

Project Proposal DRAFT

The Conservation of Wetlands and Coastal Ecosystems in the Mediterranean Region- Rehabilitation and Enhancement of Wadi Gaza

I. Project Context and Brief Description

This project is designed to complement the UNDP/GEF-funded regional project on the “Conservation of Wetlands and Coastal Ecosystem in the Mediterranean Region”, hereafter referred to as the Wetland Project". Wadi Gaza, the only major watercourse in the Gaza Strip and one of the few wetlands in this area of the Middle East, has been the site selected by the Wetland Project for the conservation of its wetlands and biodiversity. The Wadi contains a large number of endemic plants, reptiles, and mammals, and demonstrates a strategic migration pathway of wetland bird species. Inflow of untreated sewage, pollution from upstream sources, wastes dumping, and construction wastes are major threats to the survival of Wadi Gaza’s biodiversity.

The Wetlands Project also aims at building the capacity of the participating countries to conserve globally threatened and significant biodiversity within the framework of sustainable coastal development. It makes provision for biodiversity surveys, capacity building of the Palestinian Ministry of Environmental Affairs (MENA), the development of intersectoral planning body for the conservation and management of the Wetlands in Wadi Gaza, promoting environmental and public awareness on biodiversity issues and monitoring root causes of loss of biodiversity in the Wadi Gaza area.

In this proposal submitted to FEEM, is requested to enhance and rehabilitate the Wadi physical conditions which may hinder the conservation of its biodiversity. The implementation of this project would alleviate constrains on the Wetlands Project and assists in addressing the core issues of protection of the biodiversity in the area. The main activities of the project include, cleaning the Wadi from building debris and domestic garbage, establish a hiking trail around the Wadi for educational and recreation purposes to attract attention to the Wadi, design and implement a landscape plan for the Wadi and its surroundings, and upgrading the information center established by the Wetlands Project.

In parallel, and in respect to the main environmental problems affecting the Wadi, collective efforts of donor countries are being brought together by UNDP and MENA to find sustainable solution to the root causes endangering the Wadi. The Danish Government expressed its commitment to upgrade infrastructure in the Middle area of Gaza Strip, including the establishment of a temporary treatment plant to tackle the raw sewage problem. The German Government has committed financial resources for the establishment of a central treatment plant to serve Gaza City and the Middle Area (*See Annex II*).

The direct impact of these combined efforts will be, on one hand, raising public awareness and the sensitization of communities around the Wadi to its protection, and on the other hand show physical improvements to the status of the Wadi that will encourage surrounding communities to participate and protect it.

Such developmental activities will promote the Wadi as a whole. Furthermore, it will contribute to the prevention of any illegal activities that could harm the environment and have a negative impact on the biodiversity.

II. Project Objective

The Main Objective of this project is to enhance the physical structure of Wadi Gaza in order to facilitate the conservation of its biodiversity and environment and to promote community participation and awareness of the Wadi's status and in protection efforts.

III. Project Components

A) Objective one: Integrate the Wadi Landscape with the surrounding areas

Output 1.1: Some Wadi areas with significant value biodiversity purposes will be improved, and others will be developed to provide accessibility and facilities for the public.

Activity 1.1.1: Assessment of areas for landscaping and implementation

This includes the classification of open space areas into units according to criteria which relate to the characteristics and functions of each landscape unit, including ecological functions, regeneration capacity, rarity of species, landscape aesthetic function and potential for leisure and recreation activities. The assessment should be based on the contribution of open-space's landscape to flora and fauna conservation. Other activities will include:

1. Preparation of detailed designs for landscaping in specific sites in the area;
2. Assessment of the sensitivity and carrying capacity of each site; and
3. Implementation of landscaping activities.

Output 1.2. Pedestrian trail constructed around the Wadi

Activity 1.2.1: Construction of the Hiking Trail

This component will provide access of the public and the Wadi Wardens to sites within the Wadi while protecting sensitive areas and threatened species. Activities will include:

1. Define pathways that will constitute the trail according to land use plan prepared by the Wetlands project;
2. Prepare standards and measurements for the trail in terms of fencing, construction materials and physical space;
3. Produce financial plan for implementation.
4. Construct, in collaboration with Local Implementing Organization such as municipalities, village Councils, NGOs or landowners, the main trail and the pathways.

B) Objective two: Improve the habitat ecosystems of the Wadi species

Output 2.1: Sections of Wadi Gaza are cleaned from the solid waste and building debris.

Activity 2.1.1: Physical cleaning of the Wadi

This is a major activity that will introduce reduce pollution in the Wadi caused by dumping solid waste and building debris. It will be implemented in line with the outputs of objective one.

1. Prepare, in close cooperation with lined Ministries and agencies, a plan for the cleaning methods and procedures of the Wadi.
2. Remove, in close cooperation with lined Ministries and agency solid waste and building debris; and
3. Organize one-week community based clean-up campaign, involving schools, universities and local municipalities to remove solid wastes from specific sites along the Wadi.

Output 2.2: The old landfill site along the Wadi developed into an local park.

Activity 2.2.1: Conversion of dump site to a local park

The local park will be planted with threatened biodiversity species and provided with facilities that will encourage the existence of migratory birds.

1. Prepare a financial and environmental feasibility study for the utilization of the site as a local park;
2. Prepare detailed design of the site as a local park.
3. Provide budget and action plans.

C) Objective three: Support and services are provided to the public, researchers and other targeted groups in areas related to the conservation of the biodiversity in the Wadi.

Output 3.1: Supportive facilities and services are in place and functioning

Activity 3.1.1: Upgrading the Information Center

The Wetlands Project will construct and information center at a site in the Wadi Gaza that will host the Wetlands Project Team and also provide space for public awareness activities and facilities for researchers. The FEEM is requested to upgrade the Information Center by providing equipment and furniture to the facilities related to public awareness and research.

1. Purchase of material and equipment;
2. Obtain a variety of learning modules and programmes for targeted groups.

Target Beneficiaries

- Global and local biodiversity and wetlands area;
- Local inhabitants and neighboring municipalities and villages;
- Local universities, research institutions;
- Ministry of Environment Affaires and its respective agencies.

IV. Institutional and Financial Arrangement

MENA will be the umbrella implementing agency of the this project for the Palestinian Authority. The Executing agency for the project will be UNDP through its Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People (PAPP).

Both MENA and UNDP/PAPP have a key role to play in the implementation of this project. It is essential that MENA maintain a clear vision of how to reach the projects objectives within the context of the Palestinian Authority, and the particular context of the Gaza Strip. The UNDP/PAPP will provide technical backstopping support, and facilitate the implementation of the project. In full consultation with MENA, UNDP/PAPP will contract local implementing institutions for the implementation of certain components of project. Selection and drafting of contracts with local implementing institutions will be jointly carried out by UNDP/PAPP and MENA.

MENA responsibilities will include:

1. Providing a fully functional office for the project in MENA premises in the Gaza Strip, including a full-time secretary;
2. Provide a full-time qualified technical assistance to the project;
3. To, jointly with UNDP/PAPP, select and prepare ToRs and negotiate contracts for local implementing institutions and/or agencies and international and national consultants for the relevant activities in the project;
4. Preparing quarterly financial and operational reports as requested;
5. Establishing and chairing a local intersectoral co-ordination committee for Wadi Gaza, composed of all relevant authority departments (including, MOPIC, Palestinian Water Authority, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Tourism, Ministry of Housing, Ministry of Information, the Governorate, universities, local mukhtars representing the community, UNRWA, UNDP and NGOs, such as Greenpeace, and CNPN (See Annex II for ToR);
6. Establishing and chairing a biodiversity working group for the Gaza Strip, involving NGOs, universities and biodiversity experts; and
7. Supervising activities of sub-contracted institutions and local consultants.

UNDP/PAPP responsibilities will be the following:

1. To contract the selected local implementing institutions, or appropriate short-term consultants for the relevant activities of the project;
2. To transfer the funds available to the implementing institutions into separate bank accounts to be opened by them for the purpose of their subcontract with UNDP/PAPP, upon submission of a written request and certified documents and according to an agreed schedule of payment;
3. To monitor the project implementation and progress;
4. To purchase equipment necessary for the implementation of the project and to make the necessary arrangements for its temporary or permanent use by the implementing institutions or individuals, in full consultation with MENA;
5. To provide appropriate support, as necessary; and
6. To report on financial and implementation progress of the project to FEEM

VI. Financial Plan

Budget Plan

Activities	US\$	2000	2001	2002
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Activity 1.1.1	75,000	25,000	50,000	0000
Activity 1.2.1	35,000	000	10,000	25,000
Activity 2.1.1	70,000	55,000	15,000	0000
Activity 2.2.1	50,000	0000	40,000	10,000
Activity 3.1.1	30,000	30,000	0000	0000
Miscellaneous/ Contingency	15,000	5,000	5,000	5,000
Subtotal	275000	115,000	120,000	40,000
UNDP/PAPP Administrative and Operational Support 8%	22000	9,200	9,600	3,200
Total	297,000	124,200	129,600	43,200

Time Frame

Activities	2000				2001				2002			
	I	II	III	IV	I	II	III	IV	I	II	III	IV
Activity 1.1.1			⇒	⇒	⇒	⇒	⇒	⇒				
Activity 1.2.1							⇒	⇒	⇒	⇒	⇒	
Activity 2.1.1		⇒	⇒	⇒	⇒							
Activity 2.2.1					⇒	⇒	⇒	⇒	⇒			
Activity 3.1.1		⇒	⇒									

VI. Justification for Intervention by FEEM

The narrow Mediterranean coastline and its associated wetlands is a limited area increasingly colonised by human presence. The most frequent, and irreversible, trend is urbanisation which wipes out the potential for biodiversity and natural habitats.

This occupation of space is virtually irreversible as a return to natural habitats is largely impossible. At the other end of the spectrum, however, other dangerous threats, for example pollution, can be reversed with appropriate resources. It is therefore essential to develop planning and management policies, natural resource management and sustainable development initiatives that aim to limit the loss of natural habitats, especially wetlands.

This project complies with principles of biodiversity protection, the GEF operational strategy and the programmes on coastal, marine and freshwater agreed at the second conference of the parties to CBD (Jakarta, Indonesia, Nov 1995).

The incremental “green“ contribution of international donors will accelerate the implementation of current policies whose costs could not otherwise be carried by the states alone, considering the substantial funds committed by them to address existing brown issues.

In addition, the development of pilot management methods for the coastal zone, and the development of structured exchanges through a regional network, will allow a number of Mediterranean countries to avoid the need to reinvent the wheel in addressing their own national issues, hence promoting accelerated replication of experience gained elsewhere.

VII. Risks

The active participation of local people and local government in decision-making on land-use and water issues is essential as it is at this level that the main pressures on remaining natural areas occur. This purpose is rendered difficult by lack of resources to allow full participation and the weakness of analytical, consultative and inter-administrative systems.

In addition, effective coordination between MENA, UNDP and lined ministries/Agencies and local communities at all levels is essential for project success and this will require a sustained effort from all project participants and strong political will for the protection of the Wadi.

Other major risk is related the mitigation of major causes of deterioration of the Wadi's environment, mainly the sewage and solid waste dump. These issues are currently being addressed by other projects (annex II) in the area and also by the increasing co-ordination between the MENA and the Israeli Ministry of Environment, where the protection of Wadi Gaza was main issue on the co-ordination agenda.

VIII. Project Review, Reporting and Evaluation

The project will last for 36 months, starting March 2000. It will be subduced to the following reviews:

1. A) The project will be subject to joint review by representatives of the Palestinian Authority and UNDP/PAPP at least once every 12 months, the first such meeting to be held within the first 12 months of the start of the full implementation. The national project coordinator shall prepare and submit to each review meeting a Project Performance Report.
- B) A project terminal report will be prepared for consideration at the terminal review meeting. It shall be prepared in draft sufficiently in advance to allow review and technical clearance by UNDP/PAPP at least four months prior to terminal review.
2. The project shall be subject to evaluation 6 months prior to the scheduled termination date. The organization, terms of reference and timing will be decided in consultation between the parties. The purpose of the evaluation will be to assess whether the project has achieved its immediate objectives and whether funding should be sought for the further activities in the Wadi Gaza area.

Annex I

Map of Gaza Strip Showing the Location of Wadi Gaza



Annex II

Prior/ Ongoing Projects in the Wadi Gaza Area

There is a range of projects that was identified and which were addressing, or which intended to address, the sewage treatment associated with Wadi Gaza. These projects address the infrastructure needs in the sewerage sector in Gaza City and around the Wadi. The implementation of these projects would alleviate constraints on the Wetlands Project.

The following is a list of prior and ongoing initiatives that address, directly or indirectly, Wadi Gaza and its biodiversity:

1. The UNDP/GEF funded Conservation of Wetlands and Coastal Ecosystems in the Mediterranean Region
2. ***The Middle Area Sewerage Project***: the Danish Government through (DANIDA) funds this project. The project is aimed to improve the environmental situation for the three refugee's camps of Nussirat, Buriij and Magazi. The project will upgrade the physical infrastructure for the three municipalities.
3. The implementation of the sewerage collection networks for the middle area, which is implemented by UNRWA. This project complements the feasibility study of the proposed new sewerage treatment plants for the Gaza Strip (supported by France).
4. The construction of the Gaza central treatment plants is presently under consideration for implementation through the German Government. The project aims to protect the coastal aquifer and reduce health risks in the project area (Municipality of Gaza and Middle area Municipalities) by providing a sewage treatment which is environmentally sound and safe for people's health. Produced treated effluent will be needed for future reuse. The first phase of the project serves 880,000 inhabitants (Planning horizon 2010). The cost is preliminary estimated to be DM 142 million (excluding land acquisition). Italy has committed itself to the operation and maintenance of the Gaza wastewater treatment plant.