



## GAME DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK - ACTIVITY 3.2.2 WP3

### Jordan

#### Destinations

##### 1- Umm Qais

Umm Qais situated 110 km north of Amman occupying an area of 1554 km<sup>2</sup> at the strategic location of Gadara. The Yarmouk river is located at its northern side comprising the borders with neighbouring Syria, while the forested hills of Ajloun stretches at its southern borders. At its eastern side lies the Horan plateau with Irbid city in its middle, and lastly to the west it overlooks the evergreen Jordan valley. Umm-Qais is distinguished by various relieving and fascinating natural scenes with a beautiful weather, which combines perfect elements of environmental, historical, religious, and therapeutic tourism experience. These set of elements gives the site an opportunity for new types of tourism such as Eco-tourism, Hiking, Biking, and sightseeing. On top of that, it is qualified for receiving and hosting the increasing number of tourists.

Today's site of Umm-Qais not only represents the integration of natural and human forces, but also a combination of stratigraphy of different number of historic periods; Roman, Byzantine, Islamic and Ottoman. The Greeks were the first to marvel at breath-taking view and established their acropolis, later Roman Byzantine, and ottomans would follow, leaving their own marks on this site. Therefore, it should not be surprising that contemporary visible features generally comprise the most recent layer The modern town of Umm-Qais is the site of ancient Greco-Roman town of Gadara one of the cities of the Decapolis. In such a dynamic system, there is a continuing element of growth, modification, and development. While any historic destination derives its primary significance from a particular historic period, alterations or additions may have achieved a significance of their own

The Greco-Roman remains are of great importance in the city, from the fact that the remaining parts of this period are so interesting and show the main features of an integrated Roman city in terms of city planning, monuments, and artistic works, as well as, its distinctive type of basalt stone. The Byzantine part of the city is also dominant from the octagonal church at the side of the Cardo Street which is astonishing in its style and the dark basalt stone.

#### Sites:

##### a. Roman Theatres

Umm Qais has two roman theatres. A large portion of the western roman theatre has vaulted passageway supporting its rows of seats. These seats were built of hard basalt stones with a row of elaborately carved seats for dignitaries stand near the orchestra. At the centre was a large white marble statue of Tyche, Goddess of fortune and of the city, which is now displayed at local museum.

##### b. The Basilica

The Basilica Terrace (the Octagonal church and its Atrium): The Five Aisled church: The basilica terrace is composed of two coherent parts, the basilica octagonal church to the south, and its rectangular atrium to the north. The early sixth century octagonal church was formed by re-used basalt columns and capitals; the atrium was also formed by re-used limestone columns and capitals.



### c. Roman Street

The Roman Street System in Umm- Qais consists in Colonnaded Decumanus Maximus: Cardo Street and its front vaulted shops: The Decumanus Maximus is the paved and colonnaded long street in ancient Umm-Qais; it is the main thoroughfare, which divided Gadara into two areas, small northern part, and big southern part. The Decumanus Maximus is oriented into east- west direction with 1,7 km length, and was colonnaded from both sides by limestone columns, and paved with basalt slabs.

### d. Ottoman village

The Ottoman village is the most interesting part of the city. Umm-Qais, on the road from Damascus to Tiberias and hence to the Palestinian seaports, overlooking Lake Tiberias and the Golan Heights, attracted the people during the Ottoman period to construct the village.

## 2- Ajloun Castle

### Sites:

Ajloun area displays a rich diversity of natural, cultural, historical and archaeological resources all of which represent heritage assets of the area. However, almost all of the arranged tours to Ajloun are a few hours to one-day duration at most; mainly to visit the most famous historical and natural sites. Thus, the local community does not get the proper benefits of touristic revenue. Moreover, tourists spend less than a day in the region despite the richness of cultural, natural and historical heritage sites of Ajloun and they may find themselves forced to visit places might not be interesting to them.

#### a. Castle

Ajloun Castle is a 12th Century fortress that was built under the rule of the Sultan and military leader Saladin. The castle is set on top of Mount 'Auf and provides visitors with astonishing views of the Jordan Valley and surrounding areas. Over the years the castle has undergone many rebuilds and although much of the original features no longer exist, there are many chambers, carvings, and towers to keep both adults and children interested. Ajloun Castle is approximately 50 kilometers away from the city of Amman which takes around one and a half hours drive by car. The city of Jerash is just a 40 minute journey away via a picturesque route of olive groves and woodland. The castle was constructed between 1184 and 1188 by the nephew of the Muslim military leader Saladin. Saladin fought against the Christian military during the Crusades in the 12th Century. The strategic location of the castle enabled Saladin's army to look out across the Jordan Valley for possible invasions.

#### b. Museum

a small museum which contains historical information about the castle and a number of artefacts. The museum contains a collection of mosaics and interesting medieval weaponry.

#### c. Tower of Aybak - Meeting hall and mosque

The L-shaped Tower 7 or Tower of Aybak (left from the entrance) was added to the building at its southeast corner for extra fortification. It is named after the governor of the castle, as stated in an Arabic inscription on one of the tower stone blocks: "In the name of God. This blessed tower was built by Aybak Ibn Abdullah, Master of the Greatest House, in the month of the Hijri year 611" (1214-15 AD). Each of the three levels of the tower had a different function.



## Reasons for Selecting the Destinations & Sites

With the availability of several historical layers and buildings, tourists need an experience different from a standard sightseeing or museum-going itinerary. Such experience should provide better understanding of the relation among historical layers, time synchronization, the original of things, people, and civilizations. Revelation of such complicated relations requires deep involvement and full engagement of tourists with the site and its particulars. In both Umm Qais and Ajloun, there is a need for the creation of authentic experiences for the tourists by deploying innovative technologies supporting a feeling of connection to a place rather than a simple visible image.

Technologies and creativity can come together in gamification product that would support historical sites with lower popularity with an educational, enjoyable, and ever lasting memory for its tourists. Gamification in tourism would encourage tourists to explore even more places in a given tourist destination. Moreover, it encourages longer visits, revisits, with higher tendency to communicate the unique experience. Tourists would have interesting experience that they would love to share with family and friends and even to communities on social media. Features of the developed games should have features that facilitates the communication of tourists' memories. Gamification help to revolutionize the cultural and historic site experience, by gamifying it with both physical and virtual applications in Umm Qais and Ajloun.

## Game Development

### 1. Methodology

#### a. Stakeholders

Stakeholders from JUST, public authorities (DOA), and private sector were working together to develop internal and external games. Both analogue and digital games were developed through the joint collaboration among all stakeholders by having many meeting and brainstorming sessions to produce a variety of creative ideas.

#### b. Awareness

Awareness campaigns in both destinations, Umm Qasi and Ajloun, were conducted to increase public awareness and to market the idea of gamification in historical sites. Many lectures and public events were implemented and brochures designed for promoting the idea and encourage the involvement of more parties to join the effort. We targeted managers of historical sites, tour operators, students, gamers, and technical game developers.

#### c. Hackatons and Creative labs

Two main hackathons were conducted in the months of October and November 2020. The objective was to invite more stakeholders, game developers and companies to participate in creating more gamification ideas in historical sites. The process included training sessions, team work, pitching, judging and evaluation and finally announcement of winners of sub grants

#### d. Sub grants

Five Sub grantees groups were selected to develop three digital games and two analogues. The winners had direct and continuous technical and financial support from JUST team. Monitoring tools for both technical and financial issues were developed including reporting, presentation, GDD, PoC, videos and development stages to ensure that games were developed in consistence with the overall strategy of MED GAIMS.

#### e. Game Testing

Game testing and monitoring days have been conducted during the project for both internal and external games. Firstly, open days for local community and tourist to ensure development of games that are based on users' feedback and to avoid any technical or usage issues. Secondly, open days for MED GAIMS partners in order to exchange the ideas among all partners and to ensure that all games are consistent with MED GAISM objectives and strategy. The testing survey and questionnaire results from both events were analyzed and the feedback was used to improve the final versions of the games.



## 2. Strategy

Gamification strategy for historical sites in Jordan was based on two main aspects. The first aspect is to enhance the understanding of archaeological sites through experiential and entertaining process. The second aspect is the deployment of the idea of gamification to enhance the tourism in less know destination.

