



Coverphoto: from the Jordan Trail Association.

**NEWSLETTER**

July 2016

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# INTRODUCTION

It's a busy summer this year with plenty of activities on offer for Jordanians and visitors alike, including a number of concerts by local, Arab and international artists at the Citadel Festival and others. Jordan's first shopping festival is taking place! It was launched on 15th July and continues until 15th August with discounts and promotions at hundreds of shops in Amman. A handicraft market is being organized as part of the festival, which will bring together artisans and handicraft producers in a weeklong market in Jabal Weibdeh. The Housing Bank for Trade and Finance launched its specialized tourism loan product today, which aims to boost credit to small, medium and large-sized tourism businesses. Inbound tour operators explored the beautiful Jordan Trail this month as part of efforts to help promote it, and the Jordan Tourism Board is working on its marketing strategy for the next three years.

## JORDAN'S FIRST SHOPPING FESTIVAL IS TAKING PLACE THIS SUMMER

The Jordan Shopping Festival 2016 is taking place between 15th July and 15th August, with hundreds of shops offering discounts and promotions. It is organized by the Amman Chamber of Commerce with the purpose of increasing visitors to Amman and other parts of Jordan and increase spending. The USAID Building Economic Sustainability through Tourism Project (BEST) is supporting this event to capitalize on the tourism potential of the festival. BEST is helping promote the festival and organize a local handicraft market that will give artisans from around Jordan the opportunity to showcase their products and increase sales, and other support. A flyer was developed to promote the shopping destinations and highlight destinations and activities around the Kingdom to encourage visits outside Amman.



### JORDAN HANDICRAFT MARKET

5<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> August  
12am to 12pm daily

At the Jordan National Gallery of Fine Arts Park,  
Jabal Weibdeh



The Jordan Handicraft Market runs from 5th to 12th August at the National Gallery of Fine Arts Park in Jabal Weibdeh. The market is organized by the Jordan Handicraft Producers Association and USAID BEST, with support from the Greater Amman Municipality and the Amman Chamber of Commerce. It is an activity of the Jordan Shopping Festival and brings together handicraft producers and artisans from around the country to showcase and sell their wares at this weeklong market. Products include ceramic art and pottery, mosaics, embroidery, jewelry, home-made preserves, and more. There will be interactive and creative activities for kids, including painting pottery, sand bottle art, and more. Food and beverages will also be available at the market.

Visit the [Jordan Shopping Festival Facebook page](#) to keep abreast of promotions and activities.

[www.jordanshoppingfestival.com](http://www.jordanshoppingfestival.com)



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## HOUSING BANK LAUNCHES NEW TOURISM LOAN PRODUCT IN PARTNERSHIP WITH USAID BEST

The Housing Bank launched a new loan product today that is specifically geared towards tourism businesses. This initiative is part of efforts supported by the USAID Building Economic Sustainability through Tourism (BEST) project to boost access to credit for small and medium-sized tourism enterprises, particularly outside of Amman. Tourism is an important contributor to Jordan's economy, generating income and jobs throughout the country. The new specialized Housing Bank loan product offers an incentive for Jordanians to build, expand and enhance their tourism businesses.

These tourism loans offer financing for small and medium, as well as large, tourism-related enterprises and companies in the Kingdom. The USAID BEST project will be providing technical assistance to the tourism entrepreneurs and businesses taking out these loans, helping them to prepare effective loan applications and enhancing their financial and business management capacities for greater competitiveness and more efficient operations. In addition, greater awareness of the potential that tourism projects and businesses hold will be instilled among bank employees in order to ensure accurate and balanced assessments and improve their willingness to provide tourism loans. [Read more.](#)

## TOUR OPERATORS HIKE THE JORDAN TRAIL



Jordanian inbound tour operators took part in a FAM trip along the Jordan Trail at the end of July, to experience part of what this wonderful trail has to offer in both stunning natural landscapes and hiking paths, as well as local hospitality and culture. The trip was organized by the Jordan Trail Association, with USAID BEST support, in collaboration with the Jordan Inbound Tour Operators Association. The group hiked part of the section between Beit Idis and Rasoun, passing through the beautiful Zubia Forest. Local community members hosted the group at their homes, where they enjoyed traditional home-cooked meals, which is a key part of the Jordan Trail as visitors are encouraged to interact with and learn about the communities who can in turn benefit directly from tourism. [Read more.](#)





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## A NEW MARKETING STRATEGY FOR JORDAN



A Jordan Tourism Board strategic retreat took place on 30<sup>th</sup> July to develop the framework for JTB 2017-2019 marketing strategy. This strategy identifies the strategic objectives for marketing Jordan as a tourism destination, in addition to outlining the lines of business, go-to-market approach/business model, and defining measures of success for the upcoming three years.

The event was opened by H.E. Lina Annab, Minister of Tourism and Antiquities, who highlighted the importance of tourism for Jordan and the need for marketing to attract visitors, *"Our role goes beyond bringing people to Jordan. Our ultimate role lies in the fact that tourists mean jobs, and at the end of the day our goal is to contribute to the economic development of Jordan. Marketing happens to be a key factor in increasing the number of tourists to Jordan."*

Dr. Abed Al Razzaq Arabiyat, JTB Managing Director, highlighted JTB's achievements for last year, including launching major direct-to-consumer campaigns in traditional markets, undertaking its largest ever major market research study, establishing new partnerships with airlines, and entering new markets. This work has been aided by incremental investment from the Government of Jordan as well as many partners. For the way forward with the new strategy, he said, *"We know that many of our competitors can outspend us. We believe our best opportunity lies in innovation."*

The framework developed has set the direction for JTB's new multiyear strategy, and this will be drafted over the next period with input from industry stakeholders.

USAID BEST is supporting this important marketing effort, bringing in a number of marketing experts to contribute to the discussion. These included Greg Klassen, Principal, Twenty31, Vancouver, Canada who advises senior leadership teams on competitive destination marketing strategies, brand positioning and investment opportunities. He is a renowned thought leader on disruption in destination marketing and the links between travel and tourism and economic development. Mr. Klassen reassured attendees about the business of tourism, saying *"Since the times of Marco Polo, 2012 was the first year in which the number of international travelers exceeded 1 Billion. In 2031- just 15 years from now-- this number will reach two billion. If you are in the business of tourism, you are in the right business."*

Other experts included Tess Longfield, Director Longfield PR, an international PR consultancy offering strategic communications for consumer brands and specializes in the travel and tourism industry. Previously, Tess was Head of International Destination PR for VisitBritain based in London. And Damian Cook, CEO E-Tourism Frontiers, Kenya, a global program to develop online tourism in emerging markets around the world. According to Mr. Cook, technology is important to the tourism sector, *"I have spent much of my life travelling and have seen the increasing use of technology as a tool to promote, communicate and creatively express the experience of travel. I developed E-tourism Frontiers to encourage the best and most effective use of technology in the world's most dynamic and experience-rich destinations."*



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## THE CITADEL FESTIVAL IS COMING UP



USAID BEST is supporting the Friends of Jordan Festivals Company in the revival of the Citadel Festival 2016. The Amman Citadel Festival hosts and promotes arts and cultural activities and performances. This year, the festival will feature a number of Arab, regional and international performers, amongst which are Yanni and Marcel Khalifeh. Friends of Jordan Festivals events have increased domestic and international tourism in Jordan, and also encouraged a variety of business partnerships worldwide, which contributes to boosting Jordan's economy and developing its service sectors.

## HIGHLIGHTS

- In the news: **JTB used Pokémon mania to promote tourist attractions**
- The **Jarash Festival 2016** is on, hosting regional and international performances.

## UPCOMING *Events*

Aug 5 – 12	Jordan Handicraft Market
August 11	Enrique Iglesias Live in Amman
August 14	Launch of Pathways to Professionalism scheme at 20 hotels
August 21	Opening of InterContinental Hotels Group Hospitality Training Academy at the Dead Sea