



## Jordan Trail Association strides towards self-reliance

With USAID BEST Support  
2016-2019

The Jordan Trail was founded by a group of hiking enthusiasts and in 2016 the Jordan Trail Association (JTA) was established to manage and maintain it. The JTA is guided by a voluntary elected board and has been developing with generous contributions from local companies and individuals and the extensive work of volunteers that share the love for Jordan's outdoors.

### How is USAID BEST supporting JTA?

USAID BEST provided support to JTA from the onset, helping the association in its set-up phase and working to build its capacity to oversee the trail and attract visitors to experience the unique and engaging adventures it can offer.

In 2016 USAID BEST provided a yearlong grant to ensure sustainability of the association and help efforts to develop and promote the trail, and in 2018 a second grant was awarded to continue support to this important national tourism experience.

USAID BEST also helped JTA map and way-mark sections of the trail, build the capacity of local escorts and businesses along the trail, and market it in Jordan and around the world. Support has enabled key income-generating and promotional hikes, including First2Finish, the Jordan Trail Run and two annual Jordan Trail thru-hikes.

### About the Trail

The Jordan Trail spans 650 kilometers of beautiful hiking through Jordan's diverse terrains and landscapes.

From Um Qais in the north to Aqaba in the south, ending at the Red Sea.

It winds past forests, mountains, deserts and canyons, through 52 villages.

The Jordan Trail is a national tourism product that has been mapped and developed for and by the people of Jordan.



### How is JTA becoming self-reliant?

Throughout the two years of USAID BEST support, the Jordan Trail Association became increasingly self-reliant in implementing events and maintaining the trail.

Following extensive guidance and support from USAID BEST for the first thru-hike and other activities, JTA implemented the Jordan Trail Thru-hike 2018 on their own, which attracted around 550 participants, triple those of the previous year's hike.

### What have been the results?

By July 2018  
**160 families**  
and  
**30 service providers**  
were benefitting  
from the  
development of the  
Jordan Trail

Events such as the thru-hikes promote the Jordan Trail, raise funds for the association and create financial opportunities for the people living in the 52 villages and communities along the trail.

Additionally, the huge global publicity that Jordan Trail managed to gain helped in strengthening Jordan's position as an attractive adventure destination. In May 2018, the Jordan Trail Association received the King Abdullah II Ibin Al Hussein Decoration for Excellence, one of the highest decorations in Jordan, as well as the International Institute for Peace through Tourism Award at the Resilience through Tourism Summit 2018. This year, the National Geographic also chose the Jordan Trail as one of 21 "Best of the World" destinations for 2018.