

Chapter 7 The Development Plan – Bcharre Highlands

7.1 Development Objectives and Strategy

7.1.1 Objectives and Strategic Framework

Objectives of the regional tourism development in the Bcharre highlands are defined, reflecting the national development policy for sustainable and balanced development as well as income generation and poverty alleviation. They are:

- (1) to protect and enhance the Bcharre's unique mix of culture and natural resources, and
- (2) to utilize these resources to expand the tourism industry and generate economic benefits for the local communities in a fully sustainable manner.

The unique feature of the study area are the presence of the Maronite church as the spiritual leader and the owner of the Qadisha Valley and religious property and also many active stakeholders who do not necessarily agree on many issues related to the development and conservation of the area. The strategic framework for the regional tourism development in the Bcharre highlands is set, therefore, reflecting the concern of the Patriarchate for the primary religious significance and secondary environmental and cultural significance of the Qadisha Valley and the Cedars of the Lord and effecting the participatory development and management involving all the stakeholders.

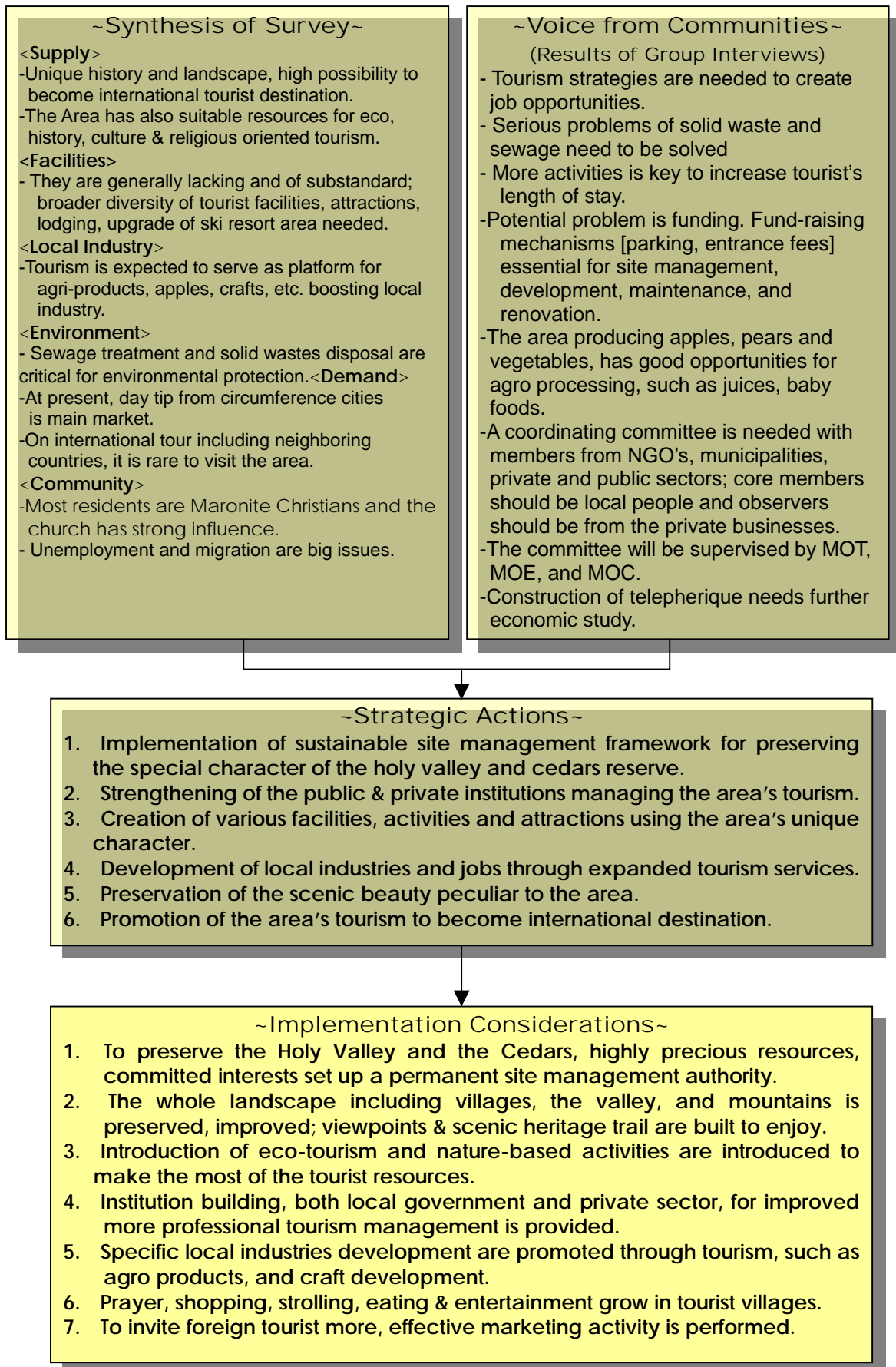
Within the strategic framework, the objectives of the regional tourism development are pursued for different areas of the Bcharre highlands through the following:

- Qadisha Valley: reviving church communities through cooperative livelihood activities and international support network to be developed through the participatory site management planning.
- Rim villages: promoting complementary development of rim villages through strengthening unique characteristics of different villages, improving physical links, and providing key facilities to serve all the villages collectively.
- Cedars grove: establishing cedars village and cedars museum through promoting expanded material and spiritual support bases world wide.
- Cedars skiing area: facilitating the private sector to develop a major skiing resort under the strict enforcement of limited regulations related to access, conservation, land use and landscaping.

7.1.2 Development Strategy for the Bcharre Highlands

Figure 7.1.1 synthesizes results of the field surveys and focus group discussions conducted by the JICA Study Team to derive strategies for the regional tourism development and expected outcome of implementing them.

Figure 7.1.1 Development Strategy for the Bcharre Highlands



7.2 Demand Potential

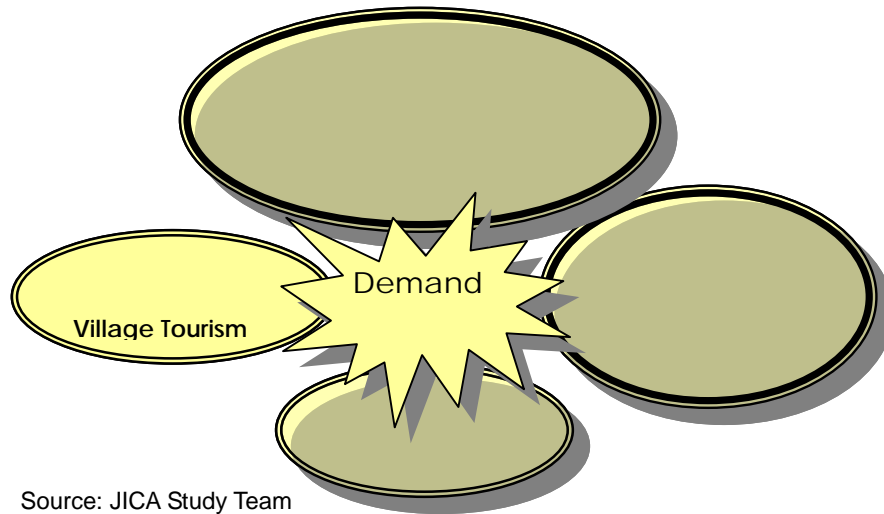
The growth potential for the key segments of demand for this area is discussed in relation to two distinct areas, the crown villages and valley, on the one hand, and then the Cedars/mountain area on the other. For each segment a growth potential [GP] indicator is designed for use to formulate visitor volume projections⁵. Some key conditional actions for product development and promotion are signaled in this section.

- Bcharre/Crown Villages/Qadisha Valley
 - Coastal (Tripoli environs)/Greater Beirut Lebanese day visitors (scenic drive, picnic, recreation, hiking, monastery visit, etc.) – GP Indicator 10 – 15%,
 - Religious visitors from overseas with two tiers: one for Pilgrimage-focused visitors organized by source market religious institutions in conjunction with Qadisha monasteries; and, the other for combination visitors of pilgrimage and culture – Baalbek, Tripoli etc. – GP Indicator 20 – 30% subject to more “market-in” promotion/sales activity by Qadisha monasteries/MOT/tour operators toward the trade (specialized operators) in Europe, Eastern Europe (e.g., Poland, Czech), Russia,
 - Coastal/Greater Beirut Lebanese nature lover (nature walk, flora/fauna, topography, eco tourism), soft adventure seeker (hang gliding, caving, trekking) – GP Indicator 10 to 20%,
 - Coastal/Greater Beirut Lebanese for village discovery (culture/heritage/agro tourism) in the Crown villages – GP Indicator 10 – 15%,
- The Cedars/Mountain Slopes
 - Both Lebanese (domestic/Diaspora) and foreign visitors of all sources for the Cedars Forest Reserve, the prime national icon of all tourist resources – GP Indicator 10 – 20% subject to provision of modern visitor facilitation/facilities,
 - Lebanese (mainly of Tripoli/environs), expats in Greater Beirut and some foreign segments for ski slopes of Cedars (downhill skiing/cross-country) – GP Indicator 10%, subject to modernization of facility provision (antiquated ski lifts, limited capacity),
 - Nature lovers (mainly domestic, some expats ex Greater Beirut) for nature trail/trekking/hiking/flora & fauna of mountain slopes – GP Indicator 10% subject to identification/creation/provision of facilitative trails/routes,
 - Niche soft adventure enthusiasts (hang gliding, para sailing – Lebanese, expats as well as from the West) in the mountain slopes – GP Indicator 10-15% subject to provision of facilitative measures/ancillary services,
 - Niche caving/spelunking enthusiasts (mostly from the West) for Qadisha Grotto, if this is developed – GP Indicator from zero market to 50%

These growth rates will be used to formulate short, medium and long-term projections that will be used in socio-economic analysis of this master plan and also in the feasibility work to be undertaken for the priority projects.

⁵ These are in process and will be completed and presented in the final report.

Exhibit 7.2.1 Demand in Bcharre Area



Source: JICA Study Team

7.3 Industry

Tourism is becoming more experiential in nature with successful destinations gaining popularity as a result of well-conceived cultural and recreational experiences. Consequently, many services will be stimulated by tourism [tertiary sector] as opposed to manufacturing [secondary sector] of physical products. The following list gives an idea of the industries that stand to be substantially stimulated by this master plan:

- crafts production and retailing, particularly religious items,
- local agricultural products particularly apples,
- restaurant and other food services,
- lodging services in B&Bs, hotels and in monasteries,
- visitor guiding services in towns, trails, museums and heritage areas,
- performing arts and religious services and commemorations,
- skiing related services such as equipment rental and lessons,
- reserve monitoring and maintenance services, and
- the construction contractors for renovations and new construction.

While not defined formally as an industry per se, a major drive for the local economy is the Maronite church with its collection of famed monasteries situated in the revered Qadisha Valley. The pilgrim or religious segment will take on growing importance and become more economically viable, following the recommendations of this master plan.

A substantial amount of created jobs will be seasonal, peaking in the summer [all activities but skiing] or winter [skiing] seasons. Much of the service jobs will be part time, enabling businesses to draw upon secondary labor pools including women, full-time students and summertime residents. These irregular labor requirements for different industries in some destinations offset each other actually adding some stability to the local labor market. The majority of the jobs will require semi-skilled to non-skilled labor.

7.4 Marketing and Promotion

7.4.1 Strategy

Because of the existence of the Cedars, this region has been promoted by MOT and the private sector from long time ago. Also there are several tourism organizations and NGOs to taking some actions for tourism development. One of the key organizations in the study area is the Bcharre Tourism Development Council. They are trying to promote the Bcharre region through producing a guidebook called "Tourism in the Bcharre region –The Cedars". However, lack of budget and human resources are constraining their activities.

Taking consideration of various situations, the following are proposed for marketing and promotion actions for this region:

- Strengthening of the implementation body for the marketing and promotion activities,
- Enhancement of the existing events / creation of the new magnetic events, and
- Development of the promotion and communication tools.

Target market for promotion

Based on the demand potential analysis and the goal of this project, also taking consideration of actual promotional process, the target market of each region for promotional activities are identified as below:

- Bcharre/Crown Villages/Qadisha Valley :
 - Beirutis, expats leisure, Religious visitors (overseas), Cultural, Diaspora, school and youth groups, winter skiers, regional Arab leisure (summer season).
- The Cedars/mountain slopes
 - Beirutis, expats leisure, Diaspora, Cultural, Nature based, winter skiers, school and youth groups, Regional Arab leisure (summer season)

7.4.2 Key Actions

- (1) Strengthening of the implementation body for the marketing and promotion activities

The key role for the broader marketing and promotion function for Bcharre as a destination lies with the strengthened BTDC. Several recommended activities focus directly on promotion to include creating exciting new events and festivals, promoting new entertainment activities, formulating prototype pilgrimage tours, organizing a website outreach, and creating a variety of visitor aides (brochures, maps, etc.) . BTDC can organize collective promotional activities and even define slogans and banners appealing to the target segments of demand. This marketing outreach is a private sector function that can tap private companies for funding, some of the national trade associations and also NGOs and certain development agencies.

- (2) Enhancement of the existing events / creation of the new magnetic events
As mentioned above, promotional events development is also required to promote the area strongly to the domestic and international markets. One approach is to enhance the existing events that are already organized in the Bcharre, Crown village area and the Cedars area, with coordinating the days of each event and further developing the

events itself. The other approach is to create the new magnetic events to develop the new market.

(3) Development of the promotion and communication tools

In the master plan, development of various promotional materials such as visitors guide, maps, posters, etc. are proposed. One of the key tools for the promotion and communication is website development, which is also included in this proposal. In addition, it is important to develop an effective information distribution method to bring tourists into the area, and also to generate tourists to visit many places or join the activities and events in the area. To give a concrete example, for visitors approaching the project area, B4 the Holy Valley Gateway Project will provide abundant consumer information at the gateway town of Hadath el Jibbe through its visitor kiosk to send arriving visitors to onward points in Bcharre for museums, events, celebrations and other experiences.

7.5 Institution Building

There are several activities focusing on strengthening institutions. Packages B1 and B2 focus on the creation of local and central management organizations, which will introduce a sustainable management framework, to manage Qadisha Valley and the Cedars Reserve for all future generations. The creation and launch of these organizations is the key institutional recommendation of this master plan since it is urgently needed, and many stakeholders have cited the need for this sustainable framework, with donor grants in place. There is an existing consensus amongst the government, the patriarchate, and the communities to launch the master planning process that will lead to a shared management authority.

The second most important recommendation focuses on boosting the private sector capability to undertake collective actions, by means of the BTDC industry group. The plan calls for many actions to be headed by this council, and even the designation of officers for environmental and promotional activities. In addition, some training of municipal officials is proposed to improve their understanding of tourism, and the role of local government in managing towns as destinations. By means of these activities these players will enter into a working, enduring and effective partnership for sustainable tourism in the Bcharre qaza.

Photo 7.5.1
Group Interview Participants
for Bcharre Session



7.6 Program of Projects and Measures

7.6.1 Program and Projects

The different programs and activities developed for this master plan have been combined into six packages of activities. Six project profiles providing some detailed description of these packages are provided below. A number of complementary or additional activities have been developed and described in Section 7.1.3.

Of the six packages, the first two deal specifically with the two key world heritage sites, the Qadisha Valley and Cedars Reserve. The third deals with the villages along the valley rim. The fourth and the fifth deal with two new facilities, the creation of a scenic promenade on the valley rim, and also the creation of villager lodging in the form of *Bed & Breakfast* in these same crown villages.

(1) B1 The Qadisha Cedars Management Program

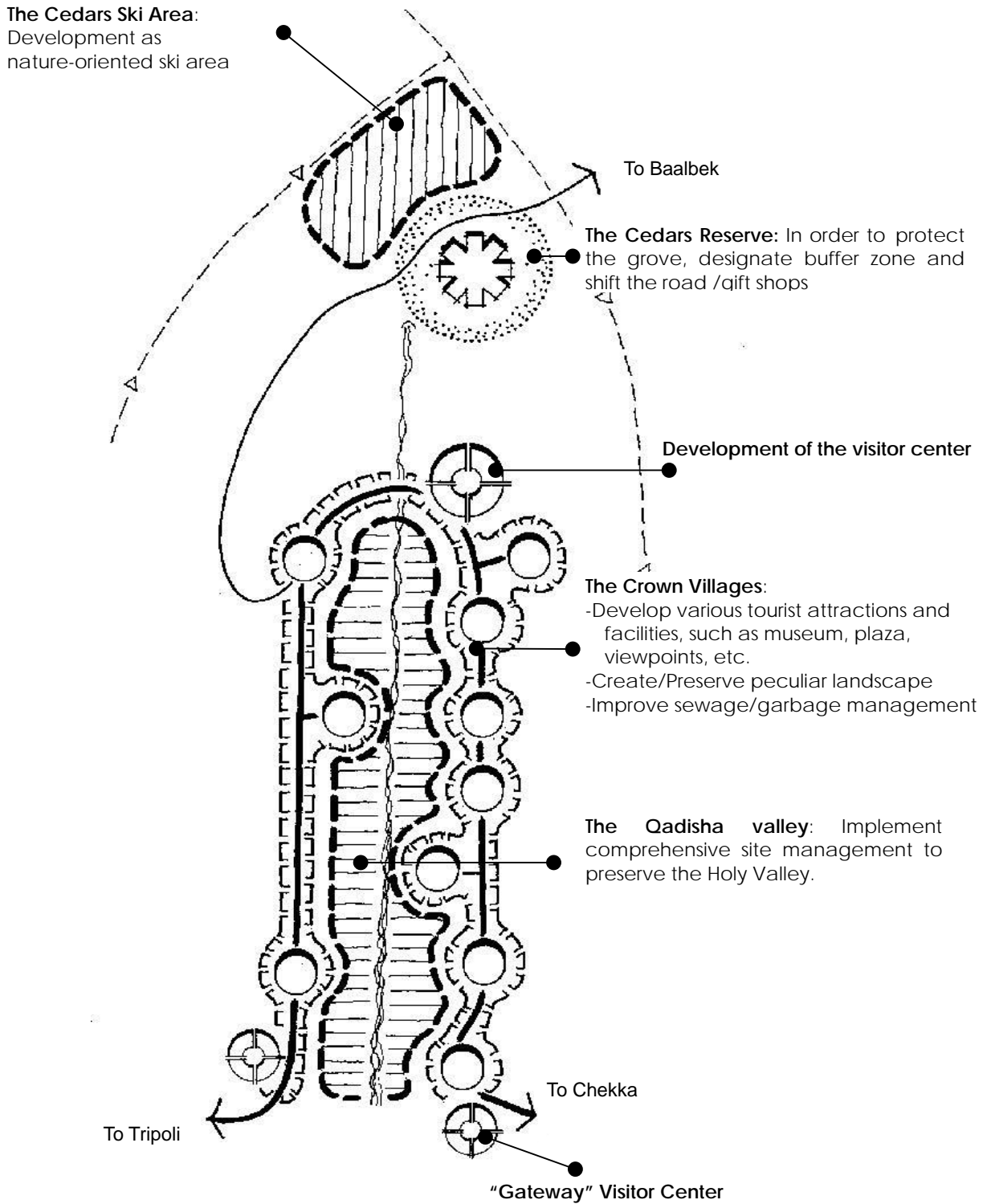
The package is to establish a definitive framework for the effective management of the heritage areas of the Qadisha Valley and Cedars Reserve for the purposes of their effective preservation and of developing fully sustainable forms of recreation and tourism within the strategic framework described in Subsection 7.1.1 [Exhibits 7.6.1 and 7.6.2].

1. Project Code	B1
2. Project Title	Qadisha Cedars Planning and Management Program
3. Objectives	(1) To comprehensively protect and promote the site, which is listed as a World Heritage site. (2) To establish a formal organizational structure to manage and link both areas – Qadisha and Cedars; to involve all stakeholders, i.e., Patriarchate, government, local communities. (3) To increase visitor length of stay and site revenue and draw more visitors to the surrounding villages.
4. Project Components	B1.1 Donor funding - CDR with MOE, MOC, MOT receives donor grant to establish framework for creating a site management plan B1.2 Policy and Staffing - Planning includes decisions on policy-making body and status as nature reserve, structure for community participation, structure for technical staffing B1.3 Visitor management – Plan includes circulation strategy from the visitors center for vehicular and pedestrian movement to and through the site including a trails plan and road improvements, B1.4 Promotion and Education – Visitors Center, Interpretation (signage, brochure, web site), Heritage Area B1.5 Training – Staffing and community involvement
5. Location	Qadisha Valley and Cedars of the Lord World Heritage Site
6. Main Implementing Organization	CDR with MOE/MOC/MOT GEF UNESCO Government of Japan (cultural grant) Patriarchate
7. Main Beneficiaries	* Local communities * Government (national level)

	* International heritage (universal patrimony as World Heritage site)
8. Possible Donor Support	Global Environmental Facility (GEF) (management plan) USAID (management plan) American Express/World Monuments Fund EU/Economic and Social Fund for Development (training) ICCROM (archaeological conservation training) Italian Aid (cultural tourism capacity building) Japan Grassroots Grant Audi Foundation (local heritage museum training) Menil Foundation (fresco restoration)
9. Project Cost and Revenue	Total: US\$ 1.62 million for Site Management Framework and Infrastructure Implementation
10. Implementation Schedule	2004 – 2007 2004-2005 - Donor funds obtained - Management framework agreed upon through participatory planning process (including boundary survey, landholding issues, documentation, master planning) - Management unit established through law (government involvement through nature reserve or national park, local concessionaire contracting/ involvement through shareholding company for fund management and staffing, legal compliance for leases, service contracts, concessions) 2005-2006 - Training program for management unit (including local guides program) - Facilities design including visitors center, parking, roads, adaptive reuse of Saydet el Qarm, etc. - Interpretation design 2006-2007 - Construction of facilities - Opening 2007
11. Project Description	
Activities	B1.1 Donor grant (CDR with Ministries) for Planning B1.2 Plan to include: (1) conservation strategy (cultural significance to include articulation of values, documentation, inventory) (2) operations strategy for organized decision-making to balance protection and visitation, to include concession contract and visitation fee (3) visitor management and circulation (parking, bus system, hiking trails, etc.) (4) visitor interpretation (visitors center, exhibition galleries, signage, web, brochure, video, etc.)

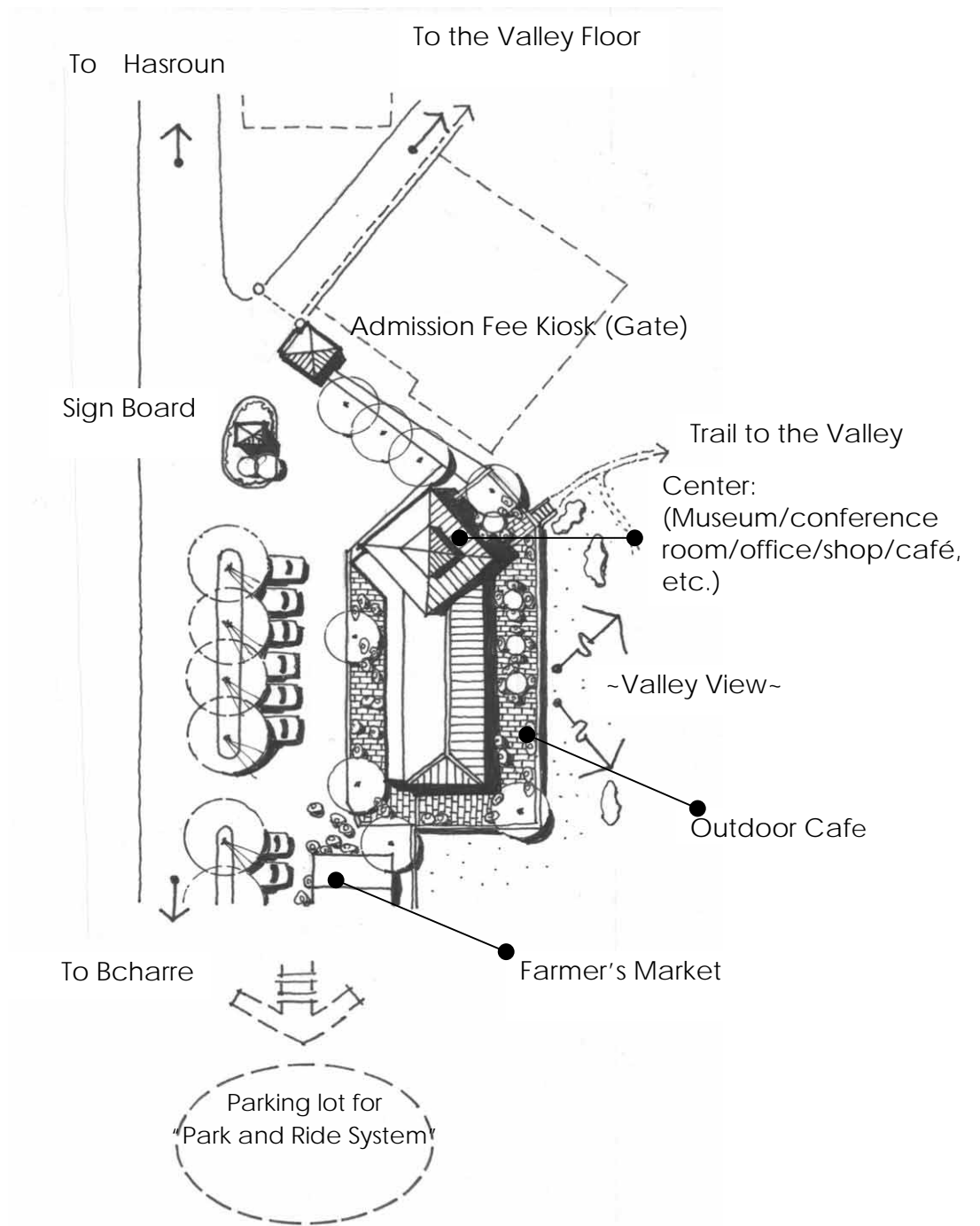
	<p>(5) staff training program</p> <p>B1.3 Policy body and Local Management Company established</p> <p>B1.4 Management activities to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • entrance fee collection • visitor center operation • park and ride system/transport operation • guided tours within the site • agro-processing products • café, site shop, exhibition galleries, rural gite
Expected Results	<p>~Increased~</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Local jobs and income from tourism development/increased visitation to the area * Site preservation fund (% of entrance fee) for conservation of natural and historical heritage and increased revenue to government * Site attractions and interpretation <p>~Enhanced~</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Sustainable tourism * Heritage buildings renovation and adaptive reuse * Handicrafts and agro products * Small business * Public private partnership
Staffing and Management	<p>Qadisha and Cedars Management Unit</p> <p>Staffing to Create Site Management Framework</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • site director/finance • visitors center manager • conservator/archaeologists • admissions staff • exhibition gallery curator • shop manager • café manager and wait staff • local guides • maintenance staff
Training	Training by ICCROM, Rome, or York University

Figure 7.6.1 Overview of Projects



Source: JICA Study Team

Figure 7.6.2 Image of Qadisha Valley Visitor Center



Source: JICA Study Team

(2) **B2 The Cedars Renaissance Program**

This package is to dramatize and vividly portray the meaning and symbolism of this heritage site in order to ensure its enduring sustainability and develop increased economic activities for local community members.

1. Project Code	B2																												
2. Project Title	Cedars Renaissance Program																												
3. Objectives	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To dramatize the presentation of the Cedars of God to attract tourists and financial support worldwide; 2. To ensure the sustainability of the Cedars of God through revitalization and expansion of the Cedars grove; and 3. To increase and diversify income-generating opportunities for local people. 																												
4. Project Components	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cedars village development 2. Cedars park establishment 3. Cedars museum and trenches 																												
5. Location	Bcharre qaza, Cedars grove and environs																												
6. Main Implementing Organization	Promotion roles: UNESCO, Ministry of Tourism Implementing roles: Bcharre Municipality Management Unit; Local enterprises, NGOs, ministries of Environment, Agriculture, Tourism and Public Works.																												
7. Main Beneficiaries	Local tourism industries & related enterprises, Lebanese people and present & future mankind.																												
8. Possible Donor Support	Technical cooperation for planning for village development. Technical cooperation for design and financial cooperation for construction of museum & trenches.																												
9. Project Cost and Revenue	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td colspan="2"><u>Costs</u></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Village road & other infrastructure</td> <td style="text-align: right;">US\$ 40,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Cedars nursery (land preparation & saplings)</td> <td style="text-align: right;">100,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Civil works associated with trenches</td> <td style="text-align: right;">150,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Museum with other facilities</td> <td style="text-align: right;">700,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: right;">Subtotal US\$ 990,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Contingencies (10%)</td> <td style="text-align: right;">110,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: right;">Total US\$1.1million</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2"><u>Revenues (net)</u></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Museum entrance fees</td> <td style="text-align: right;">US\$ 90,000/year</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Cafeteria & restaurants (in villages)</td> <td style="text-align: right;">40,000/year</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Others (sales of souvenirs, saplings, and membership for "adopt a cedar")</td> <td style="text-align: right;">60,000/year</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: right;">Total US\$19,000/year</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2">IRR = <u>11.4%</u> for 10 years operation</td> </tr> </table>	<u>Costs</u>		Village road & other infrastructure	US\$ 40,000	Cedars nursery (land preparation & saplings)	100,000	Civil works associated with trenches	150,000	Museum with other facilities	700,000		Subtotal US\$ 990,000	Contingencies (10%)	110,000		Total US\$1.1million	<u>Revenues (net)</u>		Museum entrance fees	US\$ 90,000/year	Cafeteria & restaurants (in villages)	40,000/year	Others (sales of souvenirs, saplings, and membership for "adopt a cedar")	60,000/year		Total US\$19,000/year	IRR = <u>11.4%</u> for 10 years operation	
<u>Costs</u>																													
Village road & other infrastructure	US\$ 40,000																												
Cedars nursery (land preparation & saplings)	100,000																												
Civil works associated with trenches	150,000																												
Museum with other facilities	700,000																												
	Subtotal US\$ 990,000																												
Contingencies (10%)	110,000																												
	Total US\$1.1million																												
<u>Revenues (net)</u>																													
Museum entrance fees	US\$ 90,000/year																												
Cafeteria & restaurants (in villages)	40,000/year																												
Others (sales of souvenirs, saplings, and membership for "adopt a cedar")	60,000/year																												
	Total US\$19,000/year																												
IRR = <u>11.4%</u> for 10 years operation																													
10. Implementation Schedule	B2.1: 2004-6 for village development and relocation; private sector development to follow B2.2: 2004-5 for initiation of all the components, continuous implementation thereafter B2.3: 2004-5 for buffer zone designation and design of the Cedars museum and trenches; 2006-7 for implementation.																												
11. Project Description																													
Activities	<p style="text-align: center;">B2.1 The Cedars Village Development</p> Key activities: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Civil works for village road and other infrastructure and utilities 2. Relocation of souvenir shops, 																												

	<p>3. Establishment of wood crafts workshop & design studio, and</p> <p>4. Promotion of other economic activities including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the Cedars restaurant and coffee shops - other shops for local products - agro-processing industries [e.g. apple cider] and - rest houses <p>The civil works will be designed and implemented by MPW&T, and other activities will be undertaken basically by private sector initiatives. Some support is to be provided by the government for souvenir shop relocation, and incentives to promote related economic activities. The government may also facilitate craftsmen or their association to establish the workshop and the design studio.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">B2.2 Cedars Park establishment</p> <p>Key activities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establishment of a plant nursery for cedar trees; 2. Initiation of the “adopt a cedar” program, 3. Creation of the Cedars foundation, and 4. Cedar tree planting by foster-tourists as additional tourist attraction. <p>The nursery would be established initially by MOA. Tourists would purchase cedar saplings and become foster caretakers under the “adopt a cedar” program. To support the program implementation, the “Cedars foundation” should be established as an NGO. It would undertake fund-raising worldwide and manage the fund. Membership outreach methods [email, website] will keep foster caretakers informed of progress. The plant nursery would be transferred to the foundation once its technical expertise is well established. The cedars park itself may be owned by MOE and its use and management entrusted to the municipality.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">B2.3 Cedars Museum and Trenches</p> <p>Key activities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Designation of a buffer zone around the cedars; 2. Construction of controlled access to the cedars; and 3. Establishment of the cedars museum. <p>Within the buffer zone, only limited access points should be provided to the cedars. One way is to provide underground access at least partially to minimize visual and material disturbances as well as to offer more dramatic presentation. The underground access should be carefully aligned to avoid obstruction of subsurface drainage. Visitors would travel through time [sort of] underground and enter the cedars grove at a few points.</p> <p>The cedars museum would be established at the entrance to the trenches/tunnels network. It is to house displays of photos and pictures of cedars used historically in different places, audio-visuals on themes such as biblical stories, Phoenician shipping, the symbolic use of the Cedars, and display of a huge cedar trunk.</p>
<p>Expected Results</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishment of the world famous Cedars of the Lord memorial by means of a broad spiritual and financial support base; • Enhanced sustainability of the cedars grove due to the controlled access and limited obstructions, and the effectively expanded forest area with the Cedars park; and • Increased income levels of local people and a stimulated local economy based on tourism services, agriculture and agro-processing.

Staffing and Management	<u>Management organization</u> Management committee for the The Cedars village The Cedars foundation MOE/A local office Management for the Cedars museum	<u>staffing</u> representatives of private enterprises as members [NGO] manager [forestry expert] 2-3 extension workers, support staff 1 manager, 2-3 support staff, or operation by private concession
Training	Training needed for trainer-extension workers who would train volunteer-extension workers for cedar tree planting, etc. Crafts training and training for design and products development related to wood crafts are also required.	

Photo 7.6.1
 The Cedars



Photo 7.6.2
 Existing souvenir shops near the Cedar site

(3) Crown Villages Destination Project

This package aims to convey a sense of meaning and arrival for visitors to the Bcharre area together with orientation information, to raise the appeal of the crown villages and towns for tourism and recreational purposes and to improve its infrastructure to handle a growing volume of visitors in an environmentally sustainable way. This and the next packages provide specific measures to effect the strategy for the rim villages presented in Subsection 7.1.1.

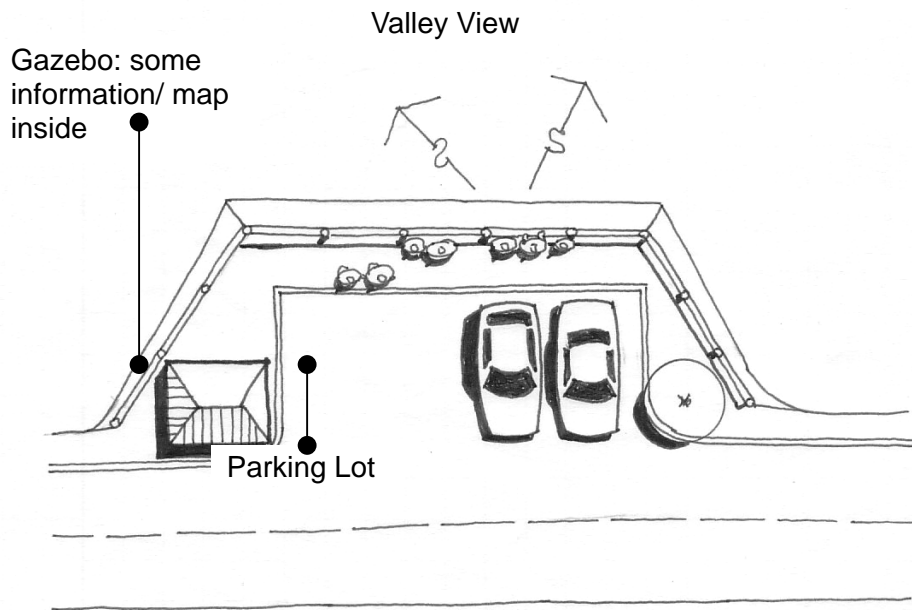
1. Project Code	B3
2. Project Title	Crown Villages Destination Project
3. Objectives	(1)To enhance the destination value of key villages on the rim to stimulate services economy; (2)To resolve sewage pollution of the Qadisha valley and; (3)To provide activities information and related services to visitors to encourage their stay and spending.
4. Project Components	-Bcharre town beautification -Gibran House renovation & visitor information -Gateway viewpoint(Hadath el Jibbe) and roadside viewpoints -Interpretive signage on key streets, routes for pedestrians -Sewage treatment plant for Bcharre and Hadchit towns, initially. -Micro industry support -Culverts for animals to link Qadisha Valley to Ehden Reserve
5. Location	Bcharre Qaza, Bcharre, Hadchit & Hadath el Jibbe
6. Main Implementing Organization	Municipalities [Hadchit municipality for sewage treatment]
7. Main Beneficiaries	Local services industries and other businesses
8. Possible Donor Support	Any donor with programs for rural development, secondary cities, urban revitalization and; -Aid for Artisan (handcraft training) -CDR/Lebanon Development Association (low interest loans to groups) -EU(capacity building, living heritage) -Italian Aid Agency(cultural tourism, capacity building) -JICA(grass root grant for NGO) -UNDP(handcraft training, women in development programs)
9. Project Cost	Bcharre town plaza renovation: US\$169,000 Hadath el Jibbe gateway improvement 10,000 Road side viewpoints & culverts: 131,000 Sewage systems: 1,272,000 Promotion: 5,000 Total US\$ 1.59 million
10. Implementation Schedule	<u>2004</u> <Bcharre Municipality> -Design works for urban facilities (plaza, signage, etc.) including the Gibran house renovation and information center -Extending study gateway viewpoint in Hadath el Jibbe and roadside viewpoints -Fund sourcing

	<p><u>2004-2005</u> < Bcharre and Hadchit Municipalities > -Design of the sewage treatment facilities <MOEW> -Technical corporation -External support seeking</p> <p><u>2005</u> < Bcharre Municipality > -Construction of urban facilities -Initiation of the micro industry support upon the construction of urban facilities</p> <p><u>2006-</u> < Bcharre and Hadchit Municipalities > - Construction of the sewage treatment facilities</p>
11. Project Description	
Activities	<p><u>Bcharre town</u> (1) Townscape: Selective façade renovations, street lighting & furniture, signage, plaza upgrading, visitor information kiosk and signage along the “vital spine” of 1,000 meters linking the lower village to the upper village⁶. This project will draw tourist traffic through the heart of the town, extend visitor stay and spending in tourist oriented services. (2) Gibran House: Consolidation, improvement of environs and provision of interpretive information.</p> <p><u>Road works</u> One or more viewpoints with parking for vehicles will be added to roads in the Bcharre vicinity. Culverts under the Bcharre-Hadchit road are to be installed to enable animals to safely pass from the Ehden Reserve into the Qadisha Valley and extend their natural environment.</p> <p><u>Sewage treatment</u> A plant for primary & secondary treatment of raw sewage from both Bcharre and Hadchit towns will be built at a low point between the two. Collection networks for both towns will be included.</p> <p><u>Hadath el Jibbe</u> (1) Town center works: Town is to undertake light improvement in its square improving pedestrian areas, adding street furniture, an information kiosk, shuttle stop and lighting. (2) Town periphery: It will add a parking lot, a viewpoint, pergola with explanatory panel, and performance space overlooking the valley.</p> <p><u>Micro industry support</u> A space for a farmers market will be located near the parking. An arts & crafts center will be installed in the town center.</p>
Expected Results	<p>-increase in tourist-oriented businesses in the crown villages/towns -reduction in pollution level of Qadisha River -rise in animal species diversity of the Qadisha Valley</p>

⁶ Lebanon American U. School of Engineering & Architecture; *The Vital Spine of Bcharre: A Case Study*; 1999, Beirut.

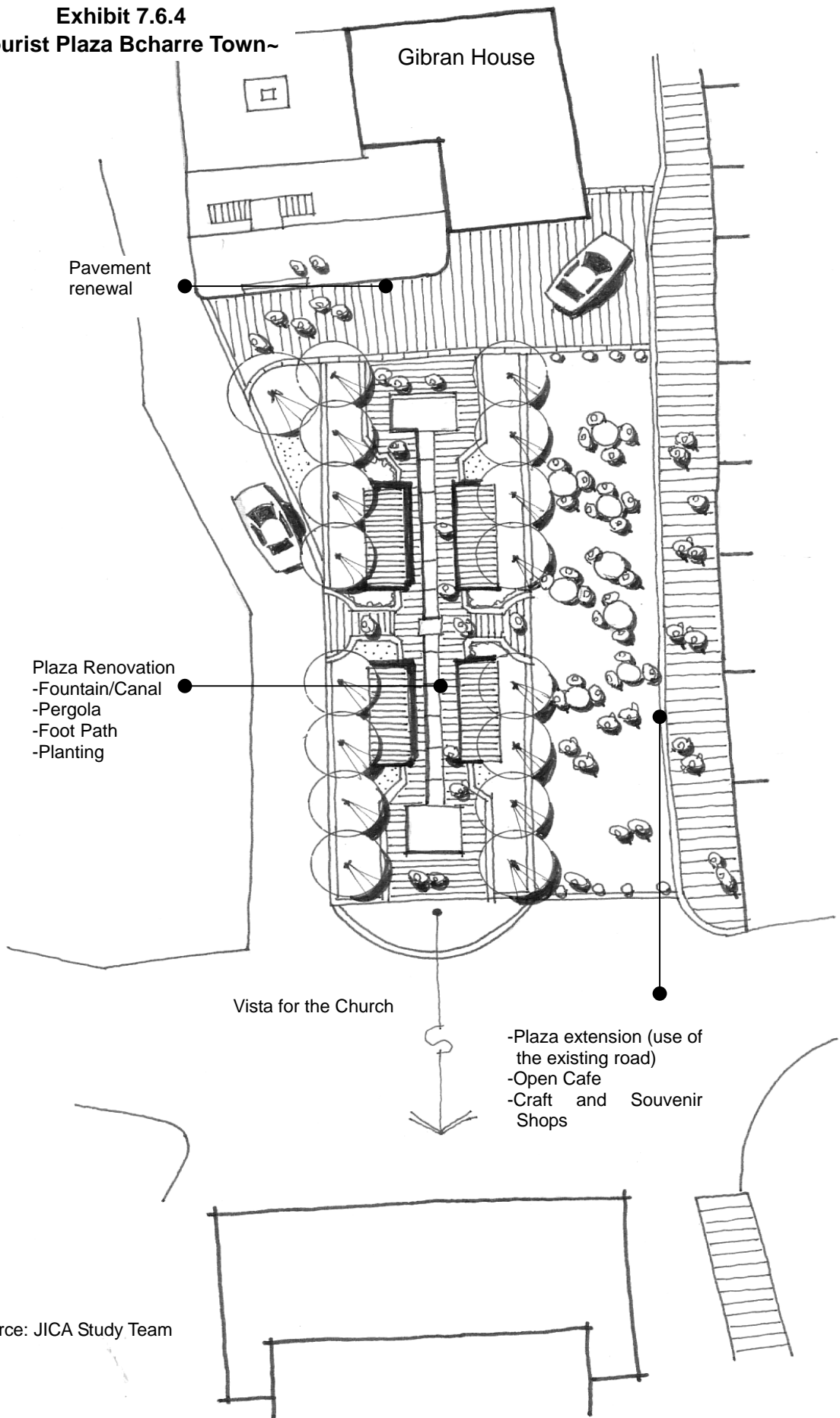
Staffing and Management	Municipalities will manage the works with an internal project management unit according to donor's requirements.
Training	None required.

Figure 7.6.3 Roadside Viewpoint



Source: JICA Study Team

Exhibit 7.6.4
~Tourist Plaza Bcharre Town~



(4) **B4 Qadisha Scenic Heritage Trail**

This package aims to provide an environmentally sensitive medium by which large numbers of visitors young and old can easily enjoy the dramatic beauty of the Qadisha Valley without even taking the trouble to enter it. It will also provide an open-air theater and citizens park where cultural events can be staged without infringing upon the valley.

1. Project Code	B4
2. Project Title	Qadisha Scenic Heritage Trail
3. Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -To create a new attraction supporting public enjoyment of dramatic valley scenery without entering the valley. -To promote of non-motor, healthy modes of visitor circulation, walking & cycling. -To increase environmental benefits through reduction in noise, air pollution, traffic congestion.
4. Project Components	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Trail on valley rim for walking & cycling & other built features 11-14 km long -Interpretive information and memorials & statuary, Via Crucis -Management innovations favoring non-motor circulation reducing auto use
5. Location	Sectors between towns on Qadisha valley rim
6. Main Implementing Organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All villages included on the trail (from Hadath El Jibbe to Blaouza) - Federation of municipalities of Bcharre Qaza - Bcharre Tourism Development Council [secondary] - Patriarch of Maronite faith
7. Main Beneficiaries	<p>Small enterprises in towns linked by the trail: The rise in visitor volume will create additional food & beverage, souvenir sales and generate new jobs.</p> <p>Pilgrims: Without any need to descend into the Valley visitors can pray, reflect and share spiritually in the valley's meaning.</p> <p>Recreational visitors: The trail will provide ideal observation points for daytime and nighttime cultural, festive and religious events.</p>
8. Possible Donor Support	Global Environment Facility, a cultural or heritage foundation, religious
9. Project Cost and Revenue	Trail proper: 12,000 meters Improvements:
10. Implem. Schedule	Short/medium term
11. Project Description	
Activities	<p>Main works: Municipalities will build walking and cycling trails on sectors between the towns to create a rim circuit offering splendid views. The trail will have crosswalks, parking lots, ample spaces for gatherings and performances, shuttle stops. Trail design will be user-friendly to promote easy use by families with children and elderly, with baby carriages, bicycles and use by prayer groups & pilgrims.</p> <p>Light works: Interpretive signage, and information kiosks at the start & finish villages are required. Commemorative plaques, statuary and memorials on cultural and religious themes can be added. A 14-station Via <i>Dolorosa</i> ["Way of the Cross"] could be added at the Diman sector. Street furniture and low level lighting is to be included. The federation of municipalities will coordinate the work on the sectors.</p>

	<p>Implementation framework: Local government authorities will sanction the project, secure funding and create the project management unit. Right-of-way and land ownership issues will be resolved before construction of each sector by municipal and qaza authorities. Local sponsors will fund light works, trail memorials.</p> <p>Trail management: Ongoing maintenance & upkeep provided by respective municipalities. Monitoring will control picnicking.</p> <p>Activities: Bcharre Tourism Development Council, tour operators & cultural and religious societies will offer special interest trail walks and events throughout the year particularly at local festival times, religious and civil holidays.</p>
Expected Results	<p>Reduced Congestion: reduction in traffic congestion on weekends, holidays & festival periods</p> <p>Reduced Pollution: reduction in noise & air pollution in the towns</p> <p>Increased leisure traffic: touring by families with babies, senior citizens, cyclists, special interest youth, tour and religious groups to increase spending in town.</p> <p>Valley preservation: Reduction of public intrusion into Qadisha valley floor for recreation purposes.</p>
Staffing and Management	<p>Works: to be managed by the municipality & qaza officials</p> <p>Management: Minimal additional maintenance staff needed. Local youth and religious groups can stage occasional cleanup campaigns.</p>
Training	None required.

Photo 7.6.3
 Hasroun City Center



(5) **B5 Promotion of Village Lodging**

This program is to pioneer an economic use of villagers' homes in the Bcharre qaza, especially of houses with some charm, to provide overnight lodging for visitors wishing to stay in the towns around Qadisha Valley.

1. Project Code	B5
2. Project Title	Promotion of Village Lodging
3. Objectives	To establish of <i>cottage industries</i> like B&B by villagers. To use charming houses for commercial lodging.
4. Project Components	-Promotion of industry, service standards, to villagers. -Management training of villagers as innkeepers. -Provision of micro-finance for home refurbishment. -Creation of marketing mechanisms.
5. Location	Bcharre qaza
6. Main Implementing Organization	Bcharre Tourism Development Council [BTDC]
7. Main Beneficiaries	Village families providing B&B service
8. Possible Donor Support	USAID, other bilateral agency
9. Project Cost and Revenue	Innkeeper training: 3 cycles @ \$50,000 = \$150,000 Microfinance: from existing programs
10. Implem. Schedule	Short term
11. Project Description	
Activities	<u>Launch</u> : BTDC will hold informative meetings with interested villagers assisted by the Lebanon Hotel Association and a small business agency. It will secure assistance from a donor for training programs. <u>Training</u> : BTDC will coordinate training in Bcharre for villagers as innkeepers to include foodservice, accounting, English language, minimal standards for facilities, basic business skills and marketing. A Lebanese hotel training institution can implement this training on site. <u>Home improvements</u> : Innkeepers requiring loans will receive advice on micro-finance sources and conditions.
Expected Results	-Lodging capacity increase in villages possibly 50 rooms [100 beds] after 3 years. -Income generation for middle aged, "empty nesters" couples or women having unused bedrooms.
Staffing and Management	A BTDC officer will coordinate this program. This officer will see if similar existing program for innkeeper training can be extended to cover Bcharre Qaza.
Training	An existing program by USAID or other organization can be extended to Bcharre qaza.

(6) B6 Bcharre Tourism Development Council Strengthening

This program is to establish an effective private organization to develop new products and to promote new segments of tourism to the Bcharre qaza.

1. Project Code	B6
2. Project Title	Bcharre Tourism Development Council (BTDC) Strengthening
3. Objectives	(1)To strengthen BTDC as the main implementing arm and promoter of master plan proposals; (2)To create new events and activities to enrich the contents of tourism experience; and (3)To develop a network with various tour operators and related organizations for tourism promotion. (4)To expand participation to include all the municipalities and many local businesses
4. Project Components	-Training of BTDC members for tourism promotion and marketing. -Creation of new events, entertainments and programs -Development of promotional media
5. Location	Bcharre Qaza
6. Main Implementing Organization	BTDC
7. Main Beneficiaries	Local tourism industry and people
8. Possible Donor Support	Technical cooperation for training USAID (Private public partnership training) EU(capacity building) Italian Aid Agency(capacity building) JICA(Grass Root grant for NGO)
9. Project Cost and Revenue	Training costs including website development \$US 200,000
10. Implementation Schedule	2004-2005 <MOT> -Grant searching -Training program searching <BTDC> -Holding widest range of non-member stakeholders meeting and formation of stakeholder forum -Training plan formulation /implementation - Based on the resolution at the forum, BTDC would conduct various promotion and marketing activities.
11. Project Description	
Activities	-BTDC will play a pivotal role in broadening Bcharre's "products" and in promoting the designation. It also will play a role in getting this master plan funded and implemented. -MOT and the national hotel or tourism association can arrange occasional training for BTDC in the techniques for creating and managing events, working with various tour operators and organizing joint advertising and promotion activities.

	<p>-Creation of new events, entertainment and programs: The cultural calendar of the Qaza can be studded with festival weekends and ceremonies, moving masses of people, and BTDC can assist municipalities in improving existing festivals, improving their logistics, and in creating new ones. Coordination with MOT is recommended.</p> <p>-BTDC can also encourage investors to establish new activities such as: A hi-tech aerial spectacle held in the heavens above the valley using laser or some other advanced imagery technology. For various shows, for different themes and target public;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> >Hot-air balloon ascensions over the valley and nearby mountains for sightseers; >Re-enactments of historic events of a cultural or religious nature featuring local actors and youths; >Family-oriented street entertainment at festivals such as jugglers, poets, acrobats and the like, and >Traveling exhibitions to foreign museums, tourism at fairs and cultural centers on themes related to the Cedars of Lebanon or to the Qadisha Valley. <p>-BTDC can designate an officer to learn about pilgrimage tourism, which is well developed in Jordan and Egypt, to assist Lebanese tour operators in tapping this special market and routing it to Bcharre. He/she can develop prototype tour programs, promote Bcharre's rich religious calendar and design a strategy to promote the highly symbolic Qadisha Valley in selected foreign markets.</p> <p>-Development of promotional media: At minimal cost BTDC can establish a website firstly to display information to target markets. Secondly the website is to steer the traveling public to the specific tour operators, foreign or Lebanese, selling trips to Bcharre (per hotlines, co sponsorship of booking pages). Most likely, BTDC can structure this as a sales platform relying on an exiting website rather than start one from scratch.</p> <p>-The cultural, religious, nature-based and meetings segments may be the initial set of user groups to target. A good linkage with the MOT'S website will be essential. BTDC will then be able to send out monthly e-bulletins to a global e-mailing list of tour operators in the relevant specialties (nature, ski, pilgrimages, cultural travel, etc.) The website can be used also as the means for Diaspora investment out-reach to tap their capital and know how for B&B, restaurant and other types of business development in Bcharre.</p> <p>-Where BTDC identifies serious information gaps for target visitors groups, it can produce helpful materials such as a trekking and hiking trail map for targeted distribution to specified visitor groups. Other opportunities include brochures, in different languages, for the scenic heritage walk, and for the proposed museums and visitors centers.</p>
Expected Results	<p>-Strengthened BTDC conducting proactive marketing through link with various tour operators, related organizations and Diaspora societies.</p> <p>-Enriched tourism experience in the villages full of colorful and lively events and entertainment without disturbing the holiness of the Qadisha Valley.</p>
Staffing and Management	<p>Program Director Secretary</p>
Training	<p>Training at BTDC is the main component of the person.</p>

7.6.2 Additional Measures

The master plan also contains a variety of additional measures requiring very limited resources but having substantial impact in the short term. Many contain recommendations for capacity-building and institution-building. Roles for the NGO world and private sector interventions are defined. Explanations appear below.

(1) Skills Training for Municipal Officials

In order for city officials to grasp the scope of the tourism industry, and its potentials and its pitfalls, officials at the municipal and qaza levels will require training in topics such as:

- the scope of the tourism industry and thinking like a destination,
- management and marketing of heritage areas,
- the special needs of holy destinations,
- quality sensitivity and hospitality training for innkeepers, shopkeepers and foodservice staff,
- tourism awareness training for youth, business community, service providers,
- the need for good environmental management and urban hygiene, and
- problems caused by seasonality.

MOT and relevant trade associations can provide training for local government officials in the above-mentioned areas.

(2) Development of Arts and Crafts

The plan strongly supports activities to improve the quality and marketability of locally produced crafts. Through the implementation of a Bcharre Handicrafts Cooperative, working with the Bcharre Tourism Development Council, training programs for handicraft design, production, merchandising, and marketing would be held.

Today cedar wood products are typically sold, although it is somewhat jarring to tourists to be in a reserve with endangered trees and see products made of the same wood. If it is determined that cedar wood should continue to be used for handicrafts, the marketing strategy should include a public awareness element, i.e., that trees are never cut down but rather fallen branches are recycled to make products.

More marketable would be products made from trees that are easily regenerated such as pine cones and olive pits, not pine wood or olive wood. To reflect the World Heritage patrimony and religious nature of the Qadisha Valley and Holy Cedars, religious souvenirs could also be showcased to growing numbers of pilgrims. Well designed t-shirts and other logo items, that quietly reflect the nature of the reserve, should also be available. However, merchandising strategies should separate items to meet market demand.

In order to make Bcharre's handicraft base sustainable, another type of craft should be developed. One idea would be to produce products that incorporate the Qaza's strong agricultural and apple base. This might be accomplished through a contemporary pottery industry that would be connected to the apple industry. Pottery is an ancient craft in the Middle East, but the quality on Lebanon is very low. A large segment of cultural heritage tourists throughout the world buy "local pottery" when

they travel. Rather than mimicking a lost traditional craft, kilns could be built and potters could be trained to create high quality contemporary designs as “signature” items for the Qadisha Valley. Potteries are also tourist attractions. Local apple juice products could then be packaged in the locally produced pottery.

One strategy for handicraft development is to create specific product identities in certain regions or villages. Because of excellent design and high quality production, this strategy has been successfully implemented in Central America (particularly in Mexico and Guatemala) and in the South of France. For example, Baalbek is already known for its rugs and textiles and this identity could be better marketed. Aanjar and Rashaiya already produce extraordinary jewelry, and they could be internationally known for their jewelry. Bcharre could establish a new identity as the place to buy apple, pottery and natural products.

(3) Development of Agricultural Products

Olive oils, apples and their byproducts such as ciders, flavorings, essences, dried fruits, gift packaging and the like are all produced in nearby areas [Zgharta, Kura] and can be sold at the towns of Bcharre qaza. Local government officials and BTDC can arrange for programs similar to the Rene Moawad Foundation-USAID training program supporting apple and olive oil production [and also foodservice skills] to boost local agriculture directly in support of tourism. Local producers can supply local farmers markets, area restaurants and foodservice establishments.

An interesting opportunity is the olive oil story. Consumer interest is rising in this product and a local olive grower could add educational improvements to depict the history, the religious symbolism, and the steps in the processing of the olives into a variety of products. A range of well presented and packaged products reflecting some local history can be offered for sale to visitors as highly tasteful souvenirs. A Qadisha label of the most virgin oil could be introduced for sale at Bcharre.

A critical need directly in the Qadisha Valley is the reactivation of terrace farming to save the deteriorating terraces and make them productive once again. The religious communities controlling the different sectors of the valley may require special assistance to relaunch cultivation on the abandoned terraces through revival of traditional crops [olives, apples, fruits] and possibly through the introduction of new higher value crops [decorative flowers, medicinal herbs, plants with holy significance]. The story of the successful agricultural production of hermits for centuries is one that can be illustrated and retold by present-day farmers. Oil produced from the valley's olive terraces could have special meaning to visitors to the holy valley.

(4) A Reinvigorated Cedars Ski Resort

Lebanon is home to six ski areas, and some of them, like Faraya, are of an international standard. In order to better meet local, regional and international (particularly European) demand, the Cedars Ski Resort needs to be reinvigorated to an international standard. The challenge for this aging and relatively under-developed facility is four-fold:

- To be compatible with the nationally symbolic and religious character of the nearby Cedars Forest Reserve/World Heritage site. The proposed buffer zone will separate the different purposes of the forest and the ski village and give them

separate, unique identities.

- To comprehensively master plan the area, so that future growth is attractive, sustainable, and fits within a well designed ski village framework, offering a sense of place and identity. Either the government or the private sector could develop the master plan; its land use recommendations and facility design guidelines would be followed by private sector concessionaires or investors.
- To upgrade and expand its facilities including ski runs, lifts (4 owned by MOT), and visitor attractions, such as lodging, restaurants, and shops.
- To protect mountain landscapes but also allot expanded terrain for both downhill skiing and cross country trails.

Ski areas can be havens for successful real estate when they offer “sustainable slopes” and their environments are both protected and enhanced with attractive visitor facilities. For example, the Telluride Ski Area in Colorado experienced a 68% increase in the average price of local housing from 2002 to 2003. The number of skiers rose 30%. Last year, from December 17-31st, there were a record-breaking 53,054 skiers. Telluride’s success is attributed in part to its very stringent planning and design standards, which take into account historic preservation and new facility design, and in part to promotional activities, both of which make the area a long-term sustainable investment.

Experience in ski areas throughout the world indicates that this can best be achieved through improved planning and landscape preservation, infrastructure, public awareness and service training programs, and good facility and signage design standards. Typical ski resort master plans address environmental management issues for summer and winter activities and the provision of lifts and trails, buildings on the slopes and near the base, slope grooming operations including snowmaking and supportive infrastructure such as power, communications and hydraulic services. The development and management of the ski slopes are interdependent with that which occurs in the resort base areas or villages, ensuring that access, accommodation and services attract skiers and meet their needs. Facilities should provide for non-skier needs as well. If the village is attractive enough, the number of non-skiers can significantly contribute to the local economy through shopping and dining.

A strong argument can be made in favor of a sole operator, who can implement all components of the master plan and actual development including sensitive, coordinated facility design and vigorous international marketing. An economically prosperous ski resort with built in safeguards for sustainability will serve as a worthy neighbor to the heritage assets of the Cedars Reserve. Through further analysis in Phase 3, the JICA Study Team will analyze the objectives of the master plan, facilities, and creation of a year-round economy at The Cedars Ski Resort, to promote prosperity of the entire area. [See full treatment in Volume 3, Chapter 10]

(5) The Special Case of Qannoubine Monastery

This monastery is a major pilgrimage asset in the center of the valley, famed throughout the Maronite world. In fact because of its inspiring symbolism and easy walking accessibility from Blaouza (a 15 minutes walk away) it commonly receives gatherings of hundreds of visitors on holy days during the warmer months, both

pilgrims and hikers, in very substandard, unsafe and unsustainable conditions. It is not realizing its role as such because of severe problems such as the lack of toilet facilities, deterioration of precious frescoes, lack of safety features [handrails, gates], insufficient gathering spaces to handle groups adequately, limited trail signage, and the poor condition of the trail from Blaouza to name a few problems. The Antonine Sisters serve as caretakers, and are fully aware of the problems of the facility.

As a major resource in the heart of the valley, the site management plan to be formulated for the entire heritage site [under project B1] will have to signal these inadequacies and risks and propose solutions for them, if they are still not adequately resolved for preservation and sustainability. The Maronite Church must take action to remedy the most urgent problems, and develop with the Sisters an improvement plan that can secure adequate funding from the appropriate sources. The nuns and the Patriarchate need to clarify their respective responsibilities and prepare such plans in order to rescue and preserve this deteriorating monastery for future generations.