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# VISITOR EXPERIENCE DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

**15 February 2006**

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**Visitor Experience Development Project**  
**Final**  
**15 February 2006**

# CONTENTS

<b>Acronyms</b>	i
1. Objectives	1
2. Background and Overview	1
3. Existing Visitor Experience and Attractions	2
4. Proposed Action Plan: Madaba Walking Tour	4
5. Project Description	5
6. Legal and Administrative Requirements	7
7. Financing Requirements	8
8. Private Sector Participation (PSP) opportunities	10
9. Incentives for stakeholders	10
10. Potential Partners and roles	10
11. Market Outreach and Support	11
12. Heritage Environment and Buildings	11
13. Timeline for Implementation	12
14. Estimated Budget	12
15. Milestones and Success Indicators	12
16. Madaba Walking Tour Development	13
17. Proposed Next Steps	15

## ACRONYMS

ACOR	American Center for Oriental Research
ASEZA	Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority
BDS	Business Development Services
BOD	Board of Directors
CBO	Community Based Organization
CoE	Centers of Excellence
DCA	Development Credit Authority
DoA	Department of Antiquities
GDA	Global Development Alliance
GOJ	Government of Jordan
JAU	Jordan Applied University
JHA	Jordan Hotel Association
JHTEC	Jordan Hospitality and Tourism Education Company
JITOA	Jordan Inbound Tour Operators Association
MBR	Market Based Representatives
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MICE	Meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibitions
MFI	Microfinance Institution
MOE	Ministry of Education
MoTA	Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities
MSME	Medium and Small Micro Enterprises
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PNT	Petra National Trust
PSP	Private Sector Participation
RSCN	Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature
SAVE	Scientific, academic, volunteer and educational
SIU	Strategy Implementation Unit
SSC	Strategy Steering Committee
TA	Tourism Associations
TOT	Institutional of Trainers
TSA	Tourism Satellite Account
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

# Visitor Experience Development Project: Day Excursion Market

## 1. Objectives

- Enhance the visitor experience and Madaba's competitiveness
- Better utilize and manage MOTA and other GOJ assets through concessions and other forms of Private Sector Participation (PSP)
- Improve the core of the product offering in Madaba, as a first step in developing the potential of the city and region as a hub for Christian Holy Land Market and other targeted segments
- Extend average length of stay and provide day visitors more and better opportunities to spend money

## 2. Background and Overview

### History

Discussion of ancient history (Nabataeans, Romans, Byzantines, and Umayyads), abandonment of the city, and resettlement by Christians from Karak at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Mosaics.

### Rationale

Madaba is one of Jordan's most important tourism destinations, with only Petra, Jerash, and Mt. Nebo receiving more foreign visitors. The potential of the city for generating income from these visitors is, however, essentially untapped.

The majority of visitors today spend less than an hour in Madaba, to view the famous Map, before moving on to Mt. Nebo and destinations further south. For example, only about 1 in 13 Map visitors (7%) visit DoA-managed attractions, which consist of the Archeological Park, Madaba Museum, Burnt Palace, and Church of the Apostles. A single ticket for entry into all of these sites is sold at the Archeological Park (2 JD). Mt. Nebo, which is adjacent to Madaba, receives 30 percent more visitors than St. George's Church.

The economic impacts from tourism on the local community are, as a result, minimal. Benefits currently flow to only a few restaurants, a few artisans and handicrafts vendors, the Dept. of Antiquities (DoA), and St. George's Church, which charges a 1 JD entrance fee. The World Bank estimates that only about 200 local residents are employed in the tourism sector.

The purpose of this Experience Development Action Plan is to increase lengths of stay and levels of visitor expenditures and begin to lay a foundation for the development of overnight and other market segments that will yield meaningful economic benefits to city residents.

### 3. Existing Visitor Experience and Attractions

The principal attraction for foreign visitors is the Madaba Map, which received a total of 138,712 visitors in 2005, virtually all of them foreign (137,554). For group excursions it is often the only attraction they visit in the city. For other market segments, including foreign FIT's and Jordanians on weekend excursions, other attractions include:

**Haret Jdoudna Restaurant** – A city landmark and favorite of both foreign and Jordanian visitors. It probably receives more economic benefit from tourism than any other private business in the city. Privately owned.

**Madaba Visitors Center** – A very nice facility created through renovation of an historic building, but currently providing not much more than a parking lot for buses, a Madaba brochure, bathrooms, and a visitor information desk that is often unattended. Revenues generated - \$0. Owned and operated by MOTA.

**Mosaic School** – While it has a great deal of potential as a visitor attraction, that potential remains completely unexploited. A few visitors wander in, but there is no interpretation program, no admission fee charged, and nothing for foreign visitors to buy. Revenues generated from tourism - \$0. Operated by DoA.

**Archeological Park** – Encompassing the remains of several Byzantine churches and a number of important mosaics, the Park has a great deal of potential but offers no visitor services, very little interpretation and is poorly managed and maintained. A fee of 2 JD is charged to enter the site (when it's open), and includes admission into the Madaba Museum and Apostles Church. Revenues generated from tourism – about \$10,000 JD. Owned and operated by DoA.

**Burnt Palace** – Up the road from the Archeological Park, a large residence or “Palace” that burned to the ground during the Byzantine era and was never rebuilt. It houses several important mosaics but is barely managed and poorly maintained. Many mosaics are unsheltered and moisture damaged, there is very little interpretation, and exhibits are unlit and often very difficult to view. No visitor services. Revenues generated from tourism - \$0 (part of Archeological Park tour). Operated by MOTA.

**Madaba Museum** – Hard to find and poorly managed and maintained, the Museum has some significant redevelopment potential but needs renovation and better interpretation and management. Revenues from tourism - \$0 (admission included in Archeological Park entrance). Owned and operated by DoA.

**Church of the Apostles** – Housed in a very attractive shelter built with USAID and Italian Government assistance, with spectacular mosaics that are very difficult to see because of a lack of lighting and catwalks that would permit overhead views. The Church has significant untapped tourism potential. Some would argue that the mosaics within the site are more interesting than the famous Map. There is however, little in the way of interpretation and the site is barely managed. Revenues from tourism - \$0

(admission fee included in Archeological Park admission fee). Owned and operated by DoA.

**Other potential attractions not currently visited by tourists but that have significant potential include:**

**St. John the Baptist Catholic Church** – A beautiful structure (there was no one there to let us inside) that includes depictions of John and Jesus on its façade and a rustic garden courtyard with Roman columns. Significant potential as a stop along a Madaba circuit and nice link to the John the Baptist theme at Bethany, Mukawir, and other Christian Holy Land sites in the area. Owned and operated by the Catholic Church.

**The Acropolis** – An early Roman site being excavated by Toronto University. Revenues from tourism - \$0. Owned and operated by DoA.

**Martyr's Church** – A Byzantine-era Church, located adjacent to the Archeological Park, but currently unexcavated (due to a lack of funding for construction of a protective shelter). Visitation is currently not permitted but can be viewed through a hole in the wall of the Archeological Park. Revenues from tourism - \$0. Owned and operated by DoA.

**Historic Buildings** – A number of houses and other structures (reportedly 87 in all) constructed during the resettlement of Madaba, circa 1900, that could be adaptively reused for tourism purposes. The most well-known is the Saraya building, which is currently being used as a police station and is an important focus of the World Bank Madaba City Revitalization Program.

Potential uses include guest houses, restaurants, spas, arts and crafts centers, retail facilities, museums, entertainment facilities, etc. Privately owned, with the exception of the Saraya building. Some house commercial operations (retail outlets, workshops, etc.). Many are private residences. Several are unoccupied and in need of major renovation. Ownership is an issue (some have several private owners), but there are a handful of buildings that would appear to have excellent redevelopment potential and no major ownership problems. Revenues from tourism - \$0.

**Other Attractions** – There are a range of other potential development opportunities to be explored, including the development of a crafts market or Souq, (indoor and/or outdoor, potentially with artists in action), day and nighttime entertainment facilities, such as cultural exhibitions and performances (in place of the static mannequin display at the Madaba Museum), sound and light shows (to promote evening excursions), and urban renewal (with a tourism focus) along the streets that connect these various attractions.

#### **4. Proposed Action Plan: Madaba Walking Tour**

##### **Vision**

The tour bus arrives at the new Madaba Welcome Center (current Visitor's Center). A group of 25 wealthy middle-aged Holy Land visitors are dropped off at the front gate, and led through the landscaped garden to the hospitality room (the bus parks around the back).

There they are greeted (Welcome Center staff are prepared for the visit, because the tour group has booked the tour in advance and the guide has phoned ahead to provide their estimated time of arrival) and treated to Bedouin coffee/tea service, by employees dressed in traditional clothing. Seated on Bedouin-style sofas made with colorful hand-woven fabrics, they are given an overview, in their language, by a trained (certified by JTOA) Madaba Guide, of the history of the city, its famous mosaic art, and the walking tour they are about to take. New maps mounted on the wall show the route and major attractions, and highlight the city's location in the heart of the Christian Holy Land.

Those who might not be interested in (or fit enough) to complete the full tour, or prefer to wander off on their own, are offered the option of renting hand-held audio tours, rented for 5 JD, which is in addition to the 15 JD cost of the ticket for the 3.5 hour walking tour, prepaid by the tour operator and included in the price of their Jordan package. It includes the coffee service, the guide, admission into all of the attractions, and special mosaic lapel pin used to enter each attraction on the route. The Welcome Center, Tour, and audio tour rentals are operated by a private company that pays a portion of the income received to MOTA as a concession.

Welcome Center brochure in hand, they are then given 20 minutes to wander through the site and explore the exhibits that highlight the city's history, from the Nabataeans to the Umayyads, and its resettlement by Christians from Karak in the early 1900's. Displays include artist's renderings of what the city might have looked like at various periods, an interactive timeline display that highlights dates and characteristics of different periods, a short video or slide presentation, historic photos from the resettlement, information on past and current excavations, and important artifacts discovered within the city, all with professional interpretive signs in multiple languages. *Elapsed time: 30 minutes.*

As the tour begins, they are lead, on a clearly marked route, with signs for each attraction (made from mosaic tiles), and sensors that trigger the audio-tour players, into the Mosaic School, through the Mosaic School entrance, which is now also the entrance to the Archeological Park.

Inside the school they are treated to a demonstration of how the city's famous mosaics were originally made and are currently being restored (school staff are prepared because the group has been pre-booked and the Welcome Center alerts them by cell phone when the group arrives). They have the opportunity to see artisans in action and for those groups that have booked it, and FITs, there is an afternoon Mosaic-making class (15 JD)

where visitors can get their hands dirty and make their own mosaic. Longer classes are also available for those who would like to spend a full day, up to a week.

As they exit the school they pass through the gift shop, where high-quality reproductions of famous mosaic images are available for sale, as well as books on the history and art of mosaic making and other souvenirs. The school receives 2 JD from the 15 JD admission fee, plus the revenues it earns from classes and the gift shop, and in total is earning more than 300,000 JD per year in tourism revenues. *Elapsed time: 60 minutes.*

From there it's short walk to the attractions contained within the Archeological Park. Their guide leads them through the various exhibits, which all provide high quality interpretive signs. The mosaic floors of the Byzantine churches located within the site are all professionally lit and have catwalks above that provide visitors with a bird's eye view of these ancient masterpieces. The guide (and audio tours) explain the meaning of the vibrant images (because they are now regularly cleaned, fully restored, and well lit) depicted in the mosaics, translates the Greek inscriptions, provides some historical context, and explains why some of the images have been defaced. For FITs, this information is also available on special wall exhibits with high-quality images of the mosaic floors. *Elapsed time: 80 minutes.*

From here they walk along the well marked route to the Burnt Palace. Here they find a many other beautiful, restored, maintained, professionally interpreted and well-lit mosaic images. One of the highlights of this attraction is the Interpretation Center (currently administrative offices) which provides a timeline and history of the Byzantine Era, how the Byzantines and Umayyads peacefully coexisted under Umayyad rule, and a scale model of what the Palace might have originally looked like.

In the courtyard café outside they can buy snacks and drinks, cool off in the shade, and admire the large mural painted on the wall depicting the 4,500 year history of the city. *Elapsed time: 110 minutes.*

From here they wind their way up the street to St. George's Church, where they can view the famous Madaba Map. Along the route they see newly renovated shops with mosaics, hand-woven rugs, tea shops, etc., where they can return after the tour and where FIT's can spend time shopping and interacting with the locals.

Inside the Church compound, their first stop is the Map Room, With a life-sized image of the Map, (perhaps a replica made of mosaic tiles commissioned to the Mosaic School), mounted on the wall for easier viewing, where the Madaba Guide explains when the map was made, when and how it was excavated, highlight interesting parts of the map (e.g., the fishing swimming upstream to avoid ending up in the Dead Sea), and perhaps a rendering of what the map might have looked like before portions of it were destroyed.

The Church is able to afford investment in this new interpretive facility because it receives 2 JD from the 15 JD walking tour fee, and can now charge 3 JD to FITs and other walk-in visitors, because of the improved visitor experience. This Map Room tour

also helps alleviate congestion and time constraints for groups visiting the actual map. They have also been provided with technical assistance in producing, packaging, and merchandising Madaba Map and other high quality souvenirs (perhaps produced on commission by the Mosaic School). They also now have an outdoor café for visitors that are still only coming to Madaba to see the famous map (though most are now coming for the complete walking tour). *Elapsed time: 140 minutes.*

From here they walk up the street toward the Madaba Museum. Along the route, which is closed to vehicular traffic from 10:00 am to 5:00 pm, they are able to immerse themselves in a real Jordanian street scene/cultural experience, with street vendors, shops, and a visit to the new Souq/outdoor crafts market that has been developed in the vacant lot up the road. They wander through quickly and make a mental note to return after the tour is completed. A few have seen enough and are in the mood for some shopping. They will be picked up at a predetermined time back at the Welcome Center.

On their way to the museum the group stops by the St. John the Baptist Catholic Church. They visit the cathedral, light a candle, and continue on their tour. *Elapsed time: 160 minutes.*

They enter the Museum and are treated to a tour of the newly renovated facility, with new lighting, interpretive signs, and exhibits. They spend 20 minutes and head out toward the Church of the Apostles, passing (and perhaps stopping) to view the new Madaba Guest House and Spa, created through the renovation of an historical two-story building, with views of the valley below. They might enter into the ground floor gift shop that sells spa and beauty-related products from the Dead Sea, or stop at the rooftop café for a drink, a chance to rest their feet, and admire the view. *Elapsed time: 180 minutes.*

They enter into the Church of the Apostles through a beautifully landscaped garden and outdoor cafe, now the highlight of the Madaba tour, with its magnificent and beautifully lit and restored mosaics, including the famous “Personification of the Sea” medallion at the center of the room, which can now be seen from above, over a newly installed catwalk and halogen lighting that shows off the well-maintained image. *Elapsed time: 210 minutes (3.5 hours).*

The group now has 20 minutes to relax and unwind in the outdoor garden café and visit the gift shop, where reproductions of the images found inside the Church can be purchased. Then its back on the bus (waiting for them at the Church) and off to Mt. Nebo, or alternatively, a visit to one of the city’s many restaurants for lunch or dinner, and for overnight groups, a few hours of shopping or resting up before the evening’s entertainment begins (subject of a separate action plan).

## **5. Project Description**

### **Business Model:**

As proposed, the Walking Tour would be operated as one or more private-sector concessions for management and operation of the Tour and of visitor attractions currently operated by the DoA and/or MOTA, including the Visitor's Center, Archeological Park, Burnt Palace, Madaba Museum, and Church of the Apostles. It is likely that a phased approach will be used, focusing in the first phase on the route from the Visitor's Center to St. George's Church. A separate concession and development plan might be created for the Church of the Apostles.

Additional concessions could be granted for food and beverage operations, interpretive, educational, and entertainment-oriented programs within sites (e.g., sound and light shows, Madaba guide services, audio tour rentals, etc.). Alternatively, these services might fall within the scope of a "master" concession for operation of these sites.

It might also be possible to contract out, directly with DoA/MOTA or the concession holder(s) responsible for management of DoA sites, related services. For example, the cleaning and general maintenance of these facilities to a private company, contracting the Mosaic School to clean, maintain and restore mosaics, etc.

As envisioned, the Walking Tour concessionaire would package and promote the tour that would include at least the first part of the "Vision" or visitor experience described earlier – at least, in phase I, from the Visitor's Center to St. George's Church. There would be a single entry fee charged, perhaps 5 JD in Phase I, 10 JD when the full tour is established, and rising to 15 JD (at the end of year three of operations), as the visitor experience is enhanced. That fee would include a welcome coffee and snack, tour of Visitor's Center attractions, guided tour of sites with a trained Madaba guide, and entrance into all attractions included in the Walking Tour.

The business model(s) will be defined in greater detail in the next phase of work.

## **6. Legal and Administrative Requirements**

There are a number of legal and administrative issues already identified that will have to be addressed in the short term. The first, and one that must be dealt with before tenders can be promoted and concessions granted, is transfer of management responsibilities of the aforementioned sites from MOTA/DoA to the private sector.

A second is the legal terms of concessions agreements, including use rights and rights of transfer; length of concessions and terms for extension; rules for prequalification, competitive bidding and evaluation of bids; remedies for non-performance, termination of concession agreements, disposition of investments made by concessionaires once

concession agreements have expired or been voided; DoA and MOTA oversight and responsibilities, revenue or profit sharing splits; etc.

Draft tenders and concessions agreements from other destinations that grant private sector management rights for heritage and other types of government-owned tourism sites should be collected and analyzed by legal professionals early on in the project development process.

Other legal and administrative issues to be dealt with include zoning, closing off streets to vehicular traffic, ownership, protection and adaptive reuse of historic buildings, and relocation of DoA staff from administrative offices currently located within sites to be concessioned. There will undoubtedly be other issues identified as we move through the project development program.

## **7. Financing Requirements**

Financing issues to be resolved include:

**Reconfiguration and renovation of DoA sites** – For both infrastructure and superstructure. While it does not appear that new major construction will be required at any of the sites targeted for concessioning, there is clearly a need for some meaningful levels of renovation work.

First on the list in terms of renovation needs is bathroom facilities at the Archeological Park, Burnt Palace, and Madaba Museum and the addition of bathroom facilities at the Church of the Apostles (there may be bathroom facilities there, but I did not see them, and based upon past experience, any that do exist likely need work). Bathrooms at the Visitor's Center could use some minor refitting as well.

One relatively major project suggested for the Phase I development program is the construction of a shelter over the Church of the Martyr's, adjacent to the Burnt Palace. Excavation of this structure could potentially add a great deal to the Phase I experience.

Another expenditure that will be required is improved drainage around outdoor mosaics. Most importantly at the Burnt Palace and Madaba Museum.

**Interpretation Infrastructure** – Items required include high-quality interpretative signs, professional lighting, walkways, catwalks and elevated viewing platforms. The biggest expenditures would likely be lighting and signs in the Phase I sites. The Church of the Apostles is badly in need of better elevated viewing platforms, preferably a catwalk over the main floor.

**Interpretive Programs and Services** – Potential items include sound and lighting equipment for sound and light shows and performances, audio tour rental equipment, and guide training (likely can be covered under Siyaha technical assistance program).

**Food and Beverage Services** – Both within concessioned sites and other sites and locations along the tour route. Investment in permanent and semi-permanent structures, landscaping, and hardware and soft goods will be required.

**Revitalization of the Urban Streetscape** – In the proposed Phase I, the street that runs from the Visitor’s Center to the corner of King Talal Street adjacent to St. George’s Church. Includes basic infrastructure (road paving, etc.) and superstructure, including shop signs, shop configuration, and renovation of unoccupied shops (and perhaps occupied ones as well).

**Adaptive Reuse of Historic Buildings** – Financing or grants to owners to renovate and use some of these buildings for tourism purposes (guest houses, restaurants, handicrafts workshops, museums, retail operations, etc.)

Some of the financing needs listed above (and to be expanded at the project is defined to greater levels of detail) can be covered through Siyaha grants and micro-credit programs. DCA-supported financing programs may also be developed.

The World Bank project aimed at revitalizing Madaba’s urban core, primarily for tourism purposes, is focused on essentially the same route as the proposed walking tour and may be will cover some of the infrastructure-related costs.

Private companies granted concessions for operation of DoA sites may be willing or required to invest their own capital for putting in place the required infrastructure and other improvements, though the degree they will be willing to undertake these kinds of investments remains an open question. If significant resistance is encountered (manifested in a lack willingness of qualified companies to submit bids), then other strategies may be required.

One potential solution is to upgrade site infrastructure at all of the to-be-concessioned sites before the hand over to the private sector. The question then becomes how to finance those improvements. One option is through the establishment of the proposed Tourism Development Corporation, though the likely start-up date is likely several months away. Another option might be funding from the Ministry of Finance, as a distribution of the funding committed to for product development through the adoption of the National Tourism Strategy (though that process might take several months as well).

As mentioned in the previous section, this issue of funding for site improvements and whether or not concessionaires should be or would be willing to make these kinds of investment has legal implications as well. If for example, a company granted a concession makes the required investments, but to a standard below what is required to create a high-quality visitor experience, what recourse will MOTA have to remedy the situation? What if the concession holder makes the investments but then fails to live up to other terms of the concession agreement? Will it be compensated for investments made? These types of issues can and have been addressed at other concessioned sites

around the world, but typically with some degree of controversy. Research needs to be conducted and strategies thought out well in advance on the tendering process.

## **8. Private Sector Participation (PSP) opportunities**

PSP opportunities have been outlined above in discussion of the business model for development and operation of the walking tour. Additional work needs to be done in the near term to define in much greater detail what shape those opportunities might take, through the development of:

**Business Plans** – Detailing the types of business opportunities that can be created through development of the Tour and related services, how those businesses might be structured, potential revenue that might be generated, estimated operating costs, and profit potential of each business opportunity identified.

**Site-specific Action Plans** – That provided detailed estimates of the types of improvements needed both in terms of infrastructure, conceptual themes, story lines, and associated interpretive programs, and other visitor-related services.

**Implementation Tools & Strategies** – In terms how need improvements might be financed and an analysis of available financing programs and other programs that might be developed; how concessions and other forms of PSP might be structured; a tendering strategy, including legal structures, pre-qualification, promotion, evaluation of bids, technical assistance needs and resources, and remedies for non-performance.

## **9. Incentives for stakeholders**

Incentives are clearly needed. More discussion, research, and analysis needs to be completed before recommendations can be made. A critical first step will be to review the results of the stakeholder workshops recently conducted and still ongoing.

## **10. Potential Partners and roles**

One of the most important potential partners identified is MOTA/World Bank, through implementation of the program defined in their Madaba Urban Renewal Project, now in the final stages of planning.

The MOTA representatives overseeing the project have expressed a serious interest in working with Siyaha to create synergies between the two programs and work closely together compliment the World Bank’s “hardware” improvements with Siyaha’s “software” capabilities.

The next step in this process is to prepare a “wish list” of changes Siyaha would like to see to project programming that will enhance the potential of both projects to achieve meaningful short-term results.

## **11. Market Outreach and Support**

Product development without marketing support will greatly reduce the effectiveness of the proposed program. There is a wide range of tools and strategies that can be employed. The next phase of work will begin to lay out those strategies and define potential roles and responsibilities for the JTB, concession holders, the municipality, and other stakeholders.

One of the most critical issues to be addressed in defining how the tour, and ultimately the Madaba experience within the entire cluster is promoted, is working with Jordanian and foreign tour operators and tour guides to change business practices and mind sets so that a more valuable and more memorable experience can be developed, marketed and sold to primary target markets.

## **12. Heritage Environment and Buildings**

There are a number (reportedly more than 80), historic buildings, most dating to the end of 19<sup>th</sup> century, which can adaptively re-used for tourism purposes. Though not directly tied to the development of the Walking Tour concept, it is another avenue for pursuing tourism development in Madaba and promoting the goals of longer average stays and higher average daily visitor expenditures.

Most importantly, through the redevelopment of these buildings into guest houses and other forms of visitor accommodations, to create the capacity for overnight stays. Other potential uses include restaurants, handicrafts workshops and retail facilities, and museums and other interpretive facilities.

To have this capacity in place within the lifespan of the Siyaha project, planning work should begin in the near term. Tasks to be completed include:

- Inventory of Heritage Buildings
- Potential alternative uses for those buildings
- Key issues (legal, ownership, use, maintenance, etc.)
- Suggested program of work for Heritage house redevelopment
  - Awareness of owners
  - Technical assistance and grants packages
    - Cost estimates
    - Grants and TA
    - Other

### **13. Timeline for Implementation**

To be determined, once the workplan outlined above has been completed.

### **14. Estimated Budget**

To be determined, once the workplan outlined above has been completed.

### **15. Milestones and Success Indicators**

To be determined, once the workplan outlined above has been completed.

## **Madaba Walking Tour Development**

The ideas presented by the Steering Committee Chairman, Minister and Mr. Gossous where (in my view at least) right on target and should guide our next phase of work. They included:

- A need to move from the conceptual to the specific. The development of the Walking Tour concept should be an iterative process, with refinements and greater levels of detail added along the way.
- The approach needs to be very focused. Phasing the development program is probably the best means of focusing our efforts.
- Financing is an issue. While the model should provide a stream of revenues sufficient to manage, maintain, and continually improve the product/experience, there are some initial expenditures that will need to be made to bring sites up to a level where a quality visitor experience can be delivered.

Grants and micro-financing programs can provide some of that funding, but it will likely not be sufficient. Perhaps the company(s) granted the concession will be willing to borrow money, or to invest their own capital in the rehabilitation and interpretation of sites, but we can't count on that as a complete solution, and there are hard costs that will need to be covered that lie outside the scope of the concession and the Siyaha Project.

There are at least two alternatives we can explore in the short term. First is the World Bank project. If we can get them to refocus and reprogram their expenditures to some meaningful degree, on the Phase I plan, it could have a major impact upon how quickly we can get Phase I up and running.

The second is the TDC model. Getting the concept approved as quickly as possible should be a high priority (a point also made, more than once, by the Chairman and Minister). Perhaps it's not realistic to hope that we can get approvals and budget allocations approved in time to have an impact in Madaba. You all know the obstacles much better than I do. Even if it is not feasible, obviously the sooner the corporation is up and running the better.

The Minister also raised another important point. We don't want to be creating a competing model (in competition with the TDC concept) and another entity (concessionaire) that MOTA will have to deal with in the development and management of heritage sites. The model we are proposing can be shaped in a way that it can easily be integrated into the TDC concept, but we need to make it clear that this is our approach. It is not clear now.

Regarding phasing, the logical Phase I focus is from the Visitor's Center to St. George's Church. Our short term efforts should be focused:

- Reconfiguring and providing interpretive services at the Visitor's Center
- Providing assistance to the Mosaic School so that they become an integral part of the visitor experience
- Reconfiguring (entrances and exits, etc.) and renovating the Archeological Park and Burnt Palace, and if possible, the Martyr's Church. That work includes: 1) Infrastructure – drainage, better protection of mosaics, lighting, catwalks; 2) Interpretation tools and programs (signage, audio tours, edutainment, etc.); and 3) Reuse of MOTAs administrative offices (relocation of staff).
- “Pedestrianizing” the street from the visitor's center up to the Church and providing technical assistance to shop owners and other MSME's interesting in developing businesses tied to the Phase I project.
- Working with St. George's Church to improve interpretive programs, e.g., the proposed Map Room, which is also a project defined by the World Bank.

We got the impression from our meeting with MOTAs officials overseeing World Bank project implementation that there may be some meaningful opportunity to get them to reprogram some of their funding to focus on some of these areas. The window to do so, however, appears to be relatively short.

They made it clear in our meeting that the original project was never approved, in large part due to the view that redevelopment of King Talal Street was premature, as there is no reason, currently, for tourists to make their way up the street, as there is not much of interest to see at the other end.

This thinking fits in well with the proposed phasing approach. Our objective should be to get them to reprogram funds earmarked for redevelopment of King Talal, the Leisure Park, etc., in the first phase of *their* project, only on the street from the Visitor's Center to the Church, and on needed infrastructure improvements at the Archeological Park, Burnt Palace, Martyr's Church (a cover, so that excavation work can be completed), and implement the Map Room project at St. George's. (Perhaps too ambitious, but we won't know if we don't ask).

In summary, the proposed approach is to develop a short version of the Walking Tour, pour as much of our resources as possible into development of that truncated tour, and convince the World Bank to do likewise. Perhaps by the time this phase of work is completed (or perhaps sooner), the TDC concept will be approved and additional product development funding can be secured for expansion of the tour.

### **Proposed Next Steps:**

- Define the development approach, visitor experience concept, route, and business plan, making sure that all have clearly been designed to be folded into the TDC framework, once approved (and perhaps make clear that this development effort will not be sustainable without the TDC).
- Secure commitments from MOTA and the World Bank for a refocusing of their program and funding.
- Develop detailed site assessments, plans, development programs, budgets, and timelines and potential sources of funding for each site along the Phase I route.
- Secure other sources of financing required for implementation, from the private sector (concessions), MOF/MOPIC (through implementation of the TDC or “1% of revenues” pool), or other sources.
- Conclude agreements between MOTA and the project (the turn over of management and interpretation, reuse of MOTA offices at each site, etc) and MOTA and MOF needed to begin implementation.
- Secure agreements between the Mosaic School, Franciscans, Italian Government, and other sources of funding for the development of visitor services and other programs (e.g., vocational training) at the Mosaic School.
- Begin providing technical assistance (the software) to concessionaires, vendors, the School, etc.
- Prepare and promote tenders to the private sector
- Provide TA to DoA in terms of a heritage conservation and excavation strategy for sites on the Phase I route (which can be replicated/serve as a model for other sites along the complete route and other heritage sites within the cluster/country).
- Lay out the Phase II strategy.