



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

Activity Newsletter | December 2022

VISIT TUNISIA



Greetings friends and supporters of Tunisian tourism,

As 2022 draws to a close, our team has had the pleasure of reflecting on our efforts and accomplishments from the year. We have made great strides to strengthen the tourism industry in Tunisia to previously unseen heights, even before COVID-19. With each and every initiative, our work moves us closer to USAID Visit Tunisia’s goal: bringing about a more resilient tourism sector that benefits thousands of Tunisians. It has been heartening to see the country’s recognition grow internationally in the period since we’ve started (read more below about UNESCO’s new designation for harissa!), and we are thrilled that part of our work involves encouraging more visitors to see the country’s wonders for themselves.

We are grateful to all of our partners who have helped us along this journey. I am confident that our collective efforts will continue to propel all the hardworking people involved in Tunisia’s tourism industry to great success in 2023.

Happy New Year,

Leila Calnan
Chief of Party, USAID Visit Tunisia Activity

NEW CALL FOR FUNDS

Access up to 1 million TND in grants & 7 million TND in loans!

Calling all small businesses operating in the Tunisian tourism sector! Submit your applications to access micro-finance grant and loan support from the USAID Visit Tunisia Activity to accelerate local economic recovery and growth.

TOUNES LIK: INSPIRING TUNISIANS TO EMBARK ON DOMESTIC TOURISM ADVENTURES



The marketing campaign “Tounes Lik” (“Tunisia is Yours”) inspired thousands of Tunisians to embark on domestic tourism adventures and getaways to explore diverse and untapped sites. From April to November 2022, USAID Visit Tunisia and partners released 14 videos to create buzz around destinations in Tunisia typically ignored by the domestic market. These profile-raising videos were a huge success. Online, they generated extremely high user engagement and increased awareness of the National Tunisian Tourism Office (ONTT) and local businesses. Offline, they generated more visitors and revenue to destinations.

“Tounes Lik” (“Tunisia is Yours”) encouraged local travelers to explore Tunisia’s diverse tourism destinations and share their experiences by releasing 14 profile-raising videos on social media from April to November. Tounes Lik was recognized as the most successful domestic tourism campaign in Tunisia ever.

Here are notable highlights:

- Reached over 14 million views on all Tounes Lik social media platforms
- Increased “Tounes Lik” following from 46K to 145K social media followers
- Generated high user engagement , with more than 200K “likes” across all the posts
- Inspired Tunisians to share their trips , with over 16K posts shared using the hashtags
- Increased awareness and revenue for local businesses by generating more year-round and high-spending visitors

The nationwide domestic tourism campaign “Tounes Lik” was implemented by USAID Visit Tunisia in partnership with the **National Tunisian Tourism Office (ONTT)** and the **Ministry of Tourism and Handcrafts (MOTH)** in collaboration with local influencers. It ran from April to November 2022. The featured experiences were also made possible thanks to several private sector businesses.

Tunisia, an Untapped Potential for Locals

Tunisia, a small country of 11 million people at the peak of North Africa, has immense tourism potential for any kind of tourist. With a diverse terrain that spans from desert to forest to sea, well-preserved relics from the Roman era, and year-round festivities that display a vibrant culture, Tunisia is a prime destination for cultural, historical, adventure travelers, and more.

However, many of Tunisia’s tourism offerings remain undiscovered, even by Tunisians. According to a Domestic Tourism Survey conducted by USAID Visit Tunisia in November 2021 with 1589 respondents across Tunisia, most of Tunisians are keen to travel locally rather than internationally – and when they do, they rarely stray from traditional coastal towns, such as Hammamet, Sousse, and Djerba.

- 30% of respondents traveled outside of their hometown only once in the past 3 years
- 81% of respondents prefer to travel locally rather than internationally
- 35% of respondents think the efforts to promote domestic tourism are not at all effective
- 80% of respondents get the information about the destination and offers from social media
- Nabeul, Sousse, Djerba, Tunis & Tabarka are the top favorite destinations Tunisians go to
- Djerba, Tozeur, Tabarka, Bizerte & Ain Draham are the top places Tunisians dream of visiting

Tounes Lik: 14 Bucket-list Destinations. Over 14 Million Views

Starting in April 2022, USAID Visit Tunisia supported the **National Tunisian Tourism Office (ONTT)** in releasing 14 high-quality tourism videos spotlighting high-potential tourism sites. These, unified, became the domestic tourism campaign, Tounes Lik (“Tunisia is Yours”). The objective was to inspire and motivate Tunisians to travel more and differently in their own country.

The campaign highlights Tunisia’s diverse tourism landscape – from the northern hinterland to the southern coast – with captivating videos released on social media produced by local influencers. This includes content on Tunisia’s traditional seaside getaways such as **Djerba**, but also, less-visited interior regions with untapped potential – such as **Kef, Zaghuan, and Kairouan**.

The videos went viral, helping the ONTT expand its online presence on Instagram, a fast-growing media channel in Tunisia, and massively multiply its following since USAID Visit Tunisia joined the campaign. The videos have cumulatively received more than 14 million views on Facebook and Instagram and reached all areas of Tunisia.

Top 3 bucket-list destinations: Djerba, Tozeur, and Tabarka

Djerba



“La douce” (the sweet), is a Tunisian island located in off the country’s southeast, and is the largest island in North Africa. From camel rides on dreamy beaches to sailing, Djerba has it all in terms of activities. Beyond classical ones, Djerba’s popularity is rising among active communities -its lagoon is a kitesurf playground. Authentic fishing experience is also possible thanks to local fishermen who share their ancestral know-how with eager visitors. Djerba’s name holds up - It is known for its sweetness of life. **Watch the full video.**

Tozeur



A city in southwest Tunisia, impresses its visitors by her traditional architecture and its offerings ranging from amazing guest houses and hotels to the most extreme activities, such as skydiving above the dunes of the desert. Walks in the palm groves are common and yet a must-do.

Watch the full video.

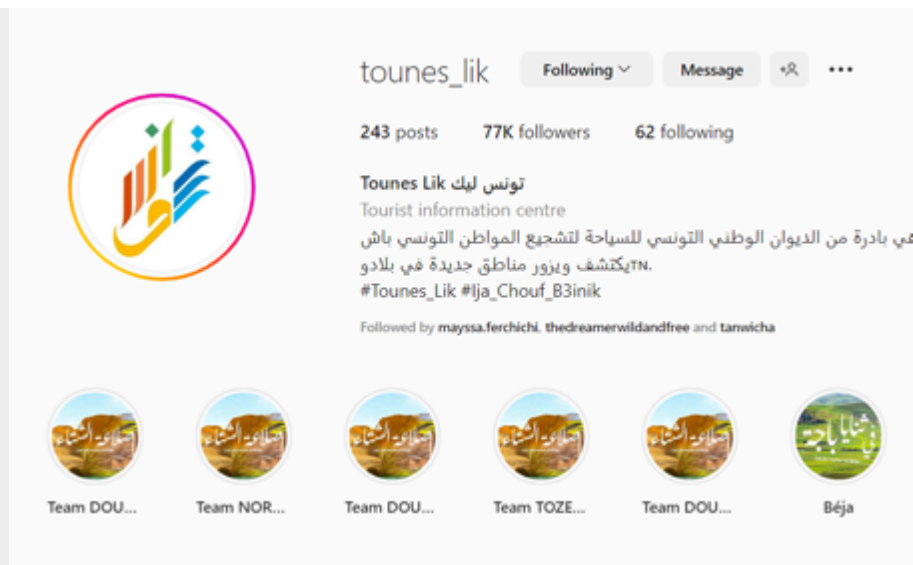
Tabarka



A coastal town located in north-western Tunisia, close to the border with Algeria, is the go-to destination to learn scuba diving and explore unique dive spots like the “grouper rock” and the “tunnels.” Camping in “Melloula,” a remote pebble beach, mountain biking, and going on a tour with a local fisherman are also one of Tabarka’s highlights. [Watch the full video.](#)

Increasing “Tounes Lik” following up to 145K

“Tounes Lik” following increased from 1K to 55K on Instagram and from 45K to 90K on Facebook (145K combined). The “Tounes Lik” campaign contributed to a massive increase of the number of followers/fans on the official social media platforms. The impact of this domestic campaign is unprecedented for the national tourism office (ONTT).

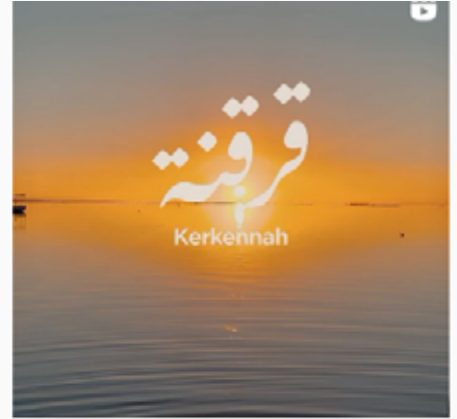
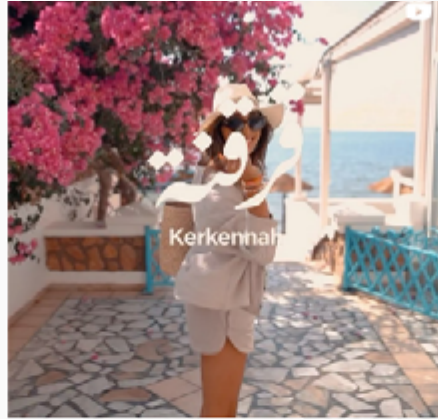


Tounes Lik’s following on **Instagram** increased from 1K in April to more than 55K followers in December 2022; whereas the **Facebook** fans jumped from 45K to 90k in only eight months.

Tounes Lik knew how to communicate with the target audience

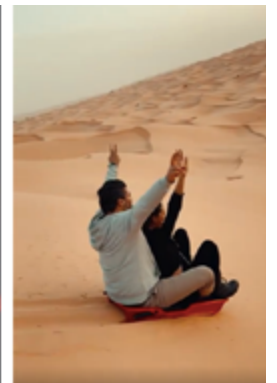
Local influencers were handpicked not only based on their ability to produce compelling content tailored for Tunisians, but also for what they represent and stand for. All created personable, relatable, and accessible content and brought voices and stories from the ground to their communities and wider audiences in the most authentic way.

Rabii Ben Brahim (aka “The Dreamer”) is an avid explorer and a precursor in the off-the beaten path travel. Manel Jouini (aka “Tanwicha”) shares her passion for food and Tunisian cuisine. Mayssa Ferchichi and Fatma Bououn Tunisian lifestyles. **Authenticity** led to Tounes Lik’s success, and increased awareness.



Douz

known as the “gateway to the Sahara”, is a village in southern Tunisia, located at the foot of the great dunes of the desert”. It’s the perfect disconnection. Wifi-free camps create memorable experiences, such as eating “sand bread”, and going on quad tours to play in the sand dunes. **Watch the full video.**



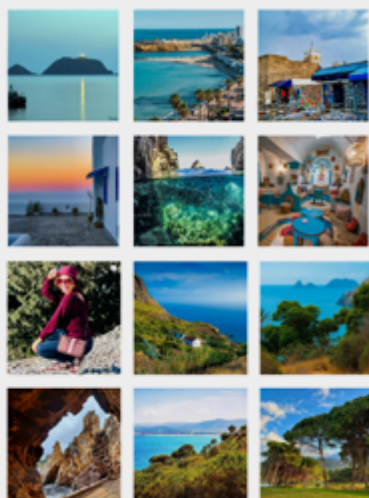
Engaging over 16K Tunisians who shared their travel experiences

Tunisian followers listened to the influencers and engaged with them, asking for more domestic trail recommendations. Notably, they listened to the influencers and booked their holidays based on their advice!

“Please keep showing us new places where we can have new experiences. Our homeland has unlimited beauty.”

-- wrote a user

From April to November, these destinations have become newfound adventure grounds for locals. The captivating videos have drawn a flood of positive engagement and feedback from local communities, excited to embark on new adventures. Over 16K Tunisians documented and shared their travels on Instagram under the **#touneslik** hashtag and through the **@touneslik** tag. From April to November, these destinations have become newfound adventure grounds for locals.



Tunisians dared to travel to their bucket-list destinations, such as Djerba, Tozeur, Tabarka, Bizerte, and Ain Draham. They also explored places off the beaten path, such as remote island La Galite. They also returned to some of their favorite destinations, such as Nabeul, Sousse, Djerba, Tunis, and Tabarka to explore more. Thousands of photos and videos about architectural wonders, underwater life, shipwrecks, and diverse Tunisian wonders have been shared.

“Our Tunisia is magnificent” is the most shared comment during “Tounes Lik” campaign, reinforcing the idea that Tunisians appreciate Tunisia’s offerings and are eager to go on adventures, family, and solo trips.

Tunisians continue to travel and share their experiences and tips by identifying “Tounes Lik” on social media even after the campaign’s end date in November. Their lasting excitement and renewed engagement are key indicators of the campaign’s success in creating a lasting positive effect.

Explore all the user generated content shared by engaged Tunisians [here](#) and [here](#)!



Thriving local businesses in underserved regions

The videos views led to an increase in visitation to the targeted sites. By rekindling enthusiasm for domestic travel, the campaign created an economic boom for local tourism enterprises and artisans hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic. Many featured businesses reported a significant increase in interest from people in their products and services, leading to increased revenue.

“After releasing the El Kef promotional video in Tunisia, many nature lovers contacted me to visit the region, which remains little publicized by the government. [...] With your support, we are advancing more quickly in our mission to enhance the potential of Kroumiria region and promote sustainable tourism. [...] We thank you for having gone beyond the classic image conveyed in the media. Your hard work turns into tangible benefits for the locals, our partners, small projects, and our company!”

— Jebli Wathik, owner of Dar El Ain, an eco-tour agency providing alternative and eco-tourism experiences in the Northwest of Tunisia.

El Kef



Situated 175km to the west of Tunis, incarnates well a “never-a-dull-moment” destination. It includes diverse activities, such as hiking, climbing, kayaking, biking, chasing waterfalls, tasting “Bozgen” - the traditional dish, encountering sheep, drinking spring water, and much more. **Watch the full video.**

“Our business has been flooded with bookings since we were featured in the Zaghoun video.”

— Farouk Zammouri, owner of Atyma Cycling, an outdoor adventures company in Zaghoun.

Zaghoun



Located 60km south of Tunis, is great for day trips, weekend getaways, and adventure activities, such as hiking, climbing, kayaking, and zip-lining. **Watch the full video.**

“Congratulations on your exceptional work, especially on the region of our impact: Tabarka, Ain Draham, and Melloula. We are impressed and believe you play a crucial role in achieving our vision towards sustainable and high-quality tourism in our country.”

— Jebli Wathik owner of Dar El Ain, an eco-tour agency providing alternative and eco-tourism experiences in the Northwest of Tunisia.

Bolstering Tunisia’s domestic tourism trend is leading USAID Visit Tunisia towards some of its key objectives to increase domestic tourism and promote brand awareness of the country as a diverse tourism hub for outdoor, adventure, nature, and historical and cultural activities.

In 2023, USAID Visit Tunisia will continue its mission to build a diverse, competitive, and resilient tourism sector in Tunisia by engaging Tunisians to explore their country and driving traffic to businesses from the private sector, which will accelerate the economic recovery and the growth of the emerging ones.

The nationwide domestic tourism campaign “Tounes Lik” was implemented by USAID Visit Tunisia in partnership with the National Tunisian Tourism Office (ONTT) and the Ministry of Tourism and Handcrafts (MOTH), in collaboration with local influencers Rabii Ben Brahim “The Dreamer”, Manel Jouini “Tanwicha”, Mayssa Ferchichi, and Fatma Bououn. This campaign is also made possible thanks to the contribution of businesses from the private sector.

Re-play all the Tounes Lik destinations’ videos on Facebook starting from the most watched:

Jalta (1.4M views. 4.6K likes. 343 comments)

Haouaria (1M views. 16K likes. 824 comments)

Bizerte (Tawicha) (1M views. 4.6K likes)

Bizerte (Mayssa Ferchichi) (725K views. 10K likes. 460 comments)

Nabeul (716K views. 169 likes)

Mahdia (580K views. 3.1K likes. 109 comments)

Kerkennah (550K views. 8.5K likes. 444 comments)

Djerba (489K views. 423 likes)

Tabarka (482K views. 1.7K likes)

Djerba (Tanwicha) (464K views. 83 likes)

El Kef (440K views. 3.1K likes)

Kairouan (421K views. 141 likes)

Tunis Medina (389K views. 38 likes)

Cap Bon (374K views. 1.5K likes)

Zaghouane (208K views. 1K likes)

Tozeur (62K views. 1.7K likes) **Douz** (6.5K views. 202 likes)

Douz (6.5K views. 202 likes)

PATHWAYS TO PROFESSIONALISM: 75 EMPOWERED PROFESSIONALS TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF HOTEL SERVICES IN TUNIS AND HAMMAMET



PHOTO: © HADHAMI YAHIA / USAID

57 department trainers and 18 coordinators from 15 hotels located in greater Tunis and Hammamet were gathered on November 18, 22, and 23 to enhance their industry-based qualifications and advance in their professional careers. The program will be extended to hotels in the Center and the South of Tunisia in February 2023. The program aims to train 2500 employees by the end of 2023 in order to improve the quality of hotel services in Tunisia.

Empowering hotels staff in greater Tunis and Hammamet to enhance qualifications

As the tourism sector recovers from COVID-19 pandemic and destinations return to business, there is a growing need for more qualified staff in hotels in Tunisia. While upgrading skills is a must to provide high-quality tourism experiences that meet the standards of excellence and quality in the hotel sector, hotels are struggling and experiencing a shortage of trained personnel from academic or training institutions. Finding alternative solutions is more crucial than ever to the tourism sector in the country. The Pathways to Professionalism program aspires to provide alternative solutions to overcome these challenges.



“Finding the right competent and qualified profiles is one of our greatest challenges. Pathways to Professionalism is a great opportunity to learn from an American expert, enhance skills and access tools and knowledge which will help improve the quality of our service and facilitate the implementation of the required quality standards. The trainer was exceptional.”

Racha Fadhlaoui, Quality Manager
at the Mouradi Africa hotel.

Pathways to Professionalism is a program designed for hotels in Tunisia and provides work-based training with an innovative approach for professionals in the hospitality sector. It aims to improve the quality of hotel services and employability in Tunisia by training 2,500 professionals by the end of 2023, including youth and women. Pathways to Professionalism is implemented by **USAID Visit Tunisia Activity** in cooperation with the **Agence de Formation dans les Métiers du Tourisme (AFMT)** and the **Fédération Tunisienne de l’Hôtellerie (FTH)**.

November 2022 marked the first implementation of the Pathways to Professionalism program in Tunis. Were trained and certified:

- **18 managers from human resources, learning and development services** of 15 hotels located in greater Tunis and Hammamet on November 18. They are responsible for implementing the program in their hotels and will act as “Coordinators” between several stakeholders: “Department Trainers”, the hotel’s General Manager, and USAID Visit Tunisia.
- **57 employees from the Housekeeping, Food and Beverage, and Food Production departments** on November 22 and 23. They will act as “Department Trainers”, taking the training forward and teaching staff in their departments to improve the quality of services in hotels in Tunisia.



“We will soon have several hotel openings, the most imminent is the Residence Douz. This training will help us recruit the profiles we are looking for in the Housekeeping, Food and Beverage, and Food Production departments for the upcoming openings.”

Henda Saidi, HR Manager
at the Residence Gammarth hotel.



PHOTO: © HADHAMI YAHIA / USAID

The certified Pathways to Professionalism Coordinators are managers from the following hotels: Movenpick Gammarth, Movenpick Lac 1, Novotel Lac 1, El Mouradi Africa, El Mouradi Gammarth, Belvedere Fourati, Barcelo Occidental Lac 1, Barcelo Concorde Lac 1, Novotel Tunis, Ibis Tunis, Dar El Marsa, The Residence Tunis, Golden Tulip Taj Sultan, Le Corail and the Sindbad; and from the Agence de la Formation dans les Métiers du Tourisme (AFMT).



“Even if we do not all face the same challenges and are not subject to the same industry standards, this is a great opportunity to meet, exchange ideas, and assess to what extent we are in line with international standards. I appreciate the fact that usually undervalued jobs such as housekeeping are put in the spotlight. The certification ceremony is a great idea and values these small and yet key professions in the hotel industry.”

Walid Melliti, HR Manager at the Novotel and Ibis Tunis.



Certified “Tutors” on November 23, 2022.

PHOTO: © HADHAMI YAHIA / USAID



“I want to motivate our collaborators and staff. By getting a certificate at the end of the training, they will feel valued. This is as important as improving skills. This training benefits both employer and employee.”

Olfa Meddeb, Human Resources Manager
at the Mövenpick Gammarth hotel.



“The demonstrations added a practical aspect to the training and helped us better understand the best methods to incorporate into our work. In my profession (housekeeping) for instance, we learn how to make the bed, how to clean the bathroom, and how to make the whole room guest-ready for the best visitor experience possible.”

Wided Saâdaoui, General Housekeeper,
Novotel Tunis Mohamed V.

The program focused on three key professions in the hotel industry: housekeeping, catering, and food production. Through an innovative and progressive training approach, learners benefited from work-based training and certification that will enable them to improve their skills and advance in their professional careers. Thanks to the program’s manuals and modules, the “Department Trainers” will train semi-qualified and qualified staff in these services to ensure they acquire international standards-based knowledge, skills and behaviors.



“We are emerging leaders and trainers in our departments. Thanks to this workshop, we will train efficiently our staff and apprentices so that everyone shares a common vision about tourism.”

Belabed Nawfel, Bar Manager, hôtel Mövenpick du Lac Tunis



What's next in early 2023?

33 hotels from Hammamet, Monastir, Sousse, Mahdia, Sfax and Tozeur will participate in Pathways to Professionalism in 2023. Over 120 “Coordinators” and “Department Trainers” of these hotels will be trained in two cohorts, in Sousse (February 1-17) and Sfax (February 21-23).



See more photos on our Facebook posts below!



OVER 450 TUNISIAN YOUTH AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES BRINGING AWARENESS TO SUSTAINABLE TOURISM IN KAIROUAN



USAID Visit Tunisia launched an environmentally focused public awareness campaign in Kairouan in mid-September 2022. A clean-up and a cultural treasure hunt in the medina brought over 450 children and people with disabilities together. The 4th and last edition of the treasure hunt took place on Sunday, November 20th where children and people with disabilities explored Kairouan's hidden treasure together in a fun and collaborative activity.

Shifting Tunisians' mindset toward more sustainable tourism in Kairouan

Kairouan, one of our six priority destinations, has a high level of cultural attractions and opportunities for sustainable tourism that are currently not being realized. In collaboration with key local stakeholders, USAID Visit Tunisia aimed at raising public awareness on the importance of adopting an environmentally conscious approach to tourism and its importance for Tunisia through engaging young children and local communities in Kairouan in fun and educational activities. The treasure hunt is one of them.

“Young people today don't know about their city and its origins. Kairouan is one of the most historically significant cities in the Middle East and Africa, but only a few students know its history. Very few young people know about historical figures who have made Tunisia what it is today. This project focused on memorable people who have greatly impacted our society. We wanted to inspire the students and show them that they can also be people who change our city, our minds, and our futures. And, if they learn about their heritage, they will also want to keep the city clean and beautiful for future generations.”

— Ghassen Kharrat, President of Jeune Chambre Internationale (JCI) —

Each Sunday between September and November 2022, kids from Kairouan aging from 8 to 12 years old, as well as visitors, followed a map of environmental and cultural clues to discover the medina and win prizes. The last treasure hunt included people with disabilities and was adapted to them so they could enjoy it to its fullest! All were very engaged and happy to participate in an activity to learn more about Kairouan’s hidden gems.



Personalities and characters playing historians or famous people from Kairouan storytelling their biography and presenting the game for the kids and people with disabilities.



By shedding light on the importance of tourism, we hope Tunisians will be more willing to support tourism development and reinforce positive behavior.

“The treasure hunt won “the activity of the year [2022] award for best national and international impact” JCI Tunisia, across all the JCI groups in the country.”

— Ghassen Kharrat, President of Jeune Chambre Internationale (JCI) —

The treasure hunt in the media spotlight

Both Visit Tunisia's clean-up and treasure hunt activities garnered wide media attention. They received coverage on regional radios, national television news, and digital outlets such as Radio/Tv Web Mega Kairouan, Tunisie.co, and Commissariat Régional au Tourisme de Kairouan, to name a few.



What's next in Kairouan?

USAID Visit Tunisia will continue to support Tunisia's tourism industry shift to a more sustainable approach by engaging the community - public and private sectors and civil society - to undertake a tree planting activity to beautify significant tourism sites in Kairouan. As part of the public awareness campaign, the upcoming tree planting activity is an important ecological activity to fight climate change, as trees help protect against heatwaves and floods in urban areas.

The treasure hunt activity is part of an awareness campaign in Kairouan made possible thanks to the support of our partners Jeunes Chambres International (JCI) Kairouan, Commissariat Régional au Tourisme de Kairouan, The Scouts Kairouan, Dar Allanni, We love Kairouan, Municipality of Kairouan, Office National du Tourisme Tunisien (ONTT).