

Sustainable Use of Ecosystem Services in Jordan (EKF-ESS project)

Wadi Al Karak Case Study

Wadi Al Karak is a prime watershed in Karak Governorate with outstanding natural and cultural values and attributes. The case study in Wadi Al Karak is a comprehensive one and mainly addresses the provisioning ecosystem service of water and its interlinkages with key development activities such as domestic water supply, agriculture water, tourism and rangelands. The case study also targets the cultural and aesthetic services associated with recreation and nature based tourism. The case study is based on the proven assumption that current levels of utilization of water resources in Wadi Al Karak are not sustainable mainly due to over abstraction, pollution, and weak governance.

The main implementation partner of the case study is Princess Basma Community Development Centre (CDC) in Karak representing the Jordan Hashemite Fund for Human Development (JOHUD).

The cooperation with CDC Karak included the preparation of an environmental sustainability strategy for the Governorate of Karak as a framework policy for integrating ecosystem services in local development planning. The process of preparing and adopting the strategy was a participative one involving key local and national stakeholders and interest groups. A local coordination working group was established under the auspices of the Governor of Karak with the aim to promote the ecosystem approach in the forthcoming decentralization program and its improved local resource governance outlook.

The second component of the case study is the development of a sustainable development outlook for Wadi Al Karak focusing on promoting ecosystem based solutions and safeguards for the various development activities taking place, particularly, agriculture, water treatment, recreation, and rangeland. A comprehensive baseline assessment was undertaken for Wadi Al Karak covering all biophysical and socio-economic as well as governance aspects of the target area. The assessment formed the basis for the identification



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of local development scenarios and outlooks as negotiated and agreed among stakeholders. The assessment process was also used as a capacity building initiative linking local expertise to national and international knowledge and experience.

The assessment results identified nature based tourism as a prime development option for Wadi Al Karak, thus a community based initiative for the development of sustainable adventure and recreational tourism was developed and implemented with the newly established Shallalat Mumia (Mumia Falls) CBO. The 15 member CBO was granted a two year initiative to lead the development of tourism activities in Wadi Al Karak as an income generation, job creating and capacity building endeavor for the people of Wadi Al Karak while demonstrating good practices in the sustainable use of ecosystem services.

The sustainable tourism initiative includes the development of a set of adventure hiking trails organized from a renovated traditional building which was turned into a visitor reception and accommodation center. It is anticipated that sustainable tourism will contribute to a much needed balance between sustainable and unsustainable utilization of the Wadi for the various development objectives.



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Al Numeira bike trail - Gour Al Mazraiah

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Al Numeira Educational Tourism Initiative

This is another initiative implemented in the Karak Governorate in the Ghor Mazra'a Area. The main partner for this stand-alone case study is the Numeira Environmental Association (NEA) which is a community based voluntary organization devoted to environmental education and awareness raising and includes hundreds of members and volunteers in its large community network.

The EKF-ESS Project supports the Numeira CBO in the development of its education center to serve as a community development station where local citizens, visitors and volunteers come together to learn about environmental protection and sustainable development. The program also includes the development of a bike trail and a hiking trail which provide field based experience to locals and visitors on the unique nature and culture of the region and their sustainability outlook.

The initiative further includes the development of the CBO recreation and catering rest-house as an income generation activity to poor local families with focus on the unemployed young men and women. The rest-house is strategically located on the main Dead Sea highway and utilizes local agriculture goods provided by local producers.



Al Numaira Environmental Association (NEA) - Ghor Mazra'a

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