

Project Sumereen

Local project funded by the European Union and implemented by the United Nations Development Programme under the programme Supporting Recovery and Stability in Iraq through Local Development

WHAT



In mid-2020, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) launched the project Sumereen: Sumerian Youth for Economic Development and Cultural Heritage. Funded by the European Union (EU), the project supports socio-economic growth through eco-tourism and cultural heritage preservation in the Governorate of Thi Qar, south of Iraq. It is implemented in partnership with the Governorate of Thi Qar and non-governmental organizations, namely Un Ponte Per, Humat Dijlah, Safina Projects and Carlo Leopardi Studio.

The two-year project is part of the programme Supporting Recovery and Stability in Iraq through Local Development. The programme aims at contributing to the stability and socio-economic development of Iraq through enhancing democratic governance at the local level. It is working to improve the ability of selected governorates to efficiently manage local government and public services. Economic growth and job creation are prioritized, with a focus on green projects, involving youth and women, in addition to enhancing the living conditions of returnees and in conflict affected areas.

WHY

The overall objective of Sumereen is to promote the Governorate of Thi Qar as a tourist destination, including:



Conservation of tourist infrastructure in Ur archaeological site and the Marshlands;



Provision of vocational training in eco-tourism and environmental conservation; and



Creation of jobs for local communities, specifically youth and women.



HOW

Conservation of tourist infrastructure

- Collection of waste from archaeological sites in Ur and the Marshlands;
- Creation of small shops, arts and crafts stalls, tea/coffee shops, sitting areas and shades to be run by youth and women; and
- Construction of recreational areas, including sustainable parks and playgrounds, as well as the display of historical information and creative arts, in line with the UNESCO guidelines.

Capacity building and job creation

- Training of unemployed, vulnerable people, mostly youth and women, to carry out sustainable livelihood activities;
- Training of local small and medium enterprises to provide touristic services, such as boats, bicycles, bird-watching and crafts;
- Facilitation of job creation through matching the trained people with businesses; and
- Employment of trained businesses to conserve and maintain the rehabilitated sites.

FUNDING

\$2 million

Provided by the European Union

DURATION

2 years

WHERE



Capital: Nasiriyah

Population: 2 million

Area: 12,900 km²



Relevant Sustainable Development Goals

“Sumereen provides a long-term perspective for the communities by promoting the Governorates’ unique cultural and natural heritage, the archaeological site of Ur, and the marshes.”

Ambassador Martin Huth
Head of the EU Delegation to the Republic of Iraq

“We look forward to achieving tangible, sustainable results that can transform the image of this culturally-rich Governorate, support the youth to find their place in the job market, and promote investment in the area.”

Zena Ali-Ahmad
Resident Representative of UNDP Iraq

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