

Ministry of Planning and Development Cooperation  
Construction and Housing Department

**The Sectors of: Construction, Housing,  
Services, Education and Learning**

**The Pivot of: Tourism, Archeological and  
Cultural Heritage**

**Forming a Work Team for Construction  
Housing and Services**

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The Sector of Tourism and Cultural Heritage

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## 1. **Tourism and Archeological and Cultural Heritage:**

### 1-1- **The Reality of Tourism:**

As a matter of fact, tourism is one of the significant components of economy, its effective contribution to national economy helps push forward the whole economic development process. Additionally, tourism plays an important national role through: development of relations between different nations and cultures, and enhancement of mutual communication.

Since 1991 and after the last war in 2003, tourism sector in Iraq has suffered from neglect. After the downfall of the former regime, a chaotic situation took place in various sectors: economic, social, cultural and tourism, many of which were exposed to widespread looting and destruction. Consequently, we believe plans and policies, related to reconstruction and rehabilitation of this vital sector, need to be reconsidered so as to consolidate its future contribution to the national economy and to diversify latter's potentials as Iraq enjoys different tourist attraction elements.

### 1-2- **Tourism Factors in Iraq :**

For ages, Iraq is known for tremendous and variable potentials in its different regions, this includes sites of: ancient civilizations and religious legacy and diverse geographic areas and climate. All this helps create and stimulate tourist attraction factors, which can be classified into:

#### a) Natural factors:

Natural factors are important to create and develop tourism in any area or geographic site. Iraq enjoys these necessary tourist elements: water animal and plant resources, in addition to geographic and climate diversity. In the north part of Iraq, characterized by mountainous views, natural forests, greenery and animals, moderate temperatures, snowfall and waterfalls. All these factors make the north region stand as a unique center for tourism attraction, especially for those interested in nature and hunting sports.

As for the central area, it is characterized by plain land with natural factors differ from those of the north area, here orchards seen on along the banks of both the Euphrates and Tigris rivers, making wonderful places for picnics.

The southern part is characterized by marshes which represent a tourist attraction center where water and warmth in addition to unique livestock and plants.

Thus, there are areas for hunting, others for camping and short picnics, and there are lots of natural springs and mineral water, all represent good tourist attraction centers. There are also areas with orchards and lakes for long term picnics, where tourism projects can be established, this includes both lakes: Al-razaza and Al-habaniya.

#### b) Historic Factors:

One of the first ancient civilizations established and developed in Iraq where social and urbane stability set the basis for pre-history historic human groupings, discovered through archeological artifacts, representing different ages from the first stone ages such as: Shnider cave, Jermon village in Chamchamal in Kirkok province, and other human communities, established 50 000 years ago.

c) **Religious Factors:**

In term of religious potentials, Iraq is known for religious landmarks all over the country, worship places, mosques, shrines and churches all tell stories of prophets and religion leaders. Mesopotamia is known for religious shrines and sacred sites. One can notice very old places, the number of visitors from inside and outside of Iraq is growing, especially during religious occasions.

**1-3- Tourist Facilities in Iraq:**

The total number of tourist facilities and accommodation is 505 in 2006, including 500 hotels, 5 tourism compounds, two in each of Ninawa and Basra and the other in Baghdad, as shown in table (1). Generally these tourism facilities are focused in these provinces: Baghdad, Najaf, Basra, Karbala, in about (13.1 – 22.6)% of the total number of facilities. Baghdad got the highest rates for it is the capital city, followed by Najaf and Karbala provinces, where tourism movement has been lately recovered due to religious value and turnout of visitors from inside and outside of Iraq to perform visit rituals at the religious shrines. As a result, a tendency emerged to invest money through building good hotels there due to secured financial return in both provinces, the thing had a positive effect at the level of both provinces in the economic, social and urban aspects.

Importantly to mention, the general tourism facilities have declined in the last few years due to the exceptional security situation in Iraq. Besides, the hotels covered by the survey statistics were only pertain to the private sector, yet, public sector hotels are not covered for they are occupied by the multi-national forces.

**1-3-1 – Indicators of tourism facilities in Iraq:**

In order to throw the light on the level of performance of these facilities, we include here a number of relevant indicators: number of beds in these tourism facilities, indicator of spending nights and numbers of inmates, as shown in table (1).

a) **Indicator of the number of beds:**

Both Najaf, Karbala and Baghdad provinces take the highest rates amounted: 24% & 21% this can be attributed to large number of hotels: 98 & 113 hotels consecutively.

b) **Night spending indicator:**

In this indicator we also find Najaf province taking the highest rates amounted 35.5% of the total in different provinces of Iraq. This can be attributed to large numbers of visitors from other provinces and neighboring countries and desire to spend nights there. Followed by Karbala and Basra with 12.4% & 11.5% consecutively. Due to Basra's geographic location and trade recovery that may requires spending nights for shipping goods from its sea ports.

c) **Indicator of number of inmates:**

This indicator tends to focus on these provinces: Najaf in the first place with a rate amounted 38.8%, followed by both Baghdad and Basra with rates: 17.5% & 11.7% consecutively.

Generally speaking, in accordance with these indicators, it is shown that tourism facilities are active in some provinces due to location and religious position and to some extent stability of security situation. As for the rest of provinces, despite the fact that some of them do have tourist potentials, whether historic or natural or religious, they stand below the level. Shortages in tourism facilities in these provinces can be attributed to security situation in Iraq, non-exploitation of tourism activities such as the provinces: Basra, Missan and Thi Qar for existence of marshes, which received great attention from government officials, yet, it did not reach the level, needed.

**Table (1)**  
Number of tourism facilities, including: hotels, tourism compounds in provinces of Iraq during 2006

| Provinces    | Hotels #   | Tourism<br>Compounds<br># | Apartments<br># | Houses #   | Tourism<br>Facilities # | %          |
|--------------|------------|---------------------------|-----------------|------------|-------------------------|------------|
| Ninawa       | 37         | 2                         | -----           | 106        | 39                      | 7.7        |
| Kirkuk       | 36         | -----                     | -----           | -----      | 36                      | 7.1        |
| Baghdad      | 113        | 1                         | 18              | -----      | 114                     | 22.6       |
| Babylon      | 8          | -----                     | -----           | -----      | 8                       | 1.6        |
| Karbala      | 65         | -----                     | -----           | -----      | 65                      | 12.9       |
| Wassit       | 8          | -----                     | -----           | -----      | 8                       | 1.6        |
| Saladin      | 22         | -----                     | -----           | -----      | 22                      | 4.3        |
| Najaf        | 98         | -----                     | -----           | -----      | 98                      | 19.4       |
| Qadisiya     | 4          | -----                     | -----           | -----      | 4                       | 0.8        |
| Muthana      | 13         | -----                     | -----           | -----      | 13                      | 2.6        |
| Thi Qar      | 15         | -----                     | -----           | -----      | 15                      | 3.0        |
| Missan       | 17         | -----                     | -----           | -----      | 17                      | 3.3        |
| Basra        | 64         | 2                         | 20              | -----      | 66                      | 13.1       |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>500</b> | <b>5</b>                  | <b>38</b>       | <b>106</b> | <b>505</b>              | <b>100</b> |

- Ministry of Planning / COSIT (Central Organization for Statistics and Information Technology) / Statistics on hotels in Iraq during 2006.

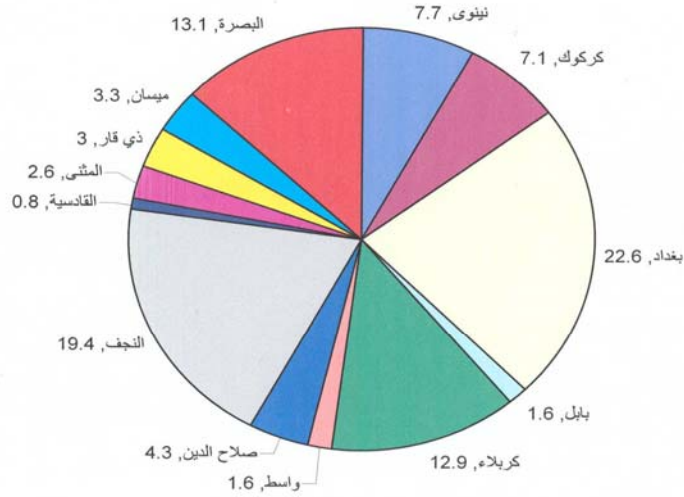
The resulting data based upon surveys conducted in different provinces two provinces: Dayala and Anbar were excluded due to security situation and hotels closed at the time the data-gathering was in process.

In addition the public sector hotels were not covered by the survey as these hotels were occupied by multi-national forces. The figures collected include hotels being operated on the ground, hotels being suspended or closed for security reasons were excluded.

**Table (2)**  
**Percentages of beds, night-spending and numbers of inmates in tourism facilities during 2006**

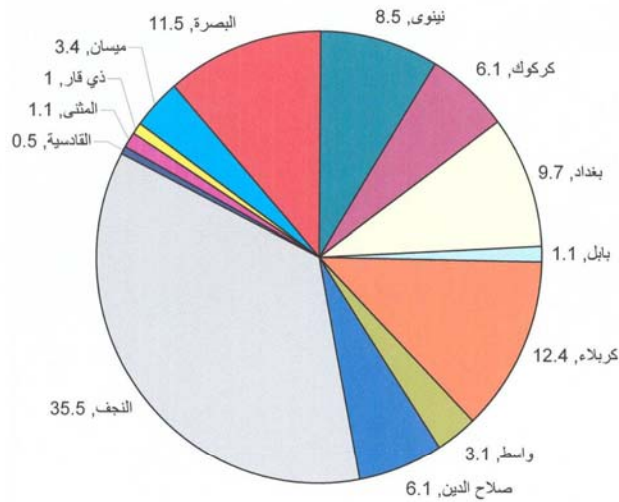
| <b>Provinces</b> | <b>Beds #</b> | <b>%</b>   | <b>Nights Spent</b> | <b>%</b>   | <b>Inmates #</b> | <b>%</b>   |
|------------------|---------------|------------|---------------------|------------|------------------|------------|
| Ninawa           | 2633          | 7.5        | 336175              | 8.5        | 68414            | 4.8        |
| Kirkuk           | 1688          | 4.8        | 235848              | 6.1        | 131172           | 9.2        |
| Baghdad          | 7443          | 21.1       | 380749              | 9.7        | 251115           | 17.5       |
| Babylon          | 341           | 1.0        | 44786               | 1.1        | 23779            | 1.7        |
| Karbala          | 6325          | 17.9       | 484868              | 12.4       | 131512           | 9.2        |
| Wassit           | 515           | 1.5        | 121366              | 3.1        | 3999             | 0.3        |
| Saladin          | 1386          | 3.9        | 239786              | 6.1        | 20117            | 1.4        |
| Najaf            | 8517          | 24.1       | 1394890             | 35.5       | 556502           | 38.8       |
| Qadisiya         | 259           | 0.7        | 19968               | 0.5        | 16369            | 1.2        |
| Muthana          | 1247          | 3.5        | 42950               | 1.1        | 11930            | 0.8        |
| Thi Qar          | 531           | 1.5        | 40596               | 1.1        | 16201            | 1.1        |
| Missan           | 841           | 2.4        | 133725              | 3.4        | 34494            | 2.4        |
| Basra            | 3582          | 10.1       | 452312              | 11.5       | 168476           | 11.7       |
| <b>Total</b>     | <b>35308</b>  | <b>100</b> | <b>3928019</b>      | <b>100</b> | <b>1434080</b>   | <b>100</b> |

Percentage of tourism facilities: hotels, tourism compounds in provinces for 2006



|          |      |
|----------|------|
| Ninawa   | 7.7  |
| Kirkuk   | 7.1  |
| Baghdad  | 22.6 |
| Babylon  | 1.6  |
| Karbala  | 12.9 |
| Wassit   | 1.6  |
| Saladin  | 4.3  |
| Najaf    | 19.4 |
| Qadisiya | 0.8  |
| Muthana  | 2.6  |
| Thi Qar  | 3    |
| Missan   | 3.3  |
| Basra    | 13.1 |

Percentages related to nights spent in tourism facilities in provinces in 2006



|          |      |
|----------|------|
| Ninawa   | 8.5  |
| Kirkuk   | 6.1  |
| Baghdad  | 9.7  |
| Babylon  | 1.1  |
| Karbala  | 6.1  |
| Wassit   | 3.1  |
| Saladin  | 6.1  |
| Najaf    | 35.5 |
| Qadisiya | 0.5  |
| Muthana  | 1.1  |
| Thi Qar  | 1    |
| Missan   | 3.4  |
| Basra    | 11.5 |

**1-4- Challenges and Constraints facing Tourism Sector:**

1. Insufficient attention is paid to this sector in national development plans, the governmental investments are restrictedly addressed to narrow activities. As for private investments, the private sector's contribution in this sector is still weak as tremendous investments needed to match magnitude and importance of this sector in the process of economic and social development.
2. Sharp and clear shortages in infrastructure services delivered to tourism facilities and areas around them.
3. lack of awareness of importance of this sector due to weak media to contribute effectively in this direction.
4. Reluctance of private sector, both the local and foreign, to invest in this sector for security and legislation reasons.
5. Absence of specialized companies to undertake the task of introducing tourism sites and significance, whether cultural or religious, to tourists, local and foreign.

**1-5- Strategy for Tourism Sector Development:**

Through increase of investment size in the tourism facilities, the following includes the most important projects:

- 1) Archeological and Cultural Tourism survey in all provinces.
- 2) Rehabilitate and develop the tourism compound in Al-madain and the surrounding areas.
- 3) Rehabilitate the Tourism City in Habaniya
- 4) Rehabilitate Al-khadhra Tourism Compound and Alaras City.
- 5) Construction of a hotel and a swimming pool in Najaf.
- 6) Rehabilitate Ain Tamr Tourism Compound in Karbala.
- 7) Develop the Tourism Compound in Al-jadirliya Lake.
- 8) Rehabilitate Al-thirthat Tourism Compound
- 9) Develop Sawa lake in Samawa.
- 10) Rehabilitate the Tourism Compound in Falooja.

**2-1 The Current State of Archeological cultural and artistic Heritage :**

The cultural heritage has suffered a lot during the past decades. Ancient civilizations represented by archeological sites. These civilizations expressed themselves through artistic works and crafts all over Iraq.

After 2003, this heritage was exposed to sabotage and looting acts. This fortune is still a source for job opportunities, therefore ambitious plans adopted to restore life to these facilities through rehabilitation and reconstruction projects. However, the eruption of sectarian violence in Iraq made many artists, scientists and engineers to leave Iraq.

The attention paid by the government and community institutions to the protection of culture may lead to broader horizons of establishment and development in the field of



tourism industry and help Iraq move forward in the process of social and economic reconstruction and development.

2-2 **Economic indicators:**

- 1) Ownership of public or private sector
- 2) The private sector contribution is still limited

2-3 **Challenges of Educational and Cultural Activity :**

- 1) The majority of strategic projects are affiliated to the disbanded Ministry of Information, currently affiliated to the MoF, including these facilities: ( Al-huriya Publish House, HQ Compound of Ministry of Information, Al-jamaheer House for Journalism, and facilities affiliated near Al-mustansiriya)
- 2) Lack of allocations which may result inability of project implementation.
- 3) Overlapping powers of Provincial Councils and Ministry of Culture.
- 4) Immigration of artists due to security situation prevailed in Iraq during the past few years as many of them were subject to abduction and murder.
- 5) Many of the archeological and cultural sites were exposed to theft while the US forces was entering Iraq, as some of these sites were taken up by the US military units. Most of the tourism sites lack appropriate infrastructure and basic services (water, electricity, sewages and roads).
- 6) Delay in approval of capital budget leads to delay in commencement of project implementation process.
- 7) The cultural and educational sites suffer from neglect, whether from governmental officials or from citizens, consequently it lost its part in introduction of the Iraqi civilization to the world.

2-4 **Development Vision of Tourism Sector and Archeological and Cultural Heritage:**

To maintain the archeological and cultural tourism facilities and develop and enhance its contribution to the process of economic and social development.

2-5 **Tasks:**

- Achieve organizational reforms through general and technical education and HR development in the areas of cultural and artistic heritage protection.
- Reconsider and activate the laws related to protection of cultural heritage and provide HR and staff capacity development in this area.
- Consolidate protection and maintenance and rehabilitate and develop the cultural heritage.
- Develop training courses and education related to tourism and archeology
- Develop small business activities related to tourism (craft and artistic).
- Analyze and diagnose the factors affecting the cultural sites.

2-6 **Objectives:**

- 1) Achieve integration and interaction among archeological and cultural tourism components through development and rehabilitation activities so as to highlight the role of civilization and stop losing ancient civilization achievements.
- 2) Encourage private sector's contribution to construction of tourism facilities.
- 3) Build and develop staff capacity development in the areas related to this sector.

- 4) Increase contribution of cultural and educational tourism sector to the GDP through financial fees imposed on tourists.

2-7 **Policies for Development of Archeological and Cultural and Educational Sector**

- 1) Rehabilitate museums in different provinces and open them for charges.
- 2) Rehabilitate and develop Ur Rest House and archeological sites in Nassiriya.
- 3) Develop Marshes Research Center
- 4) Rehabilitate Basra Theatre
- 5) Establish the Iraqi Opera House
- 6) Rehabilitate Al-rasheed Theatre
- 7) Rehabilitate the site of Babylon Annual Festival (Babylon Theatre – Throne Hall).
- 8) Rehabilitate the site of Al-huriya Publish House and provide modern printing equipment for educational and commercial purposes and get it connected to educational affairs House.
- 9) Rehabilitate the site of Ihtifalat park and the unknown soldier square
- 10) Rehabilitate the presidential palaces in Baghdad and provinces and make them as cultural and archeological tourism.