



Friends of the Earth Middle East



Proposal to Rehabilitate the Lower Jordan River System
December 21st, 2008: Side Event 6:40-7:30 pm
For Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Conference on Water

Organization

EcoPeace / Friends of the Earth Middle East (FoEME),
Offices in Amman, Bethlehem and Tel-Aviv:
Visit www.foeme.org, Email: info@foeme.org

Project Description

The Lower River Jordan, from the Sea of Galilee to the Dead Sea, has had almost all of its fresh water resources diverted. All that is presently left flowing in the Lower Jordan, a river considered holy to half of humanity, is agricultural run-off, diverted saline waters and untreated sewage. The primary goal of this project is to both identify the means by which water transfers to the Lower Jordan River could take place and help create the political will to make them happen. Mobilizing visionary leaders and good will champions from Jordan, Israel and Palestine to develop a dialogue and achieve concrete steps towards restoring the Jordan River will provide new opportunities for improved livelihoods of over 300,000 residents of the Jordan Valley, Jordanian, Palestinian and Israeli. This will be a significant contribution to develop understanding and a collaborative mechanism to manage common natural resources such as water in the Jordan Valley.

Having led the efforts to date for the river's rehabilitation, FoEME understands that a regional approach, that brings all sides to act together, is a pre-requisite for gaining the political support for the flow of fresh water back to the river.

Tasks:

In its first phase the project will:

- 1) Research the range of environmental flows required to rehabilitate the Lower Jordan.
- 2) Undertake a rapid assessment to identify the existing barriers that prevent reform of water policies.
- 3) Develop a Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis (TDA) that identifies the opportunities in existence and the trade-offs required to transfer fresh water resources to the river from the Israeli, Jordanian and Palestinian water economy at large, looking specifically at the agricultural, domestic and industrial water sectors.



**NGO in special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the United Nations*

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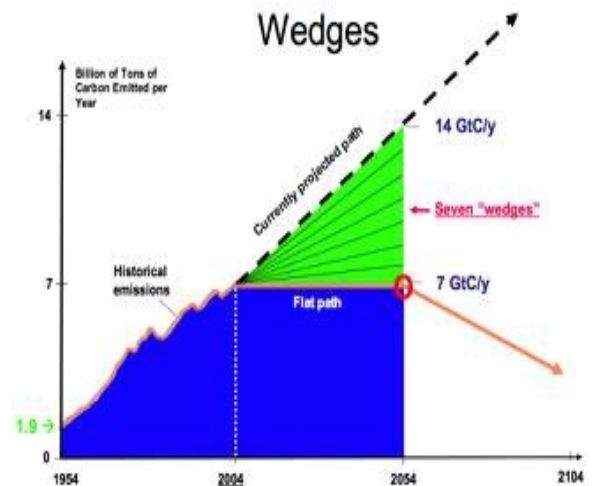
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- 4) Develop and implement a Strategic Action Plan (SAP) based on local, national and international interests targeting Israeli, Jordanian and Palestinian decision makers that would advance the implementation of each wedge identified considering the barriers earlier identified.
- 5) Work with members of Parliament (Legislative Assembly) and or committees in each Parliament where they have jurisdiction to overview the work of the relevant Ministries.
- 6) Develop an international campaign to raise awareness on the state of the Lower Jordan River and the need for reform of regional water management.

A "wedges" concept to be applied in this project will identify the percentage of water that could be saved in each sector of the water economy in each country that could be transferred back to the River Jordan. The amount of water identified for transfer to the Jordan River from each sector of the water economy, to be undertaken in the project through a transboundary diagnostic process, constitutes a wedge. The project will therefore seek to identify sufficient "wedges" that in total will highlight to decision makers, the media and the general public that there are realistic economic and environmental options available to allow water to flow back into the Lower Jordan, if there was the political will to do so.



In its second phase project tasks will include:

- 1) Identifying pollution sources to the river and an action plan for their removal.
- 2) Developing a GIS based spatial decision support system specific to the Lower Jordan.
- 3) Developing financial models to support rehabilitation.
- 4) Prepare a draft rehabilitation plan for the lower Jordan River.
- 5) Prepare a draft model agreement for a possible Jordan River Commission

Total Project Cost Estimated at \$6 million

Funding for the first phase has been obtained from the Goldman Fund, USAID and the Global Nature Fund.

Support requested from the Mediterranean Union Initiative and interested donor agencies for phase two. Extensive discussions held with UNDP / Global Environment Fund.

Project Partners:

Jordan Valley Municipalities, Local Palestinian, Jordanian and Israeli Consultants and Universities, Yale University USA, French Research Institute (TBA)

General letters of support received:

Jordanian Ministry of Planning, Israeli Foreign Ministry, Palestinian Water Authority.



*Jordanian, Palestinian and Israeli Mayors
Jumping into the Jordan, July 2005*

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