

BOOK OF ABSTRACT

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I. SESSION DESCRIPTION

ID: S7

Title of session:

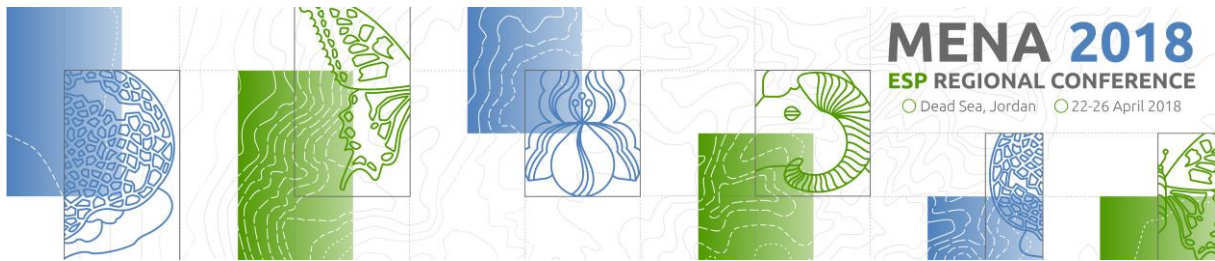
Tourism and ecosystem services – searching for sustainability

Hosts:

	Title	Name	Organisation	E-mail
Host:	Prof.	Salma TALHOUK	American University of Beirut	ntsalma@aub.edu.lb

Abstract:

The ecosystem services framework expanded prospects for nature conservation because it recognized human beings as valuing agents and enabled the consideration of basic ecological structures and processes as value-laden entities (De Groot et al. 2002; de Groot et al., 2010). Of the four ecosystem services tenets, cultural ecosystem services may be the most dependent on society's input. Cultural ecosystem (CES) services consider non-material benefits generated by the relationship of humans to ecosystems through spiritual enrichment, cognitive development, reflection, recreation, and aesthetic experience (Chan et al., 2012; WRI, 2003). Drawing on cultural ecosystem services, nature based tourism may present a pressure and a threat to natural ecosystems yet it constitutes an opportunity for promoting local economies. Services retrieved from the natural environment by the tourism sector is a double edge sword that can help flourish local economies and conserve nature or exploit locals and their natural heritage. Addressing the sustainability of tourism within the context of ecosystem services will help ensure a continuous development of this sector as part of resilient natural and cultural heritage. This session will include researchers and practitioners and will serve as a regional platform that will seek to consider sustainable tourism in the region through an ecosystem services approach.



Goals and objectives of the session:

The goal of this session is to 1) document local nature based tourism opportunities in the region especially those threatened by poor access to information and by high political instability and 2) to explore approaches where tourism contributes to local economies and at the same time actively engages communities to effectively contribute to conservation.

Planned output / Deliverables:

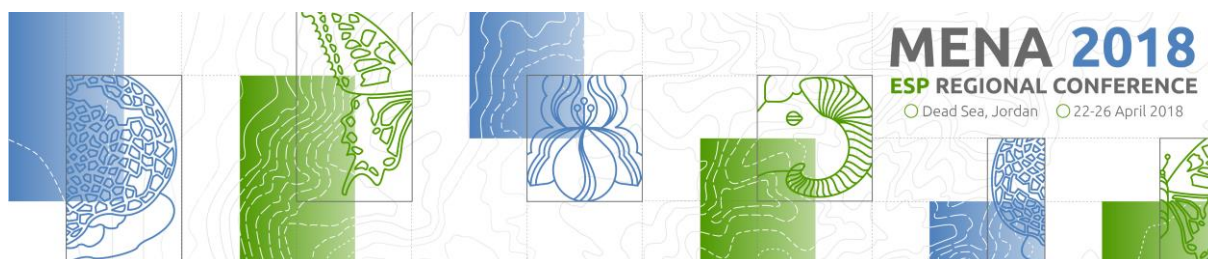
- Build a regional network of researchers and practitioners interested in promoting and exploring sustainability aspects of ecotourism
- Document and share case studies from the region
- Strengthen ties with tourism stakeholders

Voluntary contributions accepted:

YES

Related to ESP WG or NN:

[SWG 7 – ES in \(eco\) Tourism](#)



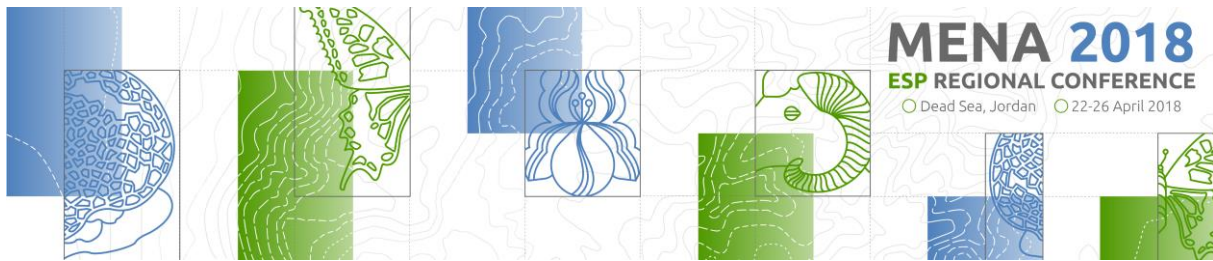
II. SESSION PROGRAM

Date of session: Monday April 23, 2018

Time of session: 13:30-15:30

Timetable speakers

Time	First name	Surname	Organization	Title of presentation
13:30	Sidi Imad	CHERKAOUI	Ecole Supérieure de Technologie de Khénifra, Moulay Ismail University, Morocco	Does Birdwatching as ecotourism activity benefits conservation and sustainability? A case study from Sous Massa National Park (Morocco)
13:45	Salma	TALHOUK	American University of Beirut, nature conservation center	DASKARA - a phone application for mapping cultural ecosystem services: an academic / private partnership example
14:00	Pascal	<i>Abdallah</i>	IUCN Centre for Mediterranean Cooperation, Spain	The Mediterranean Experience of Ecotourism: A Regional Approach to Developing, Managing, and Promoting Ecotourism in Protected Areas
14:15	Deema	ABU THIAB	Consolidated Consultants Group, Jordan	Dibbin Transect Model: A New Framework for Mainstreaming Biodiversity Conversation into Land Use Planning
14:30	Salma	TALHOUK	American University of Beirut	Brainstorming with participants: tangible steps towards sustainable ecotourism sector in the MENA region
15:00		General Discussion		



III. ABSTRACTS

1. Type of submission: *Invited speaker abstract*

S. Sectoral Working Group sessions: S7 Tourism and ecosystem services – searching for sustainability

The Mediterranean Experience of Ecotourism: A Regional Approach to Developing, Managing, and Promoting Ecotourism in Protected Areas

Authors: Jeremy Sampson, Carla Danelutti

Presenting Author: Pascal Abdallah

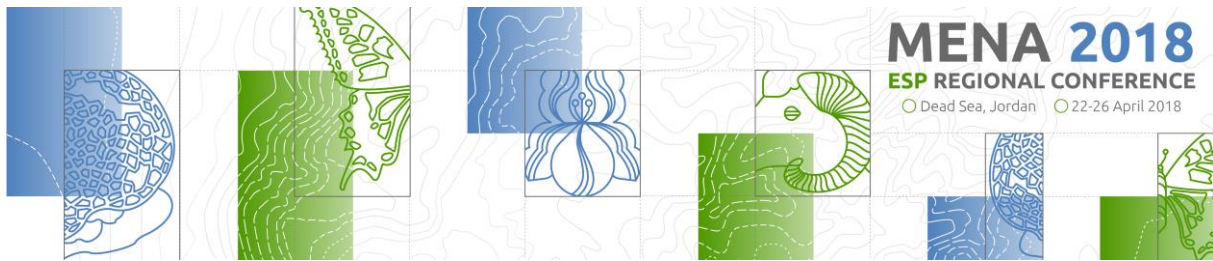
Other author: Maher Mahjoub

Affiliation: IUCN Centre for Mediterranean Cooperation, Spain

Contact: pascal@responsiblemobilities.com

Ecotourism can be transformed into a genuine solution to the current tourism challenges facing the Mediterranean while directly supporting conservation of the region's incredible biodiversity. With this vision in mind, MEET (The Mediterranean Experience of Ecotourism) is providing protected areas and their private sector partners with the tools they need to develop, manage, and promote high quality ecotourism packages, both at local scale and together in a regional network. These products generate positive outcomes for conservation and communities, by strengthening the local economy while minimizing impacts on natural and cultural resources.

Participating protected areas in a dozen countries across the Mediterranean, including in Tunisia, Jordan, and Lebanon, have gathered together local actors from private and public sector to collaboratively design new ecotourism packages, which they have tested according to quality and sustainability standards and monitoring tools that have been developed and tested through two EU-funded projects, MEET and DestiMED. These methods include an innovative approach to measuring and reducing the environmental impact of tourism on the natural resources that sustain protected area communities. This new tool is based on the established Ecological Footprint framework, and is being developed in collaboration with globally-recognized research organization Global Footprint Network.



The long-term vision of MEET is to establish a well-supported governance system and promotion platform for ecotourism in Mediterranean protected areas. The tools tested and refined through MEET will ultimately provide the Mediterranean with a recognized and trusted ecotourism brand that encourages collaborative marketing strategies, while allowing various actors to share knowledge and resources across the region and beyond.

Keywords: ecotourism, sustainable tourism, protected areas, destination management, ecological footprint

2. Type of submission: *Invited speaker abstract*

S. Sectoral Working Group sessions: *S7 Tourism and ecosystem services – searching for sustainability*

Does Birdwatching as ecotourism activity benefits conservation and sustainability? A case study from Sous Massa National Park (Morocco)

Author: Sidi Imad Cherkaoui,

Other authors: Mohammed EL Bekkay, Zouhair Amhaouch

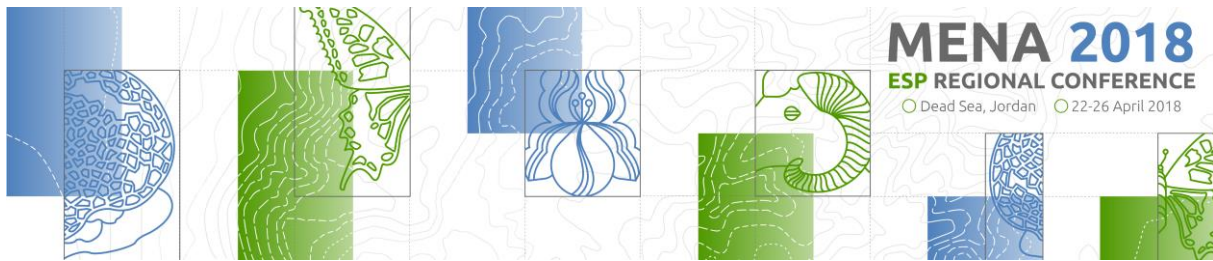
Affiliation : Ecole Supérieure de Technologie de Khénifra, Moulay Ismail University, Morocco

Contact: imad.cherkaoui@gmail.com

Outdoor recreation and ecotourism related activities frequently occur in protected areas, and are rapidly increasing in popularity. These activities may benefit conservation efforts through local employment and increased awareness and support for wildlife conservation. In addition to supporting economic activities directly associated with the management or extraction of natural resources, protected areas are popular sites for birdwatching.

The varied ecosystems of Morocco offer a range of opportunities for birdwatchers and natural heritage tourists. In fact, during two last decades, Morocco becomes a must-see destination for thousands of birdwatchers which generates seasonal employments for hundreds of local communities and, therefore, leads Moroccan wildlife management authorities (HCEFLCD) to promote sustainable tourism related activities in national protected areas through Birdwatching as a conservation tool and incomes generating alternative.

We present the outcomes of the pilot project implemented by HCEFLCD in Souss Massa National Park which benefits rural populations and aims at setting professional birdwatching facilities and services.



Keywords: Birdwatching, ecotourism, conservation, sustainability, protected area

3. Type of submission: **Voluntary contribution**

S. Sectoral Working Group sessions: **S7 Tourism and ecosystem services – searching for sustainability**

Dibbin Transect Model: A New Framework for Mainstreaming Biodiversity Conservation into Land Use Planning

Authors: Deema Abu Thiab, Mohammad Abu Baker

Other authors: Nashwa Suboh, Majdi Salameh

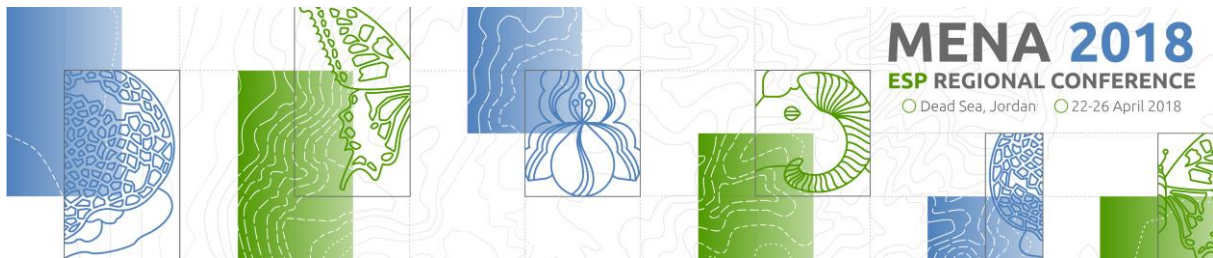
Affiliation: Consolidated Consultants Group, Jordan

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Dibbin Forest represents the south-eastern distribution limit for the native Aleppo pine and evergreen oak in Jordan. The forest is undergoing habitat fragmentation and biodiversity loss due to rapid urbanization, unsustainable human, tourism and agricultural activities and lack of proper planning policies and regulatory framework that support the conservation of biodiversity. Dibbin plan aims to guide the development in the surrounding area of Dibbin Forest Reserve while protecting the ecological resources and services such as biodiversity, farmlands, scenic landscapes, historic and cultural resources, etc. The plan provides a new framework for mainstreaming biodiversity conservation into land use planning through participatory and conservation-oriented approaches.

The proposed framework outlines a criteria for conducting biodiversity assessment. The method of assessment addresses conservation value and viability for conservation for all zones. It provides a standardized way to assign scores to the sites based on the status and trends of biodiversity, present threats on the biodiversity and habitats and effectiveness of conservation efforts. Based on the assessment, a biodiversity sensitivity map ranking different zones within the area from most important to least important and identifying biodiversity "hotspots" and "coldspots" was developed. The map provides a solid foundation for the development of Dibbin land use plan.

A new set of land uses that better responds to biodiversity conservation needs and restricts development within biodiversity hotspots was proposed. In terms of spatial pattern, the plan embraced a transect-based model; a concept adapted from ecology and includes a series of zones that demonstrate changes in land use pattern from native forest and to urban areas. Such pattern minimizes threats and disturbance on biodiversity hotspots caused by human,



agriculture and tourism activities. The plan also includes eco-trails that incorporate eco-tourism and agro-tourism activities and a number of pilot projects that improve the local economy of the area.

Keywords: Biodiversity, tourism, land use planning, conservation, transect model.

4. *Type of submission: Voluntary contribution*

5. *Sectoral Working Group sessions: S7 Tourism and ecosystem services – searching for sustainability*

DASKARA – a phone application for mapping cultural ecosystem services: an academic / private partnership example

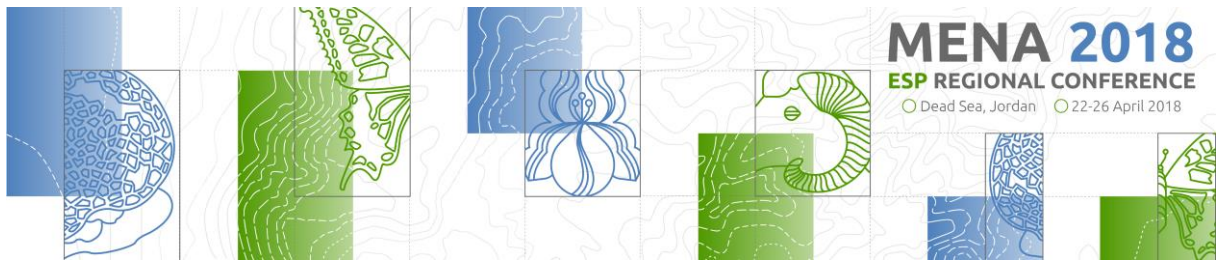
Author: Salma N. Talhouk

Other authors: Syrine Abi Kheir, Ramzi Al Malti, Moustapha Itani, and Wassim Kays

Affiliation: Department of Landscape Design and Ecosystem Management, Faculty of Agricultural and Food Sciences and nature conservation center, American University of Beirut

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Virids, the green investment fund created by Fondation Diane, whose mission includes civic awareness and sustainable development, is always on the lookout for green, innovative, and sustainable business ideas and has found big interest in AUB's latest project: Daskara. This project draws on a participatory mapping research "baldati bi'ati" which was launched in 2010 with the aim to better capture the social-cultural dimension embedded in nature conservation. The Center, through this project, forged partnerships with 80 participating village communities in Lebanon. The recent investment by Fondation Diane kickstarted the development process of a digital platform and phone application Daskara that caters for everyone interested in exploring local natural and cultural sites. It will also serve as a crowdfunding tool for everyone who wants to engage in conservation and sustainable development by donating to sustainable projects in their hometowns and villages. NCC believes Daskara will benefit a broad constituency of users including local residents and business owners, tourists, members of the diaspora, enthusiasts of outdoor natural and cultural activities, experts, and academics. The uniqueness of Daskara is its aim of defining and initiating competitive and sustainable nature related opportunities that draw on the cultural and natural heritage of Lebanon. The data collected will constitute the basis for multidisciplinary research starting with the objective of investigating whether local



participatory mapping of cultural ecosystem services (CES) helps build a sense of place, socially and locally constructed, giving meaning and attachment to a place.

Keywords: digital platform, tourism, participatory mapping, nature conservation, heritage, cultural ecosystem services.