

## APPENDIX 6

### Minutes of Meeting for Focus Group Discussions

Minutes of meeting for Focus group discussions are attached in the following.

<b>Place</b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>Date</b>
Baalbek City	1	October 11, 2003
	2	Jan 16, 2004
North Bekka Valley	1	Jan 17, 2004
	1	Sep 18, 2003
Zahle	2	Jan 15, 2004
	1	Oct 17,2003
Niha	2	Jan 16, 2004
	1	Oct 14, 2003
Aanjar	2	Jan 15, 2004
	1	Jul 22, 2003
Bcharre	2	Jul 26, 2003
	3	Oct 16, 2003
	4	Oct 16, 2003
	5	Jan 13, 2004

**Study on the Integrated Tourism Development Plan in Lebanon**  
*A project of Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)*

**Second Group Interview on Social Impact of Tourism: Baalbeck.**

**1. Introduction**

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The JICA consultants, Mr. Hideo SAKAMOTO, Ms. Sandra A. CHESROWN and the local consultant Mr. Ammar ABOUD conducted a group interview with a mixed group in the region of Baalbeck.

**2. Objectives**

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The meeting was aimed to achieve the following:

- To identify the objectives and the strategies of Tourism Development.
- To identify projects for Tourism development.
- To identify the criteria's of assessment of Tourism Development projects.

The results of this interview will guide the tourism master plan in finding what are the priority projects that are the most suitable to local needs.

**3. Methodology**

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Over a period of 3 hours, participants were asked questions in plenary sessions and asked to write all ideas on paper under each theme. Group discussions were then conducted for each theme.

**4. Interview Findings**

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**4.1 Introduction**

The participants were eager to comment on the team's final list of project ideas, which as was explained to them is not finalized yet and they will have a chance to do so in the final meeting with them at the end of the year.

**4.2 Presentation/role**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Organization/Title</b>	<b>What they like in city</b>
Hammad Yaghi	Restaurant Owner/Casino Ras El-Ain	Old City
Fadia Chehade	Loan officer/Tourist committee	The Forteress
Imad Mortada	Jupiter Assoc. for Tourist Dev./President (15 members: lawyers & doctors)	Ras-al-Ain Area

<b>Name</b>	<b>Organization/Title</b>	<b>What they like in city</b>
Mohamad Rifai	Archaeologist/Restoration	Temple of Jupiter
Yaghi Khalil	Cherazad hotel/restaurant	Temple of Jupiter
Chawbi Alwan	Nawras Restaurant	Temple of Jupiter
Farid Othman	Nawras Restaurant	The Ruins
Leila El Chall	Ministry of Social Affairs/ Co-Director	Nature
Zaki Rifai	SAWA Group	
Ramy Lakkis	Lebanese Organization for Studies & Training Research Director	Old Houses
Hammad Yaghi	Restaurant/Engineer/Baalbek Festival	
Said Lakkis	Municipality/Tourism Development Org.	Ras-al-Ein Area/ Fortress/ Nature/ Social relations
Habib Jamal	Doctor/Pension      Owner	Local Hospitality
Batoul Yahfoufi	CREADEL-Liban (Social Dev. NGO) (4 participants did not sign in)	Ras-al-Ein Area
Elie Saba	MOT	

### **4.3 Strategies**

Participants were asked to list focused ways that tourism can benefit Baalbek:

- Increase socioeconomic level
- Create jobs (# #)
- Market products
- Agricultural products
- Handicrafts
- Raise living conditions
- Liquidity in market
- Improve economics
- Human interaction
- World cultural exchange
- Improve living conditions

- Link city with the rest of the country
- Make Baalbek into an international city
- Improve conditions on archaeological sites

Summary of Concerns:

- Economic growth
- Job opportunities

Then participants were asked to list strategies. Listed as examples were creation of tourist infrastructure and marketing handicrafts:

- Infrastructure appropriate for transportation
- Make more tourists spend more time
- More tourism associations and hotels
- More hotels and restaurants
- Better environments
- MOT Specialized services infrastructure/offices
- Resthouses, hotels, camping
- Interpreting and connecting archaeological sites with the city (# #)
- Renovating sites
- Decree recognizing the city not only as an archeological site but also as an international tourist center.
- Incentives to increase length of stay
- Handicraft workshops
- Resorts (# #)
- Identification of cultures in city
- Dividing houses from souks (residential area from commercial one)
- Archeological site preservation
- Demonstrate locations and renovations
- Revive cultural heritage
- Activate role of tourism
- Link old city
- Create tourism interaction

Participants were asked to narrow down the list of strategies into three, so participants divided into groups to arrive at those three.

The three were:

- (1) Human Resource Development – Participants explained that all other strategies are linked to human resource development and training, as local people have to be trained for new job opportunities in tourism such as archaeology, hygiene, marketing, handicrafts, site preservation, youth camps, folklore activities, and agricultural activities.
- (2) Master Plan for Tourism – Participants explained that this included hotels and restaurants, having a tourism office at the municipality, renovating the ruins, urban planning to link the sites, high quality of guides, and advertising and promotion.
- (3) Investment Plan – Participants explained that this included linking sites to increase visitor length-of-stay, linking the citadel to other sites such as the caves,

Mercury Temple, and Ras al Ein, and the need to build tourism complexes or resorts offering other activities such as tennis, equestrian activities.

#### **4.4 Projects**

Participants were asked to list specific projects that they would like to see implemented. These included:

- Handicraft training (###)
- Training of tour guides at a special school or at the Lebanese University branch in Baalbek,
- Training in art sets/heritage,
- Environmental tours,
- Building of rest houses/hotels and adaptive reuse of the French Mandate hotel buildings,
- Master plan linking sites,
- Industrial development (##)
- Renovation of caves,
- Improvement of Transportation infrastructure
- Forcing tour operators to take tourists into the city,
- Publishing of tourism maps to identify points and places of interest
- Creating design guidelines to give one common appearance for buildings.
- Investment in old buildings or adaptive reuse.

#### **4.5 Criteria for Each Project**

Examples of criteria that were given:

- Project becomes quickly effective,
- Participation of poor people,
- Stimulates private investment,
- Attracts investors and is realistic to obtain funding.

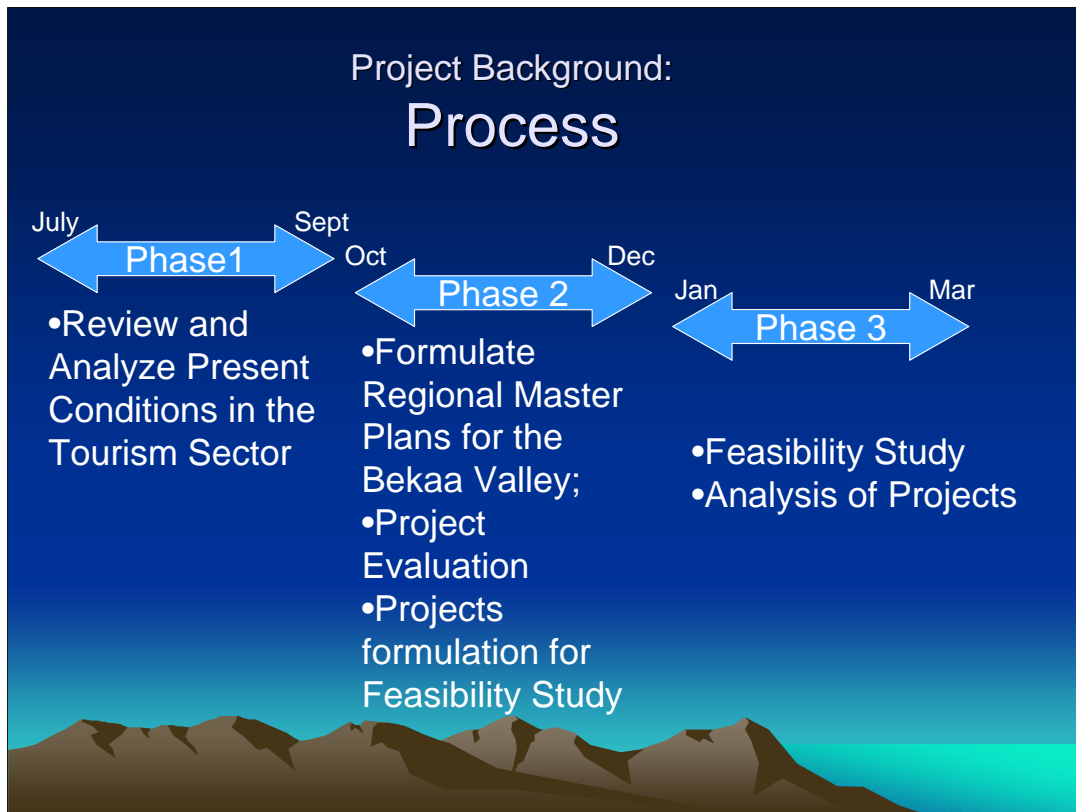
Participants added the following to this list:

- Project encourages farmers,
- Generates income,
- Has a spill-over effect,
- Stimulates participation or the number of people who can benefit,
- Integration of each project in an overall master plan,
- Links to rehabilitation of human resources,
- Integration in a work plan so that tourism developed to a certain level,
- Creates increased income from tourists.

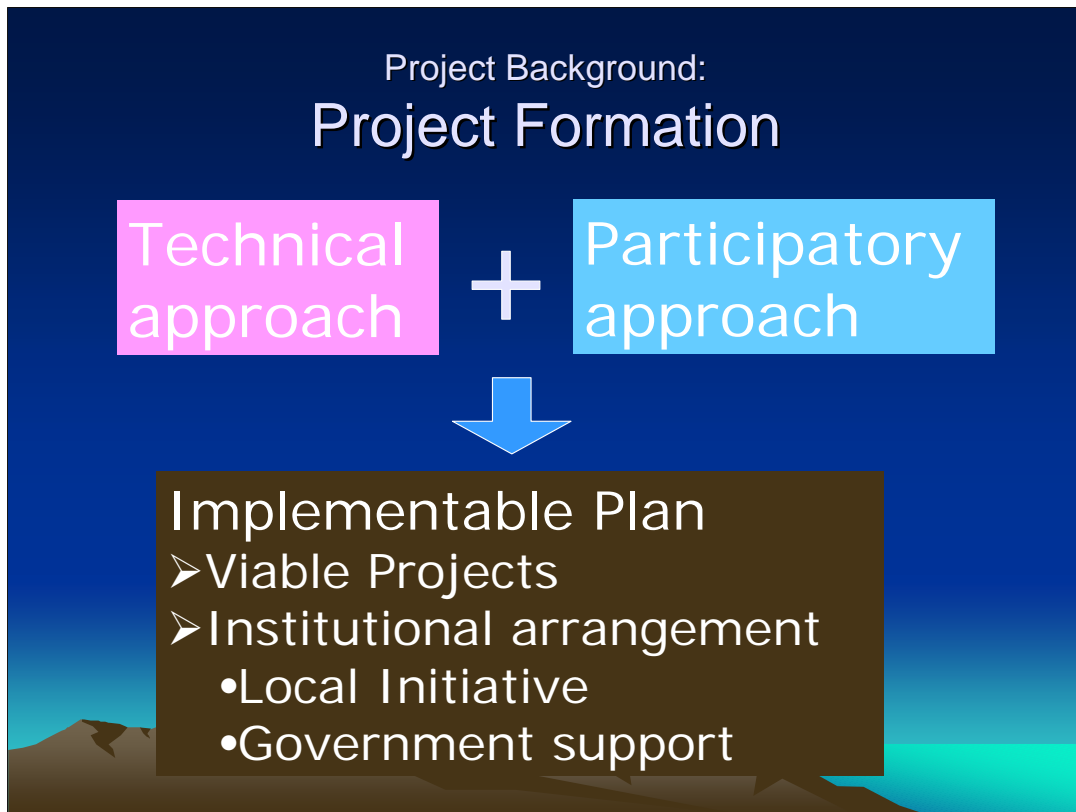
# Focus Group Interview ~Baalbeck~

2 PM, JANUARY 16, 2004

Sandi Chesrown, on behalf of the JICA Study Team, welcomed the community participants, and thanked them for working with the team over the past seven months. Particularly, she thanked President Ghaleb Yaghi and Mr. Lakkis and other members of the Tourism Development Committee, including the NGOs, who have provided the team with a window to Baalbeck's fascinating living heritage and culture. She also thanked Mrs. Mona Fares, MOT, and Dr. Abou Jaoude, CDR, for participating in the focus group, noting that they have strongly supported the project since its inception six years ago. Mrs. Fares thanked Dr. Haimari and the MOT staff, and told the participants that both MOT's and the JICA Study Team's goal is not only to complete "one more study" but to implement realistic projects that benefit the local communities of the Bekaa.



Ammar explained the project's phases, noting that the team has completed Phase 1 and Phase 2, and is completing feasibility studies and in-depth analysis of projects under Phase 3.



Ammar explained the team's master planning approach, combining technical expertise with community participation to arrive at viable, sustainable projects. He noted that the sustainability and implementation depends upon local initiative and government, donor, and private sector support.



## Participatory approach

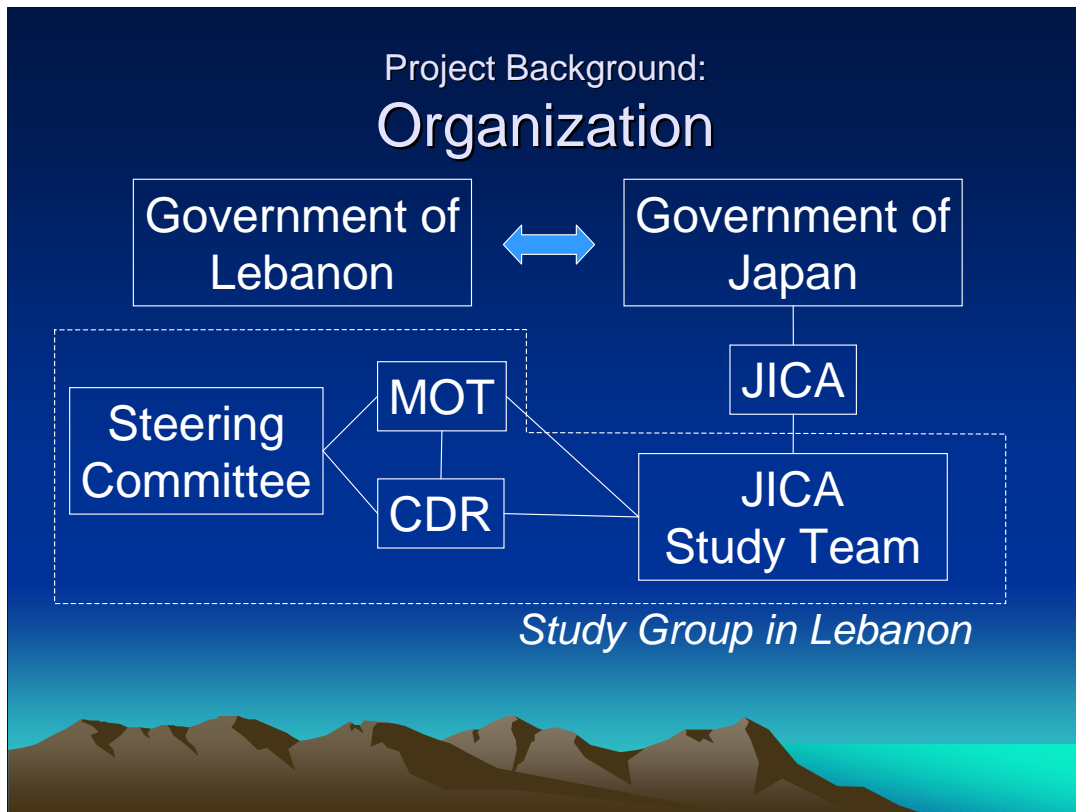
- Listening to the Community through Focus Group Meetings – August 27, September 19, October 11

Ammar reminded the group that the team has met with the Baalbeck community three times in the past (two focus groups and one site walk with the Tourism Development Committee), and has carefully listened to the community's input.

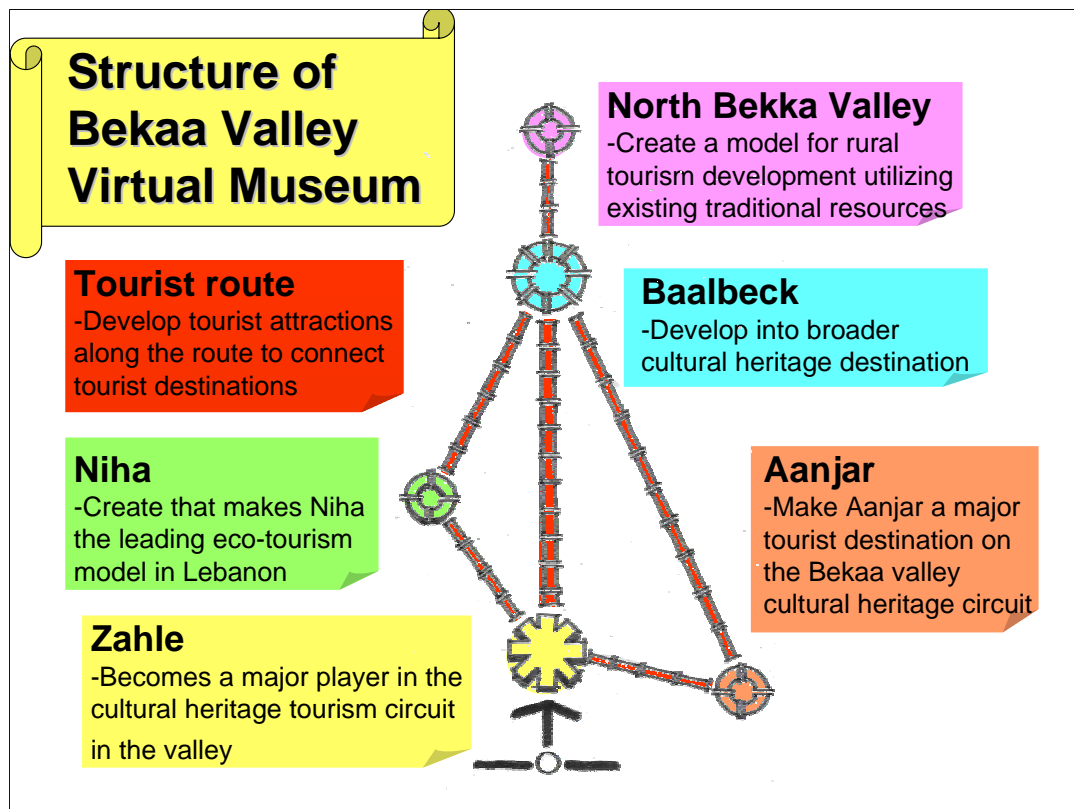
# Strategy

- Baalbeck as Part of Bekaa Valley Virtual Museum
  - Weaving the Thread of Local Attractions (linkages amongst sites) to Expand Tourism Development and Alleviate Poverty
- Strategy to develop a comprehensive tourism attraction
  - through sustainable cultural heritage tourism, which capitalizes on local resources
  - draws visitors from the Qala'a to shop at the souk, explore the local museum, continue to the Temple of Mercury, and dine along the Ras El Ain

Ammar explained the team's regional planning strategy: creating linkages amongst the Bekaa Valley's communities and attractions, and developing a comprehensive cultural heritage tourist attraction that draws visitors from the Qala'a to the medina and lengthens their stay in Baalbeck, expanding spending patterns, thus, boosting the local economy.



Ammar Abboud, the JICA Study Team Facilitator, explained the project's organizational chart as illustrated in Slide 2.



Ammar expanded on the linkages amongst Niha, Zahle, Aanjar, Baalbeck, and the Northern Bekaa, created by the Bekaa Valley Virtual Museum concept. He emphasized the creation of “a road map” for tourism creating a large circuit for a prolonged tourism experience, where each focal point serves as an attraction linked to another attraction along the circuit.

# Meeting Demand

- Cultural Tourists from the West and other regions including Levant and Gulf
- Expats and Lebanese Beiruitis, especially for festivals
- Regional Tourists (administrative center)

Ammar explained that Baalbeck's primary tourism market is comprised of international cultural heritage tourists, expats and Lebanese living in Beirut who are interested in special events like the summer festival, and regional tourists from the Levant, including Syria and Jordan.

## Proposed Projects

- Baalbeck Heritage Redevelopment Package Activities
- Baalbeck Heritage Hotel Complex Activities

Sandi explained that the JICA Study Team has identified two comprehensive projects under the master plan for Baalbeck: the Heritage Redevelopment Package and the Heritage Hotels Package.

The Heritage Redevelopment Package recommends the creation of a critical mass of cultural heritage attractions, to entice visitors away from the Qala'a and in to the medina and to the Mercury Temple. The package includes tourism management, handicrafts design and marketing including organization of a Bekaa Valley Handicrafts Cooperative, perhaps furniture workshops (inspired by a visit to the Monsignor's workshop), a museology internship, and exhibition and festival design.

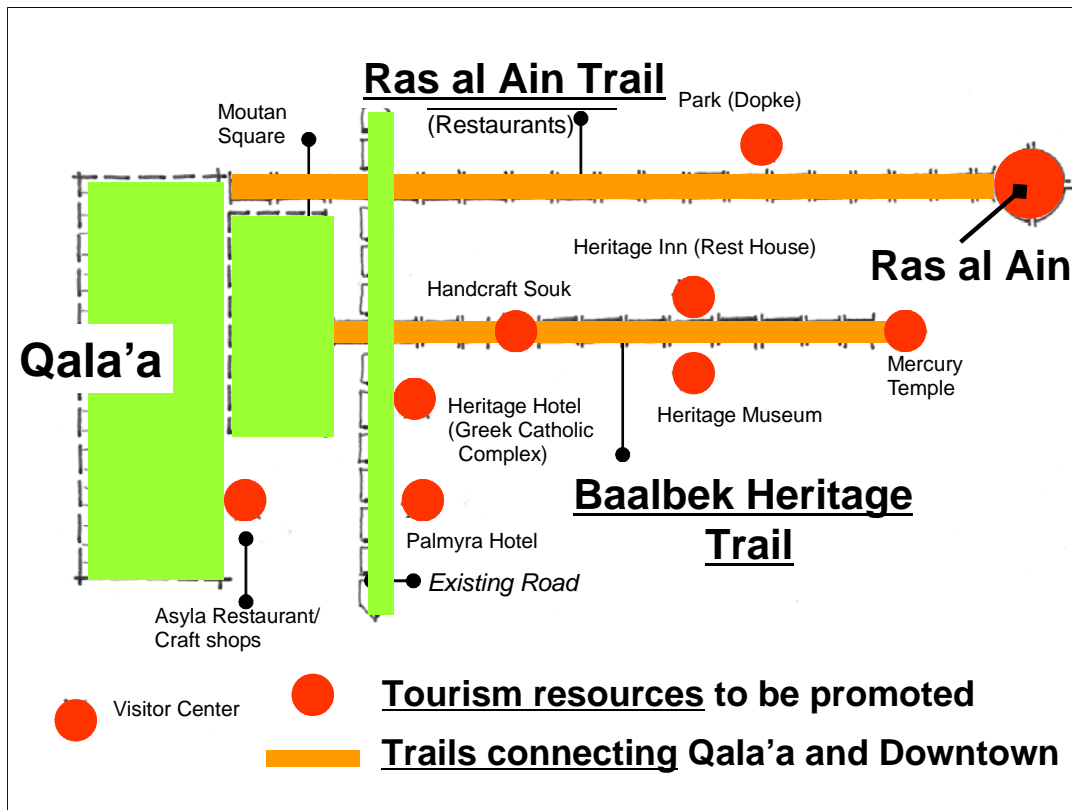
She noted that as the tourism development committee has requested, and as Mr. Lakkis has shown the group today, the team is recommending a city map/brochure illustrating a visitor's walking tour. Imbedded in the sidewalk pavement would be a historical timeline, to entice visitors to walk on two different trails: the Ras al Ain Trail and the Baalbeck Heritage Trail.

## Proposed Projects

- Baalbeck Heritage Redevelopment Package Activities
- Baalbeck Heritage Hotel Complex Activities

Continue from previous slide:

Baalbeck does not currently provide visitors with either good mid-range or high-end lodging, which discourages visitors from staying overnight. The Palmyra Hotel is a wonderful cultural icon, but it is not providing the type of lodging that is expected by international cultural heritage tourists. Based on conversations with the World Bank's CHUD project and the Monsignor of the Greek Catholic Church who owns the three French Mandate buildings along Moutran Square (who was present), the JICA Study Team recommends that the buildings be adaptively reused and renovated to become unique, mid-range Baalbeck lodging of approximately 40 rooms. The buildings are ideally located and the adaptive reuse would allow historic preservation of this important cultural asset.



Sandi explained that the map is a conceptual drawing, not intended to be physically accurate, which illustrates the recommended visitor trails. Each of the orange stars indicates a cultural heritage resource and a potential stop on the walking tour from the Qala'a to the medina. She noted that the goal would be to bring tourists down the Heritage Trail during the day after their visit to the Qala'a, where they could visit the handicrafts souk, a heritage museum (currently the Moutran House which would be renovated to exhibit local history), a rest house across the street (also a historic building that could be adaptively reused), and the Mercury Temple. Visitors could then return to either the Palmyra Hotel or the Heritage Hotel (Greek Catholic Complex) to stay overnight. During the evening, they could walk down the Ras al Ain Trail to visit local restaurants for dinner and perhaps to see a special dapke show or other local "living heritage" event in the city park. This would expand their visit from a few hours to a couple days.



# Implementation Discussion

- What is necessary for implementation?
  - Who will carry it out?

Sandi thanked the focus group for listening to the team's ideas and requested that they express their views on the master plan. Prior to that discussion, the team would like to ask who will be the "local champions," those community members who will promote implementation and be the points of contact in the future. During the course of the study, the local champions were the municipality, the tourism committee, the Greek Catholic Waqf, the NGOs like CREADEL and the Lebanese Association for Studies and Training, as well as the private sector like Asyla Handicrafts. But who will be the local champions in the future? The group indicated that the same people would be involved in implementation, and that the Tourism Development Committee is already organized as a combination of the public and private sector. But the municipality will need help finding international donors.

Discussion of the master plan followed. The President requested that the trails map be improved to better express the locations of the facilities. Another gentleman thanked the team for coordinating with the CHUD project, and liked the trails concept but added they should also link Ras Al Ain to the Mercury Temple. He recommended that linkages be created between the two trails using city streets and directional signage. Mr. Lakkis said there were two key elements missing: a third trail to the Garroud Barracks in the opposite direction, and links to the grotto (located in the middle of a residential neighborhood). In addition, ecotourism was not mentioned, although Baalbeck, like Japan, is famous for its cavalier, and horse riding could be included.

# Implementation Discussion

- What is necessary for implementation?
  - Who will carry it out?

Continue from previous slide:

A woman mentioned that religious tourism could also be included, as there are Shi'ite pilgrims who would be interested in visiting the new (blue) mosque. Sandi said she agreed that the new mosque was an amenity and noted that the team had asked about religious tourism at an earlier focus group, and the concept had been discouraged. She explained that the team's goal was to create a "critical mass" of tourism focused on the niche market of cultural heritage tourism. She said there are many types of tourism that Baalbeck could attract in the future, including all those segments that were mentioned, but this project tried to focus on improving attractions that would be interesting to the current demand, which is cultural heritage tourism.

One woman said that tourists are only interested in the temples site, not the medina. Sandi responded that currently there isn't much in the medina to attract tourists. Although Baalbeck has a very rich cultural and architectural heritage that could be very attractive to tourists, it is not visible and available to them and therefore they can not experience it.

The President said the municipality has plans of their own to create a heritage museum near the Visitors Center at the Qala'a on municipally owned land. Sandi responded that Baalbeck has a rich heritage, and a heritage museum is a very good idea. But if the heritage museum is in the medina rather than at the Qala'a it will draw visitors into the city; otherwise, the tour operators can continue to bring visitors only to the Qala'a, which is much easier for them but will not benefit the community.

# Implementation Discussion

- What is necessary for implementation?
  - Who will carry it out?

Continue from previous slide:

Woman – Agrees that the museum should not be at the visitors center but at an alternate site in the medina, but she would also like to see an open air theatre for cultural activities in the city.

Municipality rep – Said that we need to focus on land that the municipality owns; one parcel is above Ras al Ain and could perhaps be a long-term health facility (?). He said that all tourism experts seem to agree that Baalbeck should emphasize cultural heritage tourism, so the community will accept that.

# Funding

- Do you have any ideas for fund raising for the project?
- Discussion of donor meetings.

With regard to funding, the group indicated that there was not much local money available for investment. The President said that funds are limited, but that the municipality can play a role, as they are with CHUD/Waqf (renovation of the façade of the French Mandate buildings on Moutran Square). A conversation followed regarding the need for local investor incentives (tax or other). Mike McVey, JICA Study Team, discussed the IDAL program, and noted that we are encouraging them to expand their activities to the tourism sector. Mr. Lakkis said an IDAL 3% loan becomes a 9% loan due to other costs, he then added that there should be some guaranties to investors to alleviate their initial fears. Mike promised to look at ways to facilitate private sector development in tourism.

Invitation

## Tele-seminar for communities

- ❑ JICA Study Team prepares a seminar to share the experiences and knowledge of tourism development in Japan.
- ❑ Two seminars will be held on separate days.
  - 26 Jan (Mon): Eco-tourism development
  - 30 Jan (Fri): Partnership among Private and public
  - 12:00~15:00 (the seminar begins at 13:00)
  - At Berytech, Mar Roukos
- ❑ Transportation fee can be reimbursed. Snacks will be served.
- ❑ Language: Arabic based lecture
- ❑ 4 members from Baalbeck are invited for each seminar. (We need the participants' name.)

Ammar explained the up-coming tele-seminars and invited the Baalbeck community to participate.

## Theme of the seminar

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- 26, Jan: Eco-tourism Development
    - History and definition of eco-tourism
    - Potential of the compatible Eco-tourism development with the local agriculture industry.
    - Case study: Hoshino-resort.
  - 30, Jan: Partnership in tourism
    - Typical and Desired organizations
    - Two main objectives in partnership:
      - To achieve sustainable and safe development
      - To share the development
- 

Ammar noted that the meetings will be held in Beirut on January 26 and 30<sup>th</sup>.



Photos in Tele-seminar  
For NGOs  
On 16, Nov., 2003

The system connects  
between  
Lebanon and Japan.



President – Said that they are working on transforming Baalbeck into a touristic and cultural heritage city.

He again thanked the team for all of its hard work and the community and the meeting was adjourned.