



Developing As-Salt into a *distinctive destination* that offers compelling and engaging experiences

With USAID BEST support
2017 to 2019

In December 2016, As-Salt was designated Jordan's first Distinctive Destination. The announcement was the culmination of months of work by five competing destinations - Ajloun, Jarash, Karak and Madaba in addition to As-Salt, to identify their tourism strengths and propose areas of development.

As the winning destination, As-Salt receives Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities (MoTA) and USAID BEST support for comprehensive tourism development that will have a positive impact on the town through implementation of its tourism strategy. This includes technical support to small and medium tourism enterprises and destination marketing support.

Partners in developing As-Salt's tourism offerings

- Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities
- Municipality of As-Salt
- Salt Development Corporation (SDC)
- USAID BEST

As-Salt is primarily known for the Ottoman-era architecture of the yellow sandstone homes and buildings that adorn its hills. Its quaint streets, stairways and alleyways wind through the city center, with tall minarets, churches and long-arched windows. As-Salt was a key trading center at the turn of the 19th century and boomed in the early 20th century. Yet its history goes further back, as revealed by relics that include Roman tombs and an Ayyubid fortress.

What developments are taking place in As-Salt?

Work began in 2017 and over the subsequent couple of years, the following developments are taking place in As-Salt with support from USAID BEST:

1. Tourism destination plan

A comprehensive development approach to As-Salt addresses organizational, urban design, heritage conservation and business development elements. The plan was developed based on the city's nomination file for the DDP competition and is being verified with the local community.

2. Tourism Enterprise Development Program (EDP)

The EDP offers a package of training, grant funding, technical support and improved access to finance to tourism businesses and entrepreneurs in As-Salt to spur tourism activity and enrich the visitor experience through new and improved services, facilities and products. EDP is funded through a USAID BEST grant to SDC and BEST is providing support to build SDC's capacity to manage tourism activities in As-Salt and providing technical support throughout. SDC's role will help catalyze tourism development in As-Salt to attract visitors and create local job opportunities.



3. Direct support to tourism SMEs

Small and medium-sized tourism enterprises in As-Salt can receive direct funding and technical support from USAID BEST to enhance existing products and services and introduce new ones.

4. Enhancing city trails

As-Salt's two main walking trails (the Harmony Trail and the As-Salt City Trail) will be enhanced through guide training, storytelling, wider interpretation, etc. for a more enriching experience. BEST is developing an As-Salt tourist map, including main points of interest and trails.

Grants focus on the following:

- Food and beverage
- Souvenir & craft production, retail
- Traditional professions and skills
- Accommodation
- Tourism activities (day and evening, festivals, markets, exhibitions, etc.)
- Adventure and rural experiences
- Support services (travel packaging, transportation)

5. Awareness

An awareness campaign will be implemented to make residents more aware of tourism needs and benefits and address cleanliness within the city.

6. Building capacity and elevating standards

Skills training will be provided for grantees and beneficiaries to elevate standards and build local capacities in a range of areas, including running tourism businesses, financial skills, food safety, customer service, language, digital marketing, etc.

7. Distinctive Destination brand and As-Salt sub-brand

A brand is being developed for the Distinctive Destinations Program and will feature sub-brands for each destination, the first of which is As-Salt.

8. Supporting Destination Marketing for As-Salt

As-Salt Development Corporation is being supported to manage tourism experiences, oversee quality and develop and implement a marketing plan to promote As-Salt as a destination. SDC will streamline development efforts, support local tourism development and market the destination in coordination with stakeholders.