

## Director of al-Wadi Tourism and Traditional Crafts: Algeria opens its Doors for Arab Investors in Tourism Sector

*Islamic Tourism* magazine recently conducted a brief interview with Mr Burad Mohammad, Director for Tourism and Traditional Crafts of al-Wadi State, which is presented below:

• **What are the new tourist activities of Al-Wadi state?**

- The State of al-Wadi, along with its capital, al-Wadi, have witnessed remarkable activity in tourism over the last two years. This has been particularly the case with regard to cultural and environmental tourism, with conferences having taken place here. All these efforts require the need to promote tourism in the area.

• **What are the proposed projects in the city of al-Wadi and its outskirts?**

- The tourism projects in al-Wadi are based upon revisiting local Arabic and Islamic heritage, including refurbishing old buildings and preserving sites and areas related not only to tourist interest but also that are of environmental significance, such as *sabkhat* (salt marshes) and the area's lakes.

• **What are the most important landmarks and markets that the tourist should visit? What are the main traditional handicrafts to be found in the city of al-Wadi?**

- Prominent landmarks to be visited in al-Wadi are the Museum of Popular Arts, the Minaret of Zawiyat Sidi Salim, al-Gheetan, the date palms on the outskirts of the city, the sand hills and, of course, one cannot forget the magnificent sunset. The main traditional handicrafts to be found here are pottery and clothing (such as the traditional *burnus*, or capes, worn by women).

There are also markets in al-Wadi where visitors can choose from a wide selection of goods. In addition, there is agricultural produce, particularly seasonal dates, and an impressive variety of spices that are especially renowned in Algeria.

• **Are there organized trips to the desert from the city of al-Wadi?**

- There are some agencies and hotels in al-Wadi that organize such trips, which are particularly popular among tourists from the northern regions of Algeria during the winter and spring seasons. Foreign tourists, notably from Europe, also take advantage of these.

• **What are the main annual festivals in the city of al-Wadi?**

- These are indeed many and various. For instance, the International Marathon of Wadi Suf as well as the city festival known as The Thousand Domes which takes place during the spring. There is also Shayib Ashura. There is also the annual Baba Marzouq festival celebrating Algeria's African populations.

• **Do tourist groups from Arab countries visit the city of al-Wadi?**

- Many foreign tourist groups, including Europeans and Arabs from the Gulf, visit the city of al-Wadi during the hunting season. However, they are still relatively few due to the capacity of the state and the city to cope with influxes.

• **Are there collaborative projects between al-Wadi and Arab and international cities?**

- There is a need to promote investment in tourism and search for partnerships with Arab countries that have experience and background in this area. The doors of the state and the city are open for Arab investment.

• **Do you think that the infrastructure of al-Wadi is capable of dealing with future tourist influxes?**

- The state and the city of al-Wadi have all the services, including an airport, and we are now approaching the relevant ministries to turn this into an international airport. There are wide roads and of equal importance to transport is telecommunications



Mr. Burad Mohammad

(mobile phones) and other facilities such as hotels and tourism agencies. All in all, al-Wadi has the amenities and is ready to receive more tourists.

• **Finally, the city of al-Wadi and its surrounding areas has a natural desert beauty and remarkable environmental diversity.**

**Do you foresee developing plans and projects to cater for tourism that will at the same time preserve this natural environment as an element of tourism?**

- Actually, as management and authority, we are attempting to save income from tourism per se to help promote and environmental tourism – through environmental preservation - and also help classify archaeological and Islamic landmarks. The governorate of the state is keen to have local projects registered under the National Trust for Development in the south of Algeria.

Finally, Algeria has regained its original status and is now strengthening both the regional and international economy by providing a strong base for Arab investment in Algeria and promoting international tourism in the country.