

## Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund

### Process Framework for Involuntary Restrictions

The project will be implemented in Mujib Biosphere Reserve (212 sq. km, established in 1987) to improve the management planning and management effectiveness of Mujib Biosphere Reserve whilst promoting and encouraging ecologically-sound and economically-viable land use patterns in the reserve and its surroundings based on scientific research and integrated participatory conservation planning. Consequently, three main interventions will be applied during the project period:

1. Institutionalization of the management planning of the protected area, to guarantee the effective implementation and participatory adaptive management based on scientific research.
2. Engagement of relevant stakeholders as partners in the management planning processes and related conservation programs, and ensures they are the prime beneficiaries of socio-economic programs.
3. To ensure adopting best practices to reduce violations to the reserve regulations such as overgrazing, hunting, plantation of exotic species, and quarrying and mining activities that challenge the ecological integrity of important habitats and its associated species, and to assure the reserve ecosystems viability and integrity beyond its boundaries by encouraging ecologically-sound and economically-viable land use patterns.

The project will follow the CEEP strategic direction 3 which state “*Improve the conservation and protection status of 44 priority key biodiversity areas*”. This strategic direction has three themes which will all be tackled by the project: (i) Establish new protected areas and promote improved management of existing protected areas by developing and implementing sustainable management plans; (ii) Develop financial mechanisms that support protected areas while enhancing sustainable livelihood and promoting community management of priority key biodiversity areas; and (iii) Raise awareness of the importance of priority key biodiversity areas, including those that have irreplaceable plant and marine biodiversity.

Since the Mujib Reserve establishment, it has its basic management planning processes led by RSCN with minimal consultation of local stakeholders. The consultation varied according to the nature of the reserve’s intervention. In the last decade, RSCN realized the value of local community engagement and the integration of scientific research in management planning processes. This approach led to the declaration of Mujib as a biosphere reserve in 2011 by UNESCO because of the integration of conservation and sustainable social and economic development.

The idea of the project based on the needs of local communities that were shared with the management of the reserve from one side, and due to the gaps and lesson learned revealed of long term implementation of three management plans since the reserve establishment. Thus, series of consultation processes with all stakeholders will be setup in order to define stakeholders’ interest and conservation interest which will be the backbone of the project.

Main stakeholders includes the livestock owners local cooperative (35 member) who were keen to conserve the rangeland, but at the same not to lose their livestock. Their main interest was to minimize the overgrazing and shift to sustainable practices of grazing such as rotation or low price high value fodder. Cultivation of medicinal plants was a favorable option to the *Saqi Al-sdari* local cooperative (130 members), the second largest after the livestock owner cooperative in the area.

However, the proposed project activities may have potential impact on resources use by local communities. The effective implementation of the coming management plan including the zoning scheme to meet the Man and Biosphere Program (MAB) could bring some restrictions on natural resources especially overgrazing, and hunting. However, it will enhance biodiversity composition which will be reflected positively on the impacted stakeholders and will reduce the impact of this unsustainable land use practices at the long term.

### **Participatory implementation**

Early in the project preparation and through long time of management plans implementation on ground, the local communities expressed the conservation restrictions they expect, that is only concentrated in grazing, because hunting is illegal by the Jordanian law before the reserve was established. A continuously presented concern by members of local communities based on the tribal ownership of the reserve land although the whole land of the reserve is a treasury and no single private land found within boarder of the reserve.

The reserve management responded to these three needs (Grazing, hunting, land claims) by establish grazing land within the reserve with an area of (20 sq. km) and enhance the rotation schemes, while building the capacity of "livestock owners local cooperative". In this project, the management arrangement will continue in order to enhance the grazing land, introduce more initiatives to sustain the rangeland, in full participation of livestock owners who are already managing the grazing land.

As for hunting, it is been strongly not allowed by the Jordanian law, and this prohibition is well established within all stakeholders, so the reserve team are strongly supported by the law and considerable sector of local community to control hunting and conserve the biodiversity that became a good source of income.

The project is located nearby five villages known as the villages of *Hamaydeh*, a large tribe that used the area traditionally, and they claim the tribal ownership of the land especially the village of Faqu' the which will be the main target for the project. This conflict has been addressed by joint working mechanisms in order to protect the land by the local community themselves so all the reserve staff are from the local community. Currently, there are more than 30 employees from the local community who are directly benefiting from the reserve establishment, in the same time the reserve purchases all available goods and services form the local community which represents addition benefits for the local community. This approach helped to reduce the pressure on the reserve by introducing sustainable practices benefiting local community.

The impact of the project is planned to be measured quantitatively and qualitatively based on clear indicators such; the number of beneficiaries, the amount of the income, the area of use, and qualitatively by the willingness of cooperation and participation. Capacity of local community cooperatives will be important indicator as the project plans to build the capacity of these cooperatives.

### **Criteria's for eligibility of affected persons**

There are no eligible group's and\or individuals for assistant or compensation, but this project will ensure developing further relationship with local communities and local cooperatives in the site to enhance their livelihood which will be reflected positively on the conservation of natural resources of the reserve. This will be achieved through establishing small enterprises and developing comprehensive educational and awareness program. The project will develop the zoning and land use plan using based

on an extensive consultation with local communities. The plan will help to define categories the reserve area and it surrounding according to the level of use and restrictions. In order to implement the zoning and land use plan effectively RSCN will develop Memorandum of Understanding (MOUs) with local cooperatives and other stakeholder to guarantee effective implementation.

### **Measures to assist affected persons**

As stated previously, the project will be based on full consultation process with relevant stakeholders. This process will include the development of the zoning plan which should identify areas with special concerns and other areas where mitigation measures will be adopted over resources use in a sustainable manner. Meanwhile, the alternative livelihoods enterprises envisaged by this project will provide further mitigation for local communities.

### **Potential conflicts between affected communities**

Since there are no groups who will be directly affected by the project who will eligible for assistant, the implementation processes will avoid any management actions which might create conflicts with local communities. The project will also use participatory approach and awareness tools in order to enhance the stakeholders' understating of the reserve importance for biodiversity conservation and appropriate sustainable land use applicable to the reserve. Consultation process with local communities will ensure continuous collaboration and avoid any conflicts that may arise. The communities will be informed that can make complaints at any time during the implementation and provided with respective contact information.

### **Implementation arrangement**

The RSCN is the main implementer of the project, so RSCN is fully responsible to achieve the project objectives and implement all activities listed in the project document. Local communities' representatives will play an important role through their participation in the consultation processes. The district governor will play a key role as accepted facilitator and moderator in case of conflicts arise between the needs of biodiversity conservation and local community needs.

Project implementation activities will be monitored and evaluated by the RSCN senior management since RSCN responsible to assure the effectiveness implementation. Internal and external financial auditor will be commissioned by the project according to donor's guidelines and RSCN's articles of assasination. While local cooperatives activities will be closely monitored by the Reserve Manger and field assistant.