

## PROJECT BRIEF

### WADI EL RAYAN PROTECTED AREA, PHASE II

#### The Project

Wadi El Rayan Protected Area (WRPA) is located in the Fayoum Governorate and was declared a protectorate in 1989. The depression includes two man-made lakes that receive the wastewater drainage of the El Fayoum province. A critical Egyptian wetland area, Wadi el Rayan is of international importance for migrating water fowl, has unique geological and geomorphological features and also supports a rich and varied desert biological community. It is also the target of multiple large-scale economic/ commercial activities that threaten to encroach on the delicate site conditions.

The project is one of eight components implemented under the Egyptian-Italian Environment Cooperation Program (EIECP). Based on the foundation laid during Phase I (1998-2001), Phase II aims to enhance Egypt's Environmental Affairs Agency (EEAA) capabilities to manage nature conservation on a sustainable basis by contributing to the preservation and protection of the biotic communities of plants and animals of the Saharan Sand Dune Ecosystem of Wadi el Rayan. The project will implement collaborative management arrangements that strive to consolidate and ensure the ongoing Protected Area Management Unit's efforts to control the development of private economic activities, including non-intrusive eco-tourism initiatives, in the region.

Today, Wady El Rayan PA is considered a model PA and a success story for sustainable development. WRPA involves a wide-range of activities, from protecting biodiversity to development of eco-tourism, fisheries, and contributing to poverty alleviation. Building on the three years experience gained from the Wadi el Rayan Protected Area project, The Gabal Elba Protected Area project (GEPA), and the Siwa Protected Area, two components of the EIECP, will follow on the footsteps of the WRPA. Such actions will contribute to the preservation and protection of Egypt's biodiversity assets and will broaden on-going efforts to establish and manage a representative national system of protected areas.

During Phase I, places like Wady El Hitan "Valley of the Whales" were discovered with fossils of dolphins and marine areas. One of the outputs of Phase I was an Atlas for "*Wady El Rayan: Gate to the Egyptian Desert*" produced during the lifetime of the project. The project will encourage the integration of natural and cultural resources between Medinet Madi and WRPA as an important step to develop a *cultural district* in Fayoum Governorate. The project will link with activities of its sister EIECP project (Institutional Support to the Supreme Council of Antiquities – with applications to Fayoum – Madinet Mady, and Saqqara) at the antiquities site of Medinet Madi in order to link the preservation of antiquities and environment.

Wadi El Rayan PA, being of high interest for the tourists at large, necessitates a holistic approach aimed at environmental and cultural conservation altogether, whilst producing economic benefits for the community through eco-tourism activities envisaged within the protected area. Policies developed during the Legal and Institutional Framework Project (LIFP), another component of EIECP, will be applied here and extended to other protectorates.

#### Intended Beneficiaries

The intended beneficiaries of the project include the general public who will benefit from the presence of national protected areas for their natural resources, recreational benefits and future returns on biological resources. Communities, the private sector and citizens involved in economic activities focusing on the PAs or residing in and around PAs also will benefit from the project. Institutional beneficiaries will include the Nature Conservation Sector as well as the Ministry of State for Environmental Affairs, the Egyptian Environmental Affairs Agency, the Fayoum Governorate EMU and staff in other ministries dealing with environmental matters.

## **Budget**

Funding for the WRPA will be provided through bilateral funds of Euro 4,021,807.5 directly through DGCD, via UNDP. The Egyptian Government's cost sharing of LE 2,817,110 will be provided via the Italian-Egyptian Debt-for-Development Swap Counterpart Funds.

## **Results Framework**

*Development Outcome:* To contribute to the protection of Egypt's natural and cultural resources.

*Specific Outcome:* WRPA is managed in a sustainable manner with the participation of local stakeholders while contributing to the economic development of Fayoum.

Outputs:

1. Training and learning programs are developed and implemented to build capacity within the PAMU, the Fayoum EMU and among local stakeholders, to manage and conserve WRPA.
2. WRPA management plan is refined where necessary to promote the development of eco-tourism and its potential for environmental education and communication.
3. The WRPA Management plan is implemented in a participatory manner with local stakeholders.
4. A strategy is established for linking Wadi Rayan and Medinet Madi in Fayoum.
5. A site-specific plan for the conservation of the Wadi Hitan area of WRPA as a world heritage site is established in a participatory manner.

## **Link to MDGs**

The project contributes to Goal 8, to Ensure Environmental Sustainability, with the target of integrating the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes and reversing the loss of environmental losses. One of the indicators for achieving this goal is the land area protected to maintain biological diversity, i.e. number of Protected Areas.

Within this framework, Egypt's Environmental Affairs Agency (EEAA) strives to mainstream the environmental dimension in national policies, plans, programs and practices within a sustainable development with an immediate objective of preserving the national resource base, cultural heritage, and biodiversity. Currently, Egypt has 21 natural protectorates that constitute 8% of the country's total area. The ultimate goal is to increase the number of protectorates to reach 25% of Egypt's area by 2015.

Within the framework of donor's initiatives aimed to assist the implementation of the National Environmental Action Plan (NEAP), the Directorate General of Cooperation for Develop (DGCD) of the Italian Foreign Ministry, the EEAA and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) have designed the Egyptian-Italian environmental Cooperation Program (EIECP) Phase II that is intended for implementation in January 2004. The Wadi Rayan Protected Area Project (WRPA) is a component of this larger Program. The Program also supports two new Protected Areas, namely: Gebel Elba Protected Area and Siwa Protected Area.

The UNDP-Italian partnership to this end is in line with UNDP's overall interest in supporting policy development and strengthening national capacities to ensure the achievement of sustainable development goals through an integrated and policy-driven approach. In applying such a vision, the principles of decentralization and addressing poverty challenges within the environmental scope of work will be addressed together.

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## **Microstart Programme Brief Description**

Microstart Egypt is one of a number of projects under UNDP's international program intended to contribute to poverty alleviation efforts through the development of the Microfinance sector. This project is a component of UNDP Egypt's broader Social Fund for Development (SFD) Project Phase II – EGY/96/011/01/99 – designed to enhance the access of low-income entrepreneurs, particularly women, to financial services in order to expand their businesses, increase their income and augment employment.

As the first joint UNDP/SFD Microfinance initiative, this project is intended to be pilot for sustainable Microfinance based on international best practices, which will serve as model for future replication and eventual mainstreaming into the Social Fund's larger lending operations.

By design, the MicroStart Egypt Programme strictly adheres to CGAP's "Guiding Principles for Selecting and Supporting Intermediaries" embodied in a Memorandum of Understanding signed between UNDP and the Social Fund for Development.

### ***The main objectives of the project are to:***

- Strengthen the institutional, organizational, and technical capacity of participating local organizations to provide microfinance services to the economically active poor, particularly women.
- Increase the financial capacity of participating organizations to provide microfinance services to the economically active poor, particularly women.
- Contribute to the development of knowledge, expertise, and information concerning Microfinance, at level of the participating organizations.
- Enhance the capacity of the Social Fund to manage its existing microcredit projects and to propose new ones based on best practice principles.
- Enhance the capacity of the Social Fund to provide technical assistance and training to Sponsoring Agencies (SAs) and necessary follow on SA funded projects, as part of its responsibilities as an apex institution.
- Contribute to the development of reporting standards within the Social Fund for the microcredit operations under the Community Development Program (CDP) and link with relevant MIS development objectives.
- Ensure the continuity of the initiatives taken in the pilot program.

Agricultural Cooperation Development International Volunteers in Overseas (ACDI/VOCA) was contracted as the International Technical Service Provider (ITSP) for the project in June 1999. Currently there are three local NGOs participating in the project in Fayoum: The Small Project Development Association (SPDA), the Community Association for Family Development (CAFD) and the Silla Community Development Association (SCDA).

Each have received the maximum MicroCapital Grants allowed under the project totaling US\$ 150,000 and are currently trying to mobilize additional funds. The geographic scope of project activities was expanded to greater Cairo by the SFD in November 2000 in an attempt to increase outreach and impact on the ground. A fourth NGO (ADEW) was appraised and is currently pending approval.