



USAID
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Activity Newsletter | June 2022

Visit Tunisia



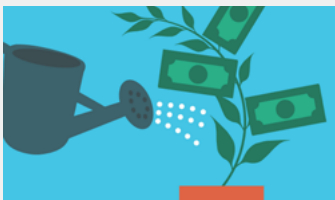
To our friends and supporters

Welcome to the June edition of the USAID Visit Tunisia newsletter! Our team has had another extremely productive month – please have a peek in to some of this month's stories. Earlier this month, our US-based team members arrived in Tunis to continue advancing our field work around the country, and revisit our work plan for the year ahead, as we mark the project's one-year anniversary. With deep experience in tourism, cultural heritage, marketing, finance, and private sector development, we have an exceptionally capable and passionate team committed to developing sustainable tourism across this wonderful country. We also had the pleasure of welcoming several new faces to the Visit Tunisia team, including Deputy Chief of Party Nicole Skarpness, who recently relocated to Tunis.

As our understanding of Tunisia's tourism sector continues to deepen thanks to stakeholder consultation and field work, we grow ever more committed to ensuring this inspiring industry flourishes. We hope you enjoy catching up on our updates! Talk to you next month.

Best wishes,
Leila Calnan
Chief of Party, USAID Visit Tunisia

USAID VISIT TUNISIA ACTIVITIES & NEWS



Helping Promising Tourism SMEs Secure Investment

With the project goal of mobilizing \$20 million of capital in the tourism sector, USAID Visit Tunisia is providing tailored support and investment facilitation for high-potential SMEs in the tourism sector. We have received more than 60 applications so far to work with us. [Learn more](#)



Domestic Tourism Campaign in High Gear as Summer Tourism Season Begins

Moving into Tunisia tourism's high season, we continue to support the #Weekend_Tunisia campaign, promoting diverse tourism destinations in Tunisia to local travelers seeking unique vacation getaways this summer. [Learn More](#)



Planning for Sustainable Tourism Growth in Underserved Regions

Within our six identified target areas, we are writing destination development plans to identify strategic investment priorities, explore public-private partnership opportunities, promote events, strengthen linkages with tourism service providers, and more! [Learn More](#)



Improving Tunisia's Tourism Infrastructure

In the coming year, USAID Visit Tunisia will work to develop and renovate key tourist sites in underserved regions, attracting more visitors to these less-trafficked areas, and bringing revenue and jobs to their communities. [Learn More](#)

HELPING PROMISING TOURISM SMEs SECURE INVESTMENT



VISIT TUNISIA

APPEL À MANIFESTATION

D'INTÉRÊT

INVESTISSEURS, SPONSORS

ET ENTREPRISES TOURISTIQUES

As part of its mission to facilitate investment in the tourism industry, USAID Visit Tunisia is providing tailored support and investment facilitation for high-potential enterprises, sponsors, and investors in the tourism sector.

At the end of April, USAID Visit Tunisia launched a call for expression of interest for an investment facilitation support program, with support from global investment firm CrossBoundary. We have since received more than 60 submissions, including from alternative accommodation providers, adventure tourism companies, cultural tourism companies, and hospitality suppliers.

Through this activity, USAID Visit Tunisia aims to mobilize at least \$20 million of capital in Tunisia's tourism sector. The program will assist beneficiaries throughout the entire investment process, including with preparing marketing documentation, financial models, market research, feasibility studies, investor matching, deal structuring, and more.



To spread the word about the investment opportunity throughout Tunisia, USAID Visit Tunisia promoted the program on its [social media platforms](#) and through interviews on national media, including popular radio stations Mosaique FM and [Express FM](#).

In an interview with Tunisian finance site [iBourse](#), Samia Kaddour Ghorbel – USAID Visit Tunisia technical advisor and head of CrossBoundary's Tunisia office – explained the USAID Visit Tunisia investment program and direct potential for partners of the project.

“By mobilizing private investment, the program aims to increase revenue from the sector, increase the number of tourists, but also generate sustainable jobs, particularly for women and youth,” Ghorbel said during the interview.

Potential applicants must submit expressions of interest through USAID Visit Tunisia's online portal. More detail on the program, eligibility criteria, and the application process can be found on the USAID Visit Tunisia [website](#).

DOMESTIC TOURISM CAMPAIGN IN HIGH GEAR AS SUMMER TOURISM SEASON BEGINS



USAID Visit Tunisia continued to support the rollout of the National Tourism Office's (ONTT's) #Weekend_Tunisia campaign, promoting diverse tourism destinations in Tunisia to local travelers who will be looking for unique vacation getaways this summer season.

The #Weekend_Tunisia campaign is part of the ONTT's Domestic Marketing Campaign – “Tounes Lik” -- designed to encourage local travelers to explore unique and undervisited tourism spots in Tunisia.

The campaign recently released promotional videos and social media posts on the coastal town of [Nabeul](#), known for its handmade pottery, and the north-eastern Cap Bon peninsula, known for its clear waters and fresh seafood.



A collection of ceramic pottery from Nabeul, Tunisia.

USAID Visit Tunisia worked with content creators [Tanwhicha](#) and [DreamerWildandFree](#) to put out this content, which many prospective travelers said had inspired them to venture to these destinations.

“You never cease to amaze,” wrote one user on Tounes Lik’s Facebook page. “Please keep showing us new places where we can have new experiences.”

“Wow, we have such an amazing country,” wrote another commenter on a video promoting Zaghouan. “Can you please share your contacts in Zaghouan so we can experience this too?”

So far, the #Weekend_Tunisia campaign has reached more than 2 million people on social media and secured tens of thousands of engaged followers. Since the campaign kicked off in April, the “Tounes Lik” Facebook page has seen its follower count jump by 37%, while its Instagram page has seen a 300% increase in followers.

The buzz is coming at the perfect time, as Tunisia plans for a big summer tourism season that will jumpstart the industry’s recovery after the COVID-19 pandemic. Domestic travelers should stay tuned for upcoming promotional content on regions such as Tabarka and Djerba.

An old fortress overlooks the Mediterranean Sea in Tunisia's Cap Bon region.



PLANNING FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM GROWTH IN UNDERSERVED REGIONS



USAID Visit Tunisia is working with Regional Tourism Offices (CRTs) and municipalities to create innovative development plans that will tap into their regions' unique tourism potential.

In May and early June, USAID Visit Tunisia conducted in depth research on four of our priority tourism destinations – Tataouine, Kairouan, Tabarka/Ain Drahim, and Tozeur – and began drafting Destination Development Plans (DDPs) for these regions. As part of this process, Visit Tunisia's partner engagement specialists held some 40 meetings and site visits in these underserved areas, and collected data on each region's tourism capacity, visitor numbers, visitor profiles, and main attractions/tourism itineraries. This information built on insight from [DDP roundtables](#) we held with public and private stakeholders earlier this year.

Each of USAID Visit Tunisia's priority tourism regions has tremendous tourism appeal. In the southern regions of Tataouine and Tozeur, visitors can find original Star Wars sites at the edge of the Sahara desert; in the central town of Kairouan, tourists can peruse an ancient, UNESCO-recognized medina with exquisite artisan handicrafts; and in the north-western town of Ain Drahim, nature-lovers can explore lush green forests that host a rich ecosystem of wild flora and fauna.



Tourism stakeholders in Jendouba participate in a DDP roundtable organized by USAID Visit Tunisia in February 2022.



A Star Wars-themed hotel in Matmata, where scenes from the movie series were filmed.

USAID Visit Tunisia's destination development planning support will help these regions capitalize on these diverse offerings by identifying strategic investment priorities, exploring public-private partnership opportunities, defining existing and new events to promote, strengthening linkages with tourism service providers, and improving development coordination and communication between local and central governments.

By mid-July, USAID Visit Tunisia will share the draft DDPs with local stakeholders, including CRTs, municipalities, and tourism federations and associations, for further input. After incorporating their feedback, the project will present the final DDPs at a roundtable in September.

This support will help the project reach its objectives of increasing overnight stays in underserved regions, increasing average tourism expenditure, and growing sustainable revenues and jobs for the sector.



IMPROVING TUNISIA'S TOURISM INFRASTRUCTURE

In the coming year, USAID Visit Tunisia will work to develop and renovate key tourist sites in underserved regions, attracting more visitors to these less-trafficked areas and bringing much-needed revenue and jobs to their communities.

As part of this effort, USAID Visit Tunisia [invited](#) construction firms to complete a pre-qualification process for these projects. Pre-qualified firms will be invited to submit proposals and provide construction services for selected infrastructure projects.

Selected firms will work on small- or medium-scale construction/infrastructure projects in our six priority tourism destinations – Tabarka, Kairouan, Nefta-Tozeur, Douz, Tataouine, and Matmata/Gabes. Projects may include improving or developing tourist paths and signage, ticket kiosks, visitor centers, or areas for local vendors to sell goods.

Tunisia's underserved, interior regions have many high-potential tourism sites and attractions, including age-old archeological relics, historical and cultural museums, and protected national parks. Improving these sites' facilities, access, and resources will enhance visitors' experience, draw new tourists, and drive more business for local artisans and businesses.

USAID Visit Tunisia is currently only considering potential infrastructure projects owned by municipalities.

Construction firms interested in supporting this activity must submit a prequalification response by email to procurement@visittunisiaproject.org. See more details on requirements and the prequalification process [here](#).