

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

Yarmouk Case Study

Community Based Tourism as a Tool for the Sustainable Use of Ecosystem Services

Al Yarmouk area represents a national natural and cultural heritage hotspot including some of Jordan's most important forest habitats and species, like the deciduous Oak and archeological sites - represented mainly by the historic city of Jadara.

Naturally, the target area hosts two protected areas, the Yarmouk Forest Reserve and the Shuleh Special Conservation Area, both established for the conservation and sustainable management of natural forests. Culturally, the area embraces the prime site of Um Qais renowned for its historical association with the Islamic heritage as well as its archeological significance in various eras.

The case study addresses a set of important ecosystem services and their associated development objectives. This includes supporting provisioning ecosystem services linked to natural habitats, rangelands and genetic resources. It also focuses on cultural and aesthetic services manifested in natural landscapes, cultural values and traditional lifestyles. Main economic activities associated with natural and cultural ecosystem services in Al Yarmouk include agriculture, livestock grazing, and recreational tourism. The three economic endeavors exert noteworthy pressures on local resources and their sustainability is organically dependent on the development approach adopted by the various users and decision makers.

On the other hand, the Yarmouk area represents a promising development opportunity especially for local communities and resources users. Its natural and cultural richness, relative intactness and authenticity coupled with medium impact development pressures provide solid grounds for a successful model for environmental sustainability and socio-economic prosperity.

The case study joins a number of local stakeholders all aiming to conserve national heritage and sustain local resources. This includes the Yarmouk Forest Reserve, the Shuleh Municipality, and Baraka Destinations Company, collectively working to promote a sustainable outlook for Al Yarmouk Area under a unique public private partnership.

The first step in the case study was to develop a strategy for sustainable tourism in Al Yarmouk area to form the basis for mainstreaming the concepts and applications of sustainable use of ecosystem services in local development planning. The strategy was developed in a participative process including all relevant stakeholders and interest groups with the aim to foster a local sense of ownership and commitment. The strategy document represented a model for an integrated planning approach where economic growth, social development and environmental protection are joined in one development outlook. Sustainable tourism was identified as the lead development option for Al Yarmouk Area developed integrally with other traditional resource uses such as agriculture and grazing, all within their acceptable limits and capacities.

To promote the implementation of the strategy, the case study cooperates closely with Baraka Company to promote the Baraka Um Qais tourism destination through building local capacities and training on tourism services, including traditional accommodation, nature hiking, cultural learning, serving local food, traditional resource harvesting and local handcrafts.

In addition to the strategy, a number of local initiatives were developed and implemented with local partners. These include:



Participation of the Shuleh Women Cooperative in the 18th Olive Oil Festival (Amman, November 2017)



Saham - Yarmouk

Contact
Dr. Oliver Schlein
oliver.schlein@giz.de

- The sustainable rangeland management initiative implemented by Al Yarmouk Livestock Association targeting natural rangelands in and around the Yarmouk Forest Reserve. The initiative aims to develop a sustainable grazing activity based on the reserve carrying capacity while providing alternative and complementary sources of income to livestock owners based on alternative fodder production, improved herd health and marketable dairy products.
- The rural women development initiative implemented by the Shuleh Women Cooperative, a newly established CBO addressing sustainable resource management in and around Al Shuleh Special Conservation Area. The initiative includes the development of a traditional products outlet to market high quality local agricultural products especially relating to olives, dairy, and rain fed fruits and vegetables. A local kitchen was established to offer authentic local food and promote local products to visitors and local inhabitants.
- The heritage trail initiative implemented by the Saham Youth Initiative, a volunteer based organization mobilizing hundreds of community members from both genders. The main activity of the initiative is the development of a nature-culture trail in the wilderness areas of Saham where visitors are invited to enjoy and learn about nature, history and local traditions. The area represents an interesting ecological refuge where native plants and animals find the opportunity to prosper and regenerate in a relatively remote landscape distant from development pressures and challenges.
- Al Wasatiyyeh forest education initiative implemented by the forestry department of Al Wasatiyyeh. The initiative includes the development of one of the field stations of the forestry department into an environmental learning center focusing on forest conservation and rehabilitation through interactive field based learning for schools and community members, in addition to a small botanic garden using native plant species.



Saham trail excursion with university students, December 2017

Published by: Deutsche Gesellschaft für
Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

Registered offices Bonn and Eschborn

GIZ Office Jordan
Mohamed Baseem Al-Kammash St. 13, Sweifieh
Amman 11190 Jordan
www.giz.de/jordan
E info@giz.de
I www.giz.de

Author: Tarek Abulhawa
Photo credits/sources: GIZ
Photographer: Mohammad Adi

GIZ is responsible for the content of this publication. Amman February 2017

Case study contacts:

Al Yarmouk Forest Reserve
Mr. Mohammad Al Malkawi
mohammed.malkawi@rscn.org.jo
Cell: +962 79 606 1649

Yarmouk Livestock Cooperative
Mr. Mohammad Ibrahim
yarmoukCBO@gmail.com
Cell: +962 236 5655

Shuleh Women Cooperative
Ms. Khanum Al Kurdi
nashmyyatshuleh@gmail.com
+962 77 755 1514

Saham Heritage Trail
Mr. Madhar Al Tayyar
tayyarmadhar@gmail.com
Cell: +962 77 200 8110

Al Baraka Destinations
Ms. Muna Haddad
muna@experiencebaraka.com
Cell: +962 77 6906906

Al Wasatiyyeh Forest Department
Eng. Salim Al Khasawneh
salewali840@yahoo.com
Cell: +962 77 210 9054