

# Tourism Development

## Review



**A Massive Program to develop  
Tourism in The Red Sea**

**( Abu Soma - Sahl Hashish - GEF project )**

**Preface :**

*Upper Egypt and the Red Sea region come into being of national importance after the adoption of a new strategy; aiming at re-distributing urban masses soundly all over Egypt.*

*The government has formulated a national plan for upper Egypt development, that is expected to offer 228 thousand rooms by the year 2017.*

*Joint - projects are initiated by the Tourism Development Authority with the help of many subsidy - giving entities like :*

*- The preparation of the study of the Egyptian Red Sea Coastal and Marine resource Management funded by the Global Environment Facility (G.E.F).*

*In addition to projects of integrated tourism development, expected to achieve successful jump in the Red Sea Tourism.*



**Coastal and marine resources (G.E.F) project**

## **Egyptian Red Sea Coastal and Marine Resource Management Project : Project Overview**

The Egyptian Red Sea Coastal and Marine Resource Management Project is an innovative tourism and environmental project funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) through the World Bank. The overall goal of the project is to ensure environmentally sound sustainable tourism and other coastal-marine development for the Egyptian Red Sea coast. Project activities are being undertaken within the context of national plans and other activities, including regional and international programmes for the Red Sea. The primary participating agencies in the project are the Tourism Development Authority (TDA), Egyptian Environmental Affairs Agency (EEAA) and Red Sea Governorate (RSG).

The project area covers the Egyptian side of the Red Sea proper (coastal and nearshore marine areas) from 40 km north of Hurgada to latitude 22° N (the Egypt/sudan border) and including the offshore islands. Throughout the project, recognition has been given to the importance of interactions between the sea, coast and land.

### **The project has the following objectives:**

- \* formulating plans and regulations to ensure that development is consistent with sound environmental management, to protect the shared marine resources of the Red Sea coastal zone;
- \* strengthening the capacity of governmental institutions and agencies to carry out integrated multi-sectoral coastal zone management activities;
- \* enhancing public and private partnerships to assure that economic development is consistent with sustainable environmental management of common marine resources;
- \* developing practical for the management of protected areas and marine recreational resources and conservation of biodiversity;
- \* establishing a database and producing an atlas and inventory of coastal and marine resources, to be available to government, agencies, institutions and stakeholders for optimal and sustainable use of these resources.

### **The implementation stages of the project has initially prepared a Base-line report :**

status of the environment in the project area on a sectoral level in terms of biophysical features, conservation value, resources slises and pollution hot spots.

### **Sector (1) North of Hurgada to Ras Abu Soma Bay**

A biologically rich sector and also one of much value for tourism. Reefs between El-kbeer and El-Sakher islands are particular popular dive sites. This sector had the highest species richness index for corals. The area is also important for turtles, while 3 species nesting on the islands.

The area is fished intensively, especially around Hurgada, but there are other low intensity fishing camps spread evenly through the sector. The primary conservation features relate to the integrated ecosystems of the Bali Watershed with coastal mangroves, and several islands found both adjacent to Hurgada and to the north of this sector. The large group of offshore islands north of Hurgada have been proposed as area of special interest. These islands are considered to be of scenic beauty and of high conservation value due to the high biodiversity.



### The Camel at the southern Wadis (Wadi Hodien)

Many sites are littered with large amounts of solid wastes. Over half the reefs within the Hurgada island group are showing signs of degradation through diving / recreation use. Many coastal fringing reefs within this sector are under serious threat as a result of indirect impacts (sedimentation) due to land filling activities.

### Sector (2) Safaga to El-Qusseyr

This sector has extensive fringing reefs, which are particularly species. Safaga Island is an important area for bird and turtle nesting as well as diving and local fishing. It is presently threatened from pollution due

to its close proximity to Safaga. Fishing is concentrated around Kalaway Beach and Wadi Quwayh, while El-Qusseyr and Safaga are important fishing centres. About half of the sector contains important nursery areas in particular the seagrass beds and corals. The central area is popular for shore diving, due to the well developed coral communities, narrow reef-flat and easy access.

Sediment from the roads is considered a problem where the road runs close to the shore and has impacted the local reefs, so these are not considered attractive for diving. The shores around Safaga port contain

large amounts of garbage and miscellaneous litter. Phosphate is exported a Hamrawien and El-Qusseyr, and spillages result in ore covering the seabed. There is a considerable input of sediment at El-Qusseyr, and coral and other fauna are less abundant than elsewhere. Tar balls are very numerous at Wadi Abu Hamrah, and there is an extensive development of tar mat at Kalaway Beach.

### Sector (3) El-Qusseyr to Marsa Alam

The sector is characterised by fringing reef frequently interrupted by a series of sharms, marsas and bays. The mangrove area at Marsa Shakra is noteworthy for the ecolodge and safari camp. It promotes the conservation of the near by mangroves and reefs to add quality to the aesthetic value of the site. Opportunities for bird watching and other marine and desert recreation are also provided.

Important offshore features include the Brother islands, which are used for short safari diving trips. Coral assemblages especially of soft corals, are well developed and the diversity of corals is very high. This area is considered to be one of



### Wild life in Red Sea coast

the best diving sites in the Red Sea. This sector has high potential for tourism development and diving, in view of the diverse coastal ecosystems, and also the large number of marsas which offer natural harbours for launching boats and access to the reefs. The northern part of sector (only) is an important artisanal fishing area. Shallow marsas may be important spawning and nursery grounds. Beach and garbage litter the harbour at Marsa Turumbi, with much damage to coral and an impoverished fauna due to ships, small boats and intensive fishing. Marsa Wizer has a severe sediment problem (origin presumably natural), while at

Wadi Wassaat sediment run-off from the wadi covers much of the reef.

#### **Sector (4) Marsa Alam to Wadi El-Gemal**

The sector has well developed fringing reefs, especially in the central area. Important offshore features include Daedelus Island, where the reefs are accessible only by live-aboards and are suitable for experienced divers. Fish especially schooling species / sharks and diverse coral communities offer excellent diving conditions.

The coastal area has a high conservation value because of the large integrated ecosystem complex of Wadi El-Gemal, the ras Baghdadi mangroves and the adjacent El-Gemal island, offering an unspoiled and

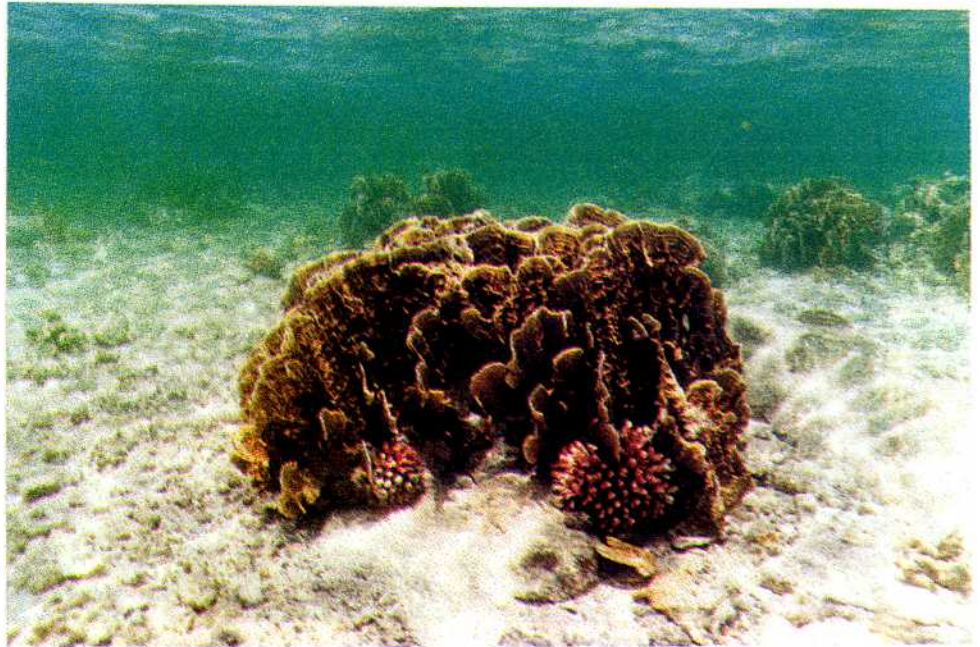
highly diverse but closely associated group of habitats. This area is important for water and flood control, terrestrial biodiversity in the wadi area, fishery nursery values and bird habitats in the mangroves as well as the abundance of coral and marine communities associated with the island. There is also considerable potential for tourism development in the area of Gabal Al-Dory. The sector could be a useful model for integrated tourism development.

Beaches at Marsa Alam, Abu Sabkhaiah and Marsa El-Nakari are littered with wood, plastics and garbage. Greatest impact is from sediment from the tin ore washing plant at the southern end of Marsa Alam.

### Sector (5) Wadi El-Gemal to Hamata

Fringing reefs are well developed in the northern part of the sector. Of significance offshore is Fury shoal which consists of a series submerged reefs and pinnacles. The main reef known as Sataya or dolphin reef is used as a dive site by live-aboards. The reefs are protected and the abundant fish life offers excellent diving opportunities.

Hamatah area is the most noteworthy part of this coast. Offering a spectacular group of interconnected and unspoiled habitats from a biodiversity and conservation perspective. Mangrove stands are the largest and most continuous in the project area. They are important as spawning and nursery areas. Fishing, shoreline stabilisation and bird habitats. The nearshore islands are also important conservation features for their sandy beaches which are used for turtle and bird nesting, and the coral reef communities important for fishing and marine biodiversity. There is



**The fire coral *Millepora platyphylla* growing in shallow areas (sharm El-Baheri)**



**Large brain coral colony of *platygra daedalea* (Hurgada)**

considerable potential for tourism development in the area of Ras Hankorab, as well as at the unique site of sharm Al-Louleya.

Abu Ghusun harbour area is severely littered with wood, metal, plastic, and general garbage, including barrels, old tyres and discarded cargo nets. At marsa Hamatah raw sewage discharged into the flat reef area has caused eutrophication and much junk (tyres, barrels, discarded cargo nets, plastic containers, food cans, etc.) litter the sea bed.

### **Sector (6) Hamatah to Bernis**

This smaller sector includes Wadi Lahmy, which is associated with the Qoraat Hartway mangroves on both sides of Qoraat Hartway bay. The wadi is important for terrestrial biodiversity and water resource. The mangroves and reefs are important as a nursery area for fishes and marine biodiversity. The sector has a particularly rich mollusc fauna. There is little artisanal fishing in sector, although South Lahmy / Roman Village and Ras Benas are important commercial line fishing centers.

The sector has limited actual and potential tourism development, due to various constraints.

Fishing villages at Roman Village, As-Satayah and Ras Benasall have moderate amounts of beach litter of all types. There is very little coral but extensive growth of algae at As-Satayah, although there is no obvious input of pollutants to account for this.

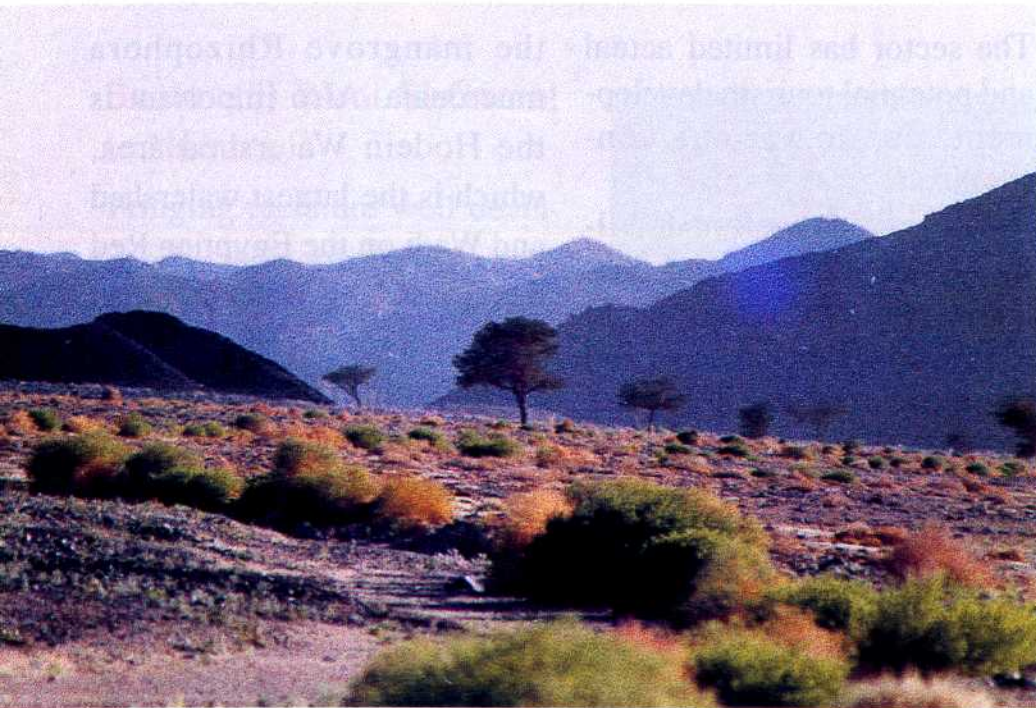
### **Sector (7) Bernis to Shalateen**

This sector is has a mixture of wetlands and fringing reefs broken by marsas. The central part includes EL-Hamirah, the only known site in Egypt for

the mangrove *Rhizophora mucronata*. Also important is the Hodein Watershed area, which is the largest watershed and Wadi on the Egyptian Red Sea Coast. This watershed also continues south of Sector 7. It is an important area for biodiversity and flood and water management. This sector is the main breeding area for camels for the whole of Egypt. Wadi Hodein area is noteworthy as it includes the very extensive Gebel Elba watershed, extending into the southernmost 160 km of Egypt's national coastal boundaries. The



**The Wild Ass *Equus asinus* ( Wadi Lahmy)**



**The upper area of Wadi El-Gemal**

Gebel Elba watershed is actually a transboundary area continuing into Sudan. This area is one of the most unique in Egypt, as it receives an unusual amount of rain creating tropical forest habitats and four altitudinal zones, exhibiting the highest terrestrial biodiversity in Egypt.

The northern part of Foul Bay is an important commercial and artisanal fishery. The trawler and purse seine commercial fishery is based around Bernis Port. This sector also contains important inshore nursery areas in the north, with El-Hamirah containing rich mangrove and coral habitats, the latter targeted

by line fishermen. Zabargead Island and Rocky island is used by divers for overnight stops for live-aboards. A shelf at the south-east corner of the latter island is noted for sharks including hammerheads. The sector's coast has actual and potential for tourism developments.

Beach litter, especially garbage and plastics at all sites, but Mar Abu Mad and Shalateen fishing village are especially bad.

**The following steps of the study will be as following:  
COASTAL ZONE MANAGEMENT ACTION PLAN**

The overall purpose of this plan will be to provide a regional plan within the existing national integrated coastal zone

management (ICZM) strategy, for optimising coastal and marine resource use along the Egyptian Red Sea coast.

In addition to providing general guidelines and measures, the coastal zone management action plan will focus on the ICZM issues identified in the national strategy. It will also assist in providing input to strategies and plans outlined under the national framework's medium-term objectives.

Furthermore, the coastal zone management action plan will assist with the short-term objectives of the national strategy, i.e. identification of the most important vulnerable coastal areas, or "hotspots", and contribute to determining institutional, legislative, financial and human resources.

**REEF RECREATION ACTION PLAN**

The overall goal of the Reef Recreation Management Action Plan is to protect the biodiversity of the reef ecosystem. This will be addressed through the development of effective recreational management of coastal and marine areas within the project area. The first priority will be to establish a unit in the Hurgada of-



office to co-ordinate the various activities formulated under the action plan. The action plan will include the following: i) assessment of the current status of recreation activities and facilities within the project area; ii) establishing links and partnerships with agencies and organizations (i.e HEPCA) involved with recreational management, iii) identification of key activities from policies developed in the CZM plans and iv) develop a phased work plan and budget for the key activities. The implementation of the above activities will be facilitated by links with the Marine Protected Areas Manager and the Environmental Education officer. Training programs focusing on practical issues will

be developed during the initial planning phases based on a needs assessment.

### **COASTAL MARINE PROTECTED AREA ACTION PLAN**

This plan will outline a process to establish one or more coastal marine areas demonstrating links between biodiversity conservation and tourism development. This will be done through the following activities :

- \* Activities and studies as needed for further evaluation and refinement of candidate sites and critical habitats building on baseline information from ecological and planning perspectives including establishment of a Red Sea base of operations.

- \* Consultative workshops, roundtable discussions as needed between GEF partners to present justification of several CMPA options and consensus on area(s) to target action;
- \* Outline actions needed for area as defined above and preliminary management plan based on models.

- \* Develop management, training, surveys and other works to achieve initial implementation of selected protected area.

### **PROJECT MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

An assessment of data availability for use in the assessment of tourism and other development impacts is provided as a basis for continuous improvement through a monitoring and evaluation system.



**Coastal overview of Egypt's Red Sea coastal zone**

**" Sahl Hashish "**

A giant project is under-construction now in Sahl Hashsish, covering 11500 thousand meters along the Red Sea Coastline. It is going to be one of the biggest tourism development projects; reinforcing the Egyptian touristic status - as one of the most gifted countries with touristic attractions

all over the world - the project will cover a huge area of 32 Million square meters similar to the area of Heliopolis district when first erected by "Baron Imban" Sahl Hashish overlooks a coast of moderate mild weather, with different elevations : 0-96 over the sea level, which secures a unique climatic Variation on one side and a high environment protection on the other side. The shareholders of the project consisted of an Egyptian group of businessmen, finance organizations, companies and banks is going to undertake the responsibility of implementing this project.

**An Integrated Touristic City :**

The integrated touristic project of Sahl Hashish is located 20 km from Hurgada International Airport. It is divided into 3 executive phases. The first phase is covering 6 Million square meters and it includes the following components :

- 14 hotels and tourist villages, 3-4-5 stars with a capacity of 3330 double rooms (i.e. 6660 beds), in addition to 1910 Villas.
- Two golf courses (36 hotels) + a golf club.
- A Bedouin Village advancing a model of rural communities living in the desert.
- Diving Centers.

- Tropical plants farm irrigated by salty waters.
- Big marina and a yacht club.
- A health sports complex.
- A corniche road along the project coastline.
- A city center including : restaurants, cafeterias, night club, shops, post office, police station...



**Sahl Hashish** **touristic center**



- A housing area for employees.
- Main and Secondary roads network.
- Infrastructure.

Buildings will cover 15% of the total area of the project, in its 3 phases, while the rest will be green areas the whole project is going to offer 34300 new Job opportunities (8000 Job is offered in the first phases only) the implementation costs are going to reach 1435 Million Pounds, including 415 million Pound for the construction of services, roads, plantation and public plants. Investment costs of the tourist and accommodation plants in the first phase, are 680 million Pounds. After the completion of this stage, the tourist nights are expected to reach 2 million nights (the occupancy rate is 60% at least).

**The Second Phases :**

This phase covers 6 million square meters and it includes the following components :

- \* 2190 rooms with a capacity of 4380.
- \* 3517 Villas and tourist housing apartments.
- \* The tourist capacity of the second phases will reach one million and a half tourist, offering 11500 new job opportunities.
- \* The total costs of the second phase is 1640 Million Pound.

**The Third Phases :**

Third and last phase of the giant project will cover 20 Million square meters and it will include the following components :

- \* 360 rooms.
- \* 4912 tourist housing units.
- \* Total of touristic housing rooms is 14736 rooms (about 20 %)

\* It is expected that this third and last phase will offer 14800 new job opportunities (seasonal and continuing) the investment costs of the 3rd phase are not get accurately estimated, but they are expected to exceed 3 Milliard Pounds.

**The first stage of allocation:**

The first seven sites are allocated for the construction of 5 tourist projects, coinciding with the construction of the infrastructure of the project according to the contracting conditions signed with the Tourism Development Authority. A portion of cost price of the 7 sites has been paid in advance.

- \* Total numbers Related to the 3 phases project.
- \* Total number of accommoda-

tion rooms : 5.880 rooms.

\* Total number of bed : 11760 beds.

\* Total number of housing and tourist units : 10.339 unit.

\* Total number of the expected tourist nights ; 4.700.000 nights.

\* Total job opportunities : 34.300 jobs.

**Abu Soma Project (Integrated Development)**

Completing the indicative plan of Soma Bay, the Tourism Development Authority T.D.A assigned a unique 10 Million square meter peninsula on the Red Sea to one of the companies of integrated tourism development. It is located 48 km south of the town of Hurgada and its international airport, the resort development is readily accessible by air and by



Abu Soma site plan ▷

road. It is also 240 km from Luxor, offering the opportunity for same day excursions to Egypt's most famous temples and antiquities.

In order to ensure the successful implementation of the Soma Bay development, the company has committed considerable financial and technical resources with the objective of creating a planned tourism community rivalling the standards offered in the Caribbean, the Canary Islands, the Far East and Southern Africa.

Shareholders consist of the Egyptian Finance company and of the Egyptian Tourism Investment Company (a joint-venture among six of the world's largest international and multinational financial institutions), in addition to the International Finance Company (a member of the World Bank Group). With a paid - in capital of L.E. 40 Million, ASD has brought together an international team of technical consultants and contractors for the purpose of planning, designing and constructing a self-contained up-market resort community on the Peninsula of Abu Soma.

The first phase of the Soma Bay Master Plan is targeted for com-

pletion by early 1997. Its various components consist of the following:

- A central utility with its related distribution systems and road networks.

- A marina and an associated commercial center.

The capacity of the marina is 50 Vessels; including ten boats of 24 meters length and one of 30 meters.

- Two 300 room five star hotels. The first will be supervised by Sheraton International and the second by Robinson Club.

- A central of golf club with 9 hole course and other sports and recreational facilities.

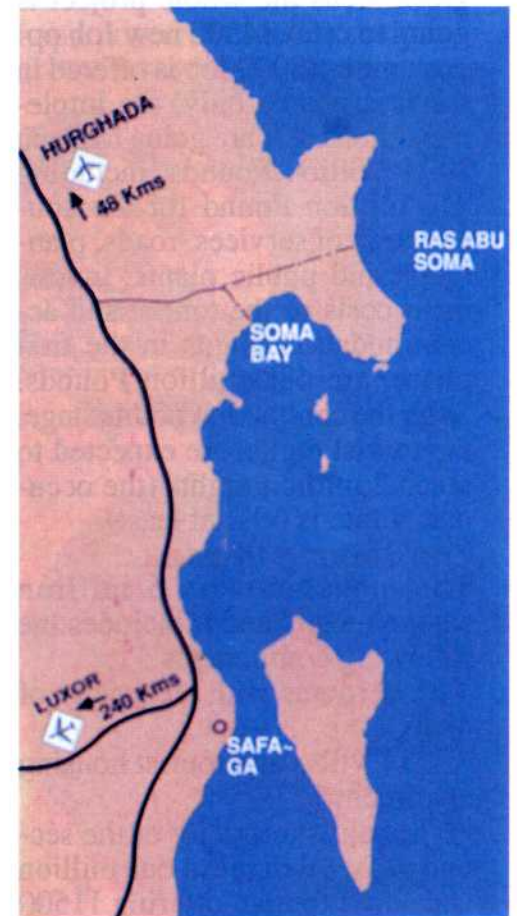
- An exclusive "residents beach" on the island tip of the peninsula.

- A variety of resort housing ranging from Luxurious villas to resort "Town house".

Soma Bay's central utility center will serve the project's requirements in electricity, potable water, sewage treatment, telephone communications, and internal roadways. Based on up-to-date and environmentally friendly technology.

These facilities are being built on a site far removed from the ho-

tels, resort housing, and other sports and entertainment facilities planned at Soma Bay, and have been designed to provide a highly reliable level of service - with adequate contingency backups and redundancies.



Abu Soma site plan

## Tourism Development Review - the issue 40

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