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# FACT SHEET

## SUSTAINABLE CULTURAL HERITAGE THROUGH ENGAGEMENT OF LOCAL COMMUNITIES

2014-2022 • \$9.1 million • Partners: American Center of Oriental Research, Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, Department of Antiquities, Petra Development & Tourism Regional Authority, Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority/Wadi Rum Protected Area

### BACKGROUND

Tourism is a critical, growing sector for Jordan's economy, contributing 19.2% of the country's GDP in 2018 and representing the largest private sector employer of Jordanians. As such, USAID supports the growth of Jordan's tourism industry in order to boost the overall strength of the economy as well as to drive employment and income generation for the population.

With a wealth of historical, archaeological and natural attractions and a functioning tourism infrastructure, Jordan already has the assets to develop a robust and booming tourism sector. Jordan is home to over 20,000 documented archaeological sites, scattered across the Kingdom, many located within communities suffering from high poverty and unemployment rates. These sites suffer from poor maintenance and visibility on the tourism map of the country. The restoration, preservation and promotion of these sites as destinations for local and international tourism can be a real opportunity for local economic development.

## PROJECT OVERVIEW

USAID's Sustainable Cultural Heritage Through Engagement of Local Communities Project, implemented by the American Center of Oriental Research, strengthens the preservation, management and development of Jordan's cultural heritage resources by involving the communities that live around them. The project enhances the self-reliance of Jordan's cultural heritage sector by implementing a capacity building program that equips cultural heritage workers and institutions with key skills, from specialized archaeological techniques to English language report writing and presentation delivery. At the same time, the project brings together governmental, non-governmental, academic, and private sector stakeholders to develop strategies and policies to guide the management of Jordan's cultural heritage resources. In this way, the project supports a robust tourism sector in Jordan through improving the country's ability to sustainably preserve, protect, and promote the cultural heritage resources that form its heart.

On the community level, the project also provides extensive technical as well as financial support to micro-to small-sized enterprises focusing on sustainable cultural tourism. These enterprises benefit from the knowledge and experience of local community members and present a significant opportunity for the employment of Jordanians who may otherwise be excluded from the tourism sector or the overall workforce. Micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises like those supported by the project employ around 70% of Jordan's workforce, and can serve as powerful drivers of economic growth, especially in communities with high rates of poverty and unemployment.

## IMPACT

- The project has harnessed the potential for cultural heritage resources to generate new streams of income and employment, especially in rural communities. By supporting four youth-led enterprises that offer unique cultural tourism experiences in lesser-known areas of the kingdom, the project has both helped to diversify Jordan's tourism sector and created new job opportunities for vulnerable people.
- The project has improved the management of Jordan's cultural heritage resources, including its archaeological heritage, a main pillar of the country's tourism industry. So far, 324 employees of key cultural heritage institutions have gained new skills and improved their practices through the project's capacity building program, supporting the sector's journey toward self-reliance.
- The project has supported the creation of new jobs, as well as better employment opportunities for those already employed. The project's activities have helped generate more than 328 job opportunities, including 134 opportunities for those living in poverty pockets or areas with high concentrations of refugees. At the same time, 79 Jordanians have attained new or better employment after participating in the project's capacity building activities.

## CONTACT

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