United Nations Development Programme

Country: Jordan

PROJECT DOCUMENT

Project Title: Mainstreaming marine biodiversity conservation into coastal zone management in the Aqaba Special Economic

UNDAF Outcome(s): Sustainable management of natural resources and the environment.

UNDP Strategic Plan Environment and Sustainable Development Primary Outcome:

UNDP Strategic Plan Secondary Outcome:

Expected CP Outcome(s): *Sustainable Management of Natural Resources and the environment / Environmental policies aligned to global conventions and national implementation capacities enhanced*

Expected CPAP Output (s) The protection and sustainable use of agriculture resources and biological diversity included in relevant national and sectoral plans particularly for major hotspots

Executing Entity/Implementing Partner: UNDP/Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority

Brief Description

The coral reef ecosystems of the Gulf of Aqaba are the most significant feature of the marine environment in Jordan. These coral reefs are unique in that they are the northern-most tropical reef systems worldwide, have a high diversity of marine taxa, and provide habitat for endemic and rare marine species; thus presenting a readily-available enterprise for Jordan's tourism industry. They also have the potential to be largely isolated from the effects of climate change as a result of their seclusion within the Gulf. The Jordanian coastline is, however, subject to considerable resource pressure, particularly as this coast supports Jordan's only seaport facilities. The high level and conflicting nature of pressure on the natural resources of Jordan's coast poses significant challenges to effective management and conservation of this unique environment.

The marine environment of the Gulf of Aqaba is of global significance in having some of the northern-most reef systems in the Western Indo-Pacific and is designated, along with the Red Sea, as a World Wildlife Fund (WWF) global 200 ecoregion on account of its marine biodiversity value. Home to both endemic and globally threatened species, the Jordanian reefs are an important reservoir or refugium for tropical reef species. In particular, the endangered Indo-Pacific humphead wrasse, *Cheilinus undulates* has been found in the vicinity of these reefs, as well as threatened species of marine turtles. Furthermore, owing to their isolated location, these reef habitats may be largely protected from the effects of global warming and, to date, have been unaffected by bleaching and other detrimental climatic effects. This ecosystem therefore provides a natural laboratory for the study of climate change impacts on coral communities.

As the Jordanian coastline is limited to 27 km in length, the area is strategically important and the vast majority of all consumer goods and foodstuffs for the country are shipped through the Aqaba Special Economic Zone (ASEZ). There is also a small artisanal fishery in the Gulf of Aqaba. Furthermore, the current population for Aqaba City is projected to increase by more than 50% from approximately 100,000 to over 160,000 people by 2020, creating significant additional resource pressure. An initiative aimed at moving and expanding Jordan's port facilities has recently become a higher priority, which has added urgency to this project for mainstreaming marine biodiversity conservation in the coastal management systems for the ASEZ. The development of port facilities is proposed for areas of high conservation value near the southern Jordanian border. Jordan's coastline has become the focus of a burgeoning tourism industry. Several extensive tourist resort developments are already underway and others are proposed in the near future, adding to pressure on environmental resources.

The goal of this project is to mainstream biodiversity conservation in order to promote more effective and integrated management of the coastal zone in the Aqaba Special Economic Zone. The strategy to achieve this goal has four primary components: development and improvement of knowledge-management systems for coastal and marine biodiversity, promotion of biodiversity friendly investment and development, improving institutional capacity for integrated coastal zone management and biodiversity conservation and coral reef protection.

Effective stewardship is premised on having a good understanding of the nature and interactions between the living (human and non-human) and non-living components of the environment. The use of this information must be managed effectively for good stewardship. Where this information indicates that

Programme Period:	2008-2012
Atlas Award ID:	00061764
Project ID:	00078516
PIMS #	4002
Start date:	June 2011
End Date	June 2014
Management Arrangements	NEX
PAC Meeting Date	Oct 2010

Total resources required	950,000 US$
Total allocated resources:	8,250,000 US$
• Regular	
• Other:	
○ GEF	950,000 US$
○ UNDP	50,000 US$
○ GoJ In-kind	7,250,000 US$
○ Other	

Agreed by (Government): _____

Date/Month/Year

Agreed by (Executing Entity/Implementing Partner): Dr. Salim Al-Moghrabi

Date/Month/Year 27th Oct. 2011

Agreed by (UNDP): Jacinta Barrios 8/11/2011

Date/Month/Year