

**A New  
Environmental  
Partnership  
Opportunity**

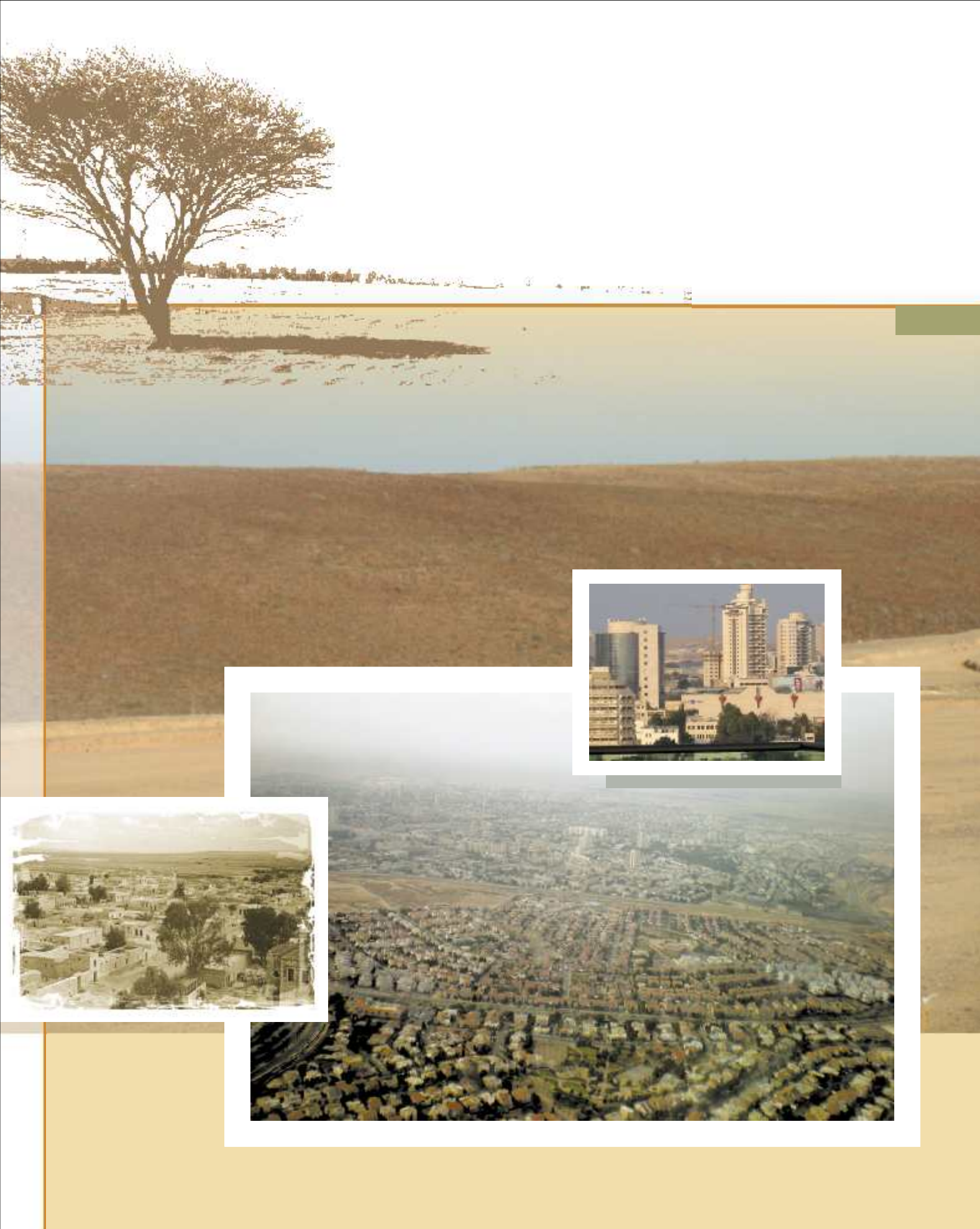
# A Ring of Green for Be'er Sheva



קרן קימת לישראל  
K K L - J N F

קרן קימת לישראל | Jewish National Fund | Keren Kayemeth LeIsrael





**"Be'er Sheva is the city of the future – it will one day surpass Tel Aviv. With an endless 'budget' of enthusiasm, the young people moving to the city will transform it into a center of education, development and quality of life".** With these words Israeli President Mr. Shimon Peres summed up his visit to Nahal Be'er Sheva Park on August 2, 2009.

# Be'er Sheva

Be'er Sheva, "capital of the Negev", is the seventh-largest city in Israel with a population of over 200,000. This vibrant city, which President Shimon Peres sees as the future Tel Aviv, has its roots deep in the past but is heading steadily onwards into the 21st century.

## Historic Be'er Sheva

The findings unearthed at Tel Be'er Sheva, an archaeological site a few kilometers northeast of today's city, testify to the fact that the region has been populated since the 4th millennium BC. The city was destroyed and rebuilt many times over the centuries. Be'er Sheva was the southernmost city settled by the Israelites in the Land of Israel, and part of the territory of the tribes of Simeon and Judah, hence the expression "from Dan to Beersheba" to describe the Kingdom of Israel.

The first mention of the site is in the Book of Genesis in connection with Abraham and Isaac who dug wells at the site, which is one of the explanations of the city's name – Seven Wells. In the 7th century the last Byzantine inhabitants abandoned the city, and the area was taken over by nomadic Bedouins whose descendants live in the vicinity of Be'er Sheva to this day.





# Be'er Sheva

## 20th Century Be'er Sheva

Be'er Sheva reappeared in the late 19th century when the Ottomans, who ruled Israel at the time, built a police station and a small town. The British captured the town during World War I in a fierce battle and many British, Australian and New Zealand soldiers are buried in a cemetery near the Old City of Be'er Sheva. During the British Mandate Be'er Sheva was a major administrative center.

David Ben-Gurion realizing the great potential the Negev had ordered the city captured from the Egyptians during Israel's War of Independence in 1948. Since then Be'er Sheva has been growing and developing rapidly. Still, in many ways it remained a desert town, gray and dusty and definitely in need of a "green face lift".

## Be'er Sheva Today – Dynamic and Diverse

What is Be'er Sheva? For IDF soldiers returning to their posts on Sunday mornings it is a stop on the way to the army bases concentrated in the Negev. For students it is the home of Israel's youngest, most unconventional university – one of the best in the country, as well as for a number of colleges. For residents of the many small communities throughout the Negev it is their capital, where they come for culture, education and community services. For tourists it is the Bedouin Market where local Bedouins put out their merchandise for sale every Thursday. Be'er Sheva is so many things, for so many people, it is hard to keep up!

For some people, however, those who have vision – such as Mr. Shimon Peres, Israel's President, or KKL-JNF – Be'er Sheva, capital of the Negev, is Israel's future. This once sleepy little town is on the way to greatness, with some fun along the way. Over one third of the city's population is between the ages of 20 to 45, and they want culture, entertainment and a vibrant city – which they are going to get, thanks to the Israeli government and thanks to KKL-



JNF. Be'er Sheva's Old City will be restored, an amazing park is being developed in what was once the city's back yard and Be'er Sheva will spearhead the awakening and flourishing of the Negev!

## A Park to Change a City

KKL-JNF's key project in Be'er Sheva is Nahal Be'er Sheva Park, a major undertaking that will extend over a number of years. The park is being developed along with the Be'er Sheva Municipality, the Ministry of the Environment and the Drainage Authority. Just this summer (2009) Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu visited Be'er Sheva and pledged to transfer 150 million NIS over the next seven years for further development of the park.

Until recently Nahal Be'er Sheva was the city's "backyard" and garbage dump. The comprehensive plan to develop this site is creating a scenic gem in the heart of the desert and a green lung for the benefit of the Negev residents, and includes a strategic plan up to 2020. The park extends 8 kilometers along both banks of Nahal Be'er Sheva over 1100 acres (350 hectares) within the Be'er Sheva city limits.

Work has been done on the riverbed and banks to control flooding. Large amounts of trash have been removed from Nahal Be'er Sheva and replaced by gardens, paths and promenades. The largest project in the park – the central promenade – is already in full use. The artificial lake in the park is filled with recycled water from KKL-JNF water management projects. Ancient Bet Eshel is being restored and will serve as the main entrance to the park. Future plans include an information station, an amphitheater, restoration of archaeological sites, the ANZAC trail and development around the ancient wells. All these projects are being implemented with the help of KKL-JNF friends worldwide.

## Be'er Sheva – Facts & Figures

- Be'er Sheva extends over 29,375 acres (11,750 ha). In terms of area it is the second largest city in Israel after Jerusalem.
- Its population is 213,100, with an annual growth rate of 0.7% and a density of 1596 inhabitants per square kilometer. 88% of the city's population is Jewish.
- Close to 30% of Be'er Sheva's inhabitants are below the age of 20; 54% between the ages of 20-59 and 16% above the age of 60.
- The city has 81 schools, close to 33,000 students and an average of 26 students per classroom.
- Academic institutions: Ben Gurion University, Kaye College, Shamoon College of Engineering, College of Management Academic Studies, College of Be'er Sheva and the Negev, Technological College, School for Performing Arts.
- Historic sites: Bet Eshel, Abraham's well, the Great Mosque, the Turkish railroad station, the British military cemetery, the Turkish bridge over Nahal Be'er Sheva.
- Culture: Be'er Sheva Symphony Orchestra, Be'er Sheva Theater Company, Be'er Sheva Music Conservatory, Negev Museum, the Municipal Library, Be'er Sheva Performing Arts Center.

Capital of the Negev



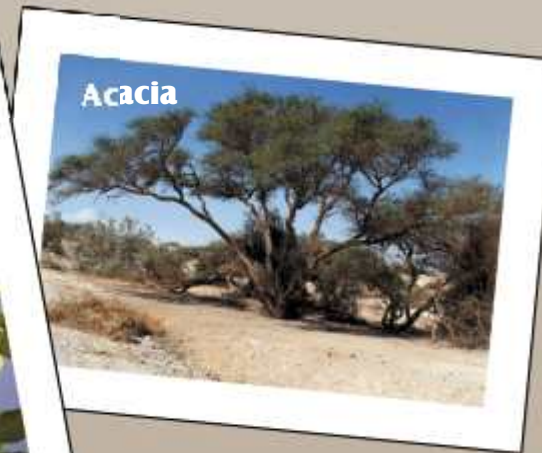




Jujube



Carob



Acacia

In 1985 KKL-JNF began developing a "green belt" outside and around the growing Negev metropolis. Trees were planted around the northwestern section of Be'er Sheva, and to date, over 6250 acres (2500 hectares) of green areas have been planted; by 2018, this area is expected to be doubled. The trees planted include a mixture of eucalyptus and pine (forty percent) and broad-leaved trees such as jujube, carob, acacia, and sycamore. The development of the green belt includes the rejuvenation and rehabilitation of existing forested areas as well as planting in new plots. This entire project is in accord with Israel's national master plan for afforestation and preservation of open spaces.

The goals of this project were to improve the quality of life for residents of Be'er Sheva and surrounding areas, including



Sycamore



Eucalyptus

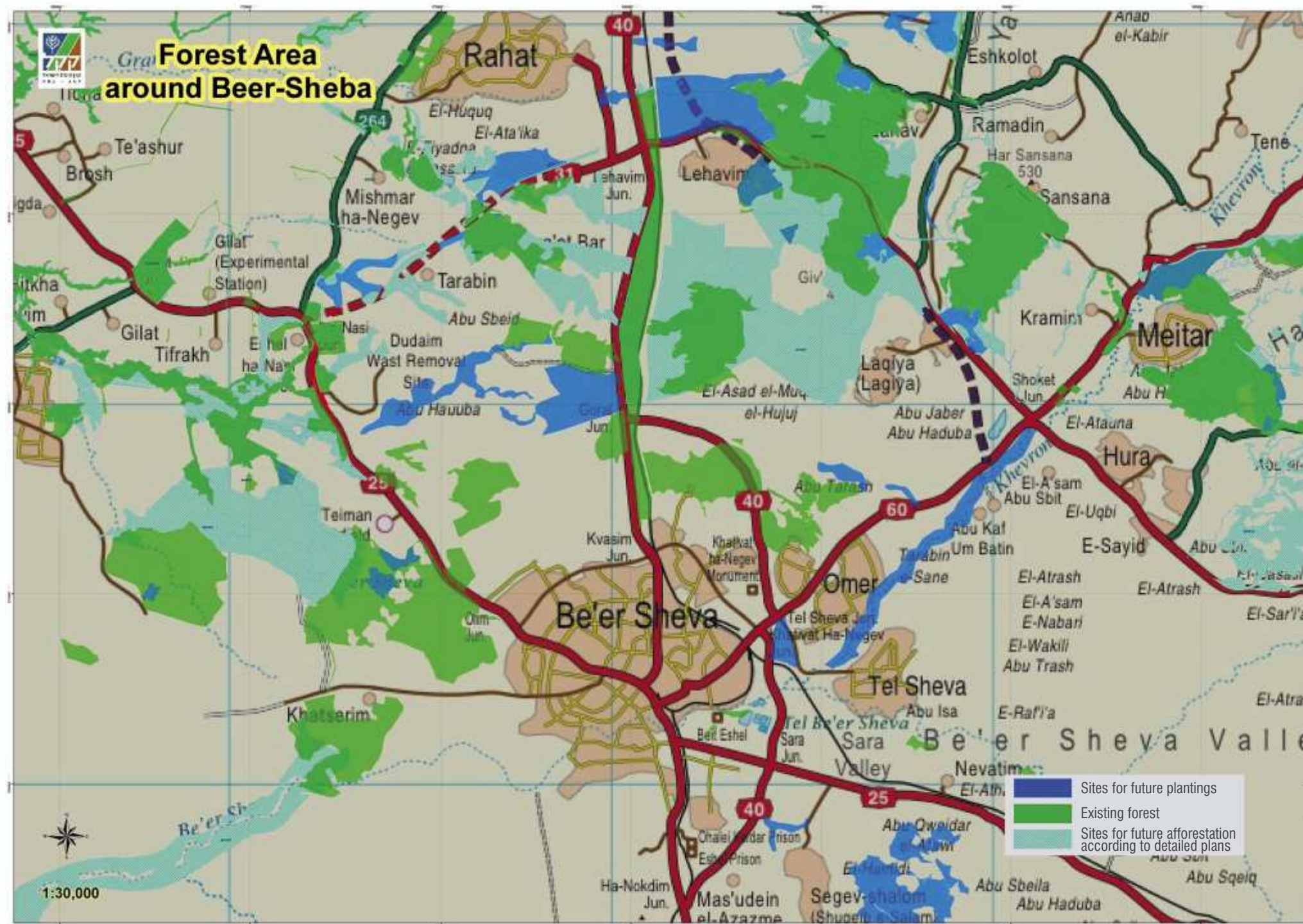
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facilities for recreation and leisure and to combat desertification. Green belts are important in any modern urban area, but they are particularly so in the desert, where they provide a welcome respite from the surrounding landscape, which although it has a beauty of its own is still dry and dusty. The environmental development around Be'er Sheva will include a network of bicycle paths for residents and visitors and a focus on archaeological sites in the area.

KKL-JNF is developing this green belt with its particular brand of expertise. The objective is not to create a dense forest in the European or North American model, but to create a green environment appropriate to the desert. This approach is known as savannization and employs such techniques as planting trees in limans (tree clusters planted in reinforced micro-catchments), building dams to store floodwaters and terraces to prevent erosion. The tree species used in this project are adapted to harsh desert conditions. Savannization has been developed at KKL-JNF as a tool for rehabilitating eroded soils, stabilizing them and preventing further erosion, thus allowing the desert to bloom. The final product will be a well-balanced desert with its unique flora and fauna.





In 2008 and 2009  
KKL-JNF planted  
over 2000 acres  
(800 hectares)  
of terrain at  
  
Duda'im Ridge,  
Nahal Ashan Forest,  
Mishmar HaNegev,  
Yatir-Hura and  
Ambassadors Forest.

# A Ring of Green for Be'er Sheva



Ambassadors Forest is located in the Western Negev, just north of Be'er Sheva. The 70-hectare (150-acre) forest was planted by KKL-JNF as part of its program of desert afforestation, and inaugurated in 2005 in the presence of ambassadors and heads of diplomatic missions from Europe, America, Asia and Africa serving in Israel.



Come be a part of the Green Ring around Be'er Sheva!



It All Begins with You!



# KKL-JNF – Join Us in the Negev!

KKL-JNF:  
With Our Friends  
in and Around  
Be'er Sheva

Various KKL-JNF  
projects in the  
Be'er Sheva  
area

## Urban Development

- Nahal Be'er Sheva Park: flow channel restoration, promenades, scenic lookouts and recreation areas
- Infrastructure for ALUT home for autistic children

Thanks to: Canada, United States, Germany



## Community Development

- KKL-JNF for IDF:
  - \* Soldier-family meeting points, landscaping, plantings
  - \* Seating corners at IDF bases – air force, infantry and armored corps.
- Development in rural communities: Nevatim, Metar, Lehavim, Shomriya

Thanks to: Canada, USA, Germany, Australia



## Educational Activity and Heritage Preservation

- Activities with children focusing on KKL-JNF and Israel
- ANZAC Trail
- Bet Eshel – preservation
- Duda'im Landfill Educational Facility

Thanks to: Australia, Canada, Germany, USA,



## Environmental Development in Forests

- Metar Forest, Lahav Forest, Yatir Forest, Duda'im Forest, Karkor Forest, Devira Forest, recreation areas, lookouts, bicycle trails,
- Hatserim – Limans

Thanks to:  
Germany, Chile, Canada, Israel, USA, Switzerland, Australia, Italy, Holland, Scandinavia



## Water Management

- Reservoirs to improve water economy in southern Israel and recycled water for agriculture: Yatir, Shomriya, Kelah, Betarim, Lahav, Aryeh, Nevatim, Tifrah, Hatserim

Thanks to: Australia, Germany, Switzerland



## Research

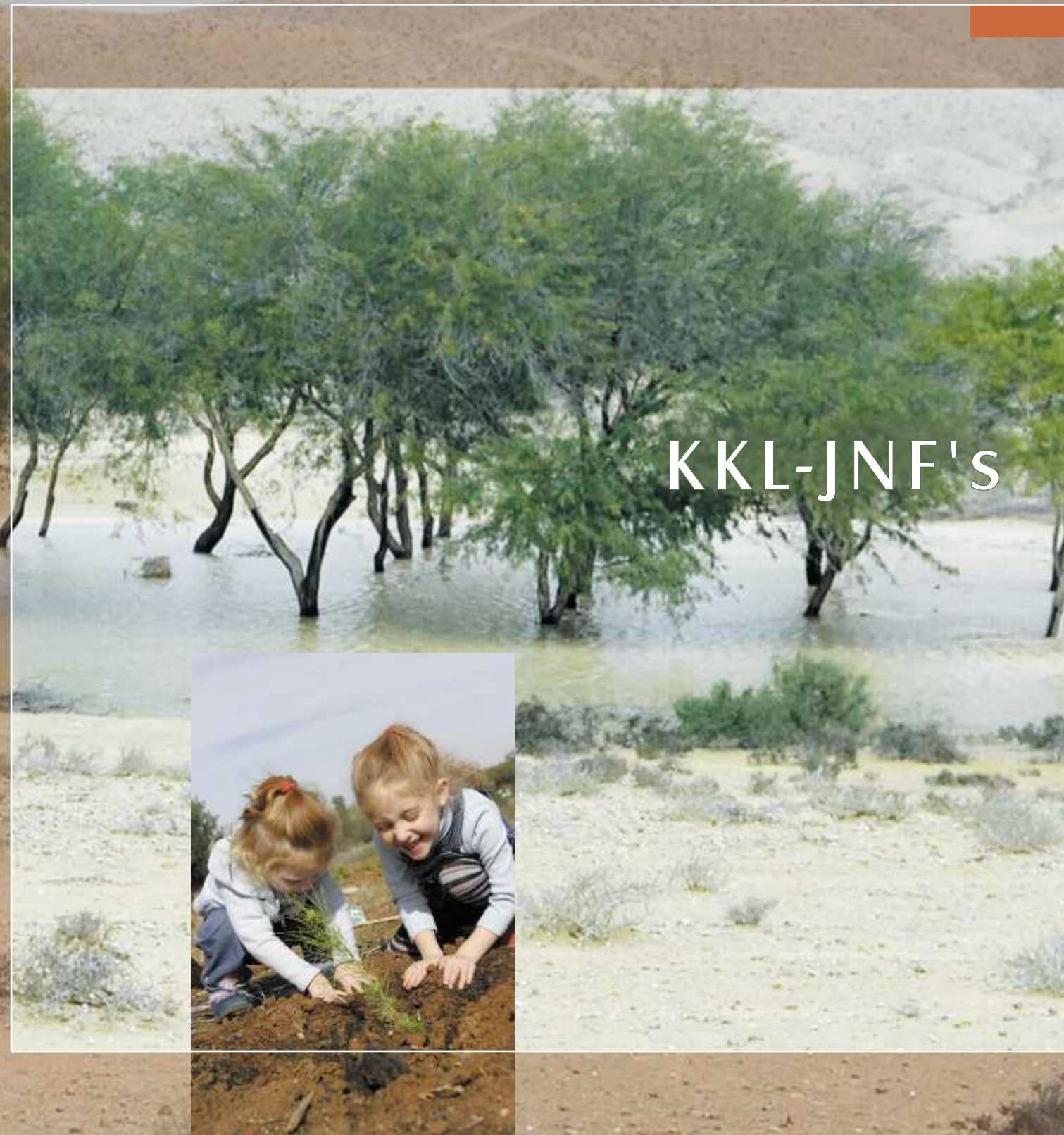
- Cooperation with Ben Gurion University on water and soil conservation and erosion prevention.
- KKL-JNF studies relating to drought-resistant tree species, savannization and runoff harvesting
- KKL-JNF exports and shares its knowledge and experience in combating desertification – international conferences and seminars

Thanks to: Australia, USA

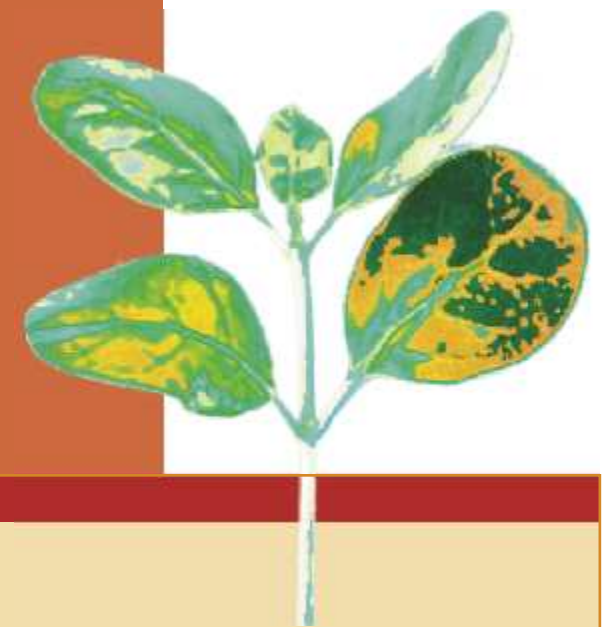


Together we can attract a new generation of pioneers!





KKL-JNF's



### Challenges for the Next Decade

As Israel proceeds into its seventh decade as an independent nation, the Negev still remains the region with the lowest development level and population in the country. A number of factors created this situation:

- Harsh environmental conditions (climate, soil, water).
- Development activity focusing on central Israel.
- Low national priority.

Over time, the Negev became a place for military activities, polluting industry and quarrying. Lack of employment forces a large portion of the younger generation to leave – most of them never to return.

## Sustainable Negev Project

The Israeli government adopted a decision to develop and strengthen the Negev, making it a major priority for Israel, while developing quality of life and developing an active, superior and contributing community. The government determined a number of targets to be achieved by 2015:

- Increase population by 70%;
- Raise employment by 83%;
- Reduce the reduction in the per capita income gap by 60%;
- Increase the number of Jewish students at Ben Gurion University of the Negev by 30% and the number of Bedouin students by 130%.

KKL-JNF representatives participated and played a major role in formulating the plan – NEGEV 2015, emphasizing our unique environmental outlook. Success depends on investment, prioritization but also on creating a suitable mechanism for effective execution, one based on professional expertise, of the type KKL-JNF can offer.





## The Negev – Facts & Figures

- The Negev extends over 12,000 square kilometers, 60% of the State of Israel, from Be'er Sheva to Eilat.
- Although it comprises more than half of Israel's land area, only 8 percent of the country's population lives in the Negev.
- The Negev forms part of a much larger desert that stretches from Egypt through the southern part of Israel to Jordan and Saudi Arabia.
- Average annual precipitation varies from 250 mm in the Northern Negev to 25 mm in the Eilat area.
- The Negev has a long and interesting human history, from pre-historic hunters who roamed the area over 10,000 years ago, through Biblical times, the Nabateans, the Romans, the Bedouins, and finally modern settlement since the establishment of the State of Israel.
- There are 6 cities, 7 local councils and 10 regional councils in the Negev. Be'er Sheva is the largest city, and is known as the capital of the Negev.



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