OLD CITY OF DAMASCUS:
STRATEGY FOR A TOURISM ACTION PLAN

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Presentation of the Old City of Damascus

The Walled City: 130 hectares and about 30,000 inhabitants
In a Modern City of 4,000,000

On the World Heritage list in 1979
دمشق في منتصف القرن الثامن عشر - من أرشيف مديرية مساحة الخريطة
The Old City of Damascus

Previous episodes:

The battle against King Faisal Urban Motorway

The definition of a Buffer Zone
Tourism in Damascus

Restaurants and Hotels
نسبة إشغالات الفعاليات السكنية في المدينة القديمة من عام صدور القرار (1996 – 2008 م): 

*صدور تعديل نظام البناء الذي سمح بإشغال الأبنية لأغراض غير سكنية في المدينة القديمة 1996*
Tourism in Damascus

Statistics and Analyses
FIGURE 1: ARRIVÉES TOURISTIQUES INTERNATIONALES DANS 12 PAYS ARABES EN 1990

FIGURE 2: ARRIVÉES DES TOURISTES EN SYRIE (1961 - 2000)
Damascus Cultural Assets

- History
- Religions
- Archaeology
- Monuments
- Museums
- Urban Landscapes
- Atmosphere
- Cooking
- Handicrafts
- Traditions
FIGURE 7: VISITEURS DES MUSÉES DE TÈRE CATEGORIE EN 1999

S. ABDELALC
CULTURE / TOURISME / DÉVELOPPEMENT EN SYRIE
SEPTEMBRE 2001
SWOT Analysis

- Strengths
- Weaknesses
- Opportunities
- Threats
SWOT Analysis

Strengths

• Importance of existing tangible and intangible heritage
• Many stakeholders are genuinely attached to the Old City
• Restaurants are more than sufficient now
SWOT Analysis

Weaknesses

• Decreasing number of usual « cultural tourists »
• Present potential not fully exploited
• The Old City not sufficiently attractive for its residents
SWOT Analysis

Opportunities

- Many endeavours undertaken by the Municipality and the ministries of Culture and of Tourism
- The MAM Program beginning to provide assistance
SWOT Analysis

Threats

- The Old City is physically deteriorating
- Surviving Crafts and Skills are fading
- Authenticity is not sufficiently valued
- Residents are moving away
Proposed Strategy (1)

Objectives:

• To be ready for a better and peaceful regional environment,
• To induce tourists to stay longer in Damascus,
• To diversify the range of tourists (like convention participants),
• To increase the income of the old neighbourhoods communities,
• To focus on a sustainable development perspective, safeguarding cultural and natural assets,
• To prepare for both short and long time projects,
Proposed Strategy (2)

Main lines of action:

• To preserve existing cultural assets, their integrity and their authenticity along with UNESCO, ICOMOS and WTO recommendations and charters,
• To enhance and increase these assets,
• To develop new tourism products based on these assets,
• To link the tourism strategy to the overall planning for the whole city, whether old or contemporary,
• To link the tourism strategy to economical, social, environmental and cultural policies and particularly to the improvement of living conditions for the Old City communities.
• To generate income and employment in tourism, building, commerce, handicrafts, arts and other sectors
• To promote Old Damascus abroad and raise the population awareness inside,
• To provide for the necessary funding, incentives and training,
Short Term Objectives

• To develop tourist routes inside and outside the walled Town, a MAM project,
• To organise light or "sound and light" shows, a MAM project,
• To multiply cultural events, like musical concerts
• To provide information desks and facilities
Traffic Management
Khaled Al-A'zem Palace
- Museum of Historical Documentation

Classical Route

Hand Crafts Route
Middle and Long Term Objectives

- Archaeology
- History
- Monuments
- Museums
- Urban Landscapes
- Traffic
- Infrastructure
- Housing Rehabilitation
- Handicrafts and Building Crafts
- Tourism Management and Marketing
- Neighbourhood Action Areas
Carte des secteurs classé et remembré de Sarouja.
DGAM, février 2004.
A Contribution to the

ICDP

the Integrated Conservation and Development Plan

• Management and Protection of the Site
• Development Controls
• Permitting Procedures
• Environmental Improvements
• Public Interventions
• Economic Development
• Private sector Participation
• Raising the awareness
• Consultative Process (residents and NGOs)
Areas with: dilapidated bldg's; poor car access; lack of fire hydrants; air pollution
The End