



Jordan's Treasures Become Tourist Destinations

Challenge

Boasting a wide range of rich historical, cultural and religious sites, Jordan attracts an ever-increasing number of visitors who play an ever-increasing role in the economy. Tourism is Jordan's second largest private-sector employer and accounts for about a tenth of the country's gross domestic product. But the industry has been highly vulnerable to regional political instability. Jordan needed to improve its tourism image, encourage the development of attractions and build the capacity of local tourism service providers. Success would require a multi-faceted national effort—something neither the private sector nor the public sector could carry out alone.

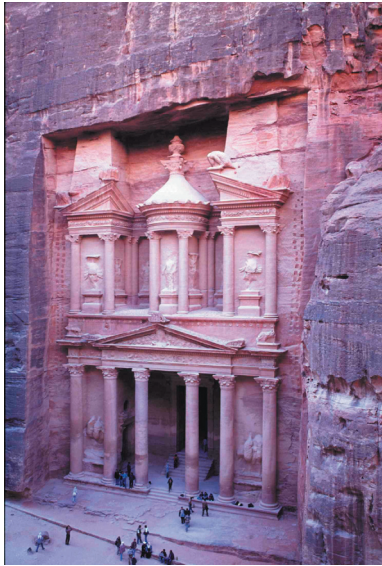


Photo: Jordan Tourism Board

Petra, one of Jordan's national tourism treasures, will benefit from the new tourism strategy.

According to the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, 1.6 million tourists visited Jordan in 2003 and spent \$80.3 million.

Initiative

Working with local officials, USAID helped create a strategy for public-private cooperation in tourism promotion and development. Industry leaders and key government officials collaborated to set out rules and define the main elements of the strategy. To facilitate the process, USAID worked with the team of experts that had similarly helped Ireland create partnerships and build a strategy to overcome public misperceptions about safety. Over the next two years, USAID and Jordan identified tourism opportunities and challenges, formulated goals and actions and strengthened the government-industry partnership. Drawing on other countries' experiences, the program formulated a plan appropriate for Jordan that incorporates an innovative approach—the 'value chain' concept—and focuses on every aspect of the tourist experience from deciding to travel to returning home.

Results

In May 2004 King Abdullah II publicly unveiled Jordan's National Tourism Strategy at a meeting of the World Economic Forum. Two months later, the strategy was officially launched for the tourism industry at an event organized by USAID. The strategy aims to develop the industry's vast potential to reach one goal: double Jordan's tourism economy by 2010. King Abdullah's government has pledged to allocate 4 percent of the revenue from tourism-related taxes for tourism marketing and product development. This support for the strategy puts Jordan's tourism industry firmly on the path to rapid, sustainable growth.

