



# INVENTORY DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS OF TOURISM ATTRACTIONS AND PRODUCTS IN THE NORTH

October 24, 2007

This publication was produced for review by the United States Agency for International Development. It was prepared by Reem Goussous, Farah Hanbali, and Farah Tukan from Al Jidara.

# ANALYSIS OF TOURISM ATTRACTIONS AND PRODUCTS IN THE NORTH

FINAL REPORT

SUSTAINABLE ACHIEVEMENT OF  
BUSINESS EXPANSION AND QUALITY (SABEQ)  
CONTRACT NUMBER: 278-C-00-06-00332-00  
BEARINGPOINT, INC.  
USAID/JORDAN  
ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES OFFICE (EO)  
OCTOBER 24, 2007  
AUTHOR: REEM GOUSSOUS, FARAH HANBALI,  
FARAH TUKAN  
DELIVERABLE N<sup>o</sup>: 4.23.1.1

**DISCLAIMER:**

*The author's views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development or the United States Government.*

## CONTENTS

<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....</b>	<b>III</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>NORTHERN GOVERNORATES.....</b>	<b>3</b>
The Governorate of Jarash.....	3
Historical Background .....	3
Jarash Today .....	4
The Governorate of Ajloun .....	5
Historical Background .....	5
Ajloun Today .....	5
The Governorate of Irbid .....	6
Historical Background .....	6
Irbid Today .....	6
<b>INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES ASSESSMENT OF THE NORTH .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>TOURISM SECTOR IN THE NORTH.....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>TOURISM INVENTORY LISTING .....</b>	<b>11</b>
Iconic Features of Jarash .....	11
1. Dibeen Forest.....	11
2. Ali Basha Palace .....	12
3. Roman Pools (Al Birkatain) .....	12
4. Jarash Old Market.....	13
5. Jarash Antiques Market .....	13
Iconic Features of Ajloun .....	14
1. Ajloun Castle .....	14
2. Ajloun Castle Museum .....	15
3. Mar Elias and Lesteb Village .....	15
4. Roman Orthodox Church .....	16
5. Wadi Al-Tawaheen.....	17
6. Karakon.....	17
7. Iraq Zot.....	17
8. Visitor's Center .....	17
9. Seedi Bader .....	18
Iconic Features of Irbid .....	18
1. Um Qais .....	18
2. Yarmouk Battle Site .....	20
3. Dar Al-Saraya Museum.....	21
4. Bait Arar .....	23
5. Hemmet Abu-Thableh.....	24
6. Old Samad Village .....	24
7. Wadi Rayyan / Tahoonet Odeh.....	25
8. Kahf al-Sayyd al-Maseeh .....	25
9. Pella 26 .....	
<b>GAP ANALYSIS .....</b>	<b>28</b>
Where We Are – S.W.O.T Analysis.....	28
Strengths.....	28
Weaknesses.....	28
Opportunities .....	30

Threats 33	
Where We Want to Be – Vision Statement .....	33
Bridging the Gap – Recommendations for future course of work .....	34
Immediate Actions (next three months) .....	34
Short-Run Actions (over the next 12 months) .....	35
Medium-Term Actions (over the next 24 months) .....	37
Long-Run .....	37
<b>APPENDIX I: MEMBERS OF THE TOURISM COMMITTEE .....</b>	<b>A</b>
<b>APPENDIX II: LIST OF STAKEHOLDERS IN THE NORTH .....</b>	<b>B</b>
<b>APPENDIX III: LIST OF TOURISTIC ATTRACTIONS BY GOVERNORATE .....</b>	<b>C</b>
<b>APPENDIX IV: EXAMPLE OF AN OLIVE OIL PACKAGED TRIP .....</b>	<b>F</b>
<b>APPENDIX V: THE AUSTRALIAN EXPEDITION TO PELLA .....</b>	<b>H</b>

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The objective of this report is to present a detailed analysis of all present and potential tourism attractions in the Northern Region of Jordan, namely in the Governorates of Irbid, Jarash and Ajloun. The analysis would enable the progressive integration of the northern region into Jordan's overall tourism sector.

The inventory listing was developed after several meetings with representatives from both the private and public sector in the tourism sector in the North. The initial list consisted of 69 sites; nonetheless, priority was given to 24 sites in order to enable a more focused intervention from SABEQ. The following list presents the visited sites and their respective classification(s):

Site	Location	Classification
1. Dibeen Forest	Governorate of Jerash	Environmental
2. Ali Basha Palace	Governorate of Jerash	Historical & Archeological
3. Roman Pools	Governorate of Jerash	Historical & Archeological
4. Jarash Old Market	Governorate of Jerash	Handicrafts
5. Jarash Antiques Market	Governorate of Jerash	Handicrafts
6. Ajloun Castle	Governorate of Ajloun	Historical & Archeological
7. Ajloun Castle Museum	Governorate of Ajloun	Historical & Archeological
8. Mar Elias	Governorate of Ajloun	Religious & Archeological
9. Lesteb Village	Governorate of Ajloun	Religious & Archeological
10. Roman Orthodox Church	Governorate of Ajloun	Religious
11. Wadi Al-Tawaheen	Governorate of Ajloun	Archeological
12. Karakon	Governorate of Ajloun	Historical
13. Iraq Zot	Governorate of Ajloun	Historical
14. Visitors Center / Ajloun*	Governorate of Ajloun	Historical & Archeological
15. Sedi Bader	Governorate of Ajloun	Historical
16. Um Qais	Governorate of Irbid	Historical & Archeological
17. Yarmouk Battle Site	Governorate of Irbid	Historical, Environmental & Religious
18. Dar Al Saraya Museum	Governorate of Irbid	Historical & Archaeological
19. Bait Arar	Governorate of Irbid	Historical & Archaeological
20. Hemmet Abu Thableh	Governorate of Irbid	Therapeutic
21. Old Samad Village	Governorate of Irbid	Historical
22. Wadi Rayyan	Governorate of Irbid	Archeological
23. Kahf al Maseeh	Governorate of Irbid	Religious
24. Pella	Governorate of Irbid	Historical & Archeological

An assessment was carried out by the team of consultants at each site, aimed at highlighting the significance of the site, the facilities and services provided within the site and within its surroundings, type of tourism products offered by the site's management, in addition to tourists' visiting trends and availability of tourists' information.

The sites were evaluated on a low, medium and high scale, with low indicating weakness in a certain criteria. The following table summarizes the scores of each site according to the following factors: Scenic value; Bio-diversity; Cultural value; Historical value; Uses & activities; Community participation; Site management; Access; and Tourism products. Some of the future recommended interventions are highlighted in the table.

## INVENTORY EVALUATION

Site	Scenic Value	Bio-diversity	Cultural Value	Historical Value	Uses & Activities	Community Participation	Site Management	Access	Tourism Products
<b>Dibeen Forest</b>	High	high	n.a.	low	medium	medium/low	high	high	medium/low
Ali Basha Palace	medium	n.a.	high	high	low	low	low	high	low
Roman Pools	medium	n.a.	n.a.	high	low	low	low	high	low
Jarash Old Market	n.a.	n.a.	medium	low	low	low	low	high	low
Jarash Antiques Market	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	medium	medium	medium	high	medium
<b>Ajloun Castle</b>	High	n.a.	n.a.	high	low	low	medium	high	low
<b>Ajloun Castle Museum</b>	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	high	low	low	low	high	low
<b>Mar Elias</b>	High	n.a.	low	high	medium/low	low	medium	medium/low	low
Lesteb Village	High	n.a.	low	high	low	low	n.a.	Medium/low	low
Roman Orthodox Church	n.a.	n.a.	high	High	medium	high	medium	high	medium
Wadi Al-Tawaheen	High	medium	n.a.	medium	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	high	n.a.
Karakon	n.a.	n.a.	low	low	n.a.	n.a.	low	high	n.a.
Iraq Zot	n.a.	n.a.	low	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	high	n.a.
Visitors Center / Ajloun*	High	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	high	n.a.
Seedi Bader	n.a.	n.a.	low	low	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	high	n.a.
<b>Um Qais</b>	High	medium	medium	high	medium	low	medium	high	medium/low
Yarmouk Battle Site	medium	medium	Low	high	low	low	medium	medium/low	low
Dar Al Saraya Museum	n.a.	n.a.	high	high	low	low	medium	high	medium
<b>Bait Arar</b>	n.a.	n.a.	high	medium	medium	low	medium	high	low
Hemmet Abu Thableh	medium	Low	Low	low	low	n.a.	low	low	low
Old Samad Village	Low	n.a.	n.a.	low	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	medium	n.a.
Wadi Rayyan	High	medium	n.a.	low	low	low	low	high	low
Kahf al Maseeh	Low	n.a.	n.a.	low	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	medium	n.a.
<b>Pella</b>	High	medium	n.a.	high	low	low	medium	high	low

\* Site is under construction

Short-term intervention  
Medium-term intervention  
Long-term intervention



A descriptive SWOT analysis was developed for the Northern Region and can be summed as follows;

### **Strengths**

- It has ***a number of prime destinations*** in addition to a wide array of products that cater for different segments of tourists; those include historical, archeological, environmental, religious, therapeutic and handicrafts;
- It has a ***beautiful nature and pleasant climate*** throughout the most of the year;
- It has a ***relatively developed road network***;
- It has a ***long and rich history and cultural heritage***;
- Located ***close to Amman***, where 70% of overnight arrivals are staying;
- The ***local community is very hospitable***.

### **Weaknesses**

- ***Impact of tourism on the local economy is minimal***, in terms of income, value added, and employment, this has been deduced from the following salient observations:
  - *Visitors are not staying overnight, and are not spending money on accommodation in the North.*
  - *Visitors do not have much to purchase from the local community at the main sites.*
  - *Visitors' spending is limited to having a meal at Pella, Um Qais and Jarash.*
  - *Business and employment opportunities in tourism in the North are limited.*
- ***Lack of availability of tourist information at the majority of sites***, in addition to minimal signage system;
- ***Main sites are dull and do not offer unique experiences for tourists***;
- ***Low appreciation for the importance of tourism within the community*** ;
- ***Staff members at main sites lack a number of critical skills*** such as English knowledge, on-site management and customer relations;
- ***The low-income levels of the local population coupled with minimal access to financing create a barrier to entry into the tourism sector***. The critical mass is also lacking, which amplifies the risks for new entrants into the market.

### **Opportunities**

- ***Involving CBOs, particularly women associations, in tourism-related activities***. This includes enabling them to sell their products at the main sites and become main beneficiaries of tourism;
- ***Availability of donor funding – mainly SABEQ, and recently SIYAHA, directed towards the tourism sector in the North***;

- ***Promoting agricultural tourism*** to allow those involved in agriculture to share their business with visitors as an additional source of income;
- ***Collaborating with universities in the North in promoting tourism packages for the families of foreign students;***
- ***Taking advantage of the increased number of tourists in Jordan as a result of declaring Petra as one of the World's seven wonders;***
- ***Promoting a number of community-based ecotourism projects in Pella and/or Um Qais.***

### **Threats**

- The high liquidity – because of high oil prices – has resulted in the proliferation of large-theme based tourism developments mainly in Aqaba, Amman, and Dead Sea. ***As other tourism destinations develop into world-class sites, the ability of the north to capture a larger share of the day and overnight visitors' markets will diminish;***
- ***The local community is detaching from their lands and many are leaving, mainly the young, due to lack of business and employment opportunities;***
- ***The low income, high poverty levels, and the low interest of private sector investment in the North will make it harder for the North to place itself on the tourism map.***

Based on the aforementioned, the futuristic vision for tourism in the North must therefore address the following issues:

1. The Northern Region is endowed with a wide array of products; if properly developed and managed, it can cater to various segments of tourists;
2. Private sector activity in tourism, with the exception of Irbid City, is limited. Subsequently, business and employment opportunities in tourism are negligible;
3. Tourism development should be community-driven, not only to improve the quality of life of the local people, but to also preserve the local heritage and cultural values;
4. The North is known for its natural beauty and lush forests. It is also home to many wild animals, plants, and endangered species. Safeguarding the area's natural resources and sustaining the balance of its nature is thus imperative.

As such, the vision statement for the Northern Region is formulated as follows:

#### **Vision Statement**

*"A vibrant tourism sector that caters to various segments of tourists, generates business and employment opportunities for the local community, yet preserves local heritage and cultural values, safeguards the region's natural resources, and ultimately contributes to the community's quality of life."*



We have identified where we are right now and where we want to be. In order to realize the vision the following must be tackled:

- 1- Improve the “distinctiveness” and “differential advantage” of the main sites by providing the visitor with an authentic and memorable experience.**
- 2- Develop sustainable tourism products that tap into niche markets and create income-generating opportunities for the local people.**
- 3- Increase tourism receipts with focus being made on low-impact, high yield tourism products.**

As such, the following immediate, short-, medium-, and long-term recommendations are proposed to help realize the vision, and ultimately bridge the gap:

#### **1) Immediate Actions within the next three months**

- Forming an advisory regional tourism committee comprised of both the tourism sector representatives in addition to other stakeholders;
- Conduct a tourist satisfaction survey at the main sites regularly in order to identify tourist profile, current spending pattern, factors influencing choice of destination, positioning current site and determine products and services that can be developed to improve the visitors' stay.

#### **2) Short-Term Actions – Over the next 12 months**

- Developing a brand personality that brings out the main features of the north, (olive tree, pine tree, honeybee, colonnades, castles, mountains, panoramic views, etc.)
- Organizing a workshop for tour operators in Irbid and various stakeholders in the North to serve several purposes such as acquainting tour operators with wide array of assets in the North, generating ideas for site development and present to participants SABEQ's course of action over the coming few years
- Provide training for selected tour operators on the development of various tourism products, with the possibility of granting small funds;
- Upgrading services and facilities at the Ajloun Castle by engaging the local community through performances, costumes, story telling, establishing souvenir workshops, holding annual book fairs, using carriages and horses as means of transportation between the visitors' center and the main site;
- Supporting the new Visitor Center in Ajloun with informational material, such as brochures, high quality maps, guidebooks, etc;
- Create one or more agricultural tourism experience;

### **3) Medium -Term Actions – Over the next 24 months**

- Develop community-based ecotourism projects in Pella by creating a village center for handicraft manufacturing, daytime excursions, holding events at nights in Pella village, involving the tourists in daily chores of a village family including farming, homemaking and herding ;
- Ensuring the active involvement of travel agencies in Irbid area by creating exiting touristic activities targeting foreign university students and their families;
- Improve the display units at both the Ajloun Castle and Um Qais museums, including signage.

### **4) Long-Run**

- Develop brochures, printed material or website on the flora and fauna of the Dibeen forest;
- Develop audio guides for Ajloun castle, Pella, Um Qais, Jarash, and Mar Elias;
- Develop tourism websites for the three Governorates in collaboration with their respective municipalities;
- Hold an annual poetry competition at Bait Arar;
- Make available modest accommodation facilities across Northern Jordan, both sanitary and convenient.

## INTRODUCTION

The tourism sector was identified as a key area of intervention for SABEQ in the northern region of the country, with focus being made on the Governorates of Irbid, Ajloun and Jarash (referred to hereafter as 'North' or 'Northern Region'). The Governorate of Mafraq was excluded for the time being, with the potential of being incorporated into future development plans.

In order to identify SABEQ's intervention in tourism development over the course of the next four years, an *inventory description and analysis of the present tourism attractions and products in Irbid, Jarash and Ajloun* was considered a critical first step (*Box 1: What is an Inventory Listing?*). This analysis is anticipated to help in determining how the North can integrate into Jordan's tourism and will set a clear path for defining what needs to be done in terms of the region's development and the markets this region would serve.

### ***Box 1: What is an Inventory Listing?***

Tourism is about generating a memorable experience!

This experience is not produced from one attraction; it is the combination and interaction between all the tourism products that the region or the community has to offer.

An inventory produces this listing of tourism products.

In order to gain local community support, the team of consultants met on several occasions with representatives from the public and private sectors working in the field of tourism in the three Governorates in order to provide assistance in generating a comprehensive list of touristic sites in the Northern Region.<sup>1</sup> Representatives were selected from a list of stakeholders with the assistance of SABEQ's office in Irbid<sup>2</sup>.

As such, an initial list of 69 sites was generated by the representatives: 34 in Irbid, 25 in Ajloun, and 10 in Jarash. The list predominantly included archeological, natural, environmental, historical, religious, therapeutical, and architectural sites among others.<sup>3</sup>

As a first stage, it was agreed with the SABEQ team and the regional representatives to narrow down the list of sites to be visited and assessed in order to focus developmental efforts, and maximize socioeconomic benefits to the local community. Priority was therefore given to 23 sites. The representatives accompanied the team of consultants on their visits to the sites, and demonstrated high levels of enthusiasm, collaboration, and commitment to any future development endeavors led by SABEQ in their respective Governorates.

The report begins with an overview of the North's history, current socioeconomic structure and dynamics, and of course its tourism sector. A general assessment of the area's infrastructure and services is also presented. The Inventory Listing of the visited sites forms the bulk of the report. The listing provides a thorough description of each visited site, its relevance, distinctiveness (if any), and assesses the services and facilities offered within close proximity. In order for the site assessment process to be coherent, an evaluation

---

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix I: Members of the Tourism Committee

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix II: List of Stakeholders in the North

<sup>3</sup> See Appendix III: List of Touristic Attraction by Governorate

form/questionnaire was developed by the team of consultants that was filled out at each site visit. Items tackled included: description of the site; visiting trends; availability of information; assessment of site services; ownership type; management description; future plans; financing/funding sources; profile of employees. The completed forms are presented in a separate report entitled *“Inventory Listing of Selected Tourist Sites in Irbid, Ajloun and Jarash”*.

A Gap Analysis follows; shedding light on *Where We Are* is in terms of North's strengths, weakness, opportunities and threats; and *Where We Want to Be*. As such, a vision statement for the North's tourism sector is formulated.

Finally, a number of immediate, short-, medium-, and long-term recommendations are suggested to be carried out in order to bridge the gap and achieve the vision. This document can be regarded as a baseline report for future action plans in tourism.

## NORTHERN GOVERNORATES

### THE GOVERNORATE OF JARASH

#### Historical Background

Jarash is mainly known for the ruins of the Greco-Roman of Gerasa; the ancient city that is also referred to as “Antioch on the Golden River”. Archeologists have found the ruins of settlements dating back to the Neolithic Age, thus, indicating that the ancient city of Jarash has been occupied since more than 6,500 years. It was not until the Roman era though that the city witnessed its golden age, becoming one of the great Ten Roman Cities, better known as the “Decapolis League”. Today, Jarash is the only Decapolis City that retains the most number of intact artifacts.]

According to recent excavations, Jarash was inhabited during the Bronze and Iron Ages (3200 BC- 1200 BC). After the Roman conquest in 63 BC, Jarash was added to the Roman province of Syria and later on joined the Decapolis cities. In 90 AD, Jarash was annexed to the Roman province of Arabia, which back then included the city of Philadelphia (modern day Amman).



However, it was not before the second half of the century AD that the city of Jarash began to yield great prosperity. In AD 106, Emperor Trajan constructed roads that flourished trading activity in Jarash. The city finally reached a size of around 800,000 square meters within its walls. However, a rapid decline and massive destruction were recorded in Jarash's history due to the major earthquake in AD 74, and the Persian invasion in AD 106.

Some of Jarash's monuments were converted into fortresses during the Crusades' period. During the Ayyubid, Mameluk and Ottoman periods, small settlements were located in Jarash. During the Muslim conquest, the City shrunk to almost one-fourth its original size. After that, the city remained largely uninhabited until the creations of the Circassian refugee settlement by the Turks, whose current descendents still form a very large proportion of Jarash's local population.

Aside from the famous ancient archeological city, the city of Jarash is rich with many remarkable monuments and historical ruins that are testimony to the rich history of the city. These however are largely neglected including the Roman Pools “Al Birkataen”, Eastern Roman Baths, and the Old Souq<sup>4</sup>.

---

<sup>4</sup> These will be covered by the inventory listing.

## Jarash Today

Jarash is 45-kms north of the capital Amman. The Governorate's geographical features vary from cold mountains to fertile valleys at 300 to 1,100 meters above the sea level. Jarash's temperature fluctuates between 2 and 33 Celsius; meanwhile, rainfall ranges between 0 and 114 mm/per month.

Those distinguished geographical features make Jarash very suitable for growing a wide variety of agricultural crops and gives it an excellent visibility over the surrounding low-lying areas.

In 2006, the population of Jarash was estimated at 168,000, comprising around 11% of the Northern Region's population<sup>5</sup>. The population growth rate witnessed a decline from 2.4% in 2002 to 2.2% in 2006, a rate that is equal to the national average rate.

Jarash is one of the highest inhabited governorates in the Kingdom with a population density of 401 persons/km<sup>2</sup> preceded only by the governorate of Irbid (620 personsr/km<sup>2</sup>). Around 53% of the population is below the age of 20 and average family size is recorded at 5.9, slightly higher than the Kingdom's average of 5.4. In 2006, the unemployment rate reached 15.5% with males' and females' unemployment reaching 12.8% and 32.1% respectively.

The majority of those employed work in the public administration and defense (36.3%) sector, followed by the education (15.4%), and wholesale and retail trade (10.4%) sectors.

The average annual household income was estimated at JD4,810, of which half was generated from employment income. Likewise almost half of the average income of a household member (JD 713) was generated from employment income.

### Jarash in Numbers

- 168,000 persons live in Jarash
- 5.9 persons is the average family size
- 18.4% live under the poverty line (2002 est.), fourth highest rate in the Kingdom.
- 34.9% of the population is economically active
- 36.3% work in the Public Administration and Defense sector
- 15.4% work in education
- 3.4% work in agriculture, hunting and forestry
- 239 people work in tourism
- 186 KG, primary and secondary schools
- 10,500 fixed telephone subscribers
- 170,040 visited the ancient city in 2006
- 21% drop in the number of visitors to the city in 2006 from 2005

---

<sup>5</sup> Including the population of the Governorate of Mafrq.

## THE GOVERNORATE OF AJLOUN

### Historical Background

The rich topography of the Ajloun area, its fertile soil and its relatively pleasant Mediterranean climate were major features that attracted a number of civilizations throughout history. The history of Ajloun dates back to the Byzantine period, when it all started at a water spring in the Valley of Ajloun.

The city of Ajloun was ruled by the Muslims for a long time, during which the well-known Castle of Ajloun was built by Izzeddin Usama Mungidh, one of Saladin generals, in 1183 – 1184. During Saladin's reign, the city was occupied by the Mongols for a two years until the Mamluks, led by Sultan Baybars, took over Ajloun.

### Ajloun Today

Ajloun is home to the southernmost complete pine-tree forest in the world. The area is also known for its olive groves, rich and evergreen forests that cover around one-third of the total area of the Governorate. Moreover, a large number of medicinal herbs and wild flowers such as the Black Iris grow on its heights.

Ajloun is also home to a number of wild animals and birds, some of which are endangered including the spotted hyena, fox, hoopoe, and bobwhite. In order to conserve the biodiversity of the area, the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature (RSCN) declared 12,000 dunums in Ajloun as a natural reserve.

In 2006, the total population of the Governorate was estimated at 128,800, which amounted to almost 16% of the total population in the Northern Region<sup>6</sup>. In terms of economic activity, only 33.6% of the population in the Governorate is economically active<sup>7</sup>. The majority of employed persons work in public administration and defense (47.1%), followed by 14.1% working in education and 4.9% in agriculture.

The local community in Ajloun has unfortunately departed from relying on agriculture for its livelihood. In fact, the majority of people either works, or is actively seeking a job in the “secure” public sector. Private sector activity, with the exception of small vendors and a number of olive oil presses, is basically non-existent. Conversations with a number of locals also revealed that outward migration is on the rise, particularly amongst the young graduates who are seeking

#### Ajloun in Numbers

- 128,800 persons live in Ajloun
- 5.8 persons is the average family size
- 9.7% live under the poverty line (2002 est.).
- 33.4% of the population is economically active
- 47.6% work in the Public Administration and Defense sector
- 11.3% work in education
- 4.3% work in agriculture, hunting and forestry
- 23 people work in tourism
- 148 KG, primary and secondary schools
- 9,700 fixed telephone subscribers
- 106,201 visited the Ajloun Castle in 2006
- 25% drop in the number of visitors to the Castle in 2006 from 2005

<sup>6</sup> Including the population of the Governorate of Mafraq.

<sup>7</sup> Economically active persons are those over the age of 15 who are in full or part-time work or unemployed or on a government scheme. The economically inactive are the permanently sick, the wholly retired, full time students, and persons looking after home or family.

better job prospects in Amman, Irbid, Zarqa, or even abroad in the Gulf. The Governorate today is one of the poorest in Jordan.

## THE GOVERNORATE OF IRBID

### Historical Background

The first residents of the area date back to the Bronze Age, 6,000-7,000 years ago. The city was resided by the Greek, Roman and Islamic civilizations. Roman and Greek cities were established as part of the Decapolis<sup>8</sup>; in addition, Irbid was resided by the Ghasenids, Adomites and Ammonities civilizations.

During the Roman reign, the city was known as Arabella; during which it was famous for producing some of the best wines in the ancient world due to the climate that was suitable for growing grapes.

Following the Roman and Greek civilizations, the city was ruled by the Islamic armies led by Khalid Bin Al-Walid after he defeated the Romans in 636 A.D. at the infamous Yarmouk Battle. The battle took place across the banks of the Yarmou River, located at about 30 kilometers north of the city of Irbid. The city then became known as Irbid; its specialty diverted to olive oil and wheat production after it was known for wine production during the Roman reign.

Through its links with Damascus and its strategic location serving pilgrims coming from Turkey, north of Iraq and south of Russia, Irbid represented a communication center during the Mamluke age. During that time, a number of scientists and Islamic legendaries lived in Irbid, which is indicated by the graves of the Companions of Prophet Mohammed and the numerous mosques and Islamic buildings that are located inside the city.

### Irbid Today

Irbid, the second largest city in Jordan, is located 70-km north-west of the Capital Amman. It is surrounded by fertile agricultural lands from the north, east and south. With a varied topography, Irbid extends over an area of 1,572km<sup>2</sup>, 620 meters above sea level. The ghaur area lies along the western frontier and is overlooked by hills and mountains; the plains on the other hand extend north to connect with the Syrian plains (Houran). The Governorate is at the center of the most fertile agricultural lands in Jordan and is known for the production of olives, grapes, wheat and honey.

#### Irbid in Numbers

- 974,800 persons live in Irbid
- 5.9 persons is the average family size
- 13.8% live under the poverty line (2002 est.), one of the lowest rates in the Kingdom.
- 34.2% of the population is economically active
- 25% work in the Public Administration and Defense sector
- 14% work in education
- 4.5% work in agriculture, hunting and forestry
- 453 people work in tourism
- 1,045 KG, primary and secondary schools
- 87,300 fixed telephone subscribers
- 130,532 visited Um Qais in 2006, 74% of which were Jordanians.
- 30% drop in the number of visitors to Um Qais in 2006 from 2005
- Pella attracted 19,025 visitors in 2006; predominantly foreign.

---

<sup>8</sup> A pact that consisted of the ten Roman cities in the area



Irbid's climate varies in temperatures from 5 in the cold winter nights to a high 30 Celsius in the summer. Rainfall ranges from 236 to 513 mm/year. The Governorate is fed by several springs, but the main source is the Yarmouk River.

Irbid city is one of the most developed cities in Jordan, and has become a combination of both, a provincial Middle Eastern town and a youthful nightlife of a college town. The existence of these universities in Irbid has boosted the city's economy through the establishment of a significant number of supporting services and facilities. Today, Irbid represents the center of business and economic activities in the Northern Region; in addition to that, a large number of industries that account for a sizable segment of the country's exports to the United States are located in Irbid.

In 2006, the total population of the Governorate was estimated at around one million inhabitants, which amounted to almost 63% of the total population in the Northern Region<sup>9</sup>. The population in Irbid is relatively young as almost 60% of the population is below the age of 24 and 83% is below the age of 39.

In terms of economic activity, only 35% of the population in the Governorate is economically active<sup>10</sup>. In specific, only 29% of the population is economically active and employed, and 6% is economically active and unemployed. Half of the remaining economically inactive population are homemakers, and almost one-third are students.

The majority of employed persons work in public administration and defense (25%), trade and repair (15%), education (14%), transport and communications (9%), and manufacturing (8%). The household member's average annual income in Irbid is the fifth highest in Jordan, amounting to JD825; the average annual current income of a household is about JD5,827, half of which is generated from employment.

## INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES ASSESSMENT OF THE NORTH

Suitable infrastructure is a critical enabler for any tourism destination. Visitors will not be attracted in the first place if the needed infrastructure and activities are not in place, no matter how attractive the destination may be. Infrastructure is also a core factor in improving the development opportunities of small tourism businesses because a well-developed infrastructure enhances the efficiency of private investment.

Tourism-related infrastructure includes *means of access* such as roads and airports; *services and facilities* including accommodation, restaurants, shopping outlets, banking services, and recreational activities; *preservation of natural resources* such as forests and wildlife; and the *provision of basic amenities* such as telecommunications, power, water and sewage.

The three Governorates are well connected to the main highways in Jordan, and have a road network that is quite good. Sizeable segments of the roads are village roads that pass

---

<sup>9</sup> Including the population of the Governorate of Mafraq.

<sup>10</sup> Economically active persons are those over the age of 15 who are in full or part-time work or unemployed or on a government scheme. The economically inactive are the permanently sick, the wholly retired, full time students, and persons looking after home or family.

through agricultural lands, in addition to secondary roads. Only a limited number of tourist sites are difficult to access.

The public electricity network covers 100% of dwellings in both Jarash and Ajloun; the network coverage is negligibly less in Irbid reaching 99.8%. In 2005, Irbid had the second largest number of telephone subscribers after the Governorate of Amman, estimated at 87,000 subscribers, and comprising 14% of total subscriptions, given their smaller sizes of population, both Jarash and Ajloun came well behind with only 10,500 and 9,700 subscribers.

In terms of water services, 98.3% of dwellings in Jarash were connected to the public network, higher than both Ajloun (93.6%) and Irbid (96.4%) and slightly higher than the average national rate, which stood at 97.2%. However, in terms of sewage connection, the three Governorates are amongst the least connected Governorates in the Kingdom with residential connectivity ranging between 22% and 31%, significantly less than the average national rate of 57.3%.

There are 16 hospitals in Irbid; 10 public and 6 private. The hospitals have a total capacity of 1,620 beds, translating into a ratio of 615 persons per bed<sup>11</sup>. On the other hand, the Governorates of Jarash and Ajloun have only one public hospital each with a bed capacity of 135 and 105 respectively.

Despite the fact that Jordan has many four- and five-star hotels and a number of foreign chains, they are mostly concentrated in Amman, Dead Sea, Petra, and Aqaba. Jarash has only two classified hotels, one of which is located on the outskirts of the city. Both hotels have a capacity of 38 rooms and 80 beds. Furthermore, the Governorate has only one unclassified hotel with a capacity of 5 rooms and 15 beds. Ajloun, similarly, has two 2-stars hotels and one camping site with a total capacity of 45 rooms and 114 beds.

Irbid, on the other hand, has six classified hotels— one 3-star hotel with a total capacity of 121 beds; one 2-star hotels with a total capacity of 104 beds; and four 1-star hotels with a total capacity of 149 beds. There are also six unclassified hotels with a capacity of 647 rooms and 1,723 beds.

The three Governorates have limited services and facilities catering to tourists (cafes, restaurants and entertainment activities) in terms of quantity and quality. In Jarash, for instance, there are 11 formal restaurants, 29 souvenir shops in the western side of the city, 2 travel agencies and no car rental agencies. Banking services, although provided in the Governorate, are located within the center of the city and are, thus, far away from the different sites that are scattered within the Governorate.

Furthermore, private sector activity in Ajloun is limited to a few restaurants that cater to locals and two 2-star hotels.

Within the three Governorates the basic on-site infrastructure at various touristic destinations, including sanitary facilities, telecommunication systems, catering, brochures, promotional materials, and signage, is in need of major improvement and upgrading since it is currently in a very poor condition.

Regarding the preservation of natural resources, the Governorate of Jarash is best known for the “Dibeen Forest”; one of the largest continuous natural forests remaining in the

---

<sup>11</sup> Relative to the size of population

Kingdom and one of the best remaining examples of natural pine-oak forests that supports over 17 endangered species.

Ajloun, on the other hand, is generally known for its wide green cover where about 75% of its land is occupied by olive groves and forests. Moreover, the RSCN is preserving the “Ajloun Nature Reserve”; a 13 km<sup>2</sup> protected area of outstanding beauty and diverse wildlife. It is an area of rolling hills that is covered by dense woodlands of evergreen oak, combined with pistachio, carob, and wild strawberry trees.

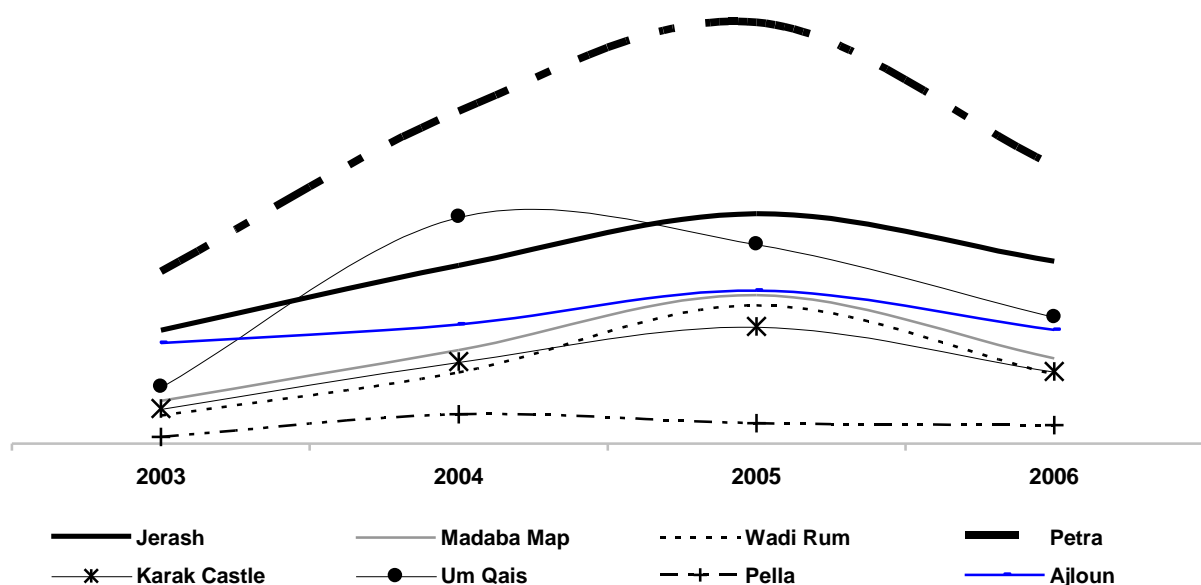
Although there are no natural reserves in the Governorate of Irbid, it nonetheless enjoys a diverse and unique topography characterized by the ghour area, overlooked by rolling hills and mountains; and the plains that extent north to connect with the Syrian plains. However, due to the Governorate’s high population density, particularly in the city of Irbid, a number of alarming environmental concerns have arisen from industrial and agricultural waste.

## TOURISM SECTOR IN THE NORTH

The Northern Region is rich with archeological ruins that are scattered throughout its diverse landscapes. Unfortunately, only a handful of sites are known to visitors; namely the ancient city in Jarash, Um Qais and Pella in Irbid, and Ajloun Castle in Ajloun.

In 2006, the total number of visitors to the three Governorates was over 400 thousand, of those around 42% visited Jarash. Today, Jarash is the second most popular touristic destination after Petra, with almost 170 thousand visitors in 2006.

Visitors to Main Touristic Sites in Jordan (2003-2007)



Source: MoTA

The majority of visitors to the four destinations were either Jordanian or European. Nationals of France, United Kingdom, and Italy constituted around 54% of the total European Visitors to Jarash (98,136) in 2006. Local Jordanian tourists came second in line with around 36,000 visitors recorded during that same year.

Meanwhile, an average of 62% of the Ajloun Castle visitors was Jordanians, followed by 22% from European countries. The remainder was a mixture of Americans, Africans, Asians and tourists from Arab Countries and the Pacific.

Likewise, the majority of visitors targeting Um-Qais were Jordanians, contributing to an average of 74%. Europeans came second in line with around 21%.

The number of package tourists has increased by almost 40% in Jarash in 2006 to reach 1,203 versus 867 tourists in 2005; this estimate was almost double that of Ajloun and Irbid combined; however, the average length of stay in Ajloun exceeded that of Jarash, where it was somewhere around 1.7 days compared to 1.2 days in Jarash in 2006.

#### Visitors' Nationalities

- ⇒ Ajloun and Um Qais are mostly visited by Jordanians
- ⇒ Jarash attracts more than half of the Europeans visiting the north
- ⇒ Pella is visited mostly by Europeans

**Table 1**

Number of Package Tourists in 2005-2006, by Governorate

Site	2005	2006
Jarash	867	1,203
Ajloun	232	222
Irbid	248	245

The number of touristic nights recorded in Jarash for 2003-2006 was significantly lower than that of Irbid. Table 2 outlines the recorded number of touristic nights spent in both governorates<sup>12</sup>.

**Table 2**

Number of Touristic Nights Spent in Jarash and Irbid (2003-2006)

Site	2003	2004	2005	2005	2006
Jarash	5,059	4,683	8,051	9,526	8,938
Irbid	26,006	10,242	25,322	36,251	36,205

In 2006, around 453 persons were employed by the tourism sector in Irbid. More than half of those worked in tourist restaurants, followed by 24% in Irbid's 12 hotels; about 12% in travel agencies, 4% in car rental offices and only 2% in tourist shops.

In Jarash, 239 persons worked in the sector in 2006. The majority of those employed worked in tourist restaurants (73%). Hotels, on the other hand, employed 29 workers, 23 of which were males. At considerably lower rates, the tourism sector in Ajloun employed only 23 workers; 74% of those worked in Ajloun's two hotels while the remaining were equally distributed between car rentals and tourist shops.

<sup>12</sup> Data for Ajloun is not available.

## TOURISM INVENTORY LISTING<sup>13</sup>

### ICONIC FEATURES OF JARASH<sup>14</sup>

#### 1. Dibeen Forest

The Dibeen Forest is south of the ancient city of Jarash, where it cloaks the steep hillsides over an area of around 60 km<sup>2</sup>. The forest was declared as a natural reserve in 2005 by the Royal Society for Conservation of Nature (RSCN) and contains Aleppo trees, mixed with evergreen oaks and a scattering of red-barked arbutus. It also has a few wild olive, pistachio, and pear trees. Nonetheless, the forest is mainly famous for its natural representation of the Aleppo Pine in Jordan, which is the last natural border for such forests from the northern part of the world.



The forest is home to 9 carnivore, 79 bird, and 250 plant species, three of which are of global importance. Moreover, the forest has more than 20 endangered species of mammals, reptiles, plants and birds.

The forest has been open for the public for many years and has one rest house. The Dibeen Rest House has 8 bungalows that are in a very poor condition.

The forest gets extremely crowded on weekends. It is note mentioning that in order to preserve the nature the total number of vehicles entering the site must not exceed 400; however, presently 2000 vehicles are entering the forest on average. Therefore, littering is a major problem even though the forest management is trying to limit it. Trails for trekkers were also established a year ago, but were unfortunately vandalized by visitors.

A few kilometers outside the site, the Socio Economic for the Local Communities Project<sup>15</sup> employs 11 persons from local villages. It produces weavings, pottery works and homemade food. Produced items are sold at the “Wild Jordan Center” in Amman.

The forest is an ideal destination for the eco-tourist offering products such as camping sites, bird watching, and trekking. This however is being carefully introduced in order to preserve balance of the wild life in the forest.

---

<sup>13</sup> A comprehensive Inventory Listing Document of the visited sites is provided separately.

<sup>14</sup> The ancient city of Jarash was dropped out from the list because it has the most developed infrastructure and facilities.

<sup>15</sup> Established jointly by the RSCN, Global Environmental Facility (GEF) and the United Nations for Development Programmes (UNDP).



## 2. Ali Basha Palace

Ali Basha Al Kayed was a prominent political figure in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. He was the Governor of the northern highlands of the Emirates of Transjordan; one of the three local administrative districts. He used to lead the numerous tribal arbitrations and in 1939 he was appointed as the Minister of Transportation.

The Ali Basha Palace was built in the early 1930s by the Al Kayed family to become the official residence of Ali Basha Al Kayed, the palace was also used for official events and ceremonies and it hosted numerous of King Abdallah I's (prince back then) official guests.

The Palace has four floors with a total area of 500m<sup>2</sup>. The architecture of the house is Ottoman Turkish Islamic and consists of 27 rooms. The main gate of the palace has two distinguished features; a pointed Islamic arch and two red granite columns. Upon entering the Palace, one finds a wide courtyard with a fountain in the center. The courtyard is surrounded by connected arches. A huge gathering room for dignitaries is found on this floor.



The upper floors were reserved as the living quarter for Ali Basha's family, including the four bedrooms, one of which was set aside as His Majesty's bedroom whenever he used to visit particularly during the summer season.

The underground floor was divided into two sections; the huge kitchen, which was reserved for banquets held in honor of the visitors and dignitaries. The second section was the horse stables. The site is currently not open for the public.

## 3. Roman Pools (Al Birkatain)

Situated around 5 minutes away from the ancient city of Jarash, "Al Birkatain" site is another distinguished preserved Roman ruins within the Governorate of Jarash. Located on an area of around 30 dunums, the site consists of several monuments, the most noticeable of which are the two connected pools.

The pools were fed by about 6 to 12 water springs and were used for two main purposes; supplying the nearby ancient city with water and providing water for the swimming contests that took place during the Roman Era. The site also contains a small theatre as well as several roman steam baths. The site is currently not open for the public and has no signage.



#### 4. Jarash Old Market

Located within the vibrant public market, Jarash Old Market extends over 100 m and currently has around 25 rented shops. The exterior of the market was upgraded and renovated in 2005 with the World Bank financial support. The Municipality currently owns the site.

Although the Jarash Old Market can attract tourists by selling antiques and souvenirs, unfortunately, the only stores operating in the market are used clothes shops, in addition to aluminum and shoe repair workshops.



#### 5. Jarash Antiques Market

Located at the entrance of the ancient city of Jarash, the Jarash Antiques Market has around 44 antiques and souvenir shops, distributed in four different zones.

Some of the main products sold are ceramic works, pottery, weavings, and “Nabateen Glass”<sup>16</sup>. Nonetheless, and as is the case with most tourist shops, many sell Chinese, Indian, Syrian and Persian products. According to the sellers, the prices of products differ according to the buyers’ nationalities.



The public facilities within the site are in extremely poor condition and are in need of maintenance and upgrading.

---

<sup>16</sup> A unique product in the governorate

## ICONIC FEATURES OF AJLOUN

### 1. Ajloun Castle

Ajloun Castle, (Qalaat El-Rabadh in Arabic), is conveniently located in Ajloun, 73-kms north of Amman. It is situated on a high hilltop overlooking the Jordan Valley to its west, and a range of surrounding mountains covered with pine tree forests, one of which has the city of Ajloun embedded in.



The Castle was built by Ezz El-din Osama bin Monqithe in 1184, who is the nephew of the Ayyubid leader Salah El-Din Al-Ayyoubi (Saladin), to fend off the threats of Crusaders whose strong foothold in the south of Jordan was captured from their castles in Shobak and Karak<sup>17</sup>. The Castle protected the routes between South Jordan and Syria from its high location of 1,023 meters above sea level.

The Castle is renowned for being one of the best-preserved and most complete examples of Medieval Arab-Islamic military architecture. The Castle's main features include a deep and wide trench that surrounds the castle; a drawbridge into the main entrance; a fortified and carved main entrance; a number of watch towers; 11 water reservoirs; large rooms that were used as dormitories, stables and dining areas.

In 1214-15 the Castle of Ajloun was enlarged by Aybak bin Abdullah. In 1260, it fell to the Mongols, but was later rebuilt by the Egyptian Mamluks. No longer needed for military purposes, it was used as an administrative center responsible to Damascus.

The Castle is accessible through a well-maintained road network. Driving up the hill, a visitor comes across lush forests.

Tourists spend an average of 30 minutes walking around the Castle, including a 5-minute sprint through a small museum it houses in one of its halls. After the brisk walk through the Castle, the tourists leave to nearby Jarash for lunch and an extensive tour of the old city.

The signage system is weak and ineffective. The signs are poorly distributed and are in grave condition. The ticket booth is located on the side of the main entrance; it is not visible to the visitor, also due to weak signage.

---

<sup>17</sup> The Karak and Shobak Castles were built by the Crusaders in the 12<sup>th</sup> century and 1189 respectively.



## 2. Ajloun Castle Museum<sup>18</sup>

The museum is located inside the main hall of the Castle. It lacks proper display units, good lighting and climate control systems. Public facilities are also distant from the museum.

The contents of the museum are simple and limited due to the lack of enough excavations in the area. The main items displayed in the museum are vases, cooking tools, sharp tools made from bones and clay drinking tools. The ruins displayed in the museum date back to the Byzantine, Islamic, Mamluk and Ayubids periods.

## 3. Mar Elias and Lesteb Village



Mar Elias



Lesteb Village (view from Mar Elias)

Mar Elias hill is located about 9-km north-west of Ajloun City, and is easily accessible by car. The site resides on top of Mar Elias hill, 900 meters above sea level. The site itself is well maintained by the Department of Antiquities. The area surrounding the site is very scenic and eye-catching.

The area lacks any services such as a small grocery store, restaurants, or cafes. The site contains clear and maintained signage written in both Arabic and English and provides a briefing about the history of the site in addition to guiding signage such as working hours, "free entry" sign, and a board that reads "All antiquities are for all generations, you are kindly requested to keep it clean". The site is supervised by an employee from the local community and managed by the Department of Antiquities.

---

<sup>18</sup> Cameras not allowed inside the museum.

The Department of Antiquities excavated two churches in the area; "the Large Church" was discovered in 1999; it occupies an area of 1,340 m<sup>2</sup> and is believed to belong to the end of the 6th century and the beginning of the 7th century. The Church floors are paved with huge pieces of mosaic. The second church "the Small Church" was discovered in 2001 and is believed to be older than the Large Church.

The site has both an archaeological and a religious importance; it overlooks the village of "Lesteb". Although no archaeological findings in the village are yet excavated to prove that it belongs to the Iron Age, however, it is believed that Prophet Elijah, who lived in the Iron Age, resided in that area. In fact, the Greek inscription found on the mosaic ground mention Master Elias.

#### **4. Roman Orthodox Church**

The Roman Orthodox Church is located inside Ajloun City. It was built between 1880-1885 using stones from "Iraq al Wahdan". It began its services on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of August, 1885. Today, the Church has the oldest structure in Jordan; while the Church in Madaba has the oldest mosaic floor that dates back to the 6<sup>th</sup> century. The church is situated in a residential area in Ajloun, amongst a number of old houses. It is accessible through well-maintained roads in Ajloun and surrounded by convenient stores and a number of unclassified restaurants.



The area was occupied by the Turkish prior to building the Church; it was then resided by a bishop. The Church was supervised by 10 priests on rotational basis.

The Church is still operational; annual Easter and Christmas celebrations take place in the Church. With gold icons on the walls, brought all the way from Jerusalem, the interior of the Church is absolutely stunning. It is very well maintained. Located in the background of the Church are the remains of a house where a number of families resided. Unfortunately, the exterior of the back of the Church was covered with cement a few years ago; the cement is neither clean nor maintained, and it ruined the archaeological image of the site especially that the remainder of the exterior is covered with building stones.

## 5. Wadi Al-Tawaheen

Wadi Al-Tawaheen (Arabic for Mills Valley) is 10-kms long and is home to 20 ancient mills that were used by the locals for grinding wheat and other grains. The valley has running water all year round, and is lush with vegetation and greenery. None of the mills are currently operational.



## 6. Karakon<sup>19</sup>

Karakon is an old prison that is currently owned by the Public Security Directorate. It is neither operational nor maintained. Karakon was used as a prison during the Ottoman times.

## 7. Iraq Zot

Iraq Zot is a cave that is naturally formed in the middle of Ajloun's downtown. The cave was once occupied by homeless gypsies. Today, the cave is filled with trash and waste and the rocks and the ceiling are moldy.



## 8. Visitor's Center

The visitors' center is currently under construction. It is situated on the way to the Ajloun Castle. Upon opening, the visitor's center will represent an arrivals' point for the visitors of the Castle. It will include a coffee shop, a restaurant and provide tour guides and shuttle transportation for the visitors. The center seems to have a simple yet neat architecture. From the center, the visitor gets a view of the Castle that is located on top of the hill, just 250 meters away.

---

<sup>19</sup> No pictures were allowed to be taken for security reasons. The site is within the premises of a police station.

## 9. Seedi Bader

Seedi Bader is located in downtown Ajloun City; it is the memorial for "Bader". It is neither maintained nor in a good shape. The site is accessible through a road just off one of the main streets of downtown Ajloun. Taking into consideration its location, the site is surrounded with all sorts of services, from convenient stores to restaurants and coffee shops. The site is not open for the public.



## ICONIC FEATURES OF IRBID

### 1. Um Qais

378 meters above sea level, Um Qais, the ancient town of "Gadara", is situated on a plateau overlooking the northern part of the Jordan Valley and Lake Tiberias. Archeological surveys indicate that Gadara was occupied since the early 7th century BC. Nevertheless, the city reached its peak of prosperity in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD where new streets, temples, theaters and baths sprouted. According to the Holy Bible, Gadara was the spot where Jesus vanquished demonic spirits into the sea far below.



Once a Decapolis City, Gadara was connected by a number of key trading routes linking Syria and Palestine. It was blessed with fertile soil and abundant rainfall; moreover, Gadara was the home and birthplace of many Roman writers and philosophers who were inspired by the beauty of the panoramic views around them.

Gadara was watered by numerous springs, amongst which were Ain (Arabic for "Spring") Gadara, and Ain et Trab. The latter, although some twelve kilometers (seven miles) east of the Roman town, was connected to the city by a canal.

Um Qais is renowned for an array of ancient remains, such as the stunning black basalt theatre, triconchos<sup>20</sup> and basilica<sup>21</sup>, the colonnaded main street and a side street lined with shops, church terrace, Byzantine baths<sup>22</sup>, domestic quarters<sup>23</sup> among many others.

Gadara comes from a Semitic word meaning “stronghold”. The name was later reverted to Um Qais during the Middle Ages, a name deriving from ancient Arabic, meaning a “border station”. Like many of Jordan's ancient cities and monuments, the city of Um Qais was destroyed during the terrible earthquake in 747 AD.

Archaeologists predict that when excavations are complete, a major city will be uncovered. In fact, recent discoveries at Um Qais have led to speculation that the city of Gadara might have been as vast and prosperous as Jarash, the foremost city of the Decapolis.

Currently, the site is located around 35-kms away from Irbid city; it is accessible through main roads and by tourist buses. Um Qais Hotel is a two-star hotel that is located within near the ancient city. Within the site, “Um Qais Rest House” offers a variety of Jordanian dishes along with a superb overlooking view. The site is surrounded by a small village; the inhabitants of which work primarily in the agricultural sector.

The site has adequate signage in both English and German languages. At the entrance, the signage is provided in both Arabic and English. In June, Gadara Festival, a cultural event, takes place in the Northern Theatre, which can seat approximately 3,000 visitors, the festival includes a book fair and poetry competition.

The site houses a museum that contains impressive monumental pieces; nonetheless, the museum is in need of substantial renovation including better lightning, interior design, etc.. Furthermore, a significant number of artifacts exist in Um Qais but are unfortunately not displayed due to insufficient space. Therefore, the museum needs to be equipped with additional cabinets and display units to fit all what is worth exhibiting of its history and heritage.

---

<sup>20</sup> The triconchos (trefoil-shaped structure) was part of a Roman public building

<sup>21</sup> During the Byzantine period a three-aisled basilica was added to the triconchos, which at the time was used as a sepulcher

<sup>22</sup> Public baths built in the early 4<sup>th</sup> century AD south of Gadara's main street

<sup>23</sup> Residential area



## 2. Yarmouk Battle Site

The site is situated on a hilltop overlooking the infamous Yarmouk Battle site that took place on the banks of the Yarmouk River on August 12<sup>th</sup>, 636 A.D. This decisive encounter, led by Khaled Ibn Al Walid on the Arab Muslim side, brought an end to the entire Byzantine existence in Belad Al Sham (Greater Syria).

The site offers a splendid view of the Yarmouk River, one of the three main tributaries that enter the Jordan River between the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea (the other being the Jabbok). It forms the border between Israel and Jordan in the Jordan Valley and between Syria and Jordan further upstream. The site is also the southern boundary of the Golan Heights.

The site has a memorial statue, and two large marble signboards that provide a comprehensive description of the historic Yarmouk Battle. Moreover, a symbolic torch is displayed on site. A ceremony takes place every year where the torch is lit on the site and then carried by athletes to the University of Yarmouk (around 20 kms away). The ceremony aims at highlighting the significance of the event.

The site is quite scenic, especially during the Spring season.



### 3. Dar Al-Saraya Museum

The museum building was established in 1886, during the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, as a castle for the Ottoman Ruler; this is indicated by the designs engraved on the castle's main entrance. After the establishment of the Emirate of Transjordan, the building was used as a prison.

In 1994, the Department of Antiquities of Jordan initiated the restoration of the building. Dar Al-Saraya Museum, also known as the museum of Irbid, was established in 2007.



The museum is owned and operated by the Department of Antiquities. Subsequently, the museum is not open on weekends. This by itself limits the number of local visitors from nearby Governorates.

Since its official opening in July 2007, the museum has welcomed approximately 500 visitors from different nationalities. There is no entrance fee for the museum visitors. The staff also expects a high number of students to visit the Museum during the course of the school year (2007/2008).

The Museum is located in downtown Irbid, is conveniently accessible from main streets, and provides a parking lot for a high number of vehicles. There are 28 restaurants in the area surrounding the museum and 68 local coffee shops. Internet and phone facilities are all available in the area. There is also one 3-star hotel and two 1-star hotels that are of close proximity to the museum. Moreover, a number of handicraft and souvenir shops are conveniently close to the museum; however, the majority of products sold are imported from Syria.

Just a few blocks from the Museum, the Ministry of Tourism is transforming a bus stop into a children's playground, in addition to renovating a number of old houses in the surrounding area.

The Department of Antiquities employs six staff members: a Museum Director who has a BA degree, a researcher who has Masters Degree, two researchers with a BA degree and two controllers with high school degrees. The staff emphasized the need for museum-management training courses.

The museum has a website that is still under construction "[www.dam.gov.jo](http://www.dam.gov.jo)". Upon entry, visitors can receive brochures, which outline a short briefing about the history of the museum. The Department of Antiquities has also developed a booklet explaining the history of each archaeological period; however, the booklet is not available to the visitors.

The museum consists of seven halls. The halls are arranged in chronological order and each holds artifacts from a certain archaeological period. The outdoor courtyard (photo #1) holds cultural and poetry nights in coordination with the Ministry of Culture.

The following is a briefing about each hall in the museum:

#### *Irbid Hall*

West of the main entrance, the Irbid Hall provides information to visitors about the history and culture of Irbid in specific and antiquities in general. The information is displayed in both Arabic and English and accompanied with photos.

#### *Ancient Periods Hall*

The second hall represents the Ancient archaeological period and has artifacts from the early, middle and new Stone Ages (1,000,000 – 3,200 BC); the early, middle and new Bronze Ages (3,200 - 1,200 BC); and the Iron Age (1,200 – 332 BC). The hall was originally a horse stable. The openings engraved in the wall, now used for display of artifacts, were once used as storage blocks for the horses' food.

The hall displays drinking and eating devices, accessories, vases and stones with engravings, all made of clay, stone, bronze and iron.

#### *Metallurgy Hall*

The Metallurgy Hall contains bronze tools used from 4,500 BC until the Roman period; in addition, it contains artifacts made of iron. The majority of these tools were found in Jordan, both the northern and the southern regions.

#### *Classical Periods Hall*

Next in chronological order is the Classical Periods hall, which represents the period between 332 BC up until 640 AD. Artifacts from the Roman and Byzantine periods dominate the pieces of art displayed in this hall. Artifacts range from clay vases to glass and fresco pieces of art. In addition, the hall displays bronze, silver and gold coins. The majority of coins were found in Pella.

#### *Sculptures Hall*

The Sculpture Hall displays Greek and Roman sculptures. The majority of items displayed in this hall were found in Um-Qais.

#### *Islamic Periods Hall*

The Islamic Period lasted from 661 AD to 1918. The artifacts found in this hall are remains from the Umayyad, the Abbasid, Ayyubid, Mamluks and the Ottomans periods.

#### *Mosaics Hall*

The majority of mosaics in this hall date back to the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> centuries. These were mostly found in central and northern regions of the country.



#### 4. Bait Arar

Just a few blocks from the Irbid Museum is Bait ("house" in Arabic) Arar, house of Jordan's most renowned poet Mustafa Wahbeh al-Tal, better known as Arar. The house is easily accessible through main streets and roads in the center of Irbid city.



Mustafa Wahbeh al-Tal, was born in the city of Irbid in 1899, where he pursued his elementary education. In 1912, Arar moved to Damascus where he continued his education until he was exiled by the Ottomans to Beirut, along with other Jordanian students. During World War I, Arar visited Istanbul for six months. He was then deported back to Beirut due to his political activism, mainly through demonstrations. He then graduated from high school in Syria and moved to teaching Arabic in a number of Arab cities until he was appointed as a local governor for the Shobak and Wadi Mousa districts in 1929. He later pursued his higher education to earn a law degree. Arar's political activism led him to spend 90 days in prison. He passed away at the age of 50 in 1949.

Arar's began writing poetry at the age 16. He wrote about his career, thoughts, political activism, and geopolitical environment.

Arar lived in his house for a short while until it became a private school. After his death, his family donated the house to the Ministry of Culture. The house's architecture is Islamic with major use of black rocks. The main entrance of the house leads into a large hall that is planted with trees, and it is where the tomb of the poet is located.

Inside the house are a number of rooms, one of which displays photos of the poet with the Royal Family in addition to an old desk that was used by the poet. Another room was turned into a public library that has many books and periodicals. The third office room displays some of his writings in addition to newspaper articles about the poet.

Cultural nights, including the reciting of poetry, are sometimes organized by the Ministry of Culture in the main hall of the house.

The house is managed by the Ministry of Culture, but needs to be better maintained. The offices of employees are also located in two of the main halls, which ruin the ambiance of the house.

## 5. Hemmet Abu-Thableh

Hemmet (Arabic for “hot water spring”) Abu-Thableh is located 1 kilometer from Pella. The water spring has an average temperature of 37 degrees Celsius. The spring is rich with calcium, potassium, lead, copper, and other minerals that are beneficial in the treatment of the nervous and respiratory systems, among others. The site is located at the bottom of a valley and can be only reached through unpaved roads that are neither maintained nor safe. The site is frequented by many local visitors for therapeutic purposes.



## 6. Old Samad Village



The Old Samad Village is 12 kilometers from the center of the new Samad village. The Old Village was built by the Turks 200 years ago. The houses were built from old stones and mud. Out of the 400 families that once lived in the old village, only ten are left. A significant number of houses are destroyed.

The village is accessible through main roads; however, the route to the village lacks any services or convenient stores.

The new Samad Village is located south west of Irbid City, a 45 minute drive. The current inhabitants of the village are engaged in simple farming activities, and cooperatives play an important role in their daily lives. The majority of the Village area is used for agricultural farming including growing olives, wheat, grape, figs, apples and apricots, in addition to yearly cash crops such as tomato, marrow, cucumber, watermelon and others.

## 7. Wadi Rayyan / Tahoonet Odeh

Wadi Rayyan is located in the Koura District, about 15 kilometers south of Dir Abi-Saied city. The valley is easily accessible by car. The valley's greenery, vegetation and lush trees make the valley quite scenic. The area has been rich with water springs throughout history. Local hospitality is experienced there as landowners allow the hundreds of weekend picnickers from the neighboring villages to wander around and eat off their fruit bearing trees, including figs and pomegranates.



Within the Rayyan Valley is Tahoonet (Arabic for "Mill") Odeh. The mill was built and used by the residents of the area in 1596 to grind wheat and other grains. The mill was recently renovated by the Department of Antiquities, which currently owns and manages the site.

## 8. Kahf al-Sayyd al-Maseeh

Kahf al-Sayyd al-Maseeh (Cave of Jesus Christ) is 11 km from Pella and 10 km east of the Jordan River. The cave is situated on a hilltop that is 2,570 above sea level and overlooks the Jordan River. The area of the cave is estimated at 17.7 square meters. The cave is easily accessible by car, but the site is located in a remote area that is far from the main tourist site in Irbid.



The Romans used the cave as an olive mill, and inside the cave are two water wells. The cave is believed to have been a shelter for Jesus Christ at some point during his travels down from Um Qais.

## 9. Pella

Pella (Tabaqet Fahl in Arabic), is situated between the hills that rise from the northern part of the Jordan Valley, located 78-km to the north of Amman. It is located in Mashare' town and is accessible from Irbid through the Southern Shooneh or Der Abi Saied. The ancient city of Pella is 3 kilometers east of Mashare' town and 50 meters below sea level. The historical importance of the location comes from the fact that it provided a secure access to the Jordan Valley.



The ancient city is believed to have belonged to the Neolithic times and parts of recent findings are also believed to have dated to the Paleolithic times, around 100,000 years ago.

Pella is considered to be one of the most ancient sites in Jordan and is home to one of Christianity's earliest churches. It was first mentioned in the 19<sup>th</sup> century BC in Egyptian inscriptions, possibly to honor Alexander the Great's birthplace. Pella was also one of the Decapolis cities, and therefore one of the flourishing trade and cultural centers in Roman times.

The ancient city was destroyed by an earthquake in 747. A small village remains in the area with around 600-700 inhabitants. To-date, only small portions of the ruins have been excavated, an effort led by the University of Sydney since 1978.

From the excavated ruins, a theater (Odeon) and several artifacts were found, in addition to churches, houses, an Islamic residential quarter and a medieval mosque. Those are believed to have belonged to the Greco-Roman period, the Chalcoithic settlement, Bronze and Iron Ages, Byzantine and Early Islamic age. For about 100 years, Pella was resided by the Umayyads, Abbasids and Mamaluks.

The site is easily accessible by car through main road networks. A rest house<sup>24</sup> is situated on a hilltop and provides a magnificent view of Pella's ruins, the Jordan Valley, and the Holy Land. It also has one unclassified hotel. According to the owner, the hotel receives around 1,000 visitors per year, who are mostly from France, Germany, Switzerland, Sweden and Israel. Around 65% of the visitors are the adventurous young tourists, including students. The remaining segment is comprised of visitors who are drawn to the area's birds and rich flora<sup>25</sup>.

---

<sup>24</sup> Built by the MoTA in 1993

<sup>25</sup> Tulips, black iris, wild thyme, rocca, okra, mustard seeds, and a large number of medicinal herbs.



## INVENTORY EVALUATION

The sites were evaluated on a low, medium and high scale, with low indicating weakness in a certain criteria. The following table summarizes the scores of each site according to the following factors: Scenic value; Bio-diversity; Cultural value; Historical value; Uses & activities; Community participation; Site management; Access; and Tourism products. Some of the future recommended interventions are highlighted in the table.

Site	Scenic Value	Bio-diversity	Cultural Value	Historical Value	Uses & Activities	Community Participation	Site Management	Access	Tourism Products
<b>Dibeen Forest</b>	High	high	n.a.	low	medium	medium/low	high	high	medium/low
Ali Basha Palace	medium	n.a.	high	high	low	low	low	high	low
Roman Pools	medium	n.a.	n.a.	high	low	low	low	high	low
Jarash Old Market	n.a.	n.a.	medium	low	low	low	low	high	low
Jarash Antiques Market	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	medium	medium	medium	high	medium
<b>Ajloun Castle</b>	High	n.a.	n.a.	high	low	low	medium	high	low
<b>Ajloun Castle Museum</b>	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	high	low	low	low	high	low
<b>Mar Elias</b>	High	n.a.	low	high	medium/low	low	medium	medium/low	low
Lesteb Village	High	n.a.	low	high	low	low	n.a.	Medium/low	low
Roman Orthodox Church	n.a.	n.a.	high	High	medium	high	medium	high	medium
Wadi Al-Tawaheen	High	medium	n.a.	medium	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	high	n.a.
Karakon	n.a.	n.a.	low	low	n.a.	n.a.	low	high	n.a.
Iraq Zot	n.a.	n.a.	low	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	high	n.a.
Visitors Center / Ajloun*	High	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	high	n.a.
Seedi Bader	n.a.	n.a.	low	low	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	high	n.a.
<b>Um Qais</b>	High	medium	medium	high	medium	low	medium	high	medium/low
Yarmouk Battle Site	medium	medium	Low	high	low	low	medium	medium/low	low
Dar Al Saraya Museum	n.a.	n.a.	high	high	low	low	medium	high	medium
<b>Bait Arar</b>	n.a.	n.a.	high	medium	medium	low	medium	high	low
Hemmet Abu Thableh	medium	Low	Low	low	low	n.a.	low	low	low
Old Samad Village	Low	n.a.	n.a.	low	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	medium	n.a.
Wadi Rayyan	High	medium	n.a.	low	low	low	low	high	low
Kahf al Maseeh	Low	n.a.	n.a.	low	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	medium	n.a.
<b>Pella</b>	High	medium	n.a.	high	low	low	medium	high	low

\* Site is under construction

Short-term intervention 

Medium-term intervention 

Long-term interention 

## GAP ANALYSIS

### WHERE WE ARE – S.W.O.T ANALYSIS

#### Strengths

The Northern Region is endowed with the following **strengths** (assets) that support its tourism industry:

1. *It has a number of prime destinations* in addition to a wide array of products that cater to different segments of tourists. There are four main tourism destinations in the North that are frequented by both local and foreign tourists. These are Um Qais's and Pella's archeological ruins; Jarash's historic city; and the Ajloun Castle. Other assets include a number of natural, religious, historic, and cultural sites as demonstrated in the inventory listing;
2. *It is a desirable place for being outdoors* because of its beautiful nature – pristine in most locations, in addition to its pleasant climate throughout most of the year. Ajloun's natural reserve, Dibeen, and Eshtafina are some of the gorgeous places frequented by picnickers, campers and outdoor adventurers;
3. *It has a relatively developed road network.* The vast majority of sites can be reached by well maintained primary and secondary roads;
4. *It has a long and rich history and cultural heritage.* The area has many stories to tell the visitors from Roman, to Christian, to Islamic times and more;
5. *It is close to Amman*, where 70% of overnight arrivals are staying;
6. *The local community is very hospitable.*

#### Weaknesses

The area however suffers from a number of **weaknesses** that can be summed as follows:

1. *Impact of tourism on the local economy is low.* An average of half a million persons visit these main sites every year, capturing around one-fourth of the visitor's market to all of Jordan's main sites<sup>26</sup>; however, despite these sizeable figures, the contribution of tourism to the local economy in terms of income, value added, and most importantly employment is "believed" to be minimal. (*Box 2: Impact of Tourism on the Economy*)

There is no quantitative assessment to support the above statement due to the unavailability of input/output tables, but this "belief" is deduced from the following facts and observations:

---

<sup>26</sup> Main sites include: Petra, Jarash, Um Qais, Mount Nebo, Ajloun Castle, Madaba Map, Wadi Rum, Citadel, Karak Castle, Baptism Site, Amra Palace, Pella, Mukawer, Um Jemal, Shoubak, and four museums in Amman, Aqaba, Madaba and Salt.

- a. *Visitors are not staying overnight, and are not spending money on accommodation in the North.* Total bed nights at the classified hotels in Ajloun, Irbid and Jarash amounted to around 47,000 nights in 2006 (77% in Irbid City). This number comprised 0.001% of the total number of nights in Jordan as a whole. The accommodation infrastructure is of low quality, thereby limiting the likelihood of overnight stops for current visitors. The majority of overnight arrivals are staying in Irbid (74%), and are mostly Jordanian and Arab (66%). Most of these people are believed to be accompanying students attending universities in Irbid.
- b. *Visitors do not have much to purchase from the local community at the main sites.* With the exception of the handicrafts souk inside Jarash's ancient city, there are no vendors selling locally produced handicrafts or authentic agricultural products such as olive oil, honey, dried herbs, etc. Even the shops in Jarash sell mostly imported items. The majority of handicrafts/tourist shops are also in Jarash, employing 32 persons<sup>27</sup>. Additionally, tourists tend to stay within the premises of the tourist site, and do not wander off into the nearby towns.
- c. *Visitors' spending is limited to having a meal at Pella, Um Qais and Jarash.* The quality of the rest houses and the food they offer is very low, and this is reflected in the low price they pay for the meal.
- d. *Business and employment opportunities in tourism in the North are limited.* Only 715 persons work in tourism in the three Governorates<sup>28</sup>. This is 72% of Wadi Rum's tourism workforce, 57% of the Dead Sea's, 50% of Petra's, and 21% of Aqaba's. This workforce is mostly concentrated in tourist restaurants<sup>29</sup> (61%), and hotels<sup>30</sup> (22%).

### ***Box 2: Impact of Tourism on the Economy***

"The impact of tourism on an economy arises from the demand for goods and services purchased by visitors. The process is one whereby tourism expenditure enters the economy by means of payment for goods and services required by visitors, thus becoming income and profit for those operating in the tourism sector. However, those individuals and companies who are the recipients of this expenditure will spend the money they receive on purchasing goods and services, thereby providing income and profit for another group of individuals and companies. This group will, in turn, also spend the money they receive, and this process goes on with each successive round of income and expenditure adding to the overall level of economic activity. The process in which an initial expenditure stimulus leads to successive rounds of income and expenditure is known as the multiplier.

Source: Economic Impact Study for Tourism Sector in Jordan - 2004, Henry Eamon & Reem Goussous.

<sup>27</sup> Total persons working at tourist shops in the North is 45.

<sup>28</sup> Ajloun 23; Irbid 453; Jarash 239.

<sup>29</sup> There are no tourist restaurants in Ajloun.

<sup>30</sup> 70% of those working at hotels are in Irbid.

2. *Lack of availability of tourist information* at the majority of sites. This includes brochures, maps, and booklets. The signage system is also minimal, improperly placed and sometimes hard to read.
3. *Main sites are dull and do not offer unique experiences* that allow the visitor to appreciate their significance.
4. *There is low appreciation for the importance of tourism* in local economic development and income and employment-generation.
5. *The staff members of main sites lack a number of critical skills* such as English knowledge, on-site management, and customer relations.
6. *The main tourism facilities are considered of poor quality* and cater to low-end tourists, including accommodation and restaurants
7. *The low-income levels of the local population coupled with minimal access to financing create a barrier to entry into the tourism sector.* The critical mass is also lacking, which amplifies the risks for new entrants into the market.

## Opportunities

A number of opportunities can be summed as follows:

1. *Involving CBOs, particularly women associations, in tourism-related activities.* This includes enabling them to sell their products at the main sites and become main beneficiaries of tourism. This will increase income, enhance the participation of women in economic life, and create employment opportunities.
2. *Availability of donor funding* – mainly SABEQ, and recently SIYAHA directed towards the tourism sector and other related sectors, in the North.
3. *Promoting Agricultural Tourism to allow those involved in agriculture to share their business with visitors as a source of pride, and as an additional source of income.* Agriculture has always been a core economic activity, but until today, it was never linked to tourism. (see Box 3: What is Agricultural Tourism?)

### **Box 3: What is Agricultural Tourism?**

“Refers to the act of visiting a working farm or any agricultural, horticultural or agribusiness operation for the purpose of enjoyment, education, or active involvement in the activities of the farm or operation.

Very often, the idea of tourism stimulates images of mass-produced travel that attracts a large number of travelers. These images may discourage small business owners from considering tourism as an option for enhancing their agriculture revenues. However, agri-tourism can be viewed much like eco-tourism in that it is small-scale, low-impact, and, in most cases, education-focused.”

Source: Virginia Cooperative Extension



Although agri-tourism is not popular in Jordan, the North has the ecology and environment that is suitable for such activities. Organizing ongoing events can attract visitors to particular seasonal activities such as olive picking in November of every year. (see Appendix IV : Example of an Olive Oil Packaged Trip)

The basics of agri-tourism are: i) creating something for the tourist to see, ii) something to do, and iii) something to buy. (see Box 4: Agritourism Ideas)

4. *Collaborating with universities in the North in promoting tourism packages* for the families of foreign students who are staying in Irbid for a number of days. This can be particularly beneficial for new students.
5. *Taking advantage of the increased number of tourists in Jordan* as a result of declaring Petra as one of the World's seven wonders.
6. *Promoting a number of community-based ecotourism projects in Pella and/or Um Qais.* (see Box 5: What is a Community-Based Development Project?)

#### **Box 4: Agritourism Ideas**

##### *Agritourism Basics*

- Pick-your-own (PYO)
- Farm animals
- Displays
- Shopping
- Food to eat

##### *Agri-entertainment*

- Harvest festivals
- Contests
- Petting zoos
- Themed displays
- Music, art, crafts festivals

##### *Agri-education*

- Farm tours
- School, seniors groups
- Demos: sheep shearing, cheese-making, etc.
- Rural crafts exhibits and demos

Source: Small Farm Quarterly

### **Box 5: What is a Community-Based Ecotourism?**

“The International Ecotourism Society defines ecotourism as responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and sustains the well-being of local people. This definition not only implies that there should be a recognition of, and positive support for, the conservation of natural resources, both by suppliers and consumers, but also that there is a necessary social dimension to ecotourism.

The term ‘community-based ecotourism’ takes this social dimension a stage further. This is a form of ecotourism where the local community has substantial control over, and involvement in, its development and management, and a major proportion of the benefits remain within the community. How the community is defined will depend on the social and institutional structures in the area concerned, but the definition implies some kind of collective responsibility and approval by representative bodies. In many places, particularly those inhabited by indigenous peoples, there are collective rights over lands and resources. Community-based ecotourism should therefore foster sustainable use and collective responsibility. However, it must also embrace individual initiatives within the community.

Some further general characteristics of ecotourism have been identified by UNEP and the World Tourism Organization as:

- a. Involving appreciation not only of nature, but also of indigenous cultures
- b. Prevailing in natural areas, as part of the visitor experience;
- c. Containing education and interpretation as part of the tourist offer;
- d. Generally, but not exclusively, organized for small groups by small, specialized and locally owned businesses (while recognizing that foreign operators also market and operate ecotourism);
- e. Minimizing negative impacts on the natural and socio-cultural environment;
- f. Supporting the protection of natural areas by generating economic benefits for the managers of natural areas;
- g. Providing alternative income and employment for local communities; and
- h. Increasing local and visitor awareness of conservation.”

Source: World Wildlife Fund International

## Threats

If the status-quo is sustained, tourism in the area will be further exacerbated because of the following imminent threats:

1. *The high liquidity – because of high oil prices – has resulted in the proliferation of large-theme based tourism developments that combine heritage with leisure and entertainment, mainly in Aqaba, Amman, and Dead Sea.* In fact, this development in real estate is considered one of the major growth areas in Jordan today. As other tourism destinations develop into world-class sites, the ability of the north to capture a larger share of the day and overnight visitors' markets will diminish.
2. *The local community is detaching from their lands* and many are leaving, mainly the young, due to lack of business and employment opportunities.
3. *The low income and the high poverty levels*, in addition to the low interest of private sector investment in the North will make it harder for the North to place itself on the tourism map.

## WHERE WE WANT TO BE – VISION STATEMENT

Based on the aforementioned, the futuristic vision for tourism in the North must therefore address the following issues:

5. The Northern Region is endowed with a wide array of products; if properly developed and managed, it can cater to various segments of tourists;
6. Private sector activity in tourism, with the exception of Irbid City, is limited. Subsequently, business and employment opportunities in tourism are negligible;
7. Tourism development should be community-driven, not only to improve the quality of life of the local people, but to also preserve the local heritage and cultural values;
8. The North is known for its natural beauty and lush forests. It is also home to many wild animals, plants, and endangered species. Safeguarding the area's natural resources and sustaining the balance of its nature is thus imperative.

As such, the vision statement for the Northern Region is formulated as follows:

### **Vision Statement**

*"A vibrant tourism sector that caters to various segments of tourists, generates business and employment opportunities for the local community, yet preserves local heritage and cultural values, safeguards the region's natural resources, and ultimately contributes to the community's quality of life."*

## **BRIDGING THE GAP – RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE COURSE OF WORK**

We have identified where we are right now and where we want to be. In order to realize the vision the following must be tackled:

- 4- Improve the “distinctiveness” and “differential advantage” of the main sites by providing the visitor with an authentic and memorable experience.**
- 5- Develop sustainable tourism products that tap into niche markets and create income-generating opportunities for the local people.**
- 6- Increase tourism receipts with focus being made on low-impact, high yield tourism products.**

As such, the following immediate, short-, medium-, and long-term recommendations are proposed to help realize the vision, and ultimately help bridge part of the gap:

### **Immediate Actions (next three months)**

1. Form an advisory regional tourism committee comprised of the persons listed in Appendix I, in addition to other key stakeholders selected from Appendix II. This will insure continued support and involvement from the local community. Capacity building can also be achieved.
2. Conduct a tourist satisfaction survey at the main sites; effort should be made to try and capture the upcoming high season in October and November. This should be repeated again during the March-April season. The survey will serve the following purposes:
  - a. Identify the profile of tourists to the site (age, income, nationality, purpose of visit, etc.);
  - b. Identify current spending patterns, overnight stay, length of stay;
  - c. Determine the factors that influence the choice of destination and the decision to return;
  - d. Identify the gap between expectations before the visit, and impressions after the visit;
  - e. Determine products and services that can be developed at the site to improve the experience for visitors;
  - f. Position current site with other main sites visited in North and in Jordan.

## Short-Run Actions (over the next 12 months)

1. Develop a brand personality that brings out the main features of the north, (olive tree, pine tree, honeybee, colonnades, castles, mountains, panoramic views, etc.). Branding is important in giving the North an identity that is memorable; this could be done with the following clustering of sites in mind:
  - Jarash, Ajloun, Pella, Um Qais, Dar Alsaraya museum to attract segments of visitors interested in historical/archaeological heritage.
  - Ajloun reserve, Dibbin, Pella to attract adventurer tourists.
  - Pella, Um Qais, Mar Elias, Cave of Jesus to attract Christian religious tourist
  - Shrines of the companions and Ajloun Mosque to attract the Muslim religious tourist
  - Beit Araar, Ali Basha (once renovated by MoTA) for visitors interested in culture and Jordanian history.

### Box 6: Branding a Destination

While many touristic destinations may offer similar products and services to its visitors, the overall experience can very well differ in accordance to the quality of the products and services offered. This could mean many things from cleanliness, preservation, to availability of facilities such as tourist shops, rest houses...etc. Touristic destinations can use branding in a way to communicate the destination's ability to provide a distinctive experience and its inability to be experienced elsewhere.

One very effective tool that creates branding for a destination is word of mouth. Fellow tourists' experiences can paint a more elaborate and beautiful picture than magazines, brochures and travel books. Accordingly, a destination that hosts well equipped services and facilities that cater to tourists is more likely to attract more people to a particular location.

One example of a touristic area that has created sufficient branding for the type the type of experience that is provides is Wadi Rum desert located 320 Km south of Amman. Wadi Rum houses several camp sites that include tents, sanitary facilities, a traditional Bedouin meal, in addition to 4X4 and camel rides across the desert as well. As such, the destination has created effective branding with the type of services it offers in that the name Wadi Rum creates a mental image of the breath taking view of the desert as well as the overall Bedouin experience.

Another success story on touristic branding in Jordan is the one established for the Dead Sea located about 55 Km southwest of Amman. The phrase "Dead Sea Destination" in itself is a reminder to the experience both tourists and locals indulge in when visiting the location. The experience includes the enjoyment of the many luxury hotels and resorts, natural salts and minerals that the location has to offer in many products as well as, health facilities and the breath taking view of the Dead Sea.

2. Organize a workshop for tour operators in Irbid and various stakeholders from the North. The workshop must serve the following purposes:
  - a. Present to participants SABEQ's course of action over the coming few years.
  - b. Acquaint tour operators with the wide array of assets in the North.
  - c. Introduce the concepts of experiential, agri-, and community-based eco tourism.
  - d. Generate ideas for site development, and guided experiences in the North.
  - e. Identify operators that are eligible for further training on the development of tourism products.
3. Provide training for selected tour operators on the development of various tourism products, with the possibility of granting small funds.
4. Upgrade the services and facilities at the Ajloun Castle, in addition to bringing life to it by creating theme-based activities that allow the visitors to re-live the history of the castle. This can be done through:
  - a. Engaging the local community through performances, costumes, story telling of the castle's history and its inhabitants. This could be accompanied by a complimentary souvenir or "delicacy" prepared by the local women CBOs to the tourists as a memory of their visit. An example of a souvenir could be a replica of a small oil lantern that was used at the time the castle was built. "Delicacies" include nicely packaged olives, thyme and oil (zeit and zaatar), yogurt spread balls made from goat milk stored in olive oil (labaneh), honey and honey wax, and dried herbs among many others.
  - b. Creating a theme related to the history of the castle for each room in the castle. The large rooms that were used as dormitories, stables and dining areas can be re-enacted.
  - c. Establishing souvenir workshops run by local CBOs that also engage the tourists in the making and then purchase of these souvenirs.
  - d. Holding an annual fair at the Ajloun castle to display handicrafts, packaged agricultural products such as olive oil, pickles, olives, honey, dried herbs; in addition folkloric dances.
  - e. Installing telescopes for the viewing pleasure of visitors that reach the top of the Castle. These must be accompanied by proper briefing signs.
  - f. Using carriages and horses for short transportation purposes (one suggested route could be between the Ajloun Castle and the Visitors' Center, which is 250 meters away).
  - g. Developing a new and interactive signage system
  - h. Providing training for staff in English, customer relations, and management of museums
5. Support the new Visitor Center in Ajloun with informational material, such as brochures, high quality maps, guidebooks, and perhaps even a website.
6. Create an agricultural tourism experience in a small farm in Ajloun.



## Medium-Term Actions (over the next 24 months)

1. Develop community-based ecotourism in Pella:<sup>31</sup>
  - a. Create a village center for handicraft manufacturing including baskets made of banana leaves, packaged herbs, agricultural products and food. This will require providing handicrafts training for the local community.
  - b. Develop daytime excursions.
  - c. Develop brochures and material about the flora and fauna in Pella.
  - d. Hold events at nights in Pella village; serve food and play cultural music. The local community could be engaged through participating in entertainment activities.
  - e. Involve the tourist in the daily chores of a village family including farming, homemaking and herding. Female tourists would join the women in their household chores (cooking and cleaning) while the males take part in outdoor activities including sheep herding. This idea was inspired by the RSCN's experience in Dana, which is proving to be very successful. The local community, which initially rejected the idea, is now earning a substantial portion of its income from tourism. Moreover, many locals became well versed in English and are now working as tour guides.
2. Active involvement of travel agencies in the Irbid area in creating exiting touristic activities targeting foreign university students and their families. This activity must also be endorsed by the universities and promoted by the student body.
3. Improve the display units at both the Ajloun Castle and Um Qais museums, including signage.

## Long-Run

1. Develop brochures and printed material or website on the flora and fauna of the Dibeen forest.
2. Develop audio guides for Ajloun castle, Pella, Um Qais, Jarash, and Mar Elias.
3. Develop tourism websites for the three Governorates in collaboration with their respective municipalities
4. Hold an annual poetry competition at Bait Arar, and promote it nationwide in collaboration with the Municipality of Greater Irbid, and the Universities in the North.
5. Make available modest accommodation facilities across Northern Jordan, both sanitary and convenient. This can encourage tourists to lengthen their stay and in return target more destinations in each governorate.

---

<sup>31</sup> See Appendix V: The Australian Expedition to Pella

## APPENDIX I: MEMBERS OF THE TOURISM COMMITTEE

Name	Position
1. Mrs. Suhad Kasem Khasawneh	Irbid Directorate of Tourism / Head of Division
2. Mr. Muhammad Hamad Al-Deik	Irbid Directorate of Tourism / Head of Division
3. Mr. Hani Hassan Al-Shweihat	Irbid Directorate of Tourism / Director General
4. Mr. Nabil Abu Baker	Afamia Hotel in Irbid / General Manager
5. Dr. Bassam Toubat	Ajloun Directorate of Tourism / Director General
6. Mr. Khalil Areifeg	Ajloun Hotel / Owner and Manager
7. Mr. Abdullah Al-Kayed	Jarash Directorate of Tourism / Head of Division
8. Mr. Salah Jamil Obeid	Jarash Handicrafts Association / Member

## APPENDIX II: LIST OF STAKEHOLDERS IN THE NORTH

Governorate / District	Local Stakeholder	Main Contact Person	Contact Information
Irbid / Qasabet Irbid	Al Beit Al Sharqee For Eastern Antiques	Mr. Ameen Al Shorman	02 710 1945
Irbid / Qasabet Irbid	Heritage Tailoring	Ms. Maha Al Rawashdeh	079 502 8762
Irbid / Qasabet Irbid	Wooden Antiques	Mr. Ala'a Haddad	079 572 3849
Irbid / Qasabet Irbid	Wood Cravings	Mr. Rafat Al Azam	079 511 7891
Irbid / Qasabet Irbid	Mosaics	Mr. Ahmad Sabri	079 676 3157
Irbid / Qasabet Irbid	Stones Craving	Mr. Sultan Al Rosan	077 749 6899
Irbid / Qasabet Irbid	Rugs Manufacturing	NA	NA
Irbid / Mazar Shamali	Daggers and Swords Manufacturing	Mr. Hoshan	079 573 9051
Irbid / Mazar Shamali	Wooden Antiques and Rugs Manufacturing	Mr. Omar Al Jaraah	077 719 5600
Irbid/Bani Kananeh	Manufacture of Dishes	NA	NA
Ajloun / Qasabet Ajloun	Business Men Association	Mr. Khalil Jawhar Araifesh	NA
Ajloun/ Qasabet Ajloun	Ajloun Mountains Tourism Association	Mr. Faisal Momani	02 644 0461
Jerash/ Qasabet Jerash	Municipality of Greater Jerash	Mr. Radwan Al Shair	02 635 1019
Jerash/ Qasabet Jerash	Association of JOHOD for the conservation of heritage	Mrs. Nofa al Naser	NA

## APPENDIX III: LIST OF TOURISTIC ATTRACTIONS BY GOVERNORATE

Governorate / District	Site	Classification	Priority*
Irbid / Qasabet Irbid	1. Irbid Museum (Dar Al Saraya)	Historical / Archeological	
Irbid / Qasabet Irbid	2. Beit Ras Site	Historical / Archeological	
Irbid / Qasabet Irbid	3. Jordan Archeological Museum / Yarmouk University	Archeological	
Irbid / Qasabet Irbid	4. Natural Heritage Museum / Yarmouk University	Environmental	
Irbid / Qasabet Irbid	5. Arar's House	Heritage / Cultural	
Irbid / Bani Obeid	6. Tell Al-Hosen	Historical / Archeological	
Irbid / Bani Obeid	7. Douhala Site	Historical / Archeological	
Irbid / Bani Obeid	8. Ya'moun Site	Historical / Archeological	
Irbid / Bani Obeid	9. Shatna Village	Heritage	
Irbid / Mazar Shamali	10. Samad Village	Heritage	
Irbid / Northern Ghour	11. Pella	Historical / Archeological	
Irbid / Northern Ghour	12. Northern Shouneh Resort	Therapeutic	
Irbid / Northern Ghour	13. Shrine of the Companion Mu'ath ben Jabal	Religious	
Irbid / Northern Ghour	14. Shrine of the Companion Sharhabil ben Hasnah	Religious	
Irbid / Northern Ghour	15. Shrine of the Companion Amer ben Abi Waqqas	Religious	
Irbid / Northern Ghour	16. Shrine of the Companion Dirar ben Al-Azwar	Religious	
Irbid / Northern Ghour	17. Al Arab Damn	Natural / Environmental	
Irbid / Bani Kinanah	18. Quweiblah Site	Historical / Archeological	
Irbid / Bani Kinanah	19. Yarmouk Battle Site	Historical / Environmental	
Irbid / Bani Kinanah	20. Malka Tourism Park	Natural / Environmental	
Irbid / Bani Kinanah	21. Jordan Himmah Resort	Therapeutic	
Irbid / Bani Kinanah	22. Um Qais Historic Site	Archeological / Heritage	
Irbid / Bani Kinanah	23. Al-Isha	Natural / Environmental	
Irbid / Ramtha	24. Shalalah Site	Natural / Environmental	
Irbid / Ramtha	25. Zayraqoun Site	Archeological / Historical	
Irbid / Ramtha	26. Al-Yaseliyyah Site	Archeological / Historical	
Irbid / Kourah	27. Tanbah Castle	Archeological / Historical	
Irbid / Kourah	28. Zaydani Mosque	Archeological / Religious	

Governorate / District	Site	Classification	Priority*
Irbid / Kourah	29. Barqash Forest	Natural / Environmental	
Irbid / Kourah	30. Himmet Abu Thableh	Therapeutic	
Irbid / Kourah	31. Barqash Cave	Natural / Environmental	
Irbid / Kourah	32. Wadi Rayyan		
Irbid / Kourah	33. Wadi Abu Ziad		
Irbid / Kourah	34. Cave of Jesus Christ	Religious	
Ajloun	35. Hasad Pool		
Ajloun	36. Shrine of Sidi Badr		
Ajloun	37. Mar Elias Site	Archeological / Religious / Environmental	
Ajloun	38. Al Khader Shrine		
Ajloun	39. Ajloun Castle / Museum		
Ajloun	40. Water Springs		
Ajloun	41. Rajeb Area		
Ajloun	42. Sayedat Al Jabal		
Ajloun	43. Ajloun Panorama		
Ajloun	44. Eshtafina		
Ajloun	45. Roman Orthodox Church		
Ajloun	46. Karakon		
Ajloun	47. Water Mills		
Ajloun	48. Ajloun Archeological Mosque		
Ajloun	49. Al-Jub Site		
Ajloun	50. Deir Halawah		
Ajloun	51. Muftah Cave		
Ajloun	52. Deir El Yous		
Ajloun	53. Rasoun		
Ajloun	54. Mehnah		
Ajloun	55. Ajloun Reserve		
Ajloun	56. Iraq Al Zutt		
Ajloun	57. Rajeb Church		
Ajloun	58. Listeb Village		
Ajloun	59. Visitor Center / Ajloun Castle		
Jarash / Qasabat Jarash	60. Jarash Historic City		
Jarash / Qasabat Jarash	61. Northern Hamamat		
Jarash / Qasabat Jarash	62. Pools (Birkatein)		
Jarash / Qasabat Jarash	63. Ali Basha Palace		

Governorate / District	Site	Classification	Priority*
Jarash / Qasabat Jarash	64. Jarash Handicrafts Souk / Jarash Historic City		
Jarash / Qasabat Jarash	65. Jarash Old Souk / City Center		
Jarash / Qasabat Jarash	66. Dibbeen Park		
Jarash / Qasabat Jarash	67. Wadi Um Jouzeh		
Jarash / Qasabat Jarash	68. Sayel Jarash		
Jarash / Qasabat Jarash	69. Shrine of Prophet Hud		

\*Priority: 1=immediate, 2=intermediate, 3=possible



## APPENDIX IV: EXAMPLE OF AN OLIVE OIL PACKAGED TRIP

### Le Marche, Italy

#### New season's Olive Oil Long Weekend

##### Sample Schedule

###### Day 1 Thursday

Airport transfers 1.30 Ancona airport  
Sea food lunch on the beach  
Arrive at Casal dei Fichi  
Settle in  
Olive oil talk and tasting  
Dinner in Local restaurant

###### Day 2 Friday

Picking olives on large olive estate  
Olive talk  
Lunch  
Factory outlets  
Dinner

###### Day 3 Saturday

Early morning visit to Civitanova market, famous for pizza bianca & shoes  
Visit Macerata and lunch  
Early evening cookery class  
Dinner

###### Day 4 Sunday

Olive oil press, tasting  
Olive talk  
Lunch  
Afternoon free  
Dinner

###### Day 5 Monday

Departures

This weekend will appeal equally to aficionados of olives and olive oil and to lovers of all things Italian. In the



rolling hills of central Marche, mid way between the Sibilline mountains and the Adriatic sea, this area produces some of the finest olives and oil.

Le Marche is a lesser known region of Italy, equally as beautiful as its neighbours Umbria and Tuscany but without the tourists. This is real Italy where English is hardly spoken, don't worry your small group will always have a translator on hand, the people are warm and genuine and traditional ways of life are still maintained. Le Marche boasts gems including Urbino, birthplace of Raffaello, the stunningly beautiful Ascoli Piceno, and Macerata which has been compared favourably to Siena. Hundreds of immaculately preserved renaissance towns sit precariously on the hilltops, each steeped in history with beautiful churches and buildings to be discovered.

November is the month when olives are picked and pressed. You will have an opportunity to learn at first hand all about the cultivation of olives, the production of oil, to try your hand at olive picking, to visit a traditional press and observe the fascinating process of making extra virgin oil. Olive oil tastes at its finest when it is newly pressed and you will be the one of the few to experience the taste of the oil fresh from the press. The olive weekend is designed specifically to take you on a journey through the history and significance of olives set in a context of how people have lived their lives and used this wonderful fruit.



Price per person £745

Single supplement £75

Dates:- 15th to 19th November

22nd to 26th November

To include, transfers to and from  
Ancona airport at a set time,  
accommodation, all meals and  
wine, classes and trips

Price does not include flights

One of the wonderful components of Italian life is the food and the way it is savoured and enjoyed, so venues for lunch and dinner each day have been carefully chosen to give you the flavour of different cooking styles and techniques using olives from the region.

You will also have an opportunity to visit a traditional market, with optional trips to Todds and Prada factory outlets – a chance to look out for those Christmas presents !

As part of this fascinating weekend you will visit the historic Il Maniero palazzo and art club where an Italian chef will show you some of the secrets of the regional Italian cooking, which you will then enjoy together with local wines.

Set in beautiful countryside, accommodation is provided at a newly restored Marche farmhouse, Casal dei Fichi. Luxury apartments provide modern comforts in a traditional setting.

## APPENDIX V: THE AUSTRALIAN EXPEDITION TO PELLA

# THE PELLA VOLUNTEER SCHEME

---

Have you ever wanted to take part in an archaeological dig? Fancy yourself as a bit of an Indiana Jones? Like to travel to the Near East and see one of the great cradles of civilisation for yourself? Well, the Pella volunteer scheme might be for you. We can't promise you the Holy Grail; but we can offer you an exciting adventure working alongside qualified professionals. Enjoy being part of a dedicated team as you trowel your way back through history. No prior archaeological experience is required.

- [What is the Pella Volunteer Scheme?](#)
  - [Season Dates](#)
  - [Accommodation](#)
  - [Dig Activities](#)
  - [What does it cost?](#)
  - [How do I apply?](#)
- 

## What is the Pella Volunteer Scheme?

The University of Sydney has been conducting excavations at the ancient city of [Pella](#) in the Jordan valley since 1978, and it has long been used as a training ground for the archaeologists of the future. In 1993 we decided to open this experience to the public, and launched the Pella Volunteer Scheme, under the auspices of the Near Eastern Archaeology Foundation (NEAF). Since then, well over 150 paying volunteers have come to Pella to work as integral members of the excavation team. Our volunteers come from all backgrounds and ages. You don't have to be an Olympic athlete or rocket scientist to enjoy the archaeological experience. If you care about the past, and like the idea of getting to know it better, then this might be the holiday you've been waiting for.

---

## Season dates

# Next season - late 2006/early 2007

The next field season is in the preliminary planning stages. We will work either in November/December 2006 or January to February 2007. Volunteers will be invited to apply for a position in one of our groups. Each group consists of about fifteen volunteers, who will spend a period of three weeks on the dig.

We plan to concentrate excavations once again in the Bronze & Iron Age Temple sequence, as well as working on temple outbuildings, and late Roman areas.



**If you are interested in participating in future seasons, please [contact us](#) & we'll add you to our mailing lists.**

---

## Accommodation

The team stays in the Pella dighouse, which is located in a compound on the main tell. Our rooms are comfortable, but not luxurious. If you want five star accommodation, we suggest you take a cruise down the Nile. But if you don't mind sharing a room, and being well fed with a comfortable mix of Arabic and Western food, provided by one of the finest dig cooks in the country, then we think you'll like what you find. All bedding is provided, and we can usually arrange separate accommodation for couples. The dighouse has hot and cold running water, western-style sanitary facilities; we'll even do your laundry for you. And because the excavations are there at hand, you can step out the door and into the past in a matter of minutes.

---

## Dig Activities

Volunteers are offered the chance to participate in all aspects of a working dig. To give you a full understanding of just what it is to be an archaeologist, we divide your time up between working in the trenches, and taking part in house activities. To this end, the team is divided into small groups, who each spend a few days in the house or field before swapping roles. This rotation continues until the end of your stay.

### Field work

Each volunteer is assigned to a trench supervisor, who will be your buddy for the duration of the dig. You assist them in the day to day running of the trench; supervising local workmen, handling the more

delicate [excavation work](#), taking samples and bagging artifacts. We'll train you in archaeological techniques, and show you how we come to interpret the things we find. By following the progress in your trench, you will get to see every aspect of field recording. As your trench gets deeper over the weeks, so will your understanding of what archaeology is all about.

## House work

Our work doesn't end when we step out of the trenches; half of any archaeologist's time is spent on processing and making sense of the things we find. So for some of your time at Pella, you will be working with our experts in the house in [cleaning, sorting and identifying artifacts](#). You will be able to follow the progress your favourite objects, developing skills in the process which will help you recognise artifacts when you go back out into the field. As part of the daily house routine, we also arrange a short morning tour of the site, to let you keep up to date with happenings in your own trench, and gain a broader perspective of how your experience fits in with the overall archaeological and historical picture.

---

## Other things to do in Jordan

Pella is in one of the most beautiful landscapes in Jordan, and we know you'll like to take the time to get to know the area better. So we leave you with the option of some leisure time in the afternoons, which you can use to meet the [local villagers](#), or explore some of the [surrounding countryside](#). Investigate the Bronze Age and Byzantine rock-cut tombs around the area, or go searching for some of the many new sites discovered in the recent Pella Hinterland Survey. Climb up into the hills for a breathtaking view of the Jordan valley, and stop to smell and photograph the spectacular local wildflowers on the way.

We work a six day week at Pella, and on Friday (the Jordanian 'weekend') we rest. But for those of you who didn't come to Pella to lounge about, we arrange Friday trips to some of the many attractions in the area. One of the members of the archaeological staff will accompany you on these excursions to act as your guide. We find this experience often helps people 'acclimatise' to the Middle East, and is invaluable for preparing people for further touring once the dig is over. The latter is certainly worth doing for those who can take the extra time, as Jordan has an extremely rich archaeological heritage, and a vibrant local culture that will both surprise and delight you. Be amazed at the rose-red monuments of Petra, take a walk back in time down the Roman roads at Jerash, or follow in the footsteps of Lawrence down Wadi Rum, en-route to storming the shops and beaches of Aqaba. From the Dead Sea to the Red Sea, desert to hot springs, and castle to rock-cut tombs, Jordan has something to offer everyone.

---

## What does it cost?

The fee for taking part in the Pella Project is estimated to be around \$3750 (Australian dollars) per person, plus the cost of your airfare and personal expenses. This may be subject to currency fluctuations; we will post more accurate information on this page as the season approaches. This will cover transfers to and from the dig, and full board and accommodation during your stay. We offer optional trips to visit other tourist attractions in Jordan once a week, at a small additional cost for the hire of a coach, site charges and lunch.

The money generated by this scheme goes directly to fund ongoing excavations at Pella. By taking part in the Volunteer Scheme, you are not gaining the opportunity to rediscover - and make - history; you are also making further archaeological work at the site possible.

---

## How do I apply?

If you think you might be interested, why not download an application form now? This is available in [Word 6](#), [Adobe Acrobat](#) or [Rich Text Format](#).

Send your applications, or any further enquiries you might have to: The Pella Volunteer Scheme,  
NEAF, SOPHI A14  
University of Sydney NSW 2006  
Australia.

Or send us an email (*with Pella in the subject heading*) to: [neaf@arts.usyd.edu.au](mailto:neaf@arts.usyd.edu.au)

---

[Pella Home Page](#)



Sustainable Achievement of Business Expansion and Quality  
Salem Center, Sequleyah Street  
Al Rabieh, Amman  
Phone: +962 6 550 3050  
Fax: +962 6 550 3069  
Web address: <http://www.sabeq-jordan.org>