



PROJECT BRIEF



The Phoenicians' Route Cultural Tourism Programme

- **WHAT:** Develop and promote signature cultural tourism itineraries along the historical route of the Phoenicians
- **WHERE:** Mediterranean region
- **WHO:** Ministry of Tourism of Lebanon, Council of Europe, World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) and other partners
- **DURATION:** 24 Months
- **BUDGET:** 300,000 EUR

RATIONALE

The Phoenicians' Route is the network of the great nautical courses which they used since the twelfth century B.C. as their main trade and cultural lines of communication in the Mediterranean Sea. These routes became an integral and basic part of the Mediterranean culture.

The potential to harness the culture and heritage inherited from the Phoenicians is undisputed as the built and natural assets provide a wealth of ingredients to create a suit of visitor experiences that can attract and engage a variety of markets and consumer segments. The maritime stories of discovery, trading and innovation can position the region as an iconic destination and one that can present a new proposition for all participating partners.

The development of a cultural tourism programme of visitor itineraries along the historical route of the Phoenicians can open up immense opportunities for economic growth and inclusive development, by creating employment, enhancing business opportunities and revitalizing local communities and destinations, while at the same time raising awareness of a remarkable cultural heritage and promoting the values of cultural pluralism, tolerance, dialogue and solidarity, as key instruments to strengthen peace and security.

AIMS

The programme aims at developing a collaborative platform that would deliver immediate and long-term socio-economic impacts in the region by leveraging existing knowledge and expertise to support communities, using existing assets and infrastructure, mobilizing public and private sector influencers to realize a profitable future that protects and builds on the heritage of the Phoenicians, engages all citizens and visitors, creates jobs and fosters creativity and innovation.

MAIN ACTIVITIES

- **Cultural tourism itineraries:** Select, develop and promote three pilot cultural tourism itineraries along the Phoenicians' Route, in the light of the results of a comprehensive route analysis, including mapping of sites, assets, infrastructure and services, as well as market research, communication and awareness building.
- **Stakeholders engagement and capacity building:** Organize workshops and training courses for tour operators and local communities in participating destinations and further commitment will be sought to enhance the quality of visitor experiences
- **Travel facilitation:** Work on simplifying the process of obtaining visas to countries that form part of the Phoenicians' Route Cultural Tourism Programme, and providing differentiated treatment to facilitate tourist travel and transportation.
- **Marketing and promotion:** Develop a marketing and communication plan based on the routes' brand vision and proposition, supported with specific promotional campaigns and a website designed to build on the existing platform and content and maximize the opportunity to share resources and expertise.

OUTCOMES

- Iconic visitor itineraries and signature experiences are developed and promoted along the historical routes of the Phoenicians.
- A network of practitioners, as well as destination and community ambassadors is developed and guidelines and recommended practices are shared among the programme's partners.
- The common heritage (both tangible and intangible) inherited from the Phoenicians' civilization is protected and valued.
- Tangible socio-economic benefits (particularly investment, business and employment opportunities, support to local culture products and traditions) are brought to local communities, through sustainable tourism development.
- The values of cross-cultural dialogue, understanding and solidarity are promoted across the Mediterranean region, thus strengthening peace and security in the region.

BACKGROUND

The Phoenicians' Cultural Route was incorporated into the programme of Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe in 2003 as an international route crossing three continents, 18 Mediterranean countries and more than 80 towns of Phoenician – Punic origin and culture.

An ad-hoc Working Group comprising public and private sector stakeholders and international organizations, met twice in January and May 2016 to develop a roadmap and action plan for the implementation of the Phoenicians' Route Cultural Tourism Programme.

The programme's roadmap and action plan is available upon request to oftc@unwto.org.