours. Since the training program took place, one local tour operator in particular saw the potential to attract new business and hired a recently graduated guide to develop a bird watching itinerary to take advantage of this new opportunity. A local mega development project also hired two of the trained guides as short term consultants to conduct a study to monitor bird migration. The guides generated almost JD 3,000 in income through this work.

Baraka and RSCN plan to hold additional courses to continue training Jordan's field guides to increase their knowledge about the birds of Jordan, and also how to make tourists' experiences more enjoyable by learning basic storytelling and birding. The training initiative also contributes to conservation efforts, threats to birds and other activities related to Jordan's birds.

"The training gave me many ideas which I suggested to the tour operators I work with, in order for them to include bird watching tours in their itineraries. I am proud to be a bird watching guide and show tourists the variety of birds in my country," Abdul Rahman noted.

Now local tour operators have made bird watching tours available and are featuring them on their itineraries. Also as a result of the program's successes in Jordan, Baraka Consulting is currently planning to expand and replicate the program in other emerging destinations.



10 new tourism products introduced or promoted (birding, MICE, religion and faith, culinary)



Increasing visitor numbers by studying consumer behavior

A seminar implemented jointly by the USAID project and JTB on “Consumer Behavior During Times of Perceived Risks” helped Jordan’s tourism trade understand the attitudes and emotions that affect a tourist’s decision to travel, in order to effectively market Jordan as a safe and desirable tourism destination and overcome any misperceptions that might prevent tourists from visiting Jordan. Tourists’ perception of risk is very important when it comes to making decisions about which destination to travel to. However, there has been little research conducted to explore tourists’ risk perceptions of the Middle East region. Jordan is a safe and stable tourism destination, yet political turmoil elsewhere in the region has negatively affected its tourism industry, along with other countries in the region, as international tourists lack the knowledge to differentiate which destinations pose a risk and which do not. Insufficient marketing promotion and improper coverage by international media of the regional turmoil has resulted in declines in the number of arrivals and amount of expenditure. The consumer behavior seminar addressed this issue by exploring the primary risk dimensions that tourism markets associate with the Middle East. Accordingly, participants learned how to develop impactful marketing strategies, and execute well-planned steps to overcome these misperceptions.

Raising Jordan’s tourism profile as a luxury travel destination

JTB’s “Jordan LEAP” marketing activities are raising Jordan’s tourism profile as a luxury travel destination. JTB engaged Virtuoso (the world’s leading luxury leisure consortium) members in a series of live training webinars, with USAID tourism project support in order to educate more than 6,000 of their North American travel agents about Jordan’s unique luxury experiences and products. The webinars increased the number of travel agents who are ‘Jordan Tourism Experts’, promoting and selling Jordan as a prime destination to travelers. Four live educational webinars took place with 464 participants, who will then reach thousands more. Also, 10 Virtuoso travel advisors went on a 10-day familiarization trip to experience Jordan first-hand. The Virtuoso campaign is JTB’s largest yet, as the consortium comprises over 9,000 travel agents in 20 countries.

VIRTUOSO CAMPAIGN PROMOTES JORDAN LUXURY TRAVEL





"Jordan is an epic destination!" says Shelane Nunnery, a travel agent and member of Virtuoso, the world's leading luxury leisure consortium. "Jordan has something to offer just about every type of traveler. I spent nearly two weeks there and feel I only scratched the surface."

Shelane Nunnery is one of ten Virtuoso travel advisors who spent two weeks in May 2014 discovering the best of Jordan's tourism experiences during a comprehensive familiarization trip hosted by Jordan Tourism Board (JTB) and the USAID Economic Growth Through Sustainable Tourism Project.

The ten participants are all travel agents catering to the luxury leisure travel market in North America. They were among 464 other North American travel advisors participating directly in Jordan Tourism Board's Learning Engagement Advisor Program (LEAP) marketing campaign. Through a USAID grant, JTB delivered a series of four live training webinars targeting over 6,000 of Virtuoso's North American travel agents over a period of three months. The campaign is educating Virtuoso's travel agents about Jordan's best attractions, resorts and hotels. The webinars are part of the campaign's e-learning module which helps to increase the number of travel agents becoming Jordan Tourism Experts, which will help them to promote and sell Jordan as a prime destination to travelers.

Shelane admitted that she had some concerns prior to visiting Jordan. *"I consider myself adventurous and well-traveled, but was not certain what to expect of my visit to Jordan. With everything that we read in the news, feelings of apprehension were mixed with my feelings of excitement. The first question anyone asked me when I told them where I was going was: 'Is it safe?'"* she explained.

However, after experiencing Jordan first hand, Shelane had nothing but good things to say of her visit. *"Having spent two weeks there being hosted by the Jordan Tourism Board, various five star hotels, and an outstanding guide, I can assure those who were concerned for my safety that the answer to that question is 'YES'. I did not only feel safe, I left truly happy that I had made the decision to go and to see for myself."*

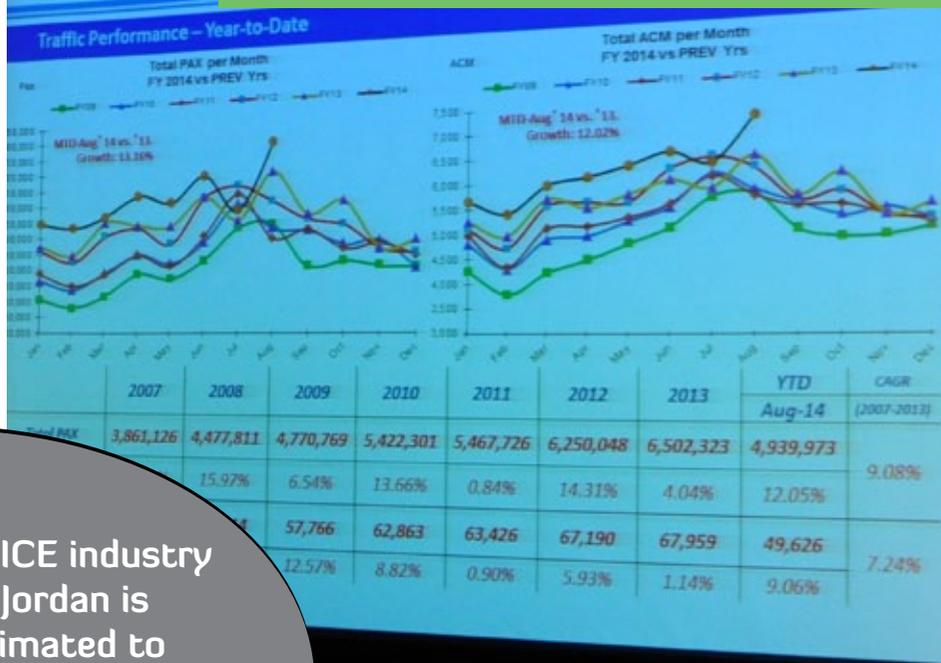
After learning about Jordan through JTB's webinar training, and becoming a 'Jordan Tourism Expert' the familiarization trip gave the ten participants the opportunity to experience Jordan's tourism products first hand, enabling them to capitalize on promoting and selling Jordan having experienced the Kingdom's diverse and unique touristic sites for themselves.

"Jordan's culture, the warmth of the people, and the dramatic landscape all exceeded any hopes I had for my visit. I was inspired by all I learned during my stay there. It is a country of dimension; from its natural, wild beauty, its traditions and incredible history, to its modern day offerings of luxury spas and hotels, fine dining, boutique wineries and upscale shopping," Shelane concluded.

The trip participants concluded their visit by presenting their experiences to the global Virtuoso network through a post-trip webinar session and online survey. The Virtuoso campaign is one of JTB's largest drives, targeting Virtuoso's 8,900 travel agents in 20 countries. By partnering with Virtuoso, one of the most important travel associations in North America, the campaign is succeeding to leverage Jordan in the luxury market.

“ It’s time to establish ourselves as a MICE destination. We need to lay the foundation and regulate by identifying local destination marketing companies to handle this niche. We need to brand Jordan as a MICE destination and reach out to decision makers in each market. This is an excellent move and there is huge untapped potential for Jordan to benefit from MICE tourism. ”

Ms. Ghada I. Najjar, Karma House Managing Director
 Commenting on Jordan’s new MICE strategy. Ms. Najjar was a member of the strategy development steering committee.



The MICE industry in Jordan is estimated to generate around **US\$50 million** annually

Speaker at the launch of the MICE Strategy for Jordan in September 2014.

USAD tourism project Chief of Party, Ibrahim Osta, speaking at the launch of the MICE strategy in September 2014.

Jordan tourism industry launches the national Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, And Events (MICE) strategy

A national meetings, incentives, conventions and exhibitions (MICE) sector strategy for Jordan was launched in September 2014. It aims to develop the tourism sector and enhance the promotion of Jordan as a unique MICE destination. The five-year (2014 – 2019) strategy and three-year action plan will be implemented by the Jordan Tourism Board in collaboration with the local tourism trade. Development of the National MICE Sector Strategy was led by an advisory committee of tourism industry representatives who worked with the sector in a coordinated and collaborative effort to lay the groundwork for the strategy, supported by the



project. The national strategy and its subsequent action plan aims to strengthen the MICE segment to make a tangible contribution to the future development of the tourism sector, while providing a forum for meaningful and effective partnership throughout the tourism community.

Jordan travel professionals achieve certification as incentive travel specialists

Travel incentives are a powerful business tool used to inspire people to change their behavior in anticipation of receiving an award. It is a specialized segment of the meetings, incentives, conventions and exhibitions (MICE) industry; incentive trips, meetings and events account for 15% of all travel spending. To strengthen the capacity of Jordan's travel trade with regards to incentive travel, the USAID tourism project, JTB and JTOA, in cooperation with the Society of Incentive Travel Excellence (SITE), organized a Certified Incentive Specialist (CIS) program. MICE tour operators were given the opportunity to gain this unique specialization, and 25 of Jordan's incentive travel professionals were certified. This qualification will help those individuals take their careers to greater heights of professionalism as well as strengthening the business travel industry in Jordan.

NEW MARKETING SKILLS BOOST BUSINESS FOR WADI TAWAHEEN REST HOUSE ON THE AJLOUN TOURISM TRAIL



Wadi Tawaheen rest house is a peaceful and traditional mountain home in a secluded area of Orjan Valley in Ajloun. The rest house is a well-appointed home away from home where visitors can just walk in and relax in the cozy atmosphere. It is run by Sultan Zeitoun and his wife, who warmly welcome guests to enjoy the native gardens and the stunning views. As well as offering food and beverages and homemade preserves, the rest house offers excellent family accommodation.

Sultan Zeitoun's rest house was expanded and accommodation added as part of the USAID tourism project's prior initiative to establish the Ajloun Tourism Trail in 2012. Since then, Sultan has been able to enhance his hospitality skills and capabilities by participating in a variety of training courses offered by the USAID Economic Growth Through Sustainable Tourism Project. These include safe food handling, product pricing and services and tourism marketing. As a result, revenues from his business have increased by 15% between 2013 and 2014. The increase in business this has created requires more hands, so in addition to himself and his wife, Sultan's three sons also work at the rest house during high season.

Participating in the USAID tourism project's workshop on how to apply low budget marketing tactics has made a big difference to Sultan's business. By improving his knowledge of marketing and his networking skills, he was able to promote his rest house and bring in new business by distributing brochures to different tour operators. Sultan also made a deal with the Royal Society for Conservation of Nature (RSCN) to sell his high quality homemade preserves through their gift shops. With large orders coming in from Italy and the United Kingdom, sales from his pomegranate molasses, sumac and ground zaatar (thyme) have doubled.

The service at his rest house has improved too, since he participated in the safe food handling training workshop. *"We are more careful when it comes to food safety. No one can enter the kitchen except the one in charge of food preparation and service. We started applying best practices in terms of personal hygiene and kitchen cleaning; such as wearing gloves, cleaning the kitchen with a vacuum cleaner, sterilizing utensils, using boiled water to wash vegetables and using filtered water to prepare hot drinks and so on,"* explained Sultan.

In addition to good service and hospitality, reasonable prices encourage visitors to come back. *"We learned how to price our products and services through another workshop organized by USAID tourism project. We understood that manipulating customers reflects negatively on us, so it is in our better interests to be fair and reasonable,"* he added.

The USAID tourism project also helped Wadi Tawaheen rest house, as well as other local businesses along the Ajloun Tourism Trail, to gain online presence by creating simple and user friendly websites, which are essential business tools to attract more customers.

As a result of his recent success, Sultan Zeitoun added two extra rooms to his rest house, and to be better able to accommodate the increasing demand he also recently bought a small plot of land next door to his bed and breakfast with plans to expand further.

"Our good practices are the secret behind our success," explained Sultan Zaitoun.

Visitors can find Wadi Tawaheen Rest House online at www.waditawaheenrest.com

EXPANDING JORDAN'S TRAVEL AGENT NETWORK IN THE U.S. AND OTHER MARKETS

Updating Jordan Travel Academy with chapters on faith and adventure tourism

Jordan is expanding its travel agent network in the United States and other markets by adding two new chapters about faith-based and adventure travel to the Jordan Travel Academy. JTB North America collaborated with Travalliance, the U.S.'s largest travel media group, to promote the Jordan Travel Academy in 2014. The USAID tourism project helped JTB develop content for the new chapters, allowing the updated Jordan Travel Academy to go live in September 2014.

PROMOTING TOURISM HANDICRAFT SECTOR



Tourism handicraft guide map

Jordan has a rich cultural heritage, and local handicrafts are a wonderful reflection of this culture and the history of the people of Jordan. Handcrafts are an art form and a way of living for many people around the country, particularly women. However their products and workshops are not always accessible or well-known. To address this, the USAID tourism project worked in coordination with Jordan

Handcraft Producers and Traders Association (JHPTA) to produce a map listing all Jordanian handcraft businesses, association and organizations around the country. This map is the result of extensive assessments carried out around Jordan, including visits to 82 handcraft establishments. The resulting map will guide visitors towards the diverse range of crafts available around Jordan and help promote these small local businesses.

PROMOTING AQABA AS A DESTINATION

Support international marketing efforts by developing Aqaba tourism strategy

Aqaba is a prime Red Sea resort destination and the USAID tourism project has been supporting ASEZA's promotional and marketing efforts for years. After assessing Aqaba's tourism branding needs the USAID tourism project recommended that ASEZA focus on more effective implementation and promotion of the existing brand strategy rather than creating a new one. To support implementation of the existing branding and messaging plan for Aqaba the project provided technical assistance and knowledge transfer which resulted in the development of the Aqaba Tourism Strategy Implementation Plan to help support their international marketing efforts.

Identifying ASEZA's key source markets

International tourism trade shows are pivotal venues for destination marketing and promotional efforts. The USAID tourism project compiled a database of scuba diving centers in key source markets that helped ASEZA identify the most suitable international trade shows to participate in and which markets to target.

Promoting Aqaba and Wadi Rum websites through digital promotion and social media strategy

The official Aqaba and Wadi Rum websites are key tools for ASEZA to attract more international and domestic tourists by providing informative, up-to-date information about attractions, lodging and other tourism services. To attract more web traffic to the sites, the project supported ASEZA with a digital promotion and social media strategy, digital campaign concept and technical write up.



A photograph of a woman wearing a white hijab and a dark top, and a man in a dark suit and tie, sitting at a table. The table has a plate of food with green herbs. The entire image is overlaid with a semi-transparent orange filter. The text is centered in the middle of the image.

IMPROVING
TOURISM
AND
HOSPITALITY
EDUCATION
IN JORDAN

A skilled tourism workforce is essential for growth and success within Jordan's largest industry. A major objective of the USAID Economic Growth Through Sustainable Tourism Project was to work with stakeholders to plan for future workforce demands. To supply this demand the USAID tourism project supported a great number of initiatives that have contributed to creating a pool of well-trained Jordanians who are ready to join the tourism workforce. These initiatives helped improve tourism and hospitality education in Jordan by enhancing the quality of instruction and training, expanding the availability of training programs, upgrading educational facilities and training curriculums and providing more opportunities for females as well as youth in remote areas around Jordan to access tourism and hospitality education and jobs.

EXCELLENCE IN TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY VOCATIONAL TRAINING

Students learn food production at Madaba VTI.



The USAID Economic Growth Through Sustainable Tourism project continued to build on previous USAID support to the Vocational Training Corporation (VTC) to establish excellence in tourism and hospitality training and encourage greater interest in this field among Jordan's youth. Efforts in this area have been hugely successful, and the demand for studying tourism and hospitality at Vocational Training Institutes (VTI) is surging.



Refurbishing institutes and increasing student capacity

The Employment – Technical and Vocational Education and Training Fund (ETVET) funded the rehabilitation of the tourism and hospitality VTIs in Salt, Tafleh, Abu Nusseir, Ajloun and Marka, and this effort was supported by USAID. The resulting superior facilities offer students an excellent study environment that closely replicates industry standards to properly prepare them for work in the sector.

The VTC, in partnership with the USAID tourism project, launched a refurbished and enhanced youth-focused hospitality and tourism training center at the Sahab VTI. The refurbishment was funded by the USAID tourism project in collaboration with the International Youth Foundation and private tourism sector partners.

The boys' training facilities at the Tafleh institute are being upgraded with USAID help, and the training workshops, library, student facilities and classrooms will be equipped with USAID funding.

While there is a general dearth of professionally trained hospitality workers in Jordan, Aqaba will particularly suffer from this challenge as a number of mega hotel resort developments are currently in the pipeline. To address the projected gap in skilled hospitality workers in Aqaba for the period 2015 to 2018, the USAID tourism project convened with the city's tourism investors, hoteliers, hotel owning companies and institution representatives to tackle this challenge. It was agreed that the Aqaba VTI should be expanded and upgraded and a steering committee was formed and a business plan developed to guide this work.

Students are trained in practical skills needed by restaurants and hotels, along with soft skills to complement their tourism and hospitality training.

MODERNIZED FACILITIES AT SAHAB VOCATIONAL TRAINING INSTITUTE ENHANCE TRAINING ENVIRONMENT



A state-of-the-art program and modernized facilities transformed Sahab Vocational Training Institute (VTI) into a youth-friendly educational center that provides youth with the skills they need to secure jobs in Jordan's largest industry - tourism and hospitality.

"We used to suffer from the rectangular-shaped classrooms, poor lighting, old-fashioned black boards, lack of air-conditioning and heating, which made it difficult for our students to concentrate and for us to keep their attention for long," said Mr. Osama Abedalsalam, Food Production Instructor at Sahab VTI. "Now that we have white boards, data show equipment, hot and cool air-conditioning and a locker for each student we have noticed that our students are more attentive and seem to understand the subjects better. We instructors have also been able to enhance our teaching techniques," he added.

"When students are cold or uncomfortable, they do not benefit much from a training session. These developments encouraged our instructors to be more productive, and we've seen that reflected in our students too," said Ramzi Jawhar, Hospitality Training Department Head at Sahab VTI.

The modernization of Sahab VTI's facilities and upgrade of the Vocational Training Corporation (VTC)'s curriculum is in response to Jordan's burgeoning tourism industry. The program is the result of a joint effort by the Vocational Training Corporation, Ministry of Labor, Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities and the USAID Economic Growth Through Sustainable Tourism Project.

The VTC also provides students with direct links to the tourism industry, connecting them with industry representatives and arranging internships at four and five star hotels around Jordan as part of their course training. Seventy-five percent of students are expected to find employment in the industry immediately following graduation.

With USAID tourism project support, VTC students are receiving professional training in food production, food and beverage service and housekeeping. USAID's Youth for the Future program is also helping to supplement the VTC's curriculum with additional soft skills training which enables students to really succeed. The students take courses in hospitality skills and English language to prepare them to work in the sector. The USAID Youth for the Future program and USAID tourism project are working closely with the Government of Jordan to craft a holistic approach to youth development.

“ I received a scholarship at the Royal Academy for Culinary Art and now I'm working as a chef at a lady's club kitchen. The two years I spent at the academy have added value to my life and me as a person. Above all I learned that a chef is not merely a cook, he's a leader of a team inside a kitchen. ”

Hanadi K. Abu Shhadeh, 26 years old

On receiving a scholarship from RACA after graduating from the Abu Nuseir VTC tourism and hospitality program.



▲ Hanadi K Abu Shhadeh, a VTC bakery program trainee during her internship at the Marriott Hotel Amman.

Expanding the new bakery and Arabic food programs

New specialized programs for bakery and for Arabic food production were previously introduced at a pilot VTI. These programs were highly successful, drawing interest from both male and female students.

Therefore during this project, the Certificate in Bakery, Pastry and Confectionery program was rolled out to the VTIs in Tafleh, Ajloun and Salt. Financed by the Kuwaiti Fund, training facilities at the Tafleh VTI for female students were renovated and equipped. USAID provided technical support and advice, as well as promotional materials that raised awareness of the program as a suitable career path for females. To support this work, the Royal Academy of Culinary Arts (RACA), Le Meridien Hotel, Intercontinental Hotel Aqaba and Crowne Plaza Hotel Amman arranged for cross training of bakery and pastry trainers in traditional and international bakery and pastry methods.

For the Arabic Food Production and Service Program, two shifts of classes (morning and afternoon) were run to accommodate extra students, which included young women registering in the program for the first time.

Short courses introduced

In response to industry demand, USAID supported the design and implementation of three new short industry-based courses in hospitality skills, bakery skills and restaurant service at Marka VTI for Bakery, Pastry and Confectionery. Participating students undertook five months of practical training at the Jordanian Parliament. Students of the foundation course are awarded a VTC certificate of attendance and can then progress to the full term Certificate in Hospitality Skills program.

The USAID tourism project built the capacity of 30 women supported by the Jordan National Forum for Women to enable them to start their own businesses through participation in a one-month training course in bakery, pastry and confectionery.

The USAID tourism project also secured funding from E-TVET Fund that supported 20 women from Al Jeeza Women Association to enhance their capacity to work in a catering kitchen in Al Jeeza, by enrolling in an Arabic Food Production training course.

Practical training prepares students for the workplace

Internships within the hospitality and tourism industry are a crucial part of training for students, equipping them with the practical skills needed to prepare for work in the industry. The USAID tourism project organized and supported 30 industry visits to Amman's restaurants and hotels to place 864 students for the six-month industry-based internship that is part of the tourism and hospitality program. USAID secured the participation of companies ready to accommodate students in the practical training scheme.

A "Partnership for Careers in Tourism" event was organized by the VTC at the Sahab VTI in cooperation with USAID Youth for the Future and the USAID tourism project, and this helped to establish partnerships between VTC trainers, VTI students and industry representatives, paving the way for students to enter the workforce.



Hussam Salameen, a VTC trainee at the Moevenpick Resort in Petra.

Quality of training enhanced and aligned with local industry

Industry-based training is an effective method of enhancing the skills of VTC instructors and enabling them to understand industry needs and thus provide students with a better quality of education and prepare them for work in the sector.

To maintain the high teaching standards established at the VTIs, the USAID tourism project worked with the VTC to arrange a 'back to industry' training program for instructors. Supervisors and trainers from the 12 VTI's across Jordan underwent this training at selected four and five star hotels in Amman. Having enhanced their skills and experienced the latest in industry developments, the trainers are now able to instruct trainees based on industry standards.

The quality of VTC training was further augmented through a quality assurance workshop held for VTC staff that upgraded their management capability and quality assurance system. The VTC supervisors and trainers were introduced to a framework and benchmarks for an effective quality assurance system to be applied at all hospitality and tourism institutes to maintain standards based on international best practices. In addition, the USAID tourism project arranged for VTC instructors to complete a two-week train-the-trainer program at the Royal Academy of Culinary Arts. The training included lesson design and planning along with theoretical and practical classes.

VTC instructors at the Vocational Training Institute for Bakery, Pastry and Confectionery in VTI Marka underwent a practical and theoretical capacity building program conducted by industry experts, which was designed and implemented by the USAID tourism project.

In partnership with International Youth Forum (IYF), the USAID tourism project helped VTC hospitality instructors and institute directors get certified to operate the "Passport to Success" life skills program. Twenty-one VTC hospitality trainers are now certified life skill trainers and conduct the program at all 12 hospitality VTIs.

The increase in student numbers created a need for additional VTI instructors. The USAID tourism project supported recruitment of ten additional specialized instructors for 10 months to teach on expanded programs at VTIs. The VTC retained the instructors following the end of their 10-month contracts.



Learning from the best – a study tour to Germany

To help Jordan achieve excellence in tourism and hospitality vocational training, the USAID tourism project organized and conducted a study tour to Munich, Germany for 19 trainers, instructors and supervisors from the VTC, in addition to the Secondary School Vocational Education – Hospitality and Tourism Stream (Fundukia) and Jordan Applied University. Germany was selected for the study tour because of its many examples of best practice in vocational training, practical internship programs, established public-private partnerships schemes and excellence in quality assurance systems. The study tour participants had the opportunity to observe, experience and learn about best practices in hospitality practical training at the vocational level.

GERMANY STUDY TOUR MOTIVATES VOCATIONAL TRAINERS TO ACHIEVE EXCELLENCE



▲ Hospitality instructors learn best practices in vocational training during a study tour to Germany in December 2013.

After a busy career in the hospitality industry, it was a natural transition for Wasef Jallad to work as a trainer of Food and Beverage Service at Jordan Applied University College of Hospitality and Tourism Education, where he has been sharing his expertise with students for the past 12 years. When chosen to participate in the USAID Economic Growth Through Sustainable Tourism Project's study tour to Munich, Germany in December 2013, Wasef jumped at the chance to learn something new that he could then impart to his coworkers and students.

The USAID tourism project coordinated the study tour for 19 trainers, instructors and supervisors from the Vocational Training Corporation, Secondary School Vocational Education – Hospitality and Tourism Stream (Fundukia) and Jordan Applied University. Participants had the opportunity to observe, experience and learn about best practices in hospitality vocational level training; specifically in food production, service, bakery, pastry and confectionary disciplines. Germany was selected for the study tour because of its many examples of best practice in vocational training and excellence in quality assurance systems.

Following one visit to the Vocational School for Hospitality Training (Bakery and Pastry Training School) in Munich, Wasef Jallad noted that “they actually tailor their training program according to the industry's needs; for example, they teach students how to make food and beverages which are popular in the area. This helps them develop a better training program and provide the industry with skilled employees.”

“We observed how soft skills are integrated into the training program. Role playing was integrated to develop critical thinking and communication skills and group work to help students understand the value of team work and time management,” he explained.

According to Wasef, Food and Beverage Service needs dedicated people who have good communication, presentation and listening skills, and who work well as part of a team. Students should enjoy their work and dedicate their talents to it, Wasef believes, encouraging his students to stay on top of their game by giving 100% to every task and to never stop learning new skills and being open to new ideas.

“We realized that even in Germany they have to raise awareness among young people about the importance of working in the tourism sector and they try different methods to attract students, like catchy social media messages. We could apply these methods in Jordan as we also work hard to attract students to study and take up jobs in the tourism sector.”

Upon his return Wasef shared his report of the tour with the university. *“There is so much we can take from the experience and implement here, such as time management and efficiency. All of the institutions and places we visited were relevant to our goals: to research new ways to keep labs clean, well maintained and resourced within budget. To be cost conscious and save time and avoid waste by preparing the labs in advance with materials, tools and ingredients needed for training sessions. I believe that we will be able to implement what we learned at JAU.”*

The study tour to Germany is part of a USAID tourism project initiative to up-skill trainers and improve graduates standards of professionalism when entering the workplace.



Expanding demand and enrolment

Recruitment campaigns have proven successful in expanding demand and enrolment in VTC hospitality and tourism programs. Open house days introduce youth to hospitality training programs and careers in tourism, and connect students and parents with industry representatives, thereby increasing interest and trust in the programs.

The USAID tourism project provided support to the VTC recruitment drives by producing 4,000 VTC brochures, 500 promotional flyers and hundreds of posters for distribution at 'open house' days, secondary school visits and to local communities. The brochures promote all the tourism and hospitality programs offered by the VTC, and helped boost awareness of these programs and thus enrolment in them. Through open house days the VTC witnessed heightened levels of interest from students. The campaign resulted in a 40% increase in registrations compared to the same period in 2013, and almost 2,000 students enrolled in the 2014 hospitality skills training programs.

Raya Al Momani, a trainee at the Ajloun VTI.



Increasing female enrolment

The USAID tourism project supported VTC efforts to increase the number of females enrolled in its programs by launching new ones, including adding the popular Certificate in Bakery, Pastry and Confectionery Program and Housekeeping to the portfolio of courses at the VTIs in Ajloun and Tafileh. The number of female students registered in 2014 increased by 70% compared to 2013. The Certificate in Hospitality Skills Foundational Level (Level I) Program at VTI Ajloun operated at full capacity in 2014.

Certificate in Bakery, Pastry and Confectionery	Females enrolled in 2014
Tafileh	36
Abu Nusair	62
Salt	29
Ajloun	63

REFORMING HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM PROGRAMS AT EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

Building capacity of university and college tourism educators

To ensure graduates meet the hospitality and tourism sector's job market needs it is essential to reform hospitality and tourism programs at educational institutions around the country by setting high standards for teaching methods used by lecturers. To that end, the USAID tourism project conducted a three-day educate-the-educator workshop titled 'Tourism and Hospitality Research and Scholarship'. The workshop was conducted by Professor Fred Mayo of the University of New York for professors, deans and lecturers from universities and colleges specializing in hospitality and tourism programs around Jordan.



▲ Workshop on tourism and hospitality research and scholarship held in May 2014.

Accreditation criteria and academic quality assurance guidelines

There are 12 universities and 8 colleges in Jordan that offer degrees or diplomas in tourism and hospitality. However, the process for accrediting these programs was unsystematic and weak, as were the standards. To address this, the USAID tourism project worked in partnership with the Higher Education Accreditation Commission (HEAC) to organize and detail the accreditation and quality assurance guidelines and develop a structured system for accreditation of tourism and hospitality programs.

As a result, a comprehensive manual was produced for each of university and college programs, which list ten main standards and detail a number of items that fall under each standard along with a group of indicators that must be met in order to achieve the standards. These cover all aspects of the programs, from the skill levels and work experience of faculty to the resources, journals and textbooks available in libraries. Greater focus has been placed on the practical element of these programs, with a need for practical subjects to now make up 50% of the total credit hours.

These programs were previously accredited without the need for laboratories and workshops, whereas now it is necessary to have training kitchens and pastry kitchens, as well as housekeeping, front office and travel agency simulators, depending on the program. It is also now specified how these laboratories should be equipped, down to the details of types of plates and cutlery needed in a training restaurant and the knives, pots and ovens required in a training kitchen.

The new accreditation system also builds in links with industry to keep up to date with industry standards, to ensure access to internships and employment for students and graduates, and to track the career progression of graduates.

A pool of 15 assessors from within participating colleges and universities, as well as from industry, were certified as Approved Assessors for Accreditation of Hospitality and Tourism Programs. Their role is to apply for program accreditation on behalf of their institutes, and to be assigned by HEAC to make assessments of other institutes as needed. The new system was piloted at the University of Jordan and Al Quds College, both in Amman, in 2014 and by September both had met the new standards.

The new accreditation standards are currently being applied to the tourism and hospitality programs of the remaining 11 universities and 7 colleges around Jordan, which are given a grace period up to the next academic year of September 2015 to work towards achieving the new standards.

This new system is raising the bar for tourism and hospitality higher education in Jordan, and has already begun equipping graduates with the skill-sets needed for finding employment within and meeting the demands of Jordan's tourism sector.

STUDY TOUR HELPS JORDANIAN UNIVERSITIES TURN VISION INTO ACTION



Eight lecturers and deans of hospitality and tourism programs at Jordan's public universities took part in a study tour to the USA to attend the International Council for Hotel, Restaurants and Institutional Education Conference (ICHRIE) research conference in San Diego. The study tour, which was organized by the USAID Economic Growth Through Sustainable Tourism Project, included field visits to tourism sites around San Diego including San Diego State University and the famous San Diego Zoological Gardens. Participating universities included University of Jordan in Amman and Aqaba, Yarmouk University, Al Balqa University and Al Hussein Bin Talal University. Upon their return, a post-tour workshop helped the study tour participants share their experiences with their colleagues as well as learn how to apply lessons learned.

One of the participants in the study tour, Dean of Yarmouk University's Faculty of Tourism and Hotel Management Professor Khalid Magablih explained how he and the other university representatives not only benefited from their observations during the visit, but importantly, they immediately began to put into action the lessons learned from the unique educational opportunity.

"We are including more applied subjects in our programs as this will enhance our students' skills and help them get good jobs in the tourism sector as soon as they graduate," said Professor Khalid Magablih, Dean of the Faculty of Tourism and Hotel Management at Yarmouk University.

The Jordanian academics were introduced to new teaching methods including more effective curricula design, events and conference management, student supervision and

admission criteria. Participants also learned how to organize tourism and hospitality conferences in a more interactive and engaging way by including a variety of training sessions. The conference also introduced the Jordanian participants to representatives of publishing houses specializing in tourism and hospitality publications. Yarmouk University is now preparing a list of books and educational resources to add to their library.

Professor Magablih noted that one of the most useful aspects of the study tour was the opportunity to network with researchers, experts and academics from the USA and around the world.

"The study tour made a big impact on all the participants and their institutions. We plan to establish a local hotel and restaurant association for Jordanian academics and industry experts, replicating the International Hotel and Restaurant Association," stated Magablih. *"We are launching our first career day in December and have already met with and signed agreements with local tour operators, hotels and restaurants based in Irbid, where our university is located, to train and hire our students. A liaison officer has been appointed for that purpose. Additionally we are introducing our first master's program in hospitality in cooperation with the University of Sorbonne in France."*

Yarmouk University also recently began offering two accredited diploma programs in Hotel and Restaurant Management and Tourism and Aviation Management, and plans to add two more programs in Catering and Nutrition Management and Medical Tourism soon. By putting more focus on vocational training, Jordan's public universities, like Yarmouk University, aim to help provide the tourism sector with the skilled workforce it needs

Establishing a TVET qualifications framework

The USAID tourism project supported VTC efforts to establish a Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Qualifications Framework that will allow learners, training providers and employers to gain information about the broad equivalence between vocational and academic qualifications. E-TVET Council approved recommendations for the establishment of a TVET Qualifications Framework. The supporting policy framework was developed and successfully piloted when the first TVET qualification was registered on the TVET Qualification Framework following approval by the Minister of Labor. The TVET Qualification selected the VTC Certificate in Hospitality Skills Foundation Level (Level I) Program, developed by the USAID tourism project. The in-depth and rigorous registration validation approval process was conducted by an independent team of hospitality experts based on the E-TVET Council TVQF policy framework standards.

The USAID tourism project commissioned technical expertise to design a new Quality Assurance format to support the VTC audit/inspection team. Eighteen VTC hospitality supervisors and the VTC project management unit were trained in the new audit system.

Upgrading the capacity of the Madaba Institute for Mosaic Art and Restoration

Jordan's mosaic heritage is an important draw for tourists and knowing how to preserve that heritage is essential to safeguard Jordan's ancient mosaic artifacts for future generations. The USAID tourism project support has enabled the Madaba Institute for Mosaic Art and Restoration (MIMAR) to continue to enhance its capacity, revamp facilities, upgrade standards, improve the curricula and promote its programs. This includes an expansion of MIMAR to triple its capacity. The USAID tourism project helped secure Ministry of Finance funding to furnish the institute's classrooms, offices and library and upgrade audio-visual and IT equipment. His Royal Highness Prince El Hassan bin Talal hosted a conference on 'Mosaic Art Restoration and Sites Conservation' at MIMAR.

Achieving global tourism education certification



JAU culinary students

TedQual Certification is issued by the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) to support the quality improvement of tourism education and training programs around the world. By achieving UNWTO TedQual Certification, Jordanian universities can be recognized for high quality tourism education that is on par with international counterparts, thus positioning Jordan as the Middle East's center for excellence in tourism education and boosting tourism competitiveness in general.

The Royal Academy for Culinary Arts (RACA) is the first Jordanian educational institution to achieve the Tourism Education Quality (TeqQual) certification awarded by the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) Themis Foundation. The certification was officially awarded in November 2013, recognizing RACA for providing high quality tourism education in the

culinary arts that is competitive on an international level. The USAID tourism project supported and guided RACA throughout the process of applying for TedQual certification, coordinated the administrative needs and funded the fees for accreditation.

The USAID tourism project also closely supported the Jordan Applied University's (JAU) College of Hospitality and Tourism Education to obtain the certification, awarding it a grant to support this effort. This enabled JAU to upgrade its computer laboratories, procure 30 computers and terminals and improve facilities for students. The project also updated and printed JAU's quality assurance manual and other needed publications, and assisted JAU in implementing a Tourism Career Day where major hotel and restaurant representatives were present to meet with over 250 students. JAU achieved certification in November 2014.

UNWTO AWARDS JORDAN APPLIED UNIVERSITY'S HOSPITALITY MANAGEMENT PROGRAM CERTIFICATION FOR TOURISM EDUCATION QUALITY



Jordan Applied University (JAU) College of Hospitality and Tourism Education was officially awarded in November 2014 the Tourism Education Quality (TeqQual) certification by the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) Themis Foundation. TedQual certification recognizes an educational institution for providing high quality tourism education that is competitive at an international level. JAU is the first educational institution in Jordan and the Middle East to achieve the award for its BA Hotel Management program.

"Looking back at JAU eight years ago, when I started my job as Dean, and looking at it now, I am proud of the tremendous developments that took place in this small, but highly effective and efficient, specialized educational institution," said Dr. Muhsen Makhamreh, Dean of JAU College of Hospitality and Tourism Education.

"I believe that hard work and dedication breed success and respect, and that is what has made JAU the institution it is today," explained Dr. Makhamreh. *"Achieving UNWTO TedQual Certification in our BA Hotel Management program was and is a prime objective for JAU. Our program was awarded certification for two years rather than just one. This demonstrates JAU's excellence in hospitality education and promotes us to an international level of recognition as well as a role model for other institutions, not only in Jordan, but in the region as a whole."*

Over the past few years, JAU undertook a range of upgrades and enhancements to its hotel management program, campus facilities and services with the aim of improving the quality of educational facilities and programs, and enriching the skills acquired by students. Knowing that accreditation would raise JAU's international image and highlight its academic quality, in 2013, JAU decided to go a step further and apply for the UNWTO's Tourism Education Quality certification program.

Dima Steitieh, Assistant Dean for Academic Affairs, was tasked by JAU as Team Coordinator for the TedQual accreditation process. *"After an initial audit we were*

provided with recommendations on areas for improvement which we took very seriously. Our goal was never limited to gaining certification, but to improving our standards in a sustainable manner. We did not want to get just enough marks to pass. Our aim all along was to surpass expectations in all areas," remarked Mrs. Steitieh. *"We focused on improving key areas, such as training faculty members, improving research, following up with graduates through an alumni tracking system, and introducing quality assurance procedures."*

The USAID tourism project awarded a grant to JAU to support its efforts to gain certification. Among other things, the USAID grant helped JAU conduct more research on tourism and hospitality, a new computer lab was built and equipped to enhance its training program, and quality assurance manuals and promotional materials were produced.

Dean Makhamreh noted how their quest for excellence has had a knock-on effect. *"JAU has developed into a successful international institution and a pioneer in hospitality education in the region. As a result, as well as UNWTO TedQual, JAU has obtained memberships in the European Association of Hotel Colleges (EURHODIP), the American Hospitality Academy (AHA), International Council on Hotel, Restaurant and Institutional Education (ICHRIE), UNWTO and UNWOMEN Gender Equity Seal (GES). Additionally, many bilateral agreements have been made with universities in Europe, the USA and other countries."*

"The technical and financial assistance provided by the USAID Economic Growth Through Sustainable Tourism Project was essential to JAU's success in achieving this award. Without it, this process would have been much more difficult. A word of thanks goes to all individuals and institutions that helped JAU along the way to obtaining UNWTO TedQual. In particular, Jordanian Hospitality & Tourism Education Company (JHTEC), Jordan Hotel Association (JHA), Netherlands Senior Experts (PUM), USAID and definitely the wonderful staff at JAU," concluded Dean Makhamreh.



▲ Fundukia students in Aqaba learn about tourism opportunities.

Young women prepare for tourism careers through FUNDUKIA

The Secondary School Fundukia (hospitality) Program for Girls is the first of its kind in Aqaba, offering the city's young women a great opportunity to take the first steps to being part of Jordan's budding tourism sector. Future careers in hospitality and tourism are now an appealing option for young women enrolled in the hospitality stream at the Aqaba Fundukia School for Girls. The 2013/2014 academic year saw double the intake of female students in the Grade 11 Fundukia program.

USAID tourism project support to the Ministry of Education helped to modernize the school's premises with new furniture and equipment. Student uniforms for housekeeping, food and beverage service and food production were also provided. The modernized facilities provide the female students with an education that closely emulates work in the industry so that they are well prepared for careers in tourism.

The USAID tourism project arranged for new Fundukia teachers to join industry-based practical training for four to six weeks to improve their practical and training skills, in order to be able to teach students at a professional industry level.

Mastering languages and maths skills are important for a career in the tourism sector. The USAID tourism project partnered with Jordan River Foundation (JRF) to provide Grade 12 Fundukia students with extra tutoring in English and math, to prepare them for final exams.

Study tours were conducted for Grade 11 and 12 Fundukia program students as part of a continuing tourism education awareness program. Students visited Jordan Applied University, Royal Academy for Culinary Arts and Sheraton Hotel in Amman, as well as the Wadi Rum protected area.

The USAID tourism project also secured scholarships from various industry partners for the first cohort of graduates from the Fundukia program in Jordan, to guarantee their continued career in the hospitality stream at either the University of Jordan or the Royal Academy for Culinary Arts.

To encourage enrolment for the next academic year, the USAID tourism project held awareness sessions on the program for Grade 10 students and their parents, explaining how it can help them to continue their academic path and build a career in tourism where there is great demand for employing qualified Jordanian youth.

FUNDUKIA SCHOOLGIRLS LOOK BEYOND TRADITIONAL ROLES TO FORGE NEW CAREERS IN HOSPITALITY



Afnan Khalil, a twelfth grader from Aqaba, has taken a pioneering step among other girls from her city as she began an education in pursuit of the career she dreams about: to be a chef. She was one of the first batch of 16 young women to enroll in the newly established Fundukia Program at the Aqaba Secondary School for Females, which launched in 2013. This is Jordan's first public secondary school to offer the vocational education stream in hospitality and tourism for women, and this important initiative was achieved with support from the USAID Economic Growth Through Sustainable Tourism project.

Afnan's brother and sister work in the hospitality industry, however her parents were hesitant about her choice of the Fundukia program as they wanted her to pursue medicine. Afnan's two other sisters are doctors but she had noticed they were having a hard time finding good jobs, so she was determined to chase her dream of working in a hotel.

"I was lucky the new Fundukia stream was launched last year, as soon as I heard about it I knew it was for me. My parents weren't exactly unsupportive, but they thought it was odd to choose hospitality over being a doctor. I love the idea of working in hospitality and especially hotels. You get to meet people from around the world and learn about new places and cultures," Afnan explained.

The acceptance of Afnan's and other girls' families is in itself a true success, as these same young ladies faced major challenges gaining permission to enter the hospitality program to start with because of prevailing misconceptions about the hospitality industry. This

shift in thinking was largely influenced by the numerous school awareness visits conducted by the USAID tourism project throughout the school year for both students and parents, as well as the determination of the students themselves to study hospitality.

"Since my siblings work in hospitality my parents had a good idea of what it means so it was easier for them to accept me studying it. Some of the other girls have had a much harder time convincing their parents though; they don't think a hotel is a suitable place for women to work. The girls are really determined though and they are bringing them around to the idea. The awareness sessions helped a lot because the parents got to see firsthand what hospitality is all about," noted Afnan.

"I know I made the right choice to study hospitality. After graduation I plan to study hotel management while working part-time in a hotel, so I will gain a degree and work experience at the same time. Then I want to attend La Roche Royal Academy for Culinary Arts as I have always wanted to be a chef."

Despite a conservative society reluctant to look beyond traditional roles and careers for women, such as housewife, teacher, doctor, Afnan and her fellow students at the Aqaba Fundukia School exemplify a generation of Jordanian women that are more aware and determined to forge careers and livelihoods for themselves in a growing industry that promises a bright future.



▲ Hoteliers certified under the "Pathways to Professionalism" scheme at a ceremony held in November 2014.



IMPROVING
QUALITY AND
DEVELOPING
THE
WORKFORCE

Continuous development of the tourism workforce ensures that Jordan maintains its reputation for providing a high quality tourism experience. The USAID Economic Growth Through Sustainable Tourism Project supported a range of innovative initiatives that are enhancing both the skills of the tourism workforce as well as the quality of the services they offer. Jordan's restaurants and hotels welcomed the introduction of national food safety implementation and inspection guidelines and the teams of trained inspectors that are helping them to safeguard their customers' health. Additionally, USAID's training workshops are teaching hospitality staff how to safely and hygienically handle food, how to design menus and to price their services, providing a boost to businesses nationwide. The pioneering Pathways to Professionalism Scheme is changing the face of on-job training in the tourism sector by empowering hotel and restaurant managers to recruit, train and qualify their workforce to prescribed standards. Managers also learned that promoting gender equity in the workplace can improve their tourism businesses overall, while promoting good environmental practices earn Jordan's hotels energy savings as well as brownie points from tourists. Tafleh in the south of Jordan hosts the majority of Jordan's tourism attractions; USAID supported the launch of a new major grant scheme and helped build the capacity of community based cooperatives to pave the way for upcoming development opportunities.

PROMOTING GOOD ENVIRONMENTAL PRACTICES IN HOTELS

The USAID tourism project continued to promote good environmental practices in hotels around Jordan through training on Good Practices for Green Hospitality. The Good Environmental Practices Instructor's Manual for Hotels was produced in both English and Arabic as a training resource.

The USAID tourism project also helped to promote the UN World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) Hotel Energy Solutions Project in Jordan to encourage better energy management as well as boost economic growth within the tourism sector through investing in environmentally-friendly technologies. UNWTO and the USAID tourism project organized a symposium and lead the debate with leading hotel executives, government officials, and technology providers to discuss how hotels in Jordan can increase profitability by reducing energy costs and going green.



Hotel and restaurant workers attending a safe food handling training workshop in Petra in April 2014.

DEVELOPING THE TOURISM WORKFORCE THROUGH INDUSTRY-BASED TRAINING

National food safety implementation and inspection guidelines

National guidelines for implementing safe food practices at Jordan's hotels and restaurants, along with how to conduct inspections based on these guidelines, were developed by the JFDA, in partnership with the USAID tourism project, Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority (ASEZA), Jordan Restaurants Association (JRA) and Jordan Hotels Association (JHA). This has raised the standards for preparing food at establishments around Jordan, thus ensuring a better meal experience throughout. The USAID tourism project also produced 1,000 copies of the Food Safety Implementation and Inspection Guidelines as reference material for these establishments.

JFDA food inspectors adopt the new guidelines

More than 100 food inspectors and restaurant and hotel managers and supervisors were trained and certified in the new national guidelines by the USAID tourism project. Participants represented various inspection authorities including ASEZA, JFDA, Ministry of Health and the Royal Department for Environmental Protection as well as many restaurants and hotels around Jordan. The USAID tourism project also trained 56 JFDA Food Inspectors in Amman and 27 ASEZA Food Inspectors in Aqaba on how to conduct the audit process. In addition, the new JFDA guidelines were introduced to 32 restaurant supervisors and kitchen chefs in Aqaba in preparation for their implementation.

The USAID tourism project conducted a series of training workshops, funded by Zara Investment Holding Company, on ISO22000 for Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) and Safe Food Handling. The Mövenpick, Grand Hyatt, InterContinental, Crowne Plaza and Holiday Inn took part, and more than 65 kitchen chefs and other hotel staff directly responsible for food safety were trained.

NEW FOOD SAFETY INSPECTION SYSTEM IMPROVING QUALITY OF JORDAN'S HOTELS AND RESTAURANTS



The year 2014 marked a huge leap towards improving the quality of Jordan's hospitality services. With a new food safety inspection system in place, hotels and restaurants are now working closely with food inspectors to achieve one goal: to ensure a safe food experience in Jordan.

"We feel more confident and comfortable when we are visited by an inspector, as we are both on the same page following a clearly identified system. There has been trust and information exchange between us and the inspectors," said Chef Eyad Al-Qaq, from Al-Qasr Metropole Hotel.

By providing support to the Jordan Food and Drug Administration (JFDA) to introduce international best practices, the USAID Economic Growth Through Sustainable Tourism Project is helping hotels and restaurants across Jordan maintain the highest standards of food safety and quality.

National 'Food Safety Implementation and Inspection Guidelines' were developed that allow JFDA inspectors to virtually report industry inspection audits as they implement the new national guidelines. Over 100 food inspectors and restaurant and hotel managers and supervisors were trained and certified in the new national guidelines by the USAID tourism project.

"The new guidelines have identified key areas that we need to keep an eye on through our work. We now have a checklist that we refer to during every shift," added Chef Eyad.

USAID tourism project then supported JFDA to digitize the guidelines, which allows food handling reports to be more easily processed and also makes restaurant reports available for public viewing. JFDA were provided

with computer notebooks to deploy the software system and implement the safety inspection guidelines as well as laboratory equipment to upgrade the JFDA audit inspections, and training on the use of the new instruments for measuring food temperatures and bacteria levels.

"The new system has improved food safety standards at Jordan's hotels and restaurants, which are in turn showing more understanding of the actions we take throughout our inspections," said Eng. Amjad Rashaideh, Head of the Food Safety Department at the JFDA. He also noted that the system has made their inspection procedures more objective and credible.

The USAID tourism project also conducted a series of training on 'Safe Food Handling and Hygiene', building the capacity of almost 340 restaurant and hotel employees in eight governorates around the Kingdom: Amman, Madaba, Dead Sea, Petra, Aqaba, Jerash, Ajloun and Tafleh.

Chef Eyad confirmed that the training has increased the knowledge of kitchen staff and that they are more aware of the details of food safety procedures. *"Many of them did not know, for example, the meaning of HACCP or the purpose of having cutting boards of different colors,"* he said. *"I tend to brief the kitchen staff and remind them, every day before they start working, of the basic hygiene procedures and instructions,"* he added.

New inspection tools for better food safety

To facilitate the work of JFDA inspectors in implementing the national food safety guidelines, the JFDA and Ministry of Public Sector Development, in partnership with the USAID tourism project, developed and launched new inspection system software. This helps inspectors to monitor food establishments and enhance knowledge among food handlers of safe food handling and hygiene. This system streamlines and controls the food inspection audit process and provides virtual reporting to a central control. To further support the launch of the system, the USAID tourism project donated nine digital tablets for use by the inspectors while conducting audits. The USAID tourism project also procured scientific equipment to help JFDA conduct audits in a more efficient and reliable way. This included frying oil testers, food thermometer probes, food PH testers, infrared IR digital thermometers and microscope equipment.

Training the industry on safe food handling and hygiene

Throughout 2014 the USAID tourism project conducted a series of training courses on 'Safe Food Handling and Hygiene' in coordination with JFDA, the Jordan Hotel Association and the Jordan Restaurant Association to reach all hotels and restaurants in the country. The training took place in Amman, Madaba, Dead Sea, Petra, Aqaba, Jarash, Ajloun and Tafleh, for 338 people.

Inspection tools provided to JFDA.



ESTABLISH ON-THE-JOB TRAINING CERTIFICATION THROUGH PATHWAYS TO PROFESSIONALISM

Pioneering scheme improves qualifications at Jordan's hotels

Pathways to Professionalism is a pioneering industry-based training scheme that enables Jordan's hospitality workers to advance their skills and build their careers through certification for on-the-job training. The USAID tourism project worked with government and industry to introduce this scheme, and it was further developed under this project. It was piloted at the Intercontinental Hotels Group in Jordan. The scheme is now accredited by the Center of Accreditation and Quality Assurance.

In coordination with industry experts, the USAID tourism project published professional standards for the scheme, including for food and beverage service, stewarding, food production, bakery/pastry, front office reception, concierge, laundry and housekeeping. These define the minimum standards to be met to achieve a certain certification level for each profession.

An Employer Committee was formed at each participating hotel, chaired by the general managers, to monitor and control implementation of the Pathways to Professionalism training program. Hotel managers were trained to deliver theoretical and practical training to participating employees. Human resource directors and training managers were certified as Internal Verifiers to monitor the scheme within their hotels.

The USAID tourism project helped set up the National Assessment Center for Pathways to Professionalism at the Madaba Vocational Training Institute, equipping this center with needed furnishings, IT equipment and equipment for the training kitchen, restaurant and housekeeping laboratories. The assessment process was piloted for housekeeping, food and beverage service and food production employees from the Intercontinental Hotel Group. The 57 participants were the first batch to be certified under Pathways to Professionalism, in November 2014.



PATHWAYS TO PROFESSIONALISM: A PIONEERING SCHEME RAISING THE BAR IN JORDAN'S HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY



A unique approach is helping resolve a critical workforce shortage in Jordan's tourism industry, especially for trained, qualified and experienced professionals. Pathways to Professionalism is a scheme aimed at empowering hotel and restaurant managers to recruit, train and qualify their own workforce to prescribed standards in order to improve the quality and service of Jordan's hotels and restaurants.

"The Pathways to Professionalism Scheme sets a clear and consistent number of tasks and criteria for professionalism in specific areas of hospitality in a very organized way. Before introducing the scheme, hotels used to train Vocational Training Corporation (VTC) graduates from scratch in order to qualify them for jobs," explained Naheel Jamous, Executive Housekeeper and Pathways to Professionalism Approved Examiner, Intercontinental Hotel Jordan. *"But as the scheme identifies what tourism and hospitality skills and trainings the VTC graduates have achieved, the hotel now knows that they are already certified for Level 1 and are ready to go to the next level,"* Naheel added.

The USAID Economic Growth Through Sustainable Tourism Project launched the Pathways to Professionalism Scheme in cooperation with the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities (MoTA), Ministry of Labour (MoL), Vocational Training Corporation (VTC) and Higher Education Accreditation Commission (HEAC).

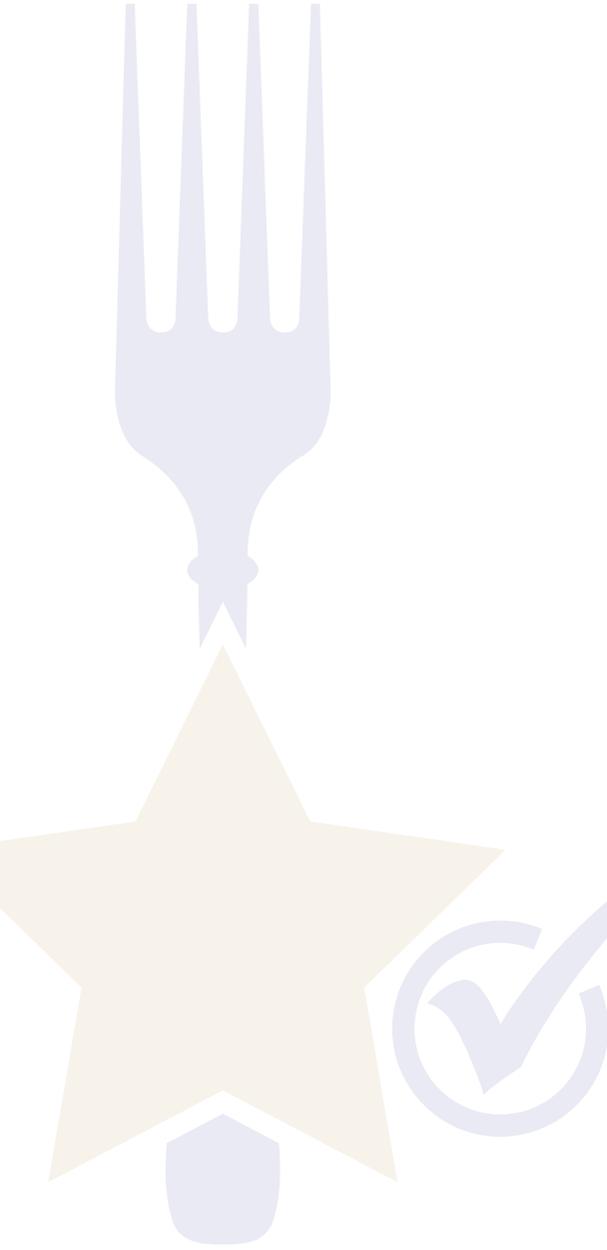
Intercontinental Hotel Group (IHG) was the first to implement the scheme. A total of 120 IHG employees were certified as Approved Departmental Trainers, Internal Verifiers and Examiners. In 2014, 56 employees with a range of professions, from kitchen to food and beverage service and housekeeping, were the first to graduate from the scheme and receive certification.

"Our staff really enjoyed participating in Pathways to Professionalism, and they were especially eager to attain official certification. So far, three of our room attendants have already been promoted to supervisors as a result of the scheme," said Naheel.

Hasan Salah is a waiter at Intercontinental Hotel Amman, and is currently preparing for certification in Level 3, and is anticipating a promotion. *"I learned new things that had never crossed my mind before. Everything is clearly explained in the program manual; for example, how to deal with customers and communicate with your manager and colleagues. I wish the scheme had been available when I first started working,"* said Hasan.

The USAID tourism project supported the groundbreaking initiative in a number of ways. This included publishing national 'Professional Standards' for the hospitality industry for the purpose of training, education, accreditation and qualifying employees in the workplace. Six employer committees were established at IHG hotels to ensure the quality of the training program. Three Job Skills Portfolios were developed for Food and Beverage Service, Food Production and Housekeeping to help with implementation of training. In addition, technical support was provided by the USAID tourism project to IHG on how to select employees and implement the scheme. External industry examiners were trained to assess trainees, and the tourism project also organized the examination of the trainees at the National Pathways to Professionalism Assessment Center in Madaba.

In addition, support was provided to the VTC and the tourism industry to obtain accreditation of the Pathways to Professionalism Scheme from the Center of Accreditation and Quality Assurance (CAQA).



NEW CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM FOR JORDAN'S RESTAURANTS

Restaurant classification scheme improving quality of tourist restaurants

With full support from the USAID tourism project, a new Restaurant Classification Scheme was launched and piloted in Aqaba to improve the quality of service offered to guests at tourism restaurants in Aqaba. The national initiative was developed through a steering committee headed by Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority (ASEZA), Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities (MoTA), Jordan Restaurant Association and supported by USAID tourism project.

The new standards are based on food and beverage quality, facility cleanliness, service efficiency and creating a hospitable and welcoming atmosphere. Restaurants are categorized as one of five types: formal, casual, quick service, coffee shop or deli café. Restaurants that meet the minimum standards will receive 'tourist approved' status and are then assessed for service standards to receive a rating. There are three classification levels to rate tourist approved restaurants, identified by a fork symbol. Accordingly, restaurants will receive one, two or three forks, or three forks with a star.

115

**tourism enterprises
received quality
certifications**

(hotel and restaurant classification,
tourism education programs)



Aqaba

Restaurants Classification

Approved assessors trained to implement restaurant classification scheme

With support from the USAID tourism project, six staff from ASEZA and MoTA were trained and certified as Approved Assessors. An awareness session was also conducted by the project for restaurant owners and managers to ensure understanding of and support for the new restaurant classification system. The criteria were then tested on a number of Aqaba restaurants. The new restaurant classification standards are in line with international best practice.

PROMOTING GENDER EQUITY IN THE TOURISM WORKPLACE

To encourage women to join the tourism workforce and ensure that tourism entities are offering equal opportunities to women, the USAID tourism project conducted a series of six training workshops on gender equity in the tourism workplace. This targeted human resource department staff and department managers and supervisors, raising their awareness of the benefits of gender equity and ways to achieve it. The workshops aimed to create a more welcoming environment to encourage women to join the tourism workforce. Over 70 heads of industry took part, learning the benefits of gender equity to companies, human resources best practices in recruitment, training and development in addition to ensuring a safe work environment. Trained managers and supervisors are spreading the message to a further 3,000 hospitality workers to raise awareness about the importance of gender equity in the workplace.



4,200

tourism professionals more aware
of the importance of gender equity



BUILDING CAPACITY OF COMMUNITY-BASED COOPERATIVES IN TAFLEH & AJLOUN

Community engagement

The USAID tourism project, in partnership with the Ministry of Interior - European Union Promoting Local Economic Development in Jordan (EU-PLEDJ) and the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, planned and conducted workshops on 'understanding local tourism development concepts' that helped build the capacity of community-based cooperatives in Tafleh and Ajloun with regards to developing tourism in their areas.

The USAID tourism project also conducted three workshops for potential grantees in the governorates of Tafleh and Ajloun on hospitality skills and customer service, menu design and planning, and safe food handling and hygiene. Representatives from local community-based organizations, individual entrepreneurs and NGOs attended. The workshops increased awareness about local tourism development, shared best practice success stories from other governorates such as Madaba and Ajloun, and promoted the importance of professional hospitality to tourists.

The project also assessed community-based organizations in Ajloun and Tafleh to determine their capacities, and submitted its findings to EU-PLEDJ, MoI and MoTA.

By learning how to market their own businesses, owners of small to medium sized tourism businesses in Ajloun are empowered to find more cost effective and productive ways of attracting new and more customers. They took part in a marketing capacity building workshop implemented by the USAID tourism project, which has helped them to better understand, develop and implement basic tourism product marketing. The initiative was immensely popular and saw a wide turnout of local business owners and aspiring entrepreneurs.

Certified participatory rapid appraisal trainers to lead community development

A Participatory Rapid Appraisal (PRA) train-the-trainer program was implemented by the USAID tourism project in coordination with the Ministry of Interior (MoI) – Local Development Directorate and Development Employment Fund (DEF). To achieve certification, twelve community development trainers from the MoI, DEF and ASEZA completed the requirements of the program. They were trained to rapidly assess communities' needs, available opportunities and resources to successfully develop project plans using PRA tools and methodologies. The trainers are now able to lead the PRA process in their own communities and continue training further staff.

Supporting local tourism development in Tafleh and Ajloun

A series of workshops were conducted by the USAID tourism project in cooperation with the Ministry of Interior Local Development Directorate to enable entrepreneurs from local communities to establish, manage or upgrade their own tourism businesses. Thirty eight potential grantees representing community-based organizations and tourism business owners of lodges, handicraft makers, campsites, restaurants, information centers and cafes attended workshops on 'how to start your own business'. Thirty seven participants were trained in 'How to Price Your Products and Services'. The tourism project provided additional support through three capacity building workshops, held under the patronage of the Ajloun Governor:

- Tourism grant project: planning and preparing for the scheme
- Preparing business concepts and proposal preparation
- How to conduct project assessments: practical field training

The USAID tourism project along with MOI, EU PLEDJ and MOTA trained 90 participants from Tafleh and Dana Nature Reserve on tourism business and understanding tourist needs.



▲ MoTA Secretary General, H.E. Issa Gammoh, at the launch of the Tafleh Tourism Development Plan.

PROMOTING MINISTRY OF INTERIOR'S TOURISM GRANTS WITH THE EUROPEAN UNION

Launching the Tafleleh tourism development plan

The Tafleleh Tourism Development Plan was launched jointly by the Minister of Interior and the Minister of Tourism and Antiquities at a ceremony that took place in Tafleleh in December 2013 and is the result of a joint initiative between the two ministries and the USAID tourism project to improve tourism products and services. The EU is also supporting implementation of the plan through the contribution of funds. The Tafleleh Tourism Development Plan, which was developed in coordination with the local community, will provide grants and technical assistance to tourism enterprises.

Supporting the publication of the PLEDJ grant scheme

The USAID tourism project designed and published the 'Tafleleh Enterprise Development Grant Scheme Program' in both Arabic and English, as well as the 'Tafleleh Tourism Enterprise Development Program' guidelines. The Tafleleh Tourism Strategy was designed, published and distributed to partners including the MOI-EU PLEDJ project and MOTA's main stakeholders and local communities. The project also supported the preparation and publication of the "Ajloun Enterprise Development Grant Scheme Program" and the Ajloun Action Plan.

Supporting EU-PLEDJ by reviewing grant applications

The USAID tourism project assisted tourism entrepreneurs in Tafleleh and Ajloun to develop concept papers and supported their applications to the EU-PLEDJ project. In addition, support was provided to the EU PLEDJ Project for the revision of 120 tourism and 35 food processing grant applications. These were reviewed by a panel of representatives from EU PLEDJ, MOL, MOTA and the USAID tourism project.



▲ H.E. Dr. Raed Al Adwan, Governor of Tafleleh at the launch in Tafleleh.



National Tourism Awareness

▲
Winners of the Tourism Awareness Competition receive their awards in June 2014.

Business Painting Competition 2014

TOURISM
AWARENESS
AND
STATISTICS

Jordan's tourism and hospitality sector is awash with opportunities for world-class education, rewarding careers and professional and personal development. However, awareness of these many opportunities is key to building a tourism workforce of motivated and enthusiastic Jordanians who know what opportunities are available to them. The USAID Economic Growth Through Sustainable Tourism Project supported unique approaches to raising awareness among youth and adults, men and women. An inspired merging of art and tourism awareness activities stirred the imagination of youth around Jordan while introducing them to tourism educational and career opportunities. School counselors were trained as awareness trainers to reach more students with accurate and positive messages about working in tourism, while familiarization visits gave both teachers and students a realistic look at what it means to work in the tourism and hospitality industry.

NATIONWIDE CAMPAIGNS

Raising tourism awareness through art

A creative initiative was implemented to get secondary school students interested in and involved in art and tourism, and thus raise awareness among these youths on what tourism and hospitality can offer them. The Jordan National Gallery of Fine Arts and the USAID tourism worked together to hold art classes with a focus on Jordan's tourism sites at secondary schools across the country. The art workshops were organized and funded by the USAID tourism project and run by the gallery's Touring Art Museum. From Irbid to Tafleh, Zarqa to the Ghor, Salt, Karak and Aqaba, 12 cities outside the capital were visited and the touring art museum reached more than 1,100 students, who took part and created their own artwork. The artwork was then entered into a competition, with prizes for the winners that included visiting tourist attractions in Jordan.

School counselors as tourism awareness trainers

As part of the nationwide tourism awareness campaign to reach different audience segments including students, teachers and parents, a series of tourism awareness training of trainers programs were conducted by the USAID tourism project across the Kingdom. The aim was to heighten tourism awareness and boost the understanding of school counselors about this sector so that they are better able to advise school students, teachers and parents about the potential of tourism for livelihood improvement and career opportunities.

Around 130 secondary school counselors from Amman, Dead Sea, Tafleh, Aqaba, Ajloun, Madaba and Petra took part. As a result, they reached almost 6,000 secondary school students and shared with them the benefits of tourism through specialized classes held at schools. The sessions increased awareness about sector tourism benefits, career opportunities and shared success stories from other governorates such as Madaba and Ajloun.

To further raise the awareness of school counselors and to give them a clearer idea about tourism jobs and the potential of tourism in Jordan, four familiarization (FAM) trips were conducted by USAID tourism project for almost 70 school counselors from Amman, Ajloun, Petra and Madaba to hotels, lodges and museums around the country.



Tourism awareness activities targeting youth

Hospitality careers promoted at schools and VTCs in Petra and Aqaba	845
Awareness raised through art classes	1,200
Tourism awareness TOT and cascade sessions	5,888
Awareness campaign promoting VTC hospitality program	5,000



▲
School children learn about tourism through art workshops.

NATIONAL TOURISM AWARENESS CAMPAIGN CHANGING PERCEPTIONS ABOUT TOURISM IN LEAPS AND BOUNDS



Ms. Jamileh Kassab, Acting Director of the Counseling Department at Al-Jeeza Directorate, is one of 129 trainers and counselors who attended a series of training sessions to raise awareness about tourism and its economic benefits. The sessions were organized by the USAID Economic Growth Through Sustainable Tourism Project. She also took part in related familiarization trips to hotels, lodges and museums around the country.

"The workshop was an eye-opener and corrected misconceptions we had about the tourism industry. We used to believe that no one would find working in tourism acceptable, and that if someone did they would be exposed to a lot of criticism," commented Ms. Jamileh.

The workshops were part of an interactive tourism awareness campaign targeting school counselors. Tourism facts were shared along with and videos of testimonials from Jordanians who work in tourism and who have benefited. The school counselors are now passing what they learned on to their students through career counseling classes.

"When we first introduced the topic to our students, they all laughed and questioned the value of the subject. But now, after watching the video testimonials and learning from us what tourism is really about, as well as the opportunities and economic benefits it provides, they became more aware and are enjoying the sessions," said Jamileh.

The tourism awareness campaign for school counselors has reached at least 129 secondary schools around Jordan, including in Amman, Dead Sea, Tafleh, Aqaba, Ajloun and Madaba.

Another tourism awareness activity resulted in over 1,100 students at secondary schools around the Kingdom participating in a creative initiative implemented by the USAID tourism project and the Jordan National Gallery of Fine Arts where they learned about the opportunities tourism can offer them alongside art classes. The students' tourism-themed artwork was entered into a national painting competition. The 15 winners visited various tourism attractions in Jordan.

Ikram Al-Huweimel's painting of a museum secured her a winning spot in the national painting competition. The 14 year old from Ghor Al Mazra'a said the first time she actually set foot in a museum was during the trip organized by the USAID tourism project to the Jordan National Museum, among other tourism sites.

"I learned that we should welcome tourists warmly and show them our Jordanian hospitality, and that we need to preserve our heritage sites," Ikram said.

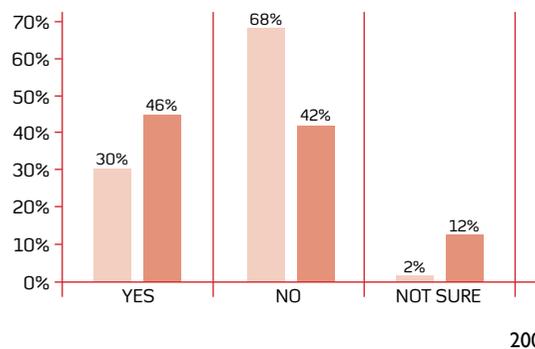
The USAID tourism project also produced and distributed 55,000 flyers containing key messages to promote tourism as an important industry that generates a variety of career options. Seven different flyers were produced to address specific segments of the population, including students, teachers, parents, tourism workers, media, policy makers and the general public.

HIGHLIGHT FROM THE NATIONAL TOURISM AWARENESS SURVEY 2014

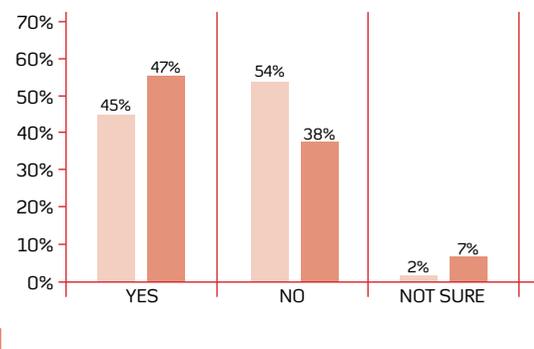
In October 2014 a National Tourism Awareness Survey was conducted by the USAID tourism project to measure attitudes and perceptions of the general community in Jordan towards tourism. In total 900 surveys were conducted nationwide, focusing on parents, students and trainers, as well as managers and workers in the tourism sector. The survey also measured the impact of the project's national tourism awareness activities by determining how accepting Jordanians are of jobs in tourism and the role of women in the tourism workplace.

In brief, household heads recognize tourism as an important sector, recognize its growth and predict potential further growth. This is further endorsed at local community levels. Out of the household heads who lived close to a tourist site/ attraction, 56% (up from 45% from 2013) recognize the fact that such tourist sites have contributed to the development of the area and 46% of those same households (up from 30% from 2013) recognized that these sites have contributed to the creation of job opportunities.

SITES CONTRIBUTED TO AREA DEVELOPMENT

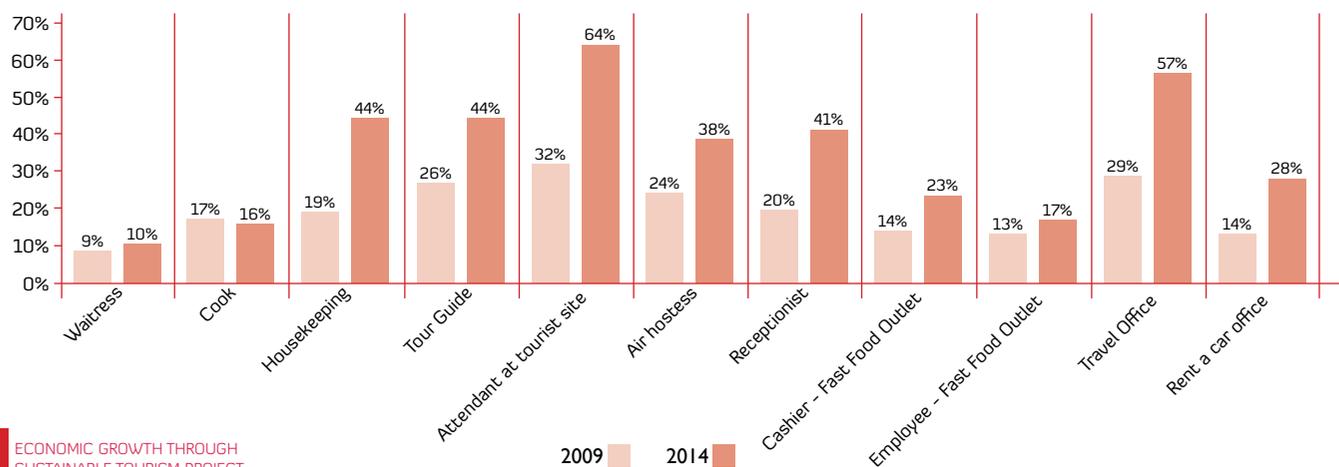


SITES CONTRIBUTED TO AREA CREATION



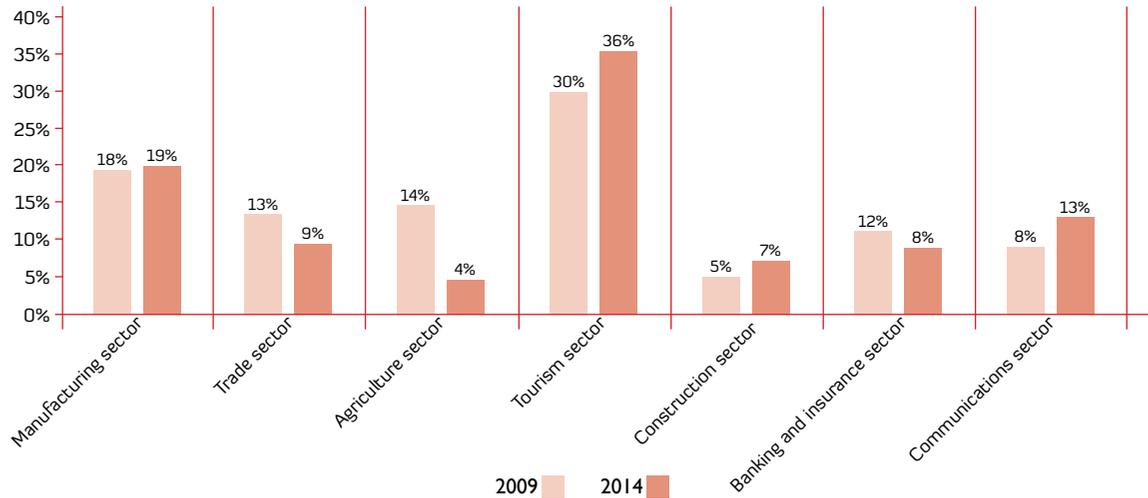
In general, the household heads' approval of women in the tourism industry have significantly increased in the past year, noting that the three most acceptable jobs are attendant at a tourist site, travel offices and tour guides.

APPROVALS FOR FEMALE ENGAGEMENT



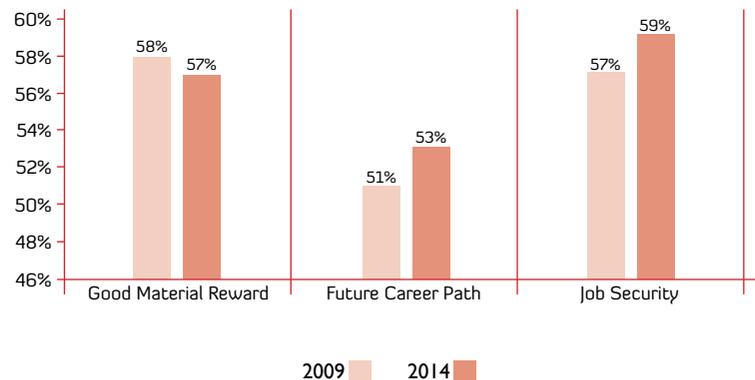
In assessing its importance to the Jordanian economy compared to other economic sectors, teachers, trainers and instructors at hospitality and tourism educational and training institutions gave it the number one ranking.

APPROVALS FOR FEMALE ENGAGEMENT



Further proof that the industry is on the right track is the testimonials by the trade. When asked if their current jobs offer good material reward, future career path and job security and satisfaction, more than 50% agreed.

APPROVALS FOR FEMALE ENGAGEMENT

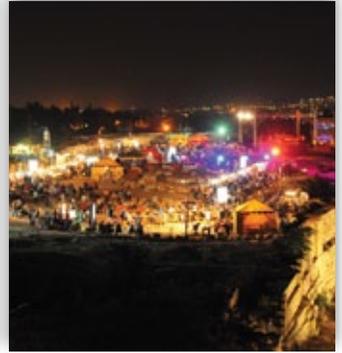


SUPPORT TOURISM RESEARCH AND DECISION-MAKING THROUGH TOURISM SATELLITE ACCOUNTS

Accurate information on Jordan's economic gains from tourism was made possible through the establishment of the country's Tourism Satellite Accounts (TSA). This is a UN World Tourism Organization system that measures the contribution of the sector to a country's economy. Under this tourism project, the detailed figures on tourism's contribution in 2012 were completed and officially published in February 2014. The report was developed in partnership with the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation's Department of Statistics, with support from the USAID tourism project. Other stakeholders who cooperated to develop the TSA tables include MoTA, Central Bank of Jordan, Jordan Tourism Board, General Intelligence Department, Tourism Police Department, Jordan Hotel Association, Jordan Restaurant Association, Jordan Inbound Tour Operators Association and Jordan Society for Tourism and Travel Agents.

“ The information produced by the TSA enables the government to plan more effectively and design more efficient policies with regards the tourism sector in the future. The data also illustrates the significance of tourism and the positive impact it has on other sectors in Jordan, such as transport and industry. ”

H.E. Mr. Issa Gammoh
Secretary General, Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities
On launching the Tourism Satellite Account figures for Jordan for 2012.



PETRA YOUTH LEARN THAT EDUCATION LEADS TO BETTER TOURISM CAREERS



They are better acquainted with tourism than most children and even most adults, but 39 youth from Um Sayhoun village in Wadi Musa, Petra were excited to discover the many different faces of tourism during a field trip to Aqaba. Through this trip they learned about the various career opportunities in the tourism industry. Most of these children are engaged in offering donkey rides, selling souvenirs, and posing for photos for small contributions.

The faces of the bright-eyed girls and boys were stretched wide with smiles as they visited the Hospitality and Tourism Vocational Training Institute in Aqaba, the Mövenpick Hotel and McDonald's restaurant. They experienced being chef for the morning, while hearing about the institutes services. Next they toured the hotel's facilities and heard firsthand from the human resources manager, also from Wadi Musa, as well as a female member of the security team how they achieved their careers in tourism. At McDonald's the youth were introduced to the Jordanian men and women serving the tourism industry.

"This trip has left such a positive impact on the kids – especially the girls – that they have requested specialized vocational training courses at school. In response, we are planning to make available a number of courses in cooperation with the Vocational Training Institute in Petra for those youth interested in careers working at hotels and restaurants," said Ms. Obaida Al-Hasanat, Director of the Community Development Center in Um Sayhoun.

According to Al-Hasanat, the center seeks to gradually improve the local community's perception of women's

education and employment. She noted that for many of the young participants, the familiarization tour was their first experience visiting somewhere outside of Petra.

"We learned more about work in tourism and there is nothing shameful about it at all," said Ibtihal, a 13 year-old from Um Sayhoun. *"I want to continue my education because it's a must. Tourism is good for people and communities."*

As for the boys, Mohammad Al-Suoud was happy to be on the trip. Speaking about his work offering donkey rides to visitors in Petra, "It's hard work," he said, "I would rather continue my education so that I can get a stable job."

"The trip left a good impression on the boys. One of them was saying that he wants to work in a hotel and another said he wants to be a cook. Despite their young age, they know how to cook as their families teach them how to prepare traditional meals while camping in the wilderness," said Mr. Derar Bani-Issa, a teacher at Um Sayhoun School for Boys.

"Education was not a priority for most of them, but each of these awareness initiatives improves their understanding of the importance of education to get better jobs," Bani-Issa concluded.

The familiarization trip was organized by the USAID Economic Growth through Tourism Project, as part of an initiative to raise youth's awareness of potential career opportunities in the tourism industry. The initiative aims to eliminate child labor in Petra by encouraging vulnerable children to stay at school and continue their studies in order to work formally in the tourism industry.

GRANTS AWARDED BY
THE USAID ECONOMIC GROWTH
THROUGH SUSTAINABLE
TOURISM PROJECT

SHOWCASING JORDAN'S HERITAGE AND CULTURE

Jordan National Museum

Supported strengthening the Jordan National Museum's institutional capabilities through development of a business plan. Also revitalized the experiences offered by the museum with new conceptual design solutions for the museum exhibits, orientation hall and displays. Revised the museum's storyline. Support was also provided for software and hardware for a new ticketing system. Museum staff participated in a study tour of US museums.

TOURISM MARKETING AND PROMOTION

Baraka Consulting for Sustainable Tourism Development

Supported Baraka Consulting for Sustainable Tourism Development to develop and deliver Jordan's first Certified Bird Guiding Program for local nature and tour guides. 17 guides graduated from the 3-month training program during which they visited seven leading bird-watching sites to learn how to plan and execute bird-watching tours for enthusiasts.

Jordan Tourism Board

Supported Jordan Tourism Board efforts to increase exposure of Jordan as a desirable destination to source market trade through local industry participation at trade shows including EIBTM 2013 and World Travel Market (WTM) 2013.

Jordan Tourism Board

Supported JTB's 'Jordan LEAP' marketing activities to raise Jordan's tourism profile as a luxury travel destination by educating 464 Virtuoso luxury travel consortium agents to become 'Jordan Tourism Experts' and promote and sell Jordan as a prime destination to travelers through live webinars.

Jordan Tourism Board

Supported JTB to organize and host press and familiarization trips from North America to boost promotion and sales of Jordan as a tourism destination, including participation of 10 Virtuoso travel advisors in a 10-day study tour of Jordan.

Jordan Tourism Board

Supported JTB implementation of social media campaigns including two TripAdvisor campaigns focusing on key North American and European markets to strengthen tourism promotion of Jordan.



ECONOMIC GROWTH THROUGH SUSTAINABLE TOURISM PROJECT

PROJECT SUMMARY
DECEMBER 2014

Facebook : [JordanTourismDevelopmentProject](#)

Twitter : [@SiyahaJordan](#)

Youtube : www.youtube.com/SiyahaJordan

Website : www.siyaha.org

Jordan Tourism Board North America (JTBNA)

Supported JTBNA to cultivate new Spanish-speaking markets in Mexico and North America through development of communication materials such as the Spanish language microsite of “My Jordan Journey” website and new social media channels.

Jordan Tourism Board Travel Agent Academy

Supported JTB to expand its travel agent network in the US and other markets through development of online Jordan Travel Academy by helping develop content for two new chapters on faith and adventure travel.

Jordan Tourism Board

Supported JTB to target, attract and directly reach new US consumers through participation in consumer shows such as NY Times Travel Consumer Show and ITB Travel Show in Berlin.

Jordan Tourism Board

Supported JTB to increase sales by launching a cooperative marketing program with JITOA that established eight joint marketing campaigns between Jordanian and North American travel agents and tour operators focusing on social media and other channels for distribution of attractive promotional deals for trips to Jordan.

TOURISM EDUCATION

Madaba Institute for Mosaic Art and Restoration (MIMAR)

Supported upgrading the capacity of MIMAR, including revamp of facilities, upgraded standards, improved curricula and promotion of its programs. Provided need-based scholarships for MIMAR students.

Jordan Applied University (JAU) College of Hospitality and Tourism Education

Supported JAU application for UNWTO TedQual program certification, including strengthening research capacity, enhancing training programs by equipping new computer lab, printing publications, and improving teaching skills.

Jordan National Gallery of Fine Arts

Supported Jordan National Gallery of Fine Arts to raise youth’s awareness of career opportunities in tourism and hospitality through 25 art workshops delivered in 12 locations around Jordan and a national painting competition.

THE TEAM
THAT
MADE IT
HAPPEN

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Ibrahim K. Osta

Chief of Party

Site Development and Presentation Component

Maysa Shahateet

Component Leader

Halla Khayyat

Project Coordinator

Dania Jamal

Administrative Assistant

Abeer Al Refai

Project Management Specialist

Suleiman Farajat

Petra Region Manager and Petra Archaeological Park Advisor

Zaid Masannat

Creative Director / Senior Architect

Ihab Amarin

Tourism Development Advisor

Marketing and Experiences Component

Amjad Sawalha

Component Leader

Dala Al Mograbi

Administrative Assistant

Tala Momani

Product Development & Destination Marketing Specialist

Ala'a Al Kurdi

Product Development & Destination Marketing Specialist

Sa'ed Zawaideh

Product Development & Destination Marketing Specialist

Nadim Goussous

Product Development & Destination Marketing Specialist

Rania Khattab

Projects Coordinator

Hala Abu Sitteh

Project Support Coordinator

Human Resource, Quality Assurance & Industry Development Component

Dr. Joseph Ruddy

Component Leader

Samah Abu Khalifeh

Projects Coordinator

Farah Al Asaad

Administrative Assistant

Amin Ardah

Industry-based Training Specialist

Rawan Atallah

SME Development and Awareness Specialist

Samira Majali

Northern Region Field Manager

Rami Fakes

Workforce Development Specialist

Issa Qaqish

Quality Assurance & Research Specialist

Haya Madanat

Project Coordinator

Susanne Grigoleit

Tourism Workforce Development and Training Specialist

Manal Khalid

Workforce Development Specialist

Saniya Al Labadi

Tourism SME Development Specialist

Omar Omari

Community Tourism Development Specialist

Program Support Component

Fadia Al-Husseini Component Leader	Wafa Qassis Operations Manager	Amal Namrouqa Projects Coordinator	Evon Warwar Grants Manager	Rula Jaber Grants Officer / M&E Coordinator
Maha Abdelrazeq Training & Events Officer	Rania Jaber Training & Events Coordinator	Mustafa Shaaban Finance Manager	Bushra Al Abdelqader Senior Accountant	Ahmad Zaidan Accountant
Reem Kattan Communications Manager	Muna Al-Alul Communications Specialist	Mona Abu Saleh Media Officer	Ahmad Qaisieh Graphic Designer	Fred Nustas Property Manager
Wisam Khalil IT Specialist	Ahmad Abu Sharifeh IT Specialist	Badee Alyacoub Environmental and Project Management Specialist	Ali Goussous Community Tourism Specialist	Rasha Farajat Administrative and Grants Support
Zain Abu Neel Administrative Support	Lutfe Awayes Driver	Nidal Jarrar Driver	Mohammad Farajat Driver	

Washington, DC Home Office Support

Preston Motes Home Office Program Director	Daniel Moriarty Home Office Manager	Sabrina Peterson Home Office Associate
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Strategic Project Advisors

Matt McNulty Project Strategic Advisor	Lori Anglin Conservation Architect and Cultural Resource Management Expert	Anthony Lenehan Quality Assurance & Human Resource Development
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