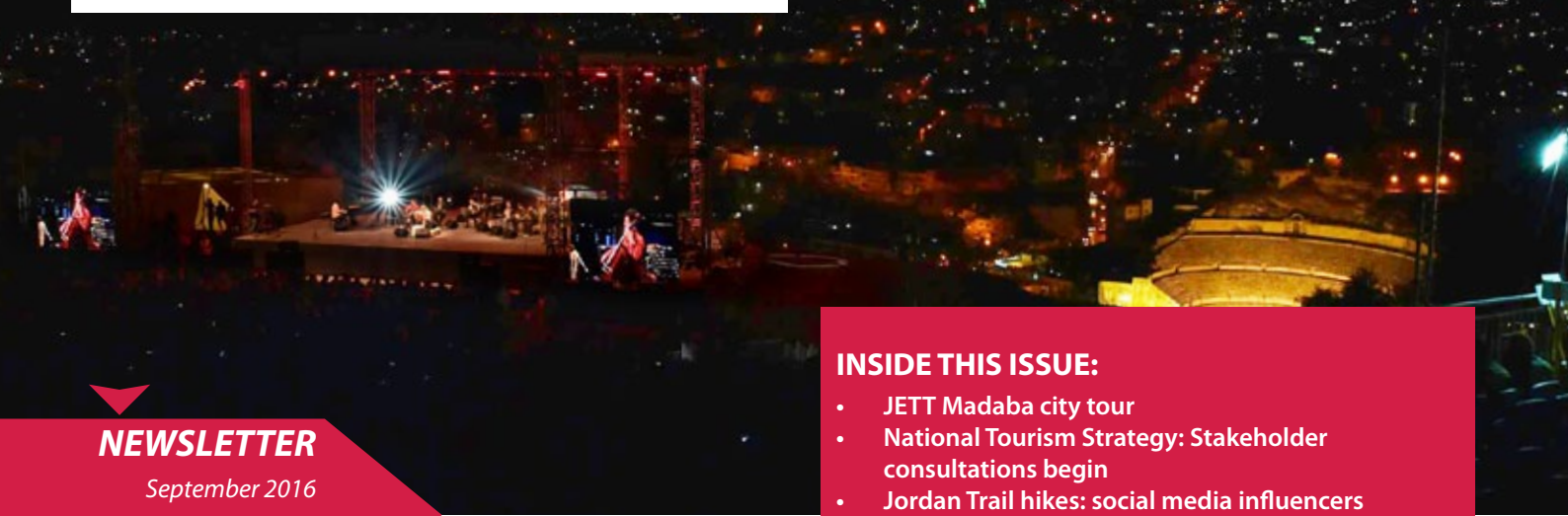




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مشروع السياحة لتعزيز الاستدامة الاقتصادية في الأردن  
Building Economic Sustainability through Tourism Project



**NEWSLETTER**

September 2016

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# INTRODUCTION

The first of JETT's new routes and tours to link passengers to tourism sites around the county and improve the tourism experience has launched; the Madaba City Bus Tour now operates on a daily basis around the key spots in Madaba and on to Mount Nebo. Work on the National Tourism Strategy continues, with MoTA and USAID BEST engaging stakeholders around the country starting with Jarash and Irbid this month. The Jordan Festival at the Amman Citadel drew in thousands and culminated with a show by world-renowned composer Yanni. The Jordan Trail is getting a lot of attention, with a USAID hike this month with social media influencers .

## UPDATING THE NATIONAL TOURISM STRATEGY: STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATIONS BEGIN

USAID BEST is working with MoTA and industry to develop Jordan's National Tourism Strategy (NTS). The strategy will guide the development of tourism in Jordan and facilitate its growth over the next five years, seeking to establish Jordan as an attractive destination that offers diverse and unique year-round experiences and to boost the national and local economies.

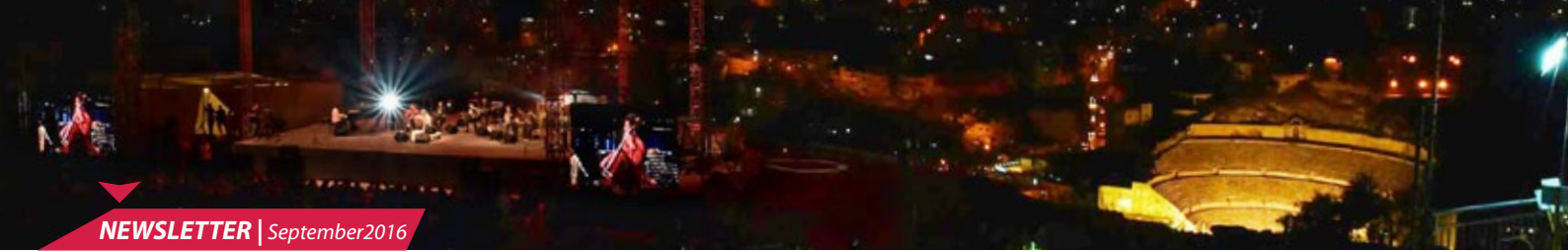
Regional consultations, drawing in local government and private sectors, began this month in Jarash and Irbid as part of MoTA efforts to identify key opportunities and priorities for tourism development in Jordan's governorates. Attendees represented various public and private sector tourism entities and stakeholders in each governorate and participation was high as local community representatives demonstrated great enthusiasm for tourism developments in their areas. His Excellency the Secretary General of the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, Issa Gammoh, attended the sessions and was delighted with the outcomes. Similar consultation sessions to identify tourism opportunities for tourism development are to take place in Ajloun, Salt and Madaba soon.





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## JETT LAUNCHES MADABA CITY TOUR

In early September the Jordan Express Tourist Transportation Company (JETT) began operating a Madaba city tour, which takes passengers along key tourism routes inside the city, and then on to Mount Nebo. The new city tour was launched by the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, and it is part of a number of new JETT routes in the pipeline, which are being supported by USAID BEST.

The new Madaba tour is a major step in boosting Madaba's tourism offerings and attracting local visitors and foreign tourists to the city.

"It is important to us to have the local community in Madaba on board and for them to benefit, so the route passes the main street of shops in Madaba, the mosaic school, the museums and more," explained Mr. Hussein Muwaswas, Business Development Manager at JETT.

A bus route linking Amman to Madaba is soon to follow, according to Mr. Muwaswas, who added, "We then want to link people from Amman and the suburbs of Jordan to Madaba where they can join the city tour. We going to operate daily tours from Amman, which will do pick-ups from 5-star hotels in Amman before heading to Madaba and then linking up with the city tour. The Madaba trip will be operational as of mid-October."

This is part of an initiative by JETT, which is supported by USAID BEST, to develop 14 new bus excursions to some of Jordan's unique and amazing destinations. JETT will operate the new excursions from its stations in Amman. They include regular trips



to Ajloun, Jerash, Ma'in, the Dead Sea, and Birgish, in addition to Madaba. JETT will also introduce tourism circuits from the Dead Sea to the Baptism Site, a 'Golden Triangle' circuit connecting Aqaba, Wadi Rum and Petra. USAID support to JETT will help provide both locals and visitors with reliable, affordable and convenient tours to popular destinations around Jordan. Ultimately, this will enable greater numbers of visitors to reach new areas, increase income for service providers and create job opportunities in local businesses catering to this increased demand.

The Madaba city bus tour, operated by JETT, runs twice a day at 10am and 2pm daily. The tour begins at the Madaba Visitor Center and passes the city's main churches, museums, shopping area and the Madaba mosaic school, before continuing on to Mount Nebo with a stop at Lastoria Museum along the way.

## PROMOTING FILMING IN JORDAN

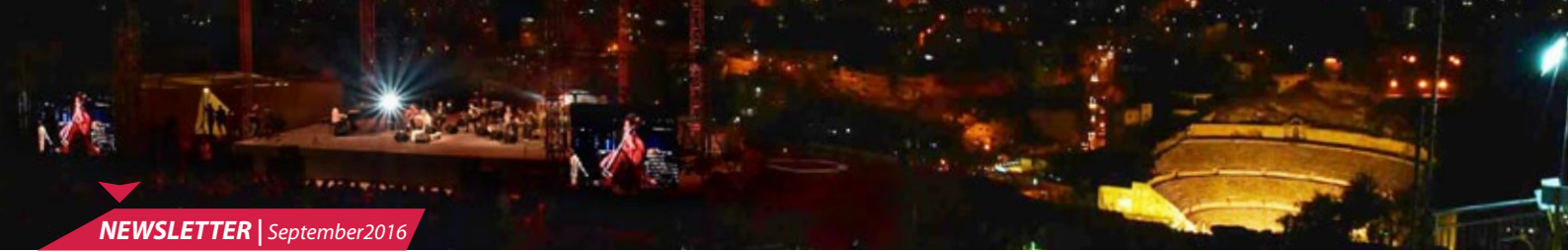
Lawrence of Arabia, Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade, Hurt Locker and The Martian are just a few of the classic and recent blockbuster films to have been shot in Jordan, taking advantage of the country's magnificent landscapes and lately of a budding filming industry. Building on this great portfolio, USAID BEST is supporting the Royal Film Commission to position Jordan as an important filming destination. This support will entail the participation of the Royal Film Commission (RFC) in international trade shows and film festivals such as the Produced By Conference 2017 in LA and the Cannes Film Festival 2017. In addition, FAM trips to Jordan will be organized for international film producers and location scouts, and a series of filmmaking workshops will be implemented, to be followed by a nation-wide film competition to sharpen the skills of budding local filmmakers and create social media-friendly content on Jordan that can be used by RFC and the tourism industry. It is anticipated that these efforts will increase Jordan's exposure in a positive light and boost interest in Jordan as a safe and secure filming and film production destination.





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## YANNI PERFORMS AT THE AMMAN CITADEL



The Jordan Festival, organized by Friends of Jordan Festivals, came to a conclusion on 25 September with a spectacular concert by world-renowned composer Yanni. Yanni has performed at iconic landmarks around the world, including India's Taj Mahal, China's Forbidden City, and the Pyramids of Egypt. The concert at the Amman Citadel was his first in Jordan; for 25 years he has wanted to visit Jordan and this month performed brand new compositions as part of his world tour.

The festival began on 13th September with a concert by the popular Marseille Khalifa, and Turkish dance group Fire of Anatolia performed its fusion of Anatolian folkdance and music on the 18th.

USAID BEST supported the Jordan Festival as an important cultural event, which this year attracted thousands of visitors.



Marcel Khalifeh performance

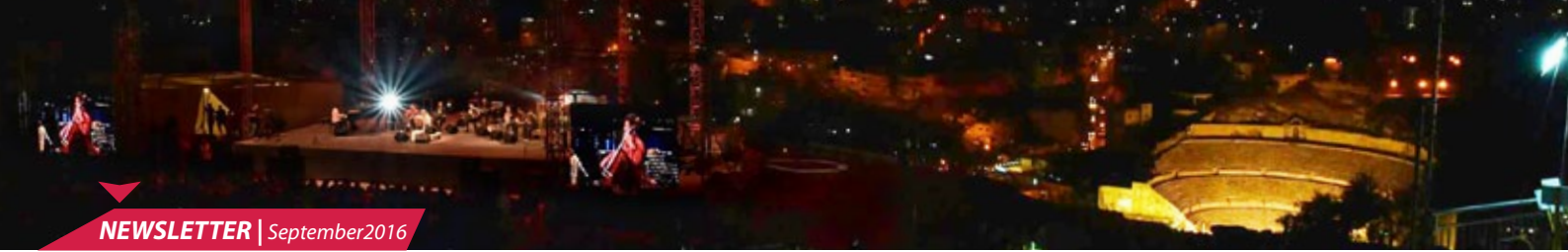


Fire of Anatolia at the Amman Citadel



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## JORDAN TRAIL HIKES



### Jordan's social influencers

This month USAID took a group of Jordanian social media influencers on a hike along the Jordan Trail, which was organized in coordination with USAID BEST and the Jordan Trail Association (JTA). US Ambassador to Jordan, H.E Alice Wells, joined the hike and the group enjoyed an 8-kilometer route through Birgish forest, Ajloun, as part of efforts to promote the Jordan Trail to Jordanians through top Jordanian social media influencers and tweeps.

The hike went through the beautiful Birgish forest and way-marking along the trail, which was recently completed along that part, was clear along the way. The way marking of the trail entailed a huge effort, demonstrating JTA's dedication to promoting adventure-tourism in Jordan and providing both locals and tourists

with the best hiking experience throughout the 650 km trail. There was live tweeting, live posting on Facebook, and live video streaming by the group, resulting in a Jordanian online voice discussing USAID's work to a large number of followers and fans. On conclusion of the hike, the group headed to a local family-run rest house, which was supported by a previous USAID tourism project, where they enjoyed a delicious home-made lunch of local foods and handpicked fruits. The hike was a follow-up to USAID's social media Iftar in June as a way to continue to foster an ever-growing relationship between USAID and Jordan's social media leaders.

USAID BEST is supporting JTA to develop, maintain and promote the trail, as well as create investment opportunities for the local communities along it.

## HIGHLIGHTS

- In the news:**
  - [Women's World Cup to boost local economy](#)
  - [Jordan to host first-ever regional adventure travel trade conference](#)
  - [Incredible forgotten gardens of Petra rediscovered after almost 2,000 years](#)

## UPCOMING Events

30 Sep to 21 Oct FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup in Jordan

31 Oct Launch of IHG Dead Sea Academy

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