

Historical and archaeological riverboat tours

Yasir Leftah Hassoun¹, Alaa Hussein Jassim Al-Lami², Ahmed Yaseen Mjhoor³, Mohammed Jabbar Jadoua Al-Abdali², Mustafa Iyad Mahdi Ghani², Shah Zanan Wissam Abd al-Abbas², Noor Musa Odeh Kadhim², Batoul Samir Jassim Muhammad²

¹Faculty of Medicine

²Faculty of Archaeology

³Information Technology Research and Development Center
University of Kufa, Najaf, Iraq

❖ Abstract

Najaf province is considered the capital of Shiism in the Islamic world and is famous for religious tourism. It receives every year a large number of tourists from inside and outside of Iraq, as it includes the shrine of Imam Ali and many other shrines and well-known religious places.

In Najaf, many annual religious events are also remembered, which in turn are attractive opportunities for local and foreign tourists. Although religious tourism is prevalent in Najaf, many local and foreign visitors still want to see different tourist attractions, including the cultural heritage. For that reason, and for other reasons, there is an urgent need to initiate the establishment of a commercial, cultural and tourism project which provide river boat tours to explore the cultural heritage of Najaf as well as to increase job opportunities for graduates in the archaeological tourism sector.



Najaf historical khans



King Faisal II Palace



Farms of fresh seed rice and Amber rice

❖ Goals

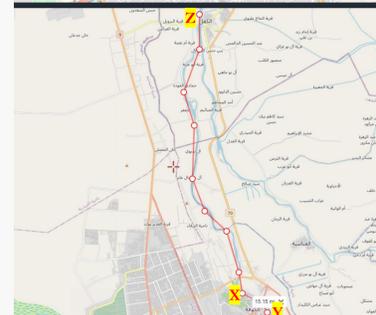
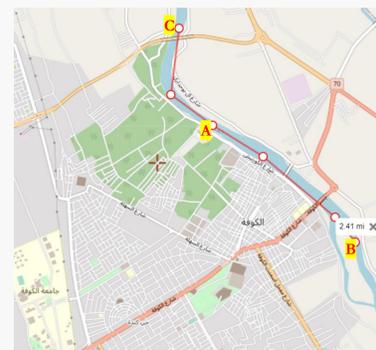
- 1) To support archaeological monuments and cultural heritage tourism in Najaf.
- 2) To create job opportunities for graduates of the Faculty of Archaeology.
- 3) To qualify and train students of the Faculty of Archaeology to work as tourist guides.
- 4) To open summer internship for student and give a chance for them to practice what they learn during their studies.

❖ Methodology

To implement this project idea, we need to build an office or reed hall on the Euphrates Riverbank in the city of Kufa to provide tourism services such as the reception of tourists, the checking of tickets, the distribution of tour guides and posters, the exhibition and sale of souvenir models of antiquities and cultural heritage pieces. These activities can provide economic sustainability to the project. Besides, this office arranges the visits by pre-booking procedures through a specialized website or social networking pages.

There will be two optional river trips. The first one is a short trip (around 8 km, two-ways), which starts from point A to B to C then back to A. The second one is a long trip (around 24 km) which starts from point X to Y to Z then back the X as shown in the maps.

Boats would be rented from Ministry of Transportation office and that would reduce the cost of buying a boat for this project.



Map of the short and long paths of the river trip

❖ Introduction

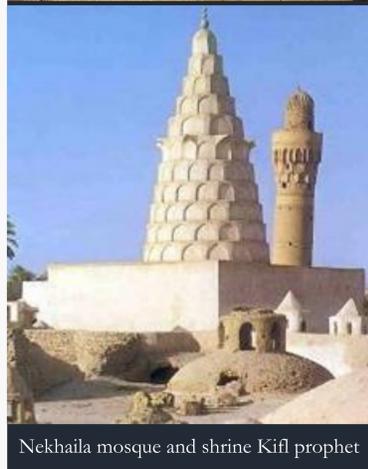
Najaf is located about 160 km south of Baghdad and it lies on a ridge just west of the Euphrates River. It is one of Shi'i Islam's two foremost holy cities and is widely held to be the resting place of imam Ail Ibn Abi Talib - Shi'i Islam's most-revered figure - whose tomb is located near the city's center.

Kufa is an Iraqi medieval city that was center of Arab culture and learning from the 8th to the 10th century. The city lay on the Hindiyah branch of the Euphrates River, about 11 km northeast of Al-Najaf. [1]

The project planned the organization of river boat tours on the Euphrates' riverbank of Kufa to show tourists the most important archaeological monuments and cultural heritage sites on the Euphrates River's sides in Najaf.

❖ Selection criteria

- Existence of archaeological sites on the Euphrates River's sides.
- Teaching of archaeology in the faculty of archaeology in the University of Kufa (cultural sustainability)
- Students desire to work as tourist guides to introduce these sites to people.
- The use of river taxi boats of the Ministry of Transportation (economic and organizational sustainability)



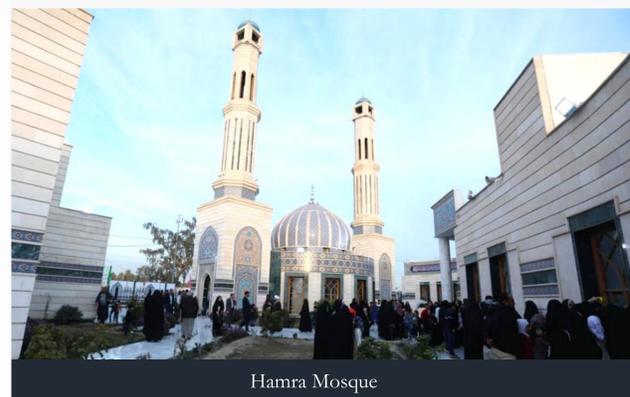
Nekhaila mosque and shrine Kifl prophet

❖ List of archaeological monuments and cultural heritage sites

- 1) Guest Palace
- 2) King Faisal II Palace
- 3) Hamra Mosque
- 4) Najaf historical khans (ancient hotels)
- 5) Nekhaila mosque and shrine Kifl prophet
- 6) Farms of fresh seed rice and Amber rice
- 7) Natural perspective views on the riverbanks



Guest Palace



Hamra Mosque



Reed Hall- outside view



Reed Hall- inside view



Project boats

❖ Acknowledgements

We would like to thank BANUU team for their efforts and supports all the time and this project possible because of the fund of the European Union.

❖ References

[1] The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Al-Najaf>



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

