

## PROJECT SUMMARY

**Project title:** SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN AL-GHAB/ RURAL TOURISM DEVELOPMENT PLAN (PART I AND II)

**Country:** SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC

**Region:** MIDDLE EAST

**Current status:**  Ongoing  Concluded

**Duration (est.)/dates:** November 2011 – February 2012

**Category:**  Tech. Cooperation  MDG-F

**Partner entities:** Government of Syria – Al Ghab Development Commission

**Main project objectives:**

In 2001, the Government of Syria decided to develop Al-Ghab region as a Special Economic Zone and, in 2007, the United Nations decided to support the Government in this initiative with the overarching objective of improving the livelihood of the Al-Ghab population through the development of agriculture, agro-industry, tourism, free trade and the preservation of environmental services. With specific regard to the strategic area of tourism, the objective was to undertake a comprehensive assessment of the tourism sector in the Al-Ghab region, providing key insights and data on the sector for suitable policy development and investments in the sector, including support services development, institutional strengthening and capacity building.

**Project focus** (Choose all applicable):

- Policy Planning & Economic Development**
  - Tourism Policy/Master Plans & Strategic Development Plans
  - Legislation & Regulation
  - Physical Planning/Infrastructure/Resort Development
  - Institutional Strengthening & Public-Private Partnerships
  - Economic Impact/Value Chain Analysis & Local Development
- Human Resource Development**
  - Manpower Planning
  - Capacity Building Programmes/Hospitality Skills & Tourism Business Development
- Statistics**
  - Statistical Strengthening
  - Development of Tourism Satellite Account (TSA)
- Quality Standards**
  - Hotel Classification
  - Destination Quality Performance
- Product Development, Marketing and Promotion**
  - Marketing & Promotion Planning
  - Product Development & Diversification

**Main project outputs/deliverables:**

UNWTO carried out a two month mission in April 2011 to Syria to draft the tourism component of the 15-year integrated development strategy for Al Ghab with a 5-year action plan. This included a situation analysis assessing the current tourism sector of Syria and the potential for tourism development in Al Ghab. A number of project proposals were also formulated representing the priority areas for the long term development of tourism in Al Ghab. The selected areas include marketing and promotion, development of a legal framework, product development, tourism awareness and a sustainable tourism development plan. The proposals comprised strategic orientations to achieve sustainable tourism development and identified the resources required for the development of the tourism sector. Workshops were held in March and June 2011 with the main participating UN agencies (UNDP, FAO, UNIDO, UNWTO and ITC), national Government partners including the Ministry of Tourism and Al Ghab authorities to integrate the programme's main pillars (Agriculture, Agro-Industry, Environment and Tourism) into the final Al Ghab Development Strategy. UNWTO presented the tourism pillar and the proposed strategy for developing tourism, which focuses on infrastructure and product development, legal and investment environment, capacity building and marketing. A workshop was organised in February 2012 to present the Comprehensive Operational Strategy (COS) to the project's stakeholders and national experts. The COS combines the main pillars into one integrated strategy for harnessing the region's natural, cultural and historical assets for its economic and social development.