



TOURISM IN GILBOA – JENIN

Cooperation: general background information

The Gilboa Regional Council

The Gilboa Regional Council is situated in the north of Israel, and comprises 33 settlements (villages and townships). The population comprises 40% Arabs and 60% Jews, who earn their livings mainly from industry, agriculture, commerce and services. The Gilboa Regional Council is a model of co-existence between Jews and Arabs in all realms of life, a model based on the concept of complete equality for all residents of the region. This model has proved successful and has gained the full cooperation of the varied population.

The Jenin District

The Jenin District is part of the Palestinian Authority. The district is situated in the north of the Samarian Hills and borders on the Gilboa Regional Council. The population comprises 260,000 residents in 80 different communities. Jenin, the capital city has 50,000 residents. The economy is based mainly on agriculture, commerce and services.

Cooperation

From the place where co-existence between Jews and Arabs exists in practice, cooperation between Jenin in the Palestinian Authority and the Gilboa Regional Council has developed over the last few years, under the leadership of Dani Atar, Gilboa, and Qadoura Mousa, the Governor of Jenin.

This cooperation is based on the mutual understanding that direct communication, a continuous relationship and the safeguarding of both sides' interests leads to the creation of a vision and shared goals, which assist in creating an atmosphere of safety, stability and economic development of the whole area. The geographic location, at the triangle of borders: Israel, Jordan and the Palestinian Authority and the proximity to the port at Haifa, create a business opportunity which may enable extensive economic development.

The cooperation between Gilboa and Jenin is supported by European Union countries, the USA and others. Recently, Tony Blair, past Prime Minister of Britain, and the Quartet representative to the Middle East, visited the area, as did General James Jones, National Security Advisor of the President of the United States, and the Foreign Minister of Spain, the present President of the European Union, Mr. Miguel Moratinos, who is personally involved in this activity and supports it.





The Gilboa – Jenin Tourism project

Vision:

The Gilboa – Jenin area will be a main tourist attraction in the north of Israel and the Palestinian Authority territory in order to develop employment opportunities and the economy of the area.

Aim:

To develop a variety of routes and sites in the Gilboa – Jenin area.

Objectives:

- ✓ To prepare tourist programs at local sites.
- ✓ To develop a marketing and distribution network.
- ✓ To train tour guides and provide visitors' centers.
- ✓ To develop short-term and medium-term tourist routes.
- ✓ To develop tourist sites and prepare them to receive tourists.
- ✓ To develop a variety of services required for tourists passing through or staying in the area.

The idea of joint tourism

The Gilboa – Jenin area includes many different focal points which could draw different kinds of visitors. The area is comprised of many panoramic views and nature sites, historical sites from ancient times and places holy to Christianity, Islam and Judaism.

The Gilboa – Jenin tourist project aims to bring tourists from all over the world to see the beauty of the area, to assist in developing and promoting economic opportunities, to experience the unique features of the area, and to show the world a unique model which proves that combined efforts, integrated interests, initiatives and joint projects truly enable co-existence in peace between Palestinians and Israelis.

The joint tourism program:

The joint tourism program includes group visits to historical sites, sites which are holy to the three monotheistic religions and unique panoramic and nature sites for lengths of time ranging from a few hours to a stay of a few days in Gilboa and Jenin.

Historical, archeological and other research and study groups may wish to prolong their stay in the region.

Local sites include Mount Gilboa, with historical features from the Biblical period, Ma'ayan Harod (Harod Spring) at the foot of Mount Gilboa, and Gideon's cave, where Gideon chose 300 best warriors to go to battle with him. (Judges 6 - 8). A tour of Christian holy sites would include places where Jesus visited, such as Mount Precipice in Nazareth and the baptismal site in the Jordan River adjoining the Sea of Galilee. Other unique attractions are the Bahai Gardens in Haifa, the Old City of Safed, the Old City of Acre and others.





In Jenin, tourists may visit the special, lively market in the city centre and enjoy the delicacies of the local traditional restaurants. A point of interest is Saint George's Church, at Burqin, the fourth oldest church in the world. According to tradition, Jesus stopped there on his way to Jerusalem and healed ten lepers with a touch of his hand. (Luke 17: 11-19). Tourists also have the opportunity to visit a traditional olive press, to see how top quality olive oil is made, and to visit Joseph's pit in the Dotan valley, where the Children of Israel threw their brother Joseph. (Genesis 30: 22 – 24). Tourists may also choose to stay at the holiday resort.

The target audience

The Gilboa – Jenin Tourist Program target audiences have a number of main characteristics:

- ✚ Co-existence supporters world-wide who are interested in improving and developing the economy and employment opportunities in areas of conflict. They choose to show their support not by donations, but by physically coming to the area, getting to know the local people and their characteristics, to stay there and to shop there.
- ✚ Groups of tourists who are interested in visiting the historical and holy places in the Gilboa – Jenin area.
- ✚ Study groups of students from all over the world, who may choose to come for a longer time, in order to learn about the Israeli – Palestinian conflict and to study new archeological and historical sites.





Work program according to objectives:

To prepare tourist programs at local sites:

In some of the tourist sites in the Gilboa area and also in the Jenin area, there is no written material of an appropriate level for tourists, explaining the meaning and the uniqueness of the sites. We need to identify the relevant sites, prepare maps and diagrams in addition to written explanations in appropriate languages for the tourists.

To develop a marketing and distribution network:

We must be in contact with a tourist company through which we can market and distribute information about tourist opportunities in the Gilboa – Jenin area. A campaign must be directed at target countries, via tourist companies and tourism exhibitions in order to expose the opportunities we are offering to the target countries. An internet site with all the necessary information a tourist requires to enable him to join a tour must be built. The existing cooperation between Gilboa and Jenin and their leadership needs to be publicized to policy makers in the target countries and utilize them to encourage tourist agencies and tourists to come and visit the area.

To train tour guides and visitors' centers:

It would be appropriate to guide tourists through the Gilboa – Jenin area professionally. An authentic and realistic form of guidance could be created if the guide's personal experiences are closely connected to the subject he is explaining. In order to train large groups of Jewish and Arabic tour guides, well versed in the sites they will be visiting, they will need to receive professional training at one of the official tour guide institutes. In order to preserve the information and make it available for guests, we need to operate visitors' centers in the Gilboa and the Jenin areas, specializing in relevant material for the tourist to become acquainted with the area. All the information a tourist may require will be gathered in the visitors' center.

To develop short-term and medium-term tourist routes:

There are various different tourist routes in the Gilboa – Jenin area. The length of time depends on the tourist's desire to deepen his acquaintance with the area. We can offer a route which is just a touch – for a few hours, and we can offer a whole day, two days or three on each side of the border. Study programs can be for weeks or even months, depending on the research topic, and the need to collect authentic material which is not otherwise available.

We must build a few tourist packages enabling the tourist to have the experience he is looking for, for the length of time he wishes to spend. These packages will be built together with tourism companies.





To develop tourist sites and prepare them to receive tourists:

The existing tourist sites in the Gilboa – Jenin area are only partially suited to providing guests with appropriate conditions. We must prepare development programs for each one of the sites to be included in the tour: bus access, sign-posts to the sites, and explanatory signs at the sites, parking arrangements, basic safety arrangements, and toilet facilities.

To develop various services for tourists passing through or staying in the area:

Considering the aim, which is to develop a number of routes and sites in the Gilboa – Jenin area, and to offer attractions and the services needed to receive 100,000 tourists a year, we need to make arrangements in the Gilboa – Jenin area for short – term tourists and also for those who choose to stay for longer.

The first stage is to make a master plan for tourism, presenting meaningful answers to the needs of tourists passing through the area, or staying for any length of time, regarding lodging, catering, transportation and other needs arising from the analysis of the situation.

Budget required:

- To prepare a tourist program of the sites in the area - 70,000 euros
- To develop of marketing and distribution of the tourism programs - 410,000 euros
- To train tour leaders and tourist center staff - 340,000 Euro
- To develop tourist routes for short and longer periods of time - 50,000 euros
- To develop tourist sites and adapt them for visitors - 150,000 euros
- To develop the necessary services to transport and accommodate people in the area - 100,000 euros

The total budget necessary for the project - 1,120,000 euros





The budget:

Preparing a tourism program for all the sites – 70,000 euros

Details:

- To prepare a page explaining the unique features of each site, the translation and copying of 500 copies in Hebrew, English, Arabic, French and Spanish – Estimated cost: 5000 euros per site.
- To prepare a joint map of the Gilboa – Jenin area, highlighting the tourist sites. Estimated cost: 20,000 euros.

Developing a marketing and distribution network – 410,000 euros

Details:

- To prepare publicity materials – the production of a film about cooperation; informative written material – approximately 50,000 euros.
- The distribution of written material via travel agencies – approximately 30,000 euros per country, assuming that there will be distribution in Spain, Germany, France and the USA. Estimated cost: 120,000 euros.
- Participation in two international tourist exhibitions – 45,000 euro per exhibition, totaling 90,000 euros.
- To establish an internet site to promote and advertise tourist packages – 50,000 euros.
- Meetings with leaders and policy-makers in the target countries, in order utilize them to encourage tourist agencies and tourists to come and visit the area. – 100,000 euros.

Establishing a tour guide training facility – 340,000 euros

Details:

- The first stage of instruction: 50 tour guides in a five-day workshop. Estimated cost: 2,000 euros for each student, in total – 100,000 euros.
- The management and maintenance of one visitors' center in the Gilboa area and one in Jenin, to be established in existing buildings. Estimated cost: 120,000 euros for each center, a total of 240,000 euros.

The Development of tourist routes for short and medium periods of time-50,000 euros

Details:

- Preparation of an information booklet about the two areas including all possible tourist routes, view spots, interesting stops, and interesting sites to be shown by professional guides - 40,000 euros
- Reproduction of 500 copies - 10,000 euros





The Development of tourist sites and their adaptation for visitors 150.000 euros

Details:

- The preparation of a master plan for the development of sites on the tourist routes. The plan will include the adaptation of the physical conditions needed at each site including signposts, paths and roads for buses, parking, explanation boards at each site, basic security needs and toilet facilities. The approximate cost of this master plan 150,000 euros.

The Development of the variety of services needed for the transport and accommodation for tourists in the area - 100,000 euros

Details:

- The preparation of a master plan for tourism which analyses the significance of transport and accommodation of tourists in the Gilboa and Jenin. This plan should give solutions on the aspects of accommodation, meals, transport and other aspects that arise while doing the analysis. The cost of this plan 100,000 euros

The total budget required for this project - 1,120,000 euros

