

| <b>Ajloun Castle - Lodge and Visitor Center</b>  |                               |                         |
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| <b>Sector:</b> Tourism   | <b>Project Value:</b> 20M JDM | <b>Location:</b> Ajloun |
| <p><b>Potential Opportunity</b></p> <p>Castle of Ajloun or Qalaat Errabadh (Arabic for "Hilltop Castle" was built by Muslims in 1184-85 as a military fort and buffer to protect the region from invading Crusader forces. It was built on the orders of the local governor, Ezz Eddin Osama bin Munqethe, a nephew of the Ayyubid leader Salahuddin Al-Ayyoubi (Saladin), as a direct retort to the new Latin castle of Belvoir (Kawkab El-Hawa) on the opposite side of the valley between the Tiberias and Besan, and as a base to develop and control the iron mines of Ajloun.</p> <p>Visitation is estimated to be around 110,000 persons per year, which given its features, should be viewed as a dismal performance. Commercial visitor services on the site are almost non-existent and are certainly inconsistent. As a result, visitation to the site and time spent on site is kept to an absolute minimum.</p> <p>Today the site is not performing close to its potential:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poorly maintained and operated Visitor Services</li> <li>• Limited and poor retailing</li> <li>• Poorly presented Interpretation</li> <li>• Limited restaurant services</li> <li>• Ineffective use of site resources</li> <li>• Ineffective use of environs</li> </ul> <p>The Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities retains the right to operate commercial visitor services on the site itself. Thus far the government has proven ineffective at operating commercial visitor services on the site and is failing in interpretation and other basic services. Site revenue is largely a function of ticket sales (over 95%) and no revenue diversification is taking place. The opportunity exists to negotiate an exclusive multi-year concession agreement to construct lodge-type accommodations and deliver a full array of commercial visitor services on the hilltop crusader castle site.</p> |                               |                         |
| <p><b>I. Description of the Business</b></p> <p>Operation of all commercial visitor services on the site, including the building and operation of lodge-styled accommodations (off-site) and leases for several small restaurants / cafes and an events venue (within the castle grounds near the promontory itself).</p> <p>The services include a basic array of interpretation services, interpretative displays, retailing of Jordan-produced merchandise, entertainment and the staging of regular thematic events for local, regional and international tourists.</p> <p>Revenue enhancing services including the renting of appropriate portions of the castle for special events can be incorporated into the business plan. The Ajloun Castle should be operated as a showpiece and focal point for several types of thematic tours – crusader, religious, and cultural-heritage. The area should also serve as an alternative summering location point for GCC residents.</p>  |                               |                         |