



Mainstreaming Sustainable Development in West Asia

Annual Report 2008



IUCN, Regional Office for West Asia (ROWA)

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About IUCN Regional Office for West Asia (ROWA)



IUCN Regional Office for West Asia (ROWA) was established in October 2004. The region is the convergence point of the Mediterranean, Persian and Arabic civilizations. IUCN ROWA covers thirteen countries in West Asia: Bahrain, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Palestine, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, United Arab Emirates and Yemen.

We work through five thematic programmes including: the Regional Water Resources & Drylands Programme (REWARD), Protected Areas Programme, Poverty, Equity & Gender (PEG) Programme, Marine and Coastal Ecosystem Programme, and Business & Biodiversity Programme. Through these thematic programmes we demonstrate the strengths of IUCN to share knowledge and to develop new models for conservation and sustainable development.

The role of IUCN ROWA is to coordinate environmental activities at regional and local levels; particularly in relation to regional environmental agreements and global environmental conventions. At the same time, IUCN enhances knowledge, empowerment and governance around biodiversity and water resources management through projects in the field. IUCN ROWA also focuses on a multi-stakeholder decision process involving governments, civil society and research institutions. Environmental awareness is a key issue for making a difference, thus the office facilitates communication, coordination, and information exchange among different actors in the region

Forward: Harnessing the Unifying Power of the Union



Looking back at 2008, it was heartening to witness the celebration of the 60th Anniversary of IUCN. This is a time for reflection about the legacy of IUCN and also a time for the renewal and definition of niche and core competences of the Union. The Congress demonstrated the unifying power of IUCN where global membership, commissions and secretariat convene to share best practices, provide solutions, frame and define the future of sustainability and shape the governance of the Union. The IUCN Congress conveyed a strong message of hope and optimism about the potential and possibilities that are there, but these need to be harnessed in the public domain; civil society, private sector, research institutions and international community. The IUCN Congress has also communicated the state of urgency for collective action so as to make a better tomorrow. It is safe to say that IUCN has been able to provide global leadership in shaping and framing the debate on transition to sustainability.

The IUCN Forum in the Congress shed light on the critical challenges and threats to our natural capital. Climate change, financial markets, human security, and energy are likely to frame the environmental agenda for the coming decade. IUCN is in a position to provide evidence-based solutions, credible science and sound policy advice to transform the global economy to a green economy and to provide new metrics for measuring the progress of societies based on the value of ecosystem services. The IUCN Programme for 2009-12 provided insights on how IUCN should respond to global priorities like biodiversity, climate change, energy, poverty, and markets.

The Regional Office for West Asia had a strong contribution to the Congress. This was manifested in the launch of the Regional Water Resources & Drylands Programme (REWARD) and in the facilitation of the high profile meeting with HRH Prince Turki bin Nasser of the Presidency of Meteorology and Environment (PME) in Saudi Arabia. Also, IUCN ROWA presented its overall approach to ecosystem management and launched the Arabic versions of three Protected Areas guidelines, which were funded by our members in Kuwait; Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR) and Kuwait Environment Public Authority (EPA), in collaboration with the IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA). At the local arena, relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of IUCN was attained through working at a national level. Our project offices in Saudi Arabia and Palestine offered a good opportunity to address environmental issues at the local level and add value to our members.

Finally, I thank my team who made an excellent contribution to the IUCN Congress and were able to serve and add value to our members through celebrating diversity.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Odeh Al-Jayyousi". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined with a single blue stroke.

Odeh Al-Jayyousi, PhD.
Regional Director

Our Donors & Partners

IUCN ROWA is most grateful for all those who contributed to the success of our Regional Office through their generous financial contributions and partnership in 2008.

- The Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (DGCS), Italy
- IUCN Water & Nature Initiative (WANI)
- Ford Foundation
- The Netherlands' Ministry of Foreign Affairs (DGIS), Netherlands
- Ministry of Environment, Jordan
- United Nations University –International Leadership Institute (UNU – ILI), Jordan
- The Inter-Islamic Network on Water Resources Development and Management, Jordan
- The Royal Society for Conservation of Nature (RSCN), Jordan
- MercyCorps, Jordan
- Arab Women Organization (AWO), Jordan
- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Jordan
- National Commission for Wildlife Conservation and Development (NCWCD), Saudi Arabia
- Presidency of Meteorology & Environment, Saudi Arabia
- The Regional Organization for the Conservation of the Environment of the Red Sea & Gulf of Aden (PERSGA), Saudi Arabia
- Arab Water Council, Egypt
- Bibliotheca Alexandrina, Egypt
- The Center for Environment and Development for the Arab Region and Europe (CEDARE), Egypt
- GEF Small Grants Programme, Egypt
- Coptic Evangelical Organization for Social Services (CEOSS), Egypt
- CARE International, Egypt
- Society for the Protection of Nature in Lebanon (SPNL), Lebanon
- MADA, Lebanon
- Water and Environment Center of Sana'a University, Yemen
- Ministry of Water and Environment, Yemen
- Ministry of Agriculture, Yemen
- Palestinian Hydrological Group (PHG), Palestine
- Union of Agricultural Working Committees (UAWC), Palestine
- Palestinian Water Authority (PWA), Palestine



Highlights of the Year 2008

January

First West Asia Regional Committee Meeting in Jordan.

Start of the IUCN REWARD project in Palestine and the district of Marj Sanour Watershed development.

Start of the IUCN REWARD DSS project for Irrigation/Drainage management in Beni Suef and Minia in Egypt.

IUCN ROWA renews the memorandum of understanding with the National Commission for Wildlife Conservation and Development (NCWCD) in Saudi Arabia to deepen a 20 year partnership in the field of Protected Areas Management.

February

IUCN ROWA participates in the Species Survival Commission's Specialist Group Chairs meeting in Al Ain, UAE.

The project document for the IUCN REWARD project in Jordan/Zarqa approved by the national stakeholders.

Signing of an MOU with CEDARE in Egypt to lead the implementation of the IUCN REWARD project in Egypt in partnership with CARE International Egypt and CEOSS.

March

Establishment of an IUCN Palestine Project Office to implement the REWARD Project in Maj Sanour in partnership with the Palestinian Hydrological Group and Palestine Union of Agricultural Working Committees.

July

Socotra Archipelago in Yemen nominated as a new World Heritage Site.

REWARD Regional Workshop on the Future of Ground Water in the MENA Region held in Cairo in partnership with CEDARE.

August

IUCN REWARD Programme team participates in the Stockholm World Water Week.

Initiation of a new Regional Business & Biodiversity Programme to engage the private sector in IUCN ROWA's vision and programmes in the region.

October

IUCN World Conservation Congress West Asia contribution:

- IUCN REWARD Programme organizes the West Asia Water Day at the Congress Water Pavilion focusing on 5 different country cases from Egypt, Jordan (Zarqa & Azraq), Palestine and Yemen.
- IUCN ROWA organizes the World Sustainability Leaders VIP Dialogue hosted by Prince Turki of PME.
- IUCN ROWA organizes the West Asia Approaches to Reward Ecosystems session.
- IUCN ROWA contributes to the Water Dialogue and the Private Sector session.
- IUCN ROWA contributes to the Traditional Practices of Adaptation to Climate Change and Variability session.

April

Start of the inception phase of the Azraq Dialogue Project as one of the REWARD demonstration sites funded by DGCS.

May

First West Asia Regional Advisory Committee Meeting in Jordan.
Formation of Marj Sanour Watershed Project Steering Committee and Technical Advisory Committee in Palestine.

June

Future of Sustainability Debate in the Arab Region held in Alexandria Library on the occasion of the World Environment Day.
The Documentary Nature Inc. broadcast on BBC on the "Economics in Conflicting Ground Water Demand Around Azraq Oasis" as part of a broader documentary series initiated by the IUCN WANI Global Initiative.
IUCN ROWA Protected Areas Programme facilitates a workshop on Natural World Heritage and Biodiversity – Toward Sustainable Development in the Future of Iraq, funded by UNESCO.
A study tour for a governmental Palestinian Delegation to Jordanian Protected Areas organized by IUCN in partnership with RSCN to enhance Palestinian protected Areas.

A regional training course on How to Design and Implement a Public Awareness Campaign held by the IUCN REWARD Programme and InWent in Jordan.

IUCN ROWA, in cooperation with Ministry of Environment in Jordan, launches a documentary entitled "Eco-Cities, Sustainable Cities for the Future" during the Eco-cities of the Mediterranean Conference in Jordan funded by DGIS-Netherlands through IUCN WANI Initiative.

Three WCPA Guidelines on Protected Areas Management translated to Arabic and distributed during the IUCN Congress.

IUCN ROWA participates in the Third Regional Course on Conservation & Management of Heritage Sites in the Arab Region, Sharjah-UAE.

November

IUCN REWARD Programme signs an MOU with MercyCorps for building capacities in Zarqa governorate.

Azraq Dialogue project document approved at a national level.

Approval for a project proposal on women empowerment in Zarqa Governorate from the European Commission with the Arab Women Organization in partnership with IUCN REWARD Programme.

Protected Areas Programme launches the Strategic Vision for 2009-2012.

December

Start of the inception phase of IUCN REWARD Project in Dhamar Governorate in Yemen.

The IUCN Transition to Sustainability Book Launched in Kuwait in cooperation with the Green Line Environmental Group.

Signing of an MOU with Water and Environment Center of Sana'a University to be the lead partner to implement the IUCN REWARD project in Yemen.

Signing of an agreement with the Royal Society for Conservation of Nature to implement the Water for Schools project in Zarqa.

IUCN ROWA produces a documentary entitled "Socotra – The Future of an Archipelago".

IUCN REWARD conducts a Training Needs Assessment for relevant stakeholders of Zarqa River Basin Restoration project.

Regional Water Resources and Drylands Programme (REWARD)

Since drylands occupy most of the land in the West Asia region, desertification is considered to be one of the main challenges facing this region due to poor management of the often scarce freshwater resources. Water resources are hence considered to be one of the most limiting factors for sustainable development in the area.

In 2006, the IUCN ROWA started the WESCANIA Regional Water Project funded by DGCS/Italy. This project formed the basis for a multi-donor funded Regional Water Programme implemented by the actual IUCN Regional Office for West Asia (ROWA). The long-term Programme, introduced in 2007 as the Regional Water Resources and Drylands Programme (REWARD) presented a new and challenging phase of innovation and development. REWARD is one of the programmes funded by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (DGCS), the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the IUCN Global Water and Nature Initiative (WANI). In the first phase, initial contacts were made with potential Knowledge Nodes that will participate in a Regional Water Knowledge Network under the IUCN umbrella.

Coordinately, five demonstration projects were identified in river basins and watersheds of Jordan, Egypt, Palestine and Yemen. In 2007 and 2008, all of the REWARD projects went through an inception phase to determine focus and scope for a 3-year-project. The two projects located in Jordan at Azraq and Zarqa were implemented in



cooperation with the Jordanian Ministry of Environment. The Center for Environment and Development for the Arab Region and Europe (CEDARE) took charge of the project in Beni Sueif and Minia governorates in Egypt, while an IUCN Project Office took the lead on the project in Palestine. As for Yemen, the REWARD Programme signed an MOU with the Water and Environment Center of Sana'a University in Yemen to run the Dhamar project there.

The objective of the REWARD Programme is to influence regional decision makers to adopt systemic approaches for water resource management through the Regional Network of Knowledge Nodes. The network will foster capacity building,

shared learning, networking and exchange of experience between the major actors in the water sector of the region. This will be given hands and feet by the five demonstration projects in five different countries, and additionally, one or two more may still be identified.

The REWARD Programme forms part of, and directly contributes to, the Water and Nature Initiative (WANI), a worldwide effort of IUCN to implement a systemic approach to water management. This enables the IUCN members in the region to benefit directly from the experience and expertise available in this global initiative.

Reversing years of pollution

Zarqa River Restoration Project, Jordan

In 2008 the REWARD Programme cooperated with the Jordanian Ministry of Environment to work on the design of the Zarqa River Basin Restoration Project, funded by the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation. The Zarqa River has suffered for many years from severe pollution and water exploitation problems. This project will develop a long-term restoration strategy for the Zarqa river basin that will be facilitated and tested by IUCN and the Ministry of Environment.

The project plans to restore the river's environmental flows by making better use of ground and surface water. The real challenge, though, is dealing with the pollution caused by domestic waste water coming from Amman city, in addition to industrial solid waste and waste water which is heavily concentrated in the river.



As a response to these challenges, IUCN uses a participatory approach to identify solutions and strategies with relevant stakeholders of the Zarqa River Basin in order to build their capacities in river restoration methodologies. For this programme, the Ministry of Environment has established a Project Management Unit to manage the project.

Further, the REWARD Programme identified a number of IUCN WANI Publications to be translated to Arabic in an attempt to raise the awareness of relevant stakeholders on river restoration and ecosystem approaches.

IUCN also partnered with the Ministry of Environment in Jordan to start updating Jordanian environmental legislations. This will strengthen and push the process of the Zarqa River restoration.

Facilitating Dialogue and Concerted Action

Azraq Dialogue Project, Jordan

Azraq Basin is considered to be one of the most important recharging groundwater basins in Jordan, and forms the largest resource of good-quality ground and surface water. The Azraq Oasis is known for the wealth of its biodiversity and habitats, especially regarding migratory birds, and is also recognized as a RAMSAR site. The water regime in the oasis and wetland is severely jeopardized by over-abstraction of groundwater as a result of demand for drinking water in Amman and Zarqa cities as well as by unsustainable large-scale irrigation in the immediate surroundings of the oasis.

In 2008, the project convened the local Bedouins, Chechen community, government officials, NGOs, CBOs and private sector around one table to discuss how to save Azraq Oasis from the severe degradation threatening its future. The project also conducted a stakeholder dialogue to come to concerted actions with all involved parties.

A number of pilot projects will be implemented in selected pilot sites focusing on reducing water demand, and aiming to ease pressure on the oasis and thus on the ground water in the Azraq area.

For the development of a long-term restoration strategy, four different components should be taken into consideration to improve the groundwater level in the Azraq area

1. Restoration of the Ramsar wetland site which forms part of the project area in Azraq.
2. Determination of a balanced equation between pumping the groundwater for irrigation and pumping it for local drinking water uses in the oasis area.
3. Consideration of the drinking water supply share for Amman city.
4. Creation of a restoration and development plan for the larger Azraq Oasis area.



Securing Livelihoods by Utilizing the Conjunctive Use of Water

Marj Sanour Watershed Development Project, Palestine



In Palestine, the REWARD Programme is working on a long-term watershed development plan that focuses on sustainable use of water resources and agricultural production as well as on securing livelihoods under the Israeli occupation. For this it will work on a simple model for watershed development planning supported by a user-friendly Decision Support System (DSS). This system is being tested and applied in Marj Sanour, a closed watershed in the Jenin Governorate. The project is supported by the Palestinian Water Authority, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Local Government and Environmental Quality Authority, and is being implemented by the IUCN REWARD Project office in Palestine with the Palestine Hydrology Group and the Union of Agricultural Work Committees. It capitalizes on earlier efforts in the area by the EMPOWERS Regional Project, implemented by CARE International and other partners and funded by the European Commission.

During the inception phase in 2007, the Marj Sanour project identified the priorities that should be considered during the implementation process. Improving standards of living for rural livelihoods in watershed areas is one of the main concerns in addition to increasing agricultural development using systemic approaches of water resource management.

One of the main targets of the project is to improve productivity of agricultural land by utilizing the retention of surface run-off water in up-hill agricultural fields and orchards, ground water recharge increase, and better use of available water sources for agriculture and domestic purposes. Another objective is to increase ground water resources by employing conjunctive management of ground water and surface run-off water, contributing to livelihood security. Further, better use of surface (flood) water generated during the winter rainy season could alleviate stress on groundwater resources.

According to several previous studies conducted in the West Bank, floodwater has reliable potential as a water resource. Normally, part of this water either evaporates (as in Marj Sanour) or flows through the major dry valley beds to the East. Because of the frequency and duration of the run-off and the topographically hilly conditions, a portion of the runoff can be developed into a dependable water supply at reasonable costs.

Calibrating River Water for Better Crops

System tools for irrigation and drainage management, Beni Sueif and Minia – Egypt

In the Beni Sueif and Minia governorates, challenges range from the lack of awareness and insufficient communication between stakeholders to monitoring and technical capacity. This has led to insufficient water management in the area. The IUCN REWARD irrigation and drainage management project spreads awareness among stakeholders on effective and sound management of available water resources using relevant district Decision Support Tools (DSTs) that are practical, agreed upon, and reflective of decision-making processes and data availability realities. This will lead to the improvement of rural livelihoods in Menia and Beni Sueif.

The project, which has started in early 2008 after an inception phase in 2007, has identified key stakeholders and partners to review the existing system analysis tools and previous management practices. This activity will help in establishing essential databases related to water distribution systems and water consumption dynamics. A number of modules have been developed to provide district managers in those areas with an accurate estimate of water inflows, outflows, and actual water consumption. This approach is applied at the governorate level, while detailed measurements are conducted at selected locations within the governorates.

In addition, the project pays attention to the empowerment of farmers, district engineers and managers to build their capacities within the pilot-districts and at governorate administrative levels.

The project is implemented by The Center for Environment and Development for the Arab Region and Europe (CEDARE) in cooperation with the Coptic Evangelical Organization for Social Services (CEOSS) and CARE International in Egypt and is funded by the Italian Cooperation (DGCS). It is also strongly supported by the Egyptian Ministry of Water Resources and Irrigation, as it sees this project as piloting effective management and planning.



Calibrating Groundwater for Better Crops

Stakeholder dialogue and concerted action for conjunctive use of groundwater in Dhamar governorate, Yemen

In 2008, a watershed in Dhamar governorate in Yemen was identified as one of the IUCN REWARD demonstration sites funded by DGCS. Dhamar is considered to be one of the most highly populated areas in Yemen with a population of about one and a half million inhabitants. It is an agricultural area that depends on the abstraction of ground water. The need for sound water resources management is essential due to water scarcity which has resulted from overexploitation of ground water, deterioration of water resources and poor water governance.

The REWARD Project signed a memorandum of understanding with the Water and Environment Center of Sana'a University to be the lead partner in project implementation. Located in the northeastern part of the Dhamar Governorate, the project aims at securing rural livelihoods in sub-catchment areas, enhancing agricultural development and improving drinking water and sanitation for rural communities. This will be achieved through integrated management of specific watersheds contributing to poverty reduction.

In line with the IUCN REWARD Programme strategy, the Dhamar project will adopt systemic participatory approaches for water resource management at watershed/ecosystem levels by increasing the participation and representation of stakeholders in planning and decision making processes. Hence, the project will explore the best use of available water sources for agricultural and domestic uses and groundwater recharge. This will result in increased economic activity and living standards as well as enhanced empowerment and self-reliance at the community level.

Designing and Implementing Public Awareness Campaigns

A series of training workshops on designing and implementing public awareness campaigns have been conducted for the past two years, jointly organized by the IUCN REWARD Programme and InWent Capacity Building International. A five-day-training workshop was held in 2008 in Jordan to enhance participants' skills in the technical aspects of designing and implementing public awareness campaigns, enabling them to develop new communication and analytical tools.

Earlier, two other similar workshops were held in Syria and Morocco by qualified REWARD trainers, and is part of a four-year-program on capacity building in the field of environment, focusing on the water sector. The overall objective of this program is to strengthen regional cooperation and develop management strategies for the water sector in selected countries within the MENA region.

The workshops resulted in a high level of cooperation between the participants in addition to the sharing of knowledge through learning by doing. This enabled the participants to explore some conceptual notions behind awareness raising and its relation with knowledge, attitudes and behavior; which is useful in understanding how communication influences behavior. This concept is based on wide spread recognition of the need to mainstream gender issues and the need for community involvement in government or NGO initiated programs to ensure that everyone's needs are addressed in policy, procedures and practice. This also must be reflected in public awareness campaigns so as to improve use and management of water resources. To this end, the training methodology used the EMPOWERS participatory planning cycle for Integrated Water Resource Management. This cycle builds on the identification of water-related problems and the development of area specific long-term visions and strategies for water resource development to support stakeholders at different levels in making the technical and political decisions to develop and manage their water resources.

Calling for Participatory Approaches in Integrated Water Resources Management

The MENA Region suffers from severe water scarcities, high over-abstraction of ground water and low conjunctivity of ground and surface water. There are few available water resource options, but the most prominent alternatives include desalinated sea water and treated waste water. A high negative environmental impact on ecosystems and human development can be foreseen if environmental flows and conjunctive use of all water resources are not dealt with in a proper manner.

Looking at the solution for such challenges, IUCN REWARD Programme launched its Regional Water Knowledge Network during a Regional Dialogue on the Future of Ground Water in the Middle East & North Africa (MENA) Region in Cairo. This dialogue was held in cooperation with the Center for Environment & Development for the Arab Region and Europe (CEDARE) and the Arab Water Council, and funded by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (DGCS), IUCN Water & Nature Initiative (WANI) and the Global Water Partnership – MED.

The Dialogue took place within the larger perspective of IWRM but focused on groundwater and its conjunctive use and management with other water resources (surface water, use of waste water, desalination of brackish water). Subsequently, a high level policy meeting will be held in 2012 to determine possible avenues for more sustainable use of ground water which could be translated into long-term policies in participation with all stakeholders.

The Ministries of Water, Environment and Agriculture participated in this Dialogue, in addition to international donor agencies and local and international NGOs. The Dialogue will be made operational through a series of Regional Dialogue Expert Meetings held with key institutions in the region over the IUCN 2009-2012 Programme cycle.



Protected Areas Programme



Due to the lack of a representative network of Protected Areas that are effectively managed in the West Asia Region, the Protected Areas Programme focuses on guiding governments and civil societies towards adequate regional approaches and models for the effective management of Protected Areas. Particular emphasis is given to community participation and involvement at all levels.

The new strategic vision of the Protected Areas programme of 2009-2012 is: the establishment of "A representative and viable regional network of protected areas, distributed among the sub-regions to reflect differences in ecological conditions and biodiversity, conserve key elements of biodiversity, play a significant role in social and economic development, and embody a variety of approaches to participatory/ collaborative management".

The main objectives of the programme are:

- To guide and enhance the development of regional approaches and models for effective PA management with a focus on community participation and involvement at all levels.
- To build the region's knowledge and capacity in PA management with a focus on the development of regionally adequate and sound guidelines and tools drawing on global knowledge and experience.
- To enhance policies for effective protected areas designation and management at national and regional levels.
- To provide technical assistance at the Regional and National levels of implementation of the World Heritage Convention.
- To encourage state parties to nominate Natural World Heritage sites or increase the number of inscribed world Heritage Natural sites on the list.



Jordan Rift Valley Project

As a globally important land bridge for mammals, birds and other animals, the Jordan Rift Valley, as part of the Great Rift Valley, serves as a connection between Africa, Europe and Asia. Unfortunately, the Jordan Rift Valley is in danger of losing its natural assets due to the construction of infrastructure designed to meet socio-economical development needs.

As a solution to these challenges, a project was initiated by The Royal Society for Conservation of Nature (RSCN) in Jordan to establish a network of four Protected Areas and seven smaller Special Conservation Areas. The community-driven project, funded by the World Bank, involves a wide range of stakeholders.

The Protected Areas Programme provides capacity building on issues related to local community involvement in protected area planning and management and protected areas management plan development, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and review. Additionally, the Programme focuses on protected areas zoning concerning wider land-use planning and management programmes, socio-economic development and other sustainable development sectors.

As one of the main partners of the "Integrated Ecosystem Management in the Jordan Rift Valley Project", IUCN ROWA managed to attain its target in terms of in-kind contribution during the first year of the project. This was done through participating in different project activities such as meetings, workshops, trainings and field visits and by providing both technical and strategic support at all project implementation stages.



Northern Bald Ibis Project, Syria

The Northern Bald Ibis (NBI) *Geronticus eremita* is listed in the IUCN Red List 2006 as a "Critically Endangered" species on a global scale. Unexpectedly, a relict wild colony of 7 individuals was discovered in the Syrian Palmyra desert in 2002. An Ibis Protected Area (IPA) was established there in 2004.



The IUCN Protected Areas Programme launched the initiation phase of this project in late 2007 by establishing new standards and practices for protected areas design and management in Syria, specifically to focus on the conservation of the Northern Bald Ibis. To accomplish the project, IUCN is building on the knowledge and scientific expertise of BirdLife International and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB). The main aim is to improve understanding of the IPA (Ibis Protected Area) from a physical, ecological and socio economic point of view. At the same time, importance is given to awareness raising activities and capacity building for local communities, managers, rangers and the Bald Ibis protected area staff.

In 2008, a project document was approved by IUCN's national Syrian partner, the General Commission for Badia Management and Development. The project is funded by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (DGCS).

On the other hand, The Middle East Northern Bald Ibis International Meeting was held in Turkey in May 2008. This meeting was organized by Doga Dernegi, BirdLife in Turkey, with participation of BirdLife Middle East, RSPB, IUCN, as well as the Turkish and Syrian authorities. An action plan for the eastern Northern Bald Ibis population was discussed together with a supplementation operation involving both countries.



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IUCN ROWA
Protected Areas
Programme guides
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World Heritage Efforts in West Asia

Socotra – A new Natural World Heritage Site

In late 2007, the IUCN ROWA Protected Areas Programme joined the global Protected Areas Programme on an evaluation mission to Socotra Archipelago in Yemen to advise on its nomination as a new World Heritage Site. As a result, Socotra was nominated as one of nine new Natural World Heritage Sites during the World Heritage Committee's 32nd annual meeting in July 2008 in Canada. Socotra Archipelago is known for its rich flora and fauna. Approximately 37% of Socotra's plant species, 90% of its reptile species and 95% of its land snail species are endemic.

As a Natural World Heritage Site it is important to promote Socotra's terrestrial and marine biodiversity. Therefore, IUCN ROWA produced a documentary to illustrate how the islands and their communities try to fit into today's changing world. Due to increased accessibility and the influence of globalization, the islands are threatened by unsustainable development. The film, which was produced in close co-operation with the Socotra Conservation and Development Programme, raised some important questions regarding the future of the archipelago and the threats the islands are facing.



Workshop on Natural World Heritage and Biodiversity in Iraq

A workshop on Natural World Heritage and Biodiversity was organized by UNESCO in Iraq, to build the Iraqi capacities and expertise on Biological Diversity and World Heritage Conventions. The workshop aimed to urge the Iraqi authorities to sign the CBD and grow to understand the concept of both conventions in order to ensure the protection of the natural heritage sites in Iraq. They were also familiarized with the nomination processes of natural sites.



The training, facilitated by IUCN ROWA, introduced the idea of conservation management plans for protected areas, specifically for Natural Heritage Sites. Also emphasized was the role of public awareness and local participation in the preservation of cultural and natural heritage by using resources in a sustainable manner.

First Regional Meeting on the Second Periodic Reporting in the Arab States

The first Regional meeting on the Second Cycle of Periodic Reporting in the Arab States took place in Bahrain in December 2008. The focal points of Arab states attended the meeting that was organized in two main sessions, one devoted to the Outstanding Universal Value and the other to the Periodic Reporting Questionnaire.

Every country that wishes to join the World Heritage Sites list should be assessed as to whether they meet the requirements of the Outstanding Universal Values. These encompass the cultural and/or natural significance of any site that makes it so exceptional as to be of common importance for present and future generations of humanity.

In the Arab region, there is a growing need for awareness of World Heritage Conventions. UNESCO responded to this need by holding this meeting to tackle the issue of Outstanding Universal Values (OUV) and periodic reporting process. The meeting also trained the participants to prepare the report, considering regional and national applications and implementation of the World Heritage Convention.

During the meeting, IUCN ROWA accepted to be the leading "mentor" for regional organizations in the Convention. Through this role, IUCN will provide advice to State Parties who wish to fill out the new online Periodic Reporting Questionnaire which is managed by the UNESCO World Heritage Centre and IUCN ROWA Protected Areas Programme.

Conservation and Management of Heritage Sites in the Arab Region

In a step towards exploring potential collaboration and networking in the field of Cultural and Natural heritage, IUCN ROWA has participated in a training workshop in UAE entitled ATH R: Third Regional Course on 'Conservation and Management of Heritage Sites in the Arab Region organized by ICCROM; an intergovernmental organization dedicated to the conservation of cultural heritage.

The course focused on enabling participants to acquire a critical approach to the conservation of heritage sites. Selected participants from fourteen Arab countries participated in the training course including site managers, archaeologists, architects, engineers, and planners.

The course was carried out in partnership with the Sharjah Department of Culture and Information, Sharjah Museums Department, American University of Sharjah, and University of Sharjah with the support of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (DGCS).

Cooperation Amongst IUCN Members for Better Management of Protected Areas in West Asia

Partnership with RSCN in Jordan

IUCN has a long and remarkable partnership with the Royal Society for Conservation of Nature in Jordan. A long term agreement between IUCN and RSCN was renewed in 2008 to promote nature conservation and equitable and sustainable use of natural resources in Jordan and the West Asia region. Specifically, both parties will work on the adoption of a National Report on protected area management effectiveness. IUCN will provide technical assistance in the preparation of the World Heritage nomination file for Dana Biosphere Reserve and will support RSCN in a number of pilot projects, mainly related to protected areas management planning. IUCN and RSCN will also cooperate on a number of capacity building activities related to national and regional nature conservation.

Partnership with NCWCD in Saudi Arabia

IUCN's partnership with the National Commission for Wildlife Conservation and Development (NCWCD) in Saudi Arabia has generated over 20 years of technical collaboration in protected areas management. The renewed MOU between IUCN and NCWCD will promote the conservation of nature and the equitable and ecologically sustainable use of natural resources in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The strategic partnership will provide technical support in developing and implementing projects and programmes at the national level, promote the exchange of information and experiences on environment and sustainable development and promote and develop cooperative activities for environment and sustainable development.

Partnership with Ministry of Local Administration and Environment in Syria

IUCN ROWA has provided technical assistance and guidance to the Ministry of Local Administration and Environment in Syria to develop a national action plan for the conservation of sea birds in Syria. The West Asia Protected Areas Programme has conducted this action plan through a participatory approach, gathering a number of stakeholders from the Syrian government and local fishers. During a one-week field trip, a series of meetings were held with all the stakeholders in the Mediterranean Coastline of Syria to accumulate all the required information for the action plan, which was funded by the Regional Activities Center for Special Protected Areas (RAC/SPA). The major focus of the project document that was followed by a detailed action plan was the situation of sea birds, the major threats and the proposed scenarios for protecting those birds.

An Exchange Tour for a Palestinian Delegation to Jordanian Protected Areas

A study tour was organized for a Palestinian delegation from the National Committee for Protected Areas in Palestine by the IUCN ROWA Protected Areas Programme, in cooperation with the Royal Society for Conservation of Nature (RSCN) and Birdlife International/Middle East. The delegation, represented by a number of Palestinian ministries and associations, visited a number of Protected Areas in Jordan, such as Dana, Azraq, Mujib, and Shomari Reserves. The tour aimed to help the delegation learn from Jordanian experience in managing protected areas and to create a strategy to enhance the situation of protected areas in Palestine.

IUCN ROWA contributes to the First Biodiversity Congress in the Middle East

The First International Congress on Documenting, Analysing and Managing Biodiversity in the Middle East was held in October 2008 in Jordan. IUCN ROWA presented two technical cases in the conference; one was presented by the Protected Areas Programme entitled Conservation Efforts 2002-07 to Ensure Survival of the Last Surviving Northern Bald Ibis in the Middle East. The second case was presented by the Marine Coastal Ecosystem Programme entitled The Status of Coral Reefs on Selected Sites along the Sudanese Red Sea Coast. The Congress was organized by the Middle Eastern Biodiversity Network comprising of the Senckenberg Research Institute and National History Museum, Marine Science Station Aqaba, American University of Beirut, Johann Wolfgang Goethe-Universität, University of Sana'a and University of Tehran and was funded by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD).

Participation in the First-Ever Meeting of the Species Survival Commission Specialist Group Chairs in UAE

The IUCN ROWA Office participated in the Species Survival Commission Specialist Group Chairs meeting which took place in the United Arab Emirates

in February 2008. The Protected Areas Programme highlighted the case of the Northern Bald Ibis Project and the importance of the IPA (Ibis Protected Area) from a physical, ecological and socio-economic point of view.

The meeting resulted in the appointment of an IUCN ROWA Protected Areas Programme Officer as the Species Survival Commission focal person in West Asia. Due to the high demand of requests on Red listing in the West Asia Region, the Protected Areas Programme will be organizing a Regional Red List Training Workshop in 2009.

This SSC meeting was the first of its kind in the Commission's almost-60-year history. During the meeting, Chairs of SSC Specialist Groups were given the chance to share their challenges, triumphs and wisdom. The meeting, which was graciously hosted by the Environment Agency of Abu Dhabi, was an opportunity for interacting in creative ways on challenging subjects, and an opportunity for the IUCN Regional Offices to form lasting linkages with the groups to tackle these challenges.

Integrated Management of the Hermel Project in Lebanon

The July 2006 war on Lebanon and the continuing security situation had a massive impact on the already ailing economy of the country and hence the livelihoods of the people. Although this socio-economic distress was felt across the country, the rural and remote areas were most affected, as the main economic activities were already concentrated in the capital and main cities. The livelihood base of the district of Hermel is one of those that was directly affected by the war. The fisheries of the Orontes River -one of the few economic activities that the area depends on- were bombed, with at least 10 fishery stations reportedly destroyed from direct impact and sound.

Hermel, located in the Bekaa Governorate of north Lebanon, already suffers from a lack of economic opportunities as it has only modest agricultural activities and minor tourism initiatives. Despite the fact that it is rich in water (the south-west is bordered by a river originating at the "Ressmal" water source, and the southern side by the Orontes River), the lands are arid and as a result, agricultural activities are restricted.

In late 2008, DGCS agreed to fund a 1 million Euro IUCN project in the Hermel area. The goal of this project is to support strategic, participatory planning and implementation of sustainable development activities, improve local livelihoods, restore and conserve ecosystems, increase resilience of local communities to climate change or other related disasters and open new opportunities for local sustainable development. The project will be implemented by the Society for the Protection of Nature in Lebanon - SPNL (an IUCN member) and Mada (a Lebanese NGO).



Poverty, Equity and Gender Programme

Gender and Water

The conservation-development interface poses a new challenge for dealing with a multiplicity of stakeholders and social actors who are operating at different levels and with widely divergent degrees of power. These dynamics lead to a constant need for negotiation over the outcomes of conservation and development initiatives. Not only have rural communities different perspectives than government agencies, business interests, and non-governmental organizations, but within the communities themselves there are also significant differences in interests and power. It is within the rural households and communities that differences shaped by gender are most apparent. While gender has been recognized as a key variable to be addressed in the development of REWARD pilot projects, gender analysis within conservation efforts only began in 2008. This reflects the recognition and women's important role in grass-root project strategies to influence policies, institutions, and partnerships to move towards sustainable development. The pilot projects of the REWARD programme have adopted a more fundamental analysis of gender relations and their implications for natural resource use and management.



Dealing with Water Scarcity, Pollution, and Demand

The REWARD Programme must enhance water management to fulfill people's needs and reduce negative impacts through adaptation of integrated water resource management (IWRM). This will facilitate better livelihoods and sustainable use, management and development of water, land and biodiversity resources. It is also important to maintain a balance between the use of these resources for economic and social welfare and the protection and conservation of water based on sustainable development principles.

By working with communities and stakeholders, REWARD finds creative solutions that are good for both people and the environment. Gender-sensitive participatory methods are used in project management and policy development in order to facilitate greater expression and consideration of both women's and men's voices. This will be further developed through the IUCN ROWA projects.

Right and Responsibilities for Water

The REWARD programme presented a publication on Right Based Approach at the IUCN World Conservation Congress documenting two cases from Palestinian and Jordanian pilot projects. The experience was documented in the earlier mentioned EMPOWERS Project on water rights and local level accountability for water resource management, including explicit analysis of power, gender and risk for building sustainable capacity. Also detailed was how to use positive impact to claim rights and drive decision-making. The REWARD Programme will continue working on environmental sustainability, which means assuring the capacity of nature to support life.

Within the context of IWRM this translates to a healthy water cycle, adequate water for nature, and less water pollution. Forests and wetlands, among other ecosystems, help regulate water flow and quality. Wise efforts to manage water resources sustainably and ensure long-term water availability must include integrated actions to protect these ecosystems and ensure environmental sustainability. On the contrary, poor management of water resources will result in largely negative and often irreversible changes to the environment. To achieve long-term water availability, ecosystems must be able to continue to regulate water quality and quantity. This aspect can be enhanced by linking gender with environmental sustainability, as women and other vulnerable groups often reduce environmental sustainability in different proportion and by different means due to different degrees of access, control and interests.

Marine and Coastal Ecosystem Programme

In partnership with leading conservation and research institutes in the region, IUCN is implementing the Marine and Coastal Ecosystem Programme to support the conservation of marine biodiversity and sustainable use of marine and coastal resources. The programme, which was established in 2007, focuses on the Red Sea and Arabian Gulf that are facing population and economic growth, a rapidly expanding tourism industry and increasing maritime traffic; all constantly putting pressure on the region's unique and highly diverse coastal and marine environment.



The IUCN ROWA Marine & Coastal Programme is implemented in close collaboration with a number of working groups including the IUCN Global Marine Program (GMP), the World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA), the Global Programme on Protected Areas, the Species Survival Commission (SSC), the Species Programme, and the Coral Reefs and Climate Change Working Group.

Marine and Business

The ROWA Marine Programme worked with Forest Trends, Shell, and Shell Qatar to develop a Marine Biodiversity Offset plan to deal with impacts of the Gas to Liquid facility. This involved field surveys of one impact location and two potential offsite locations. Offset scenarios were developed using the Business and Biodiversity Offsets Programme Approach and Methodology. This methodology has been critiqued and modified to deal with marine systems in general and tropical marine systems in particular.

In partnership with Yemen TOTAL LNG (the Total Oil Company consortium in Yemen) and the Government of Yemen, IUCN is establishing a cooperative process under a panel of six independent reviewers (IRs) who will monitor, review and advise on the planning and implementation of the Yemen LNG MBP Strategy. Within IUCN, this partnership will be coordinated by the IUCN ROWA and IUCN Global Marine Programme. The independent reviewers will work to develop and report information on environmental indicators and related performance criteria that can be used to track the progress and effectiveness of MBP measures as compared to well-functioning reference ecosystems.

Economic Valuation of Damage by Ship Grounding on Coral Reefs

The reefs of the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden are suffering from different impacts due to the use of the region as a transit route for a significant percentage of the world's petroleum, dry bulk and other cargoes. With over 30,000 ships traveling through these waters annually, reef groundings by ships or boats are one of the main hazards for corals and coral reef ecosystems. All these factors are considered in the evaluation of the damaged reefs, in addition to the economical value of the damaged reef area, whether used for fishing, diving or as a marine park.

In a training workshop on the Economic Valuation of Damage by Ship Grounding on Coral Reefs, 20 marine professionals from the Arab Region convened to exchange knowledge on the compensation procedures for coral reef damage in their countries. This workshop provided a platform for those regional institutions to formulate the preliminary draft of Regional Guidelines. The workshop was held by IUCN ROWA Marine Programme in cooperation with the Regional Organization for Conservation of Environment of the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden (PERSGA).



Conservation of Threatened Species in the Red Sea

The population density of sharks in the Red Sea is very critical due to their high vulnerability to overexploitation. For instance, in Sudan, shark fishing occurs for the purpose of importing their fins to Hong Kong. However, the population status of sharks remains unknown in the Red Sea, therefore, a project was initiated in 2008 by IUCN ROWA and ESARO Marine Programmes. This project will focus on four key charismatic shark and ray species that were selected based on the following three criteria: unknown population status, threats from over-fishing, and value in dive-tourism.

The four species include: Whale shark – *Rhincodon typus*, Hammerhead shark – *Sphyrna lewini*, Grey reef shark – *Carcharhinus amblyrhynchos*, and Manta ray – *Manta birostris*.

It is hoped that through working with these four species that are highly charismatic and have high tourism value, an awareness of the plight of other kinds of sharks will also be achieved.



Coral Reefs and the Impacts of Climate Change in the Red Sea

The effects of climate change are visible today, and predictions regarding the health of coral reefs are extremely dire, with many experts predicting the functional extinction of many coral reef systems during this century. Because of the great socio-economic importance of coral reefs, especially to the tourism and fishery industries, the loss of these ecosystems would negatively affect the livelihoods of hundreds of millions of people around the world. As a result, the coral reef management community is engaging with the need for greater scientific understanding, improved monitoring and the development of assessment tools in dealing with the growing threat of climate change and coral bleaching to coral reefs in general and Marine Protected Areas in particular.

A Climate Change and Coral Reef Working Group has been set up by IUCN, and includes a project that is being implemented in the Red Sea. The overall aim of this project is to identify indicators of resilience, to identify key ecological areas of high resilience to conserve, and to integrate resilience principles in Marine Protected Areas design and management. IUCN will utilize the results of this project to support Egypt, Sudan, Djibouti, Yemen, Eritrea and Saudi Arabia in designing a network of resilient marine reserves and protected areas and to better monitor these protected areas in the context of climate change.

The findings of this study will have great media impact and increase the general public's awareness of the ecological effects of climate change. Moreover, the widespread loss of coral reefs should be a warning of the great potential of losses to other ecosystems.



Marine Protected Area Management Training Programme for the Red Sea & Gulf of Aden

Worldwide, Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) are recognized by nations as a valuable science-based resource management tool supporting ecosystem-based conservation. Improving the management of existing MPAs is considered as important as establishing new ones. Fewer than 50% of existing MPAs are considered to be effectively managed. Reasons for this lack of effectiveness include inadequate enforcement of regulations, insufficient financial, technical, and human resources, lack of institutional support and lack of public support due to failure to involve stakeholders. IUCN has been active in providing global guidance and technical assistance and has produced many of the key guidelines and handbooks for managing MPAs and coral reefs.

The IUCN Red Sea Marine Programme aims to develop a regional network of multidisciplinary MPA expertise which is vital to implement and ensure high quality marine conservation and to support the implementation of Programme activities. This Red Sea network must also be linked to global expertise and best practice and will operate under the general umbrella and function of the IUCN WCPA-Marine and include relevant institutions and marine experts from the Red Sea. It will also be linked to the IUCN Species Survival Commission and the IUCN Climate Change and Coral Reefs Working Group.

Remote Sensing Support for Analysis of Saudi Arabia's Red Sea and Arabian Gulf Coast

In partnership with the Saudi Arabia Presidency of Meteorology and Environment (PME), IUCN ROWA is working on a Remote Sensing Support for Analysis of Coasts Project that utilizes the Geographic Information System. The aim of this project is to develop an ecosystem-based Decision Support System (DSS) for the management of marine and coastal resources of Saudi Arabia.

The project will provide updated data to the previous IUCN baseline surveys and contribute to the evaluation of the present state of coastal resources and assessment of coastal development. Specifically, it will contribute to the integration of remote sensing results and other information in the decision-making process on coastal planning.

The project will introduce useful advanced tools to PME in Saudi Arabia such as utilizing Earth Observation data for on-going and future activities, especially for coastal monitoring of the Saudi coasts. The project is also expected to contribute to the IUCN ROWA and Global Marine Programme by providing information, methodologies and demonstrations, which will lead to the development of new programmes and initiatives in other coastal zones.

Business and Biodiversity Programme



IUCN's recognition of the common undervaluation of biodiversity by modern economics and the emerging need to engage the private sector in biodiversity nature conservation dates back to the creation of the Union in 1948. Since then, IUCN members have passed nearly 200 Resolutions related to the private sector – in the fields of agriculture, tourism, mining and finance, among others.

The IUCN ROWA, in fulfillment of its regional and global obligations, pursued IUCN's call to engage the business sectors in the global movement toward biodiversity nature conservation. In a joint effort with the Global Business & Biodiversity Programme, IUCN ROWA took a step forward and initiated a new Regional Business & Biodiversity Programme to enhance IUCN's interaction with business sectors in the region and mainstream sustainable development principals.

The main priority of the Programme is to influence the agenda of the business sectors where a change in practices is most urgently needed, due to the scale of their ecological footprints on the environment and social equity. These businesses are likely to fall into one of the following broad categories:

- Large 'footprint' industries (mining, oil and gas, construction, automotive and energy suppliers)
- Biodiversity dependent industries (hunting, wildlife trade, fishing, agriculture and forest)
- Financial services (banking, insurance investment and other financial intermediaries)
- 'Green' enterprises (organic farming, low-impact logging, renewable energy, nature-based tourism, ethical traders)

The Business and Biodiversity Programme prepared a number of concept notes to be discussed with several key governmental and private sector businesses. The first concept note details the improvement of environmental and sustainable development discourse by key media corporations in the region, the second specifies a movement toward greener and eco-friendly schools, and the third describes renovation of the Waqf mechanism (Green Fund) for sustainable development.

Waqf for Sustainable Development

Waqf for Sustainable Development

Waqf is an Islamic term which by definition means, an inalienable religious endowment which devotes an asset for the benefit of society. It can be for a religious, charitable, educational, health, development or other benevolent purpose. The concept of a Waqf fund is similar to the idea of endowments to trust funds, where the capital fund is invested and the returns on investments are utilized for activities related to purposes of that fund. The IUCN ROWA rationale behind this notion is to secure a sustainable flow of financial resources to support sustainable development.

As funds available for addressing environmental and conservation issues in the region are not growing in proportion to the growth in scale and importance of critical environmental issues, major increases and innovations in investment are crucial. Long term and sustainable sources of financing must be applied to address these challenges.

There is a growing need for non-profit sustainable funds that support conservation programmes within an over arching sustainable development framework. The new IUCN ROWA Green Fund (Waqf) for Sustainable Development Initiative would both complement existing conventional development funds of the region and provide a more flexible and innovative financing mechanism. In an attempt to link conservation and culture, a Waqf fund was initiated by IUCN ROWA.

A visionary and explanatory illustration of possible institutionalization and application of Waqf for sustainable development has been prepared by IUCN ROWA to facilitate the development of effective and durable systems in line with Islamic regulations and guidelines. This illustration will form the basis for related discussions and activities in 2009.



Waqf Palm Nursery Pilot Project in Palestine

The Jordan Valley area in Palestine is known for its agricultural richness, especially for planting palm trees, which has a spiritual value in the Islamic world. The basic goal of the Waqf Palm Nursery Pilot Project is to increase knowledge on Islamic Waqf for sustainable development and enhance the role of local communities and civil society in development and poverty reduction.

The Project, executed by the Arab Group for Protection of Nature (an IUCN member) with the support of IUCN ROWA, is implemented in partnership with three agricultural organizations in the Jericho and Ghor areas in cooperation with the local Awqaf in Palestine.

This Project is part of the One Million Tree Project implemented by the Arab Group for the Protection of Nature which aims at replanting one million trees in various locations in Palestine - mainly in Gaza and the West Bank, and including olive, fruit and palm trees - in an effort to provide economic benefit for many of the farmers.

Fair Trade Jordan (FTJ)

Fair Trade Jordan was brought to life at the end of 2005, by a unique alliance between IUCN ROWA and two other local Jordanian NGOs; the Jordan Hashemite Fund for Human Development (JOHUD) and the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature (RSCN). During 2005 and 2006, the alliance worked closely with local producers through fair trade markets, promoting the ethics of fair trade to both the producers and consumers. Fair Trade Jordan was registered as a private non-profit organization at the beginning of 2007, with the Ministry of Trade and Industry.



Fair Trade Tourism Certification

Fair Trade Tourism (FTT) is tourism that benefits communities and marginalized groups and protects human rights, culture and the environment.

Fair Trade Jordan had established a fair trade tourism certification scheme in collaboration with its sister organization, Fair Trade Tourism South Africa. The broad aims of this scheme are to: (1) Mainstream the principles of Fair Trade and responsible tourism throughout the Jordanian tourism economy, and (2) Support small-scale / community-based tourism enterprises to access markets and improve the quality and sustainability of their operations.

During March 2008, Fair Trade Tourism South Africa worked closely with FTJ, meeting stakeholders, developing the FTT Code of Conduct, standards, and indicators and developing a business model for the certification scheme. Partnerships have been established and maintained with hotels, campsites, NGOs, tourism associations and universities to ensure a strong supporting base in the tourism industry. Partnerships that have been maintained throughout the year include entities such as Sheraton Amman Al Nabil Towers Hotel, Amareen Campsite, Jordan Society for Sustainable Development (specifically their bird-watching initiative in Aqaba), Guest Houses working in Protected Areas under Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature, Jordan Inbound Tourism Association, the Jordan Hotel Association and the Hashemite University Queen Rania Institute for Heritage and Tourism.

In late 2008, seven new community run enterprises have joined the FTJ umbrella. These are: Gaza Women Cooperative, Anjara Women's Cooperative Society, Women Productive Cooperative, Women Society of Kufir Khal, Friends of Weibdeh Society, Ebein Women Charity, Damia Youth Club in Deir Alla.

Self-Assessment Questionnaire for Members of Fair Trade Jordan's Network

FTJ has developed a Self-Assessment Questionnaire targeting charities, cooperatives and non-profits that manage small enterprises and plan to join the Fair Trade Jordan Network. The self-assessment questionnaire contributes to organizational and business reflection and learning and is based on an assessment of the (1) governance structure of the organization, (2) business model and quality, pricing and marketing of products and services, (3) labor practices and (4) environmental practices. FTJ held one workshop with the 7 new members of the network, funded by the Global Environmental Facility/Small Grants Programme, on how to carry out the Self-Assessment Questionnaire, and presented two case studies demonstrating what it takes to target the high-end market for long-term sales, from both the supplier and demand perspective.

Influencing Environmental Policy in the Arab League

In 2005, IUCN ROWA was granted observer status in the Arab League after a decision to this effect was made by the Council of the Arab Ministers Responsible for the Environment (CAMRE). During the last three years, IUCN ROWA was an active participant of the technical committee for environmental conventions in the Arab League, and took the lead on activating the RAMSAR convention in the Region.

The Arab League was founded in 1945 and has a membership of 22 Arab States, all of which are within the remit of West Asia and North Africa, and with five countries from Africa - Djibouti, Comoros, Mauritania, Sudan and Somalia. The Arab League has served as a forum for member states to coordinate their policy positions. Additionally, it has played an important role in fostering socio-economic development and preserving cultural heritage.

The Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development and the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization are two of the specialized regional organizations within the Arab League which are mandated to promote and enhance human well-being and sustainable development. There is a unique opportunity for IUCN to foster, promote and evolve a regional approach for environmental conservation and to provide the IUCN global experience to the Arab World. Currently, IUCN ROWA is supporting Saudi Arabia in the establishment of a Convention on Biological Development, promoting approaches for access benefit sharing. IUCN ROWA also participates in the technical teams of the Arab League that are related to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) through providing technical input to these processes.



The IUCN World Conservation Congress – Barcelona 2008

West Asia Activities

About the IUCN Congress

More than 8,000 of the world's leading decision makers in sustainable development; from governments, NGOs, businesses, the UN and academia, gathered in Barcelona for 10 days in October, 2008 to debate, share, network, learn, commit, vote and decide. The objective of the IUCN World Conservation Congress is to share ideas, action and solutions for a diverse environment and a sustainable world.

West Asia Activities at the Congress

The West Asia activities at the Congress consisted of an interesting blend of VIP events and technical workshops. Through the participation of the REWARD Programme in the Congress water pavilion, five country water projects in river basins and watersheds were presented, all showcasing the participatory approaches that are implemented in line with IUCN's mandate as a convener among stakeholders. The Prince Turki bin Nasser's VIP event on his boat "Sarah" was a platform for inspiring leaders from all around the world to share their experiences and stories on sustainability and conservation in their scopes of work. A rewarding ecosystem concept was presented through the Rewarding Ecosystems technical session, which emphasized the benefit exchanged between ecosystems and people, and highlighted the dual challenge, focusing on conditions in West Asia. The power of the Union was demonstrated through West Asia's participation in Sailing to Barcelona initiatives. During this activity, young leaders sailed all the way from the Red Sea to prove to the world the importance of protecting marine and coastal biodiversity worldwide.



West Asia Day at the Congress Water Pavilion

The top ten driest countries in the world are located in the West Asia region. This shocking fact is a driving factor for all countries in this region to elevate issues of water resource management to the international level. Therefore, IUCN ROWA Regional Water Resources & Drylands Programme (REWARD) organized a West Asia Water day at the World Conservation Congress. Five pioneering country projects were presented as case studies for river basins and watersheds in Palestine, Jordan (two projects), Egypt and Yemen. These REWARD projects all encourage using participatory methodologies and approaches through multi-stakeholder dialogues for water resources planning and decision-making. IUCN's role is to facilitate the dialogue between stakeholders and build their capacities to generate logical solutions for the challenges facing those areas.



Leaders Inspire the World

Sustainability leaders from around the world gathered on board Prince Turki Bin Nasser Bin Abdulaziz's yacht in Barcelona, where they shared their inspiring ideas and thoughts about the environment and the pressing need to face the global environmental challenge.

Among the VIPs in attendance were Achim Steiner Under-Secretary-General & Executive Director of UNEP, Ted Turner Chairman of United Nations Foundation and Founder of CNN, Ahmed Djoghlaif Executive Secretary of the CBD, and others including a number of Ministers of Environment from different countries. This gathering was organized by the IUCN ROWA and hosted on October 7, 2008 by HRH Prince Turki Bin Naser Bin Abdelaziz, Head of the Meteorology and Environment Presidency of Saudi Arabia.

Elected 2009-2012 West Asia Council

Javed Jabbar, Pakistan

Javed Jabbar has had extensive experience as the volunteer head of a member organization of IUCN for over 20 years. As Chairman of the IUCN Pakistan National Committee for the past 4 years, Mr. Jabbar has helped expand IUCN membership and promote IUCN's role in this country.

Mohammad Shahbaz, Jordan

Mohammad Shahbaz has had extensive experience in environmental practice, management and policy for the last 25 years in Jordan, and has risen to a productive role at the international level.

Ali Darwish, Lebanon

Dr. Ali Darwish is an Agricultural Engineer by Profession and holds a Ph.D. in Animal Sciences from Germany. He is a founding member of an NGO in Lebanon, the Green Line Association, and an active member of IUCN since 1995.



Young Sea Lions from West Asia Participate in Sailing to Barcelona

Four young children from West Asia participated in the Sailing to Barcelona initiative during the IUCN World Conservation Congress. These young leaders, aged 12 to 14, sailed all the way from the Red Sea along with eight other children. The trip started in Saudi Arabia, with stops in Jordan, Lebanon and Greece. They arrived in Barcelona on October 4th along with other world leaders who met to discuss and influence the future of the planet. The children were accompanied by a TV crew who filmed the entire journey.

This experiential trip was hosted by HRH Prince Faisal bin Turki Al Faisal, organized by the Society for Protection of Nature in Lebanon (SPNL) and funded

by the First Energy Bank in Bahrain. The voyage resulted in an interesting mix of cultural exchange and education. Experts accompanied the children to teach them diving techniques, and educate them about the environment and the life surrounding them on their journey ranging from human, cultural and ecological factors.

This initiative could not have been achieved without the power of the Union and the IUCN members in West Asia who joined forces to become part of this learning experience for those future leaders.

Sailing to Barcelona was an action-oriented initiative, where participants showcased their contributions to the protection of marine and coastal biodiversity.

Rewarding Ecosystems ... Rewarding People

A technical session on Rewarding Ecosystems in West Asia was held during the IUCN World Conservation Congress. The session discussed the benefits for both ecosystems and people, highlighting this dual challenge and focusing on case studies in West Asia.

A number of approaches which have been developed in the region were presented as essential tools to come to win-win situations such as participatory planning for natural resource management, stakeholder dialogue and concerted action (SDCA), Islamic Waqf (Islam based endowment funds for conservation and development) and Hima (a traditional approach to ensure protection and conservation of protected areas).

Future of Sustainability

Linking Local to Global

Innovative Solutions for Future of Sustainability in the Arab Region

On the occasion of World Environment day, IUCN ROWA took an important step by organizing a regional debate entitled "Future of Sustainability Debate in the Arab Region: Voices from the South", which was hosted by Alexandria Library and funded by the Ford Foundation.

In light of the global water, food and energy crisis, Arab experts from governments, civil society, youth and private sector gathered in Alexandria to discuss the issue of Future of Sustainability in the Arab Region. This regional debate emphasized innovative solutions that are urgently needed to control the economical, environmental and social challenges facing the region today.

A visual Speech by HRH Prince Hassan

bin Talal of Jordan was delivered during the event. His highness stressed on the importance of the supra-national thinking when addressing the responsibility towards our future generations and human habitat.

The idea for this debate was born in 2006 as a result of the IUCN global meeting on Future of Sustainability that was held to adopt a vision for the future of sustainability in participation of global thinkers. The debate aimed at enriching and deepening the discussion on sustainable development, especially in light of the food, water and energy crisis.

Transition to Sustainability Book Launch in Kuwait

The 'Transition to Sustainability' book was published by IUCN in the summer of 2008. It illustrates how the environmental move-

ment has a decisive role to play in planning and inspiring a transition to sustainability – a transition to a world that allows humanity as a whole to maintain and extend quality of life through the diversity of life. The IUCN book was co-authored by Sally Jeanraud of IUCN and Bill Adams from the University of Cambridge.

The Green Line Environmental Group in Kuwait was inspired by this book and decided to launch it in Kuwait in cooperation with IUCN ROWA in order to spread awareness about sustainability in the West Asia region. The resulting event was a successful gathering of top Kuwaiti government officials and environmental experts. This cooperation between IUCN and Green Line came from a mutual urge to spread scientific knowledge at the local, regional and international levels.



Key Publications and Documentaries



Report on the Future of Sustainability in the Arab Region

An outcome report from the Future of Sustainability Debate in the Arab Region was produced to highlight the Arab identity by linking discussions with Arab priorities and focusing on terminologies and concepts that reflect Arab cultural identity. The report emphasizes the importance of distinguishing between the concept of "developing countries", the concept of the "south" and the Arab countries. Emphasis should be placed on the unique features of the Arab identity as a factor of cohesion and unity in the region that allows practical implementation of sustainability options, especially in light of energy, water and food challenges.



Documentary: Eco-cities, Sustainable Cities for the Future

By the end of 2008, a first-time record of 3.3 billion people - more than half of the world's population - are expected to live in urban areas according to the UN.

This was announced in a documentary entitled "Eco-Cities, Sustainable cities for the Future" launched by IUCN ROWA and the Ministry of Environment during the Eco-Cities of the Mediterranean 2008 conference held in Jordan in October, 2008.

The idea for this documentary, funded by the IUCN Global Water and Nature Initiative (WANI), arose due to the pressing need to address the concept of sustainable cities, or eco-cities, as a solution for the environmental and economic challenges facing cities in the Middle East and North Africa.

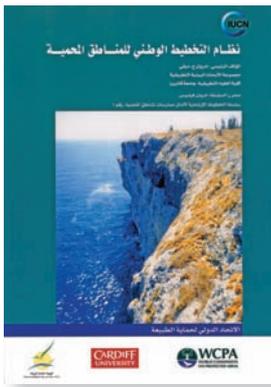
The film focuses on environmental challenges, current actions and future plans in Jordan and Egypt, and highlights the issues of water quality and scarcity, solid waste, urbanization and air pollution.



Documentary: Socotra - The Last Stand

IUCN ROWA produced a documentary on Socotra Island in Yemen to illustrate how the islands and their communities try to fit into today's changing world. Due to increased accessibility and the influence of globalization, the islands are threatened by unsustainable development. The film, which was produced in close co-operation with the Socotra Conservation and Development Programme, raised some important questions regarding the future of the archipelago and the threats the islands are facing.

• [Mainstreaming Sustainable Development in West Asia](#)



Three WCPA Guidelines on Protected Areas Management Translated to Arabic

In a step towards enhancing the understanding of better management of protected areas in the West Asia region, IUCN ROWA took the lead in translating three WCPA Guidelines on Protected Areas Management to the Arabic language. Two of these guidelines, entitled Guidelines for Management Planning of Protected Areas and National System Planning for Protected Areas, were graciously funded by the Environment Protection Authority in Kuwait. The third, entitled Indigenous and Local Communities and Protected Areas: Towards Equity and Enhanced Conservation, was printed with the support and funding of the Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR). The publications were translated with the support of the WCPA Vice Chair for West Asia, Mr. Mohamed Sulayem.

- Indigenous and Local Communities and Protected Areas: Towards Equity and Enhanced Conservation (Best Practice Protected Area Guidelines Series No. 11)
- Guidelines for Management Planning of Protected Areas (Best Practice Protected Area Guidelines Series No. 10)
- National System Planning for Protected Areas (Best Practice Protected Area Guidelines Series No. 1)

Our Members

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