

# OVERVIEW ON THE ACTUAL SITUATION



# OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM IN JORDAN

## SIPPO - Swiss Import Promotion Programme

SIPPO Swiss Import Promotion Programme is a mandate from the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs of Switzerland (SECO), carried out by Osec. The programme supports small and medium-sized enterprises (SME) from emerging markets and markets in transition to access the Swiss and European markets. On the other hand, SIPPO helps Swiss and European importers to find suitable partners in emerging countries and countries in transition.

The programme has five main goals:

- To inform the Swiss and European import economy about new market sources
- To strengthen trade institutions and business sector associations in the trade promotion process
- To increase the competitiveness of SME in selected partner countries
- To develop the manufacturing and exporting skills of SME in selected partner countries
- To establish qualified trade contacts between SME from emerging markets and markets in transition and the Swiss and European import economy

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# Map of Jordan



# General Overview on the Sustainable Tourism Activities in Jordan

## Ministry of Environment

The Ministry of Environment has established a special program under the name of **GREEN TAS** which stands for Development of methods and tools for the establishment of Good Environmental performance in the Tourist Accommodation Sector in Jordan - implementation of pilot studies. The project aims to develop strategies and instrument to pro-actively address the problems caused by increasing tourism in order to ensure a sustainable development of the sector in Jordan. In order to directly involve the tourism industry in the project, Hotels and universities have been invited to join as strategic partners. The economic viability of environmental measures is of great concern to this project. The partners in this project are:

- University of Cyprus representing the European countries
- Ministry of Tourism
- Hashemite University
- Jordan University of Science and Technology
- Moevenpick Hotels & Resorts - Jordan
- AEOLIKI Ltd as consultant

In November 2006 Moevenpick developed and published a technical report and environmental review, specially focusing on the hotel's aspects in terms of destruction of habitat of flora and fauna and the unique ecosystem of the Dead Sea as well as sustainable utilization of resources and safety of guests and employees. This report could become a guide for other destinations and form a platform for awareness and competence training.

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## RSCN – Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature

The Royal Society for The Conservation of Nature (RSCN) is an independent voluntary organization devoted to the conservation of Jordan's natural resources. RSCN has the mission of protecting and managing the natural resources of Jordan. RSCN has established seven protected areas covering over 1200 square kilometers. These areas comprise of wild plants, animals and other natural resources.

In 1994 a new approach was introduced to the management of Jordan's nature reserves. This was pioneered in the Dana Reserve, where projects were developed to use the reserve's natural assets to create economic and social benefits for local communities. Small businesses were created, making nature-based crafts and other products, and a thriving eco-tourism operation was established, bringing jobs and additional income.

Building on the success of the Dana initiative, Wild Jordan was created as the business unit of RSCN to develop similar socio-economic programmes in all of Jordan's nature reserves. Wild Jordan now manages income generating programmes that build on locally available skills and products and on the tourism potential of the nature reserves.

RSCN probably the longest history and experience in environmental friendly tourism development. Mainly USAid funded, the priorities are given by the US and a close cooperation with the Jordan Tourism Board is evident. RSCN developed and operates in several destinations and is marketing them through their own structures; a close cooperation with local tour operators is not very evident and lacks motivation from both sides and an international appearance at trade shows etc. is not a priority.

In 2006 RSCN has entered into a strategic cooperation with Moevenpick Hotels in Jordan; the latter is promoting RSCN products in the operation and supports awareness training.

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## Fair Trade Jordan (FTJ)

This relatively young NGO has recently identified the “Fair Trade in Tourism” as its initial focus point as it is already actively promoted in South Africa ([www.fairtradetourismsa.org.za](http://www.fairtradetourismsa.org.za))

Fair Trade Jordan was brought to life in 2005, by a unique alliance between two local Jordanian and one international NGO; the Jordan Hashemite Fund for Human Development, the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature and IUCN-World Conservation Union.

During 2005 and 2006 the alliance worked closely with local producers through fair trade markets, promoting the ethics of fair trade to both the producers and consumers.

During the second quarter of 2006, seed funding from the British Embassy paved the way towards the development of a fully independent fair trade entity. Fair Trade Jordan was registered as a private non-profit organization at the beginning of 2007 pioneering the institutional form of development organizations, in an effort to ensure efficiency and transparency.

Producers and service providers disadvantaged by the nature of the Jordanian trading system miss out on market opportunities for reasons related to income and market accessibility. FTJ looks to become the marketing arm for fair trade producers and service providers to ensure long term market access and fair distribution of trading benefits.

Without a sound enabling environment, the benefits of certification and market access are marginal. FTJ looks to facilitate and connect producers and service providers to existing national schemes that technically and financially support their businesses.

The main obstacles seem to be lack of sufficient funding and support from within Jordan and international organizations, the efficiency of the management and the readiness of cooperation of the sector.

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## Jordan Tourism Development Project

The Jordan Tourism Development Project “Siyaha” is funded by USAID and implemented by Chemonics International. It is a 3 year project working with the Jordanian government, local communities, NGOs and tourism related institutions to develop a dynamic, competitive tourism industry.

Siyaha’s work focuses on ***institutional and sector reforms*** (strengthening government institutions and enhancing the legal and regulatory environment), on ***product and site development*** (developing tourism products e.g Madaba, developing eco-tourism in Wadi Rum, supporting tourism enterprises through access to capital, improving site management, strengthening tourism marketing and research) and on ***human resources and sector support*** (training, quality improvement, awareness rising, strengthening associations).

By the end of 2007 the project joined the World Heritage Alliance for Sustainable Tourism (WHA) as an associate partner. The WHA is an industry-leading initiative founded by Expedia and the United Nations Foundation to support UNESCO’s goal of promoting and protecting the World Heritage sites around the world.

The partnership will implement a program to assist in strengthening the management of Jordan’s Heritage sites, most notably in Petra and launch a public awareness campaign about these sites.

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# Tour Operators specialized in Eco & Nature Tourism

## Discovery Travel & Eco Tourism

Discovery Travel & Eco Tourism with subsidiaries: UTA, Jordan Circle Tours & Gulf Circle Tours; a member of "Green Globe". The Eco-tourism components of Discovery's work are a set of guidelines by which any organization, person or company in the tourism industry must abide. These guidelines, when properly implemented, will result in the least amount of change or damage possible in any environment. These guidelines, naturally, are drawn taking into consideration the environment, the local communities, as well as the local heritage history and culture. Non profit organizations offering help to these issues also get the full backing of the general guidelines of Eco-tourism.

Discovery offers trips through Jordan with visits in Dana & Shaumari Wildlife Reserves as well as Aqaba on the Red Sea. For bird watchers, Discovery offers special trips. Their philosophy is not just to "show you some animals, but to help you understand all the facets of Jordan's magnificent environment."

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## Dahlan Tours & Travel

Established in 1996, their staff is young, active and highly creative, prepared to offer tailor made tour in Jordan to suit different budgets and tastes.

Their tours visit the lowest point on earth at the Biblical Dead Sea as well as the heights of the Alsharah mountains housing the rose red city of Petra, the monument of the ancient Nabateans.

With the tours they offer one can explore the ancient roman cities of Bella, Um Qais, Jerash and Philadelphia, the modern city capital of Amman; travel the ancient king's highway from Aqaba to Damascus; or absorb the faded glory of the desert castles, a lasting tribute to early Islam.

Moreover, they offer trips to their clients with rest and relaxation in the camp under the stars in the majestic expanse of Wadi Rum, an astonishing sensational view, nature lovers can rest in "Gods heaven on earth".

The Dana Nature Reserve for nature lovers or the Gulf of Aqaba for adventure seekers are offered as well as Jordan's red sea resort, home of the finest coral reefs in the world, and a heaven for water sportsmen.

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## Dakkak Tours International

Dakkak Tours International is a leading destination management company with extensive connections in Jordan and the region. They operate through offices in Jordan and through an extensive network of partner companies, travel industry contacts and affiliate service providers both in Jordan and abroad. Dakkak serves more than 15'000 tourists a year from all over the world.

Since 1955 Dakkak Tours International has been active in promoting Jordan and the region worldwide.

Their services include organized package tours through pre-set programs, business men services from hotel bookings to car rental, meeting, conference & exhibition services in addition to exciting incentive programs.

Special Tour Programs combining Jordan with Egypt, Syria, Israel, the Holy Land and Lebanon are also available.

**Their Mission** is to offer services beyond expectations at a fair price.

### Eco Tours

The Dead Sea's mineral-rich waters and mud, the natural hot springs along the Jordan Valley and the year-round sunny, dry climate have been healing bodies and spirits for thousands of years. Spa vacations are offered with the most sophisticated international treatments, alongside the Dead Sea specialties, at some of the most luxurious spas in the world for a total sense of well being. Clients with serious medical problems benefit from specialized facilities. In addition, bird-watching programs and trekking is among their Eco programs offering the features of Amman, Ajlun, Dead Sea, Jordan Valley, Hot Springs, Desert, Dana Natural Reserve, Wadi Rum and Petra.

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## **Petra Travel & Tourism Co.**

Established in 1965, Petra Tours is a large organisation with specialized employees providing a comprehensive range of services as Inbound Tourism Company in Jordan, representing prominent travel companies from Europe, USA, Canada and the Far East.

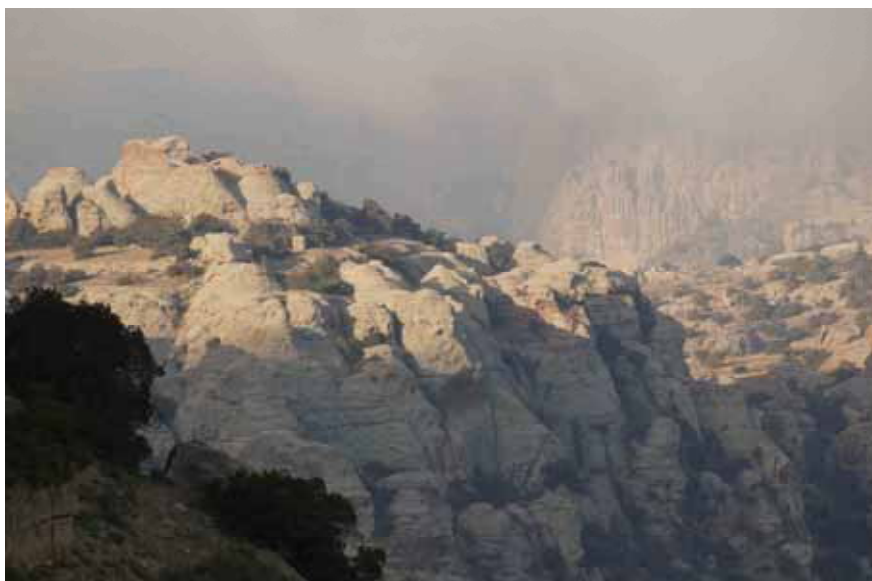
Petra Tours offers full assistance to individual travelers, groups and special interest travelers.

The services they provide include accommodation arrangements, car-hire booking, transfers, and assistance at airports, seaport and hotels. They also organize guided and unguided excursions to all tourist attractions in Jordan, either on a separate package basis or as an extension to a pre-designed trip. All field services are provided and monitored by uniformed, professional multilingual guides and managers.

The company also represents large international insurance companies that cater to traveler's world-wide.

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# Destinations for “Eco & Nature Tourism” in Jordan

## Ajloun

Ajloun Nature Reserve is located in the Ajloun highlands (North of Amman), It consists of Mediterranean-like hill country, dominated by open woodlands of Oak and Pistachio trees. The Reserve was first established in 1988 when a captive-breeding programme for the Roe Deer was initiated. The Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature has set up two hiking trails and provided a special area for camping.

Dibeen forest is situated just south of the famous Roman city of Jerash, where it cloaks the steep hillsides over an area of some eight square kilometres. Most of the trees are Aleppo pines, mixed with evergreen oak (*Quercus calliprinos*) and a scattering of red-barked arbutus. The Aleppo pines are some of the oldest and largest in the kingdom and Dibeen is the driest part of the world in which they are known to grow naturally.

The forest has been open to the public for many years and it has a large rest house, with accommodation and food. The rest-house and surrounding area get very busy on Fridays and littering is a major problem. There is no trail system as yet but there are a number of minor roads through the forest that lead to secluded glades with impressive views. Dibeen is particularly attractive in March and April, when it is full of lavishing spring flowers.



### Ajloun Forest Lodge

The Ajloun Campsite is on the edge of the forest in the Ajloun Nature Reserve in the north of Jordan. It occupies a large grassy clearing and offers beautiful views of the reserve and beyond. On clear days, you can see the west bank and the snow-capping Jebel Sheikh in Lebanon. There are 10 four-person tented lodges available with small terraces and beds inside. Shared showers and toilets are available, nearby, along side the reserve centre, which offers a small restaurant, interpretation room, training room and the reserve management offices. The campsite is open from mid March to mid November.

## Azraq

Azraq is a unique wetland oasis located in the heart of the semi-arid Jordanian eastern desert, one of several beautiful nature reserves managed by the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature (RSCN). Its attractions include several natural and ancient built pools, a seasonally flooded marshland, and a large mudflat know as Qa'a Al-Azraq. A wide variety of birds stop at the reserve each year for a rest during their arduous migration routes between Asia and Africa. Some stay for the winter or breed within the protected areas of the wetland.



### **Accommodation in Azraq**

The 16-room guest house features a colonial-style reception and its walls are adorned with black- and white-framed photos dating back to the late 1800s, which were taken by a British photographer who lived with the Bedouins.

The lodge, originally built in 1940, offers its guests a trip into the past with a room dedicated for narrating stories of the eastern desert and Azraq residents. Guests can also watch a documentary that was filmed in the 1970s by a British expedition that was tasked with exploring Azraq to study transforming it into a national park.

The lodge overlooks a vast mud flat known as Qaal Azraq and is surrounded by rocks and green cactus giving it an authentic desert atmosphere. Azraq, which means blue in Arabic, also contains several pools, and a seasonally flooded marshland.

## Dana Nature Reserve

Dana Nature Reserve covers 308 square kilometres and is a world of natural treasures. It is composed of a chain of valleys and mountains which extend from the top of the Jordan Rift Valley down to the desert lowlands of Wadi Araba. The visitor to this area will be awed by the beauty of the Rummana Mountain, the mystery of the ancient archaeological ruins of Feinan, the timeless serenity of Dana Village and the grandeur of the red and white sandstone cliffs of Wadi Dana. The Reserve contains a remarkable diversity of landscapes that range from wooded highlands to rocky slopes and from gravel plains to dunes of sand. Moreover, Dana supports diverse wildlife which includes a variety of rare species of plants and animals; Dana is home to about 600 species of plants, 37 species of mammals and 190 species of birds.



### Accommodation in Dana

#### Rummana Campsite

Camping facilities are provided at the Rummana campsite. The campsite contains 20 large tents, bathrooms, and barbecue grills for the visitor's use. Each tent comes equipped with mattresses, sheets, covers and pillows.

#### Dana Guest House

Perched on the edge of Wadi Dana, this beautifully styled building offers breathtaking views of the reserve, comfortable rooms, traditional Arabic food, and friendly service. It contains nine bedrooms, most with private terraces.

#### Feynan Eco-lodge

Set among the arid mountains of Wadi Feynan Eco-lodge, on the western boarder of the Dana Nature Reserve, the Wilderness Lodge provides a cool, atmospheric retreat for tourists wishing to explore this undiscovered and archaeologically rich area of Jordan. The lodge has a unique arabesque desert design and uses environment- friendly technologies, including solar and candle power. At night, most of the lodge are lit by candles, making it a very romantic destination.

## Mujib Reserve

The Mujib Reserve is the lowest nature reserve in the world, with a spectacular array of scenery near the east coast of the Dead Sea. The reserve is located within the deep Wadi Mujib gorge, which enters the Dead Sea at 410 metres below sea level. The Reserve extends to the Karak and Madaba mountains to the north and south, reaching 900 metres above sea level in some places. This 1,300 metre variation in elevation, combined with the valley's year- round water flow from seven tributaries, means that Wadi Mujib enjoys a magnificent biodiversity that is still being explored and documented today. Over 300 species of plants, 10 species of carnivores and numerous species of permanent and migratory birds have been recorded. Some of the remote mountain and valley areas are difficult to reach, and thus offer safe havens for rare species of cats, goats and other mountain animals. Mujib's sandstone cliffs are an ideal habitat for one of the most beautiful mountain goats in the world, the horned Ibex.



## Mujib Campsite

Situated on the Madash peninsula, which penetrates the Dead Sea, the Mujib campsite offers stunning scenery and the chance to experience the unique sensation of floating in the saltiest sea on earth. There are 15 deluxe 3- person tents, insulated from extremes of temperature with direct access to the beach! They are naturally ventilated and equipped with simple beds over polished concrete floors and small terraces to enjoy the view. Toilets and showers are in a separate complex and there are additional freestanding showers on the shore to wash off the salt. Meals can be provided on request at the camp restaurant with its magnificent views. The camp is open all year round.

## **The Shawmari Reserve**

The Shawmari Reserve was created in 1975 by the RSCN as a breeding centre for endangered or locally extinct wildlife. Today, following breeding programmes with some of the world's leading wildlife parks and zoos, this small, 22-square-kilometre reserve is a thriving protected environment for some of the most rare species of animals in the Middle East. Oryx, ostriches, gazelles and onagers, which are depicted on many 6th Century Byzantine mosaics, are rebuilding their populations and reasserting their presence in this safe haven, protected from hunting and habitat destruction that nearly wiped them out.



### **Shawmari Camp**

Shawmari camp is located east of Shawmari Reserve Nature Centre. There are 10 tents (accommodating 30 persons per night) equipped with mattresses, pillows and sheets and near by showers and toilets. Food and beverage can be provided. The camp is open all year through.

## Wadi Rum

The moonlike landscape of Wadi Rum is unique in the world. The desert of Rum is dotted with massive mountains, coloured in shades of red, yellow, and orange. Their hues spill over to colour the sand dunes around the desert and the horizon of its breathtaking panorama.

This is a place where you can become one with nature, where visitors are humbled by the towering mountains and overwhelmed by the serenity and quiet ambiance of this magnificent place.

The eco-system of Wadi Rum holds many rare and endemic plants. Spring reveals hundreds of species of wild flowers. About 120 bird species have been recorded in the area, including the Griffon Vulture, the Fan-Tailed Raven, Bonelli's Eagle, and Hume's Tawny Owl. Baseline surveys show the existence of the Grey Wolf, Blandford's Fox, the Sand Cat, and Ibex within the area.

One activity which keeps attracting thrill-seekers to Wadi Rum is mountain climbing. Ascents can range from simple hikes to serious mountain climbing more than 900 meters up sheer granite and sandstone cliffs.



### Accommodation in Wadi Rum

There are tents "furnished" with mattresses etc. behind the Resthouse costing 2JD/day, they are fairly primitive, but perfectly comfortable for a few days. There is access to the showers and toilets at the Resthouse. It is also possible to pitch your own tent if you wish. One can camp behind the Resthouse in Wadi S'Bach and still have access to the toilets and showers. There is a restaurant in the Resthouse with a bar.

The Wadi Rum equivalents of two star hotels are the camps in Dissieh, which are close to the northern end of Wadi Um Ishrin.

Obviously most people visiting Wadi Rum want to spend the night in a "Bedouin tent". These tents are not the authentic homes of the Bedouin, but are specially erected for the tourists. It is nevertheless a special experience to sleep out in the desert; several of them have "amenities" like toilets and showers. If one wants to sleep in a "Bedouin family" tent, this can usually be arranged. Many of the guides will arrange visits to their families in the desert, perhaps for lunch or a cup of tea.

## Dead Sea

The leading attraction at the Dead Sea is the hot, soothing super - salty sea water which is four times saltier than normal sea water. This unusually salty, buoyant and mineral - rich water has attracted visitors since ancient times, all of whom have floated effortlessly on their backs while soaking up the water's healthy minerals along with the gently defused rays of the Jordanian sun.

The Dead Sea in Jordan is one of the most spectacular natural landscapes in the whole world. A series of new roads, hotels and archeological discoveries are converging to make this region, the lowest spot on earth at 400 meters below sea level, as enticing to international visitors today as it was to kings, emperors, traders and prophets in antiquity.

The Dead Sea is flanked by mountains to the east and the rolling hills of Jerusalem to the west, giving it an almost other-worldly beauty. Although sparsely populated and serenely quiet now, the area is believed to have been home to five Biblical cities: Sodom, Gomorrah, Adman, Zebouin and Zoar.



### Accommodation at the Dead Sea:

In the seventies of the last century, the Dead Sea was rediscovered as Heaven for Treatments & Beauty. Today there are many specialized centers around the Dead Sea dealing with treatments linked to its nature beside several Spas & Hotels catering for the rejuvenation for old and young. The hotels are all 5 or 4 star hotels. Cheaper possibilities for accommodation are at the moment not available in this region.

**Movenpick Resort and Spa Hotel;** Website: [www.movenpick-deadsea.com](http://www.movenpick-deadsea.com)

**Jordan Valley Marriott Resort & Spa Hotel,**

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**Kempinski Hotel Ishtar;** Website: [www.kempinski.com](http://www.kempinski.com)

**Dead Sea Spa Hotel;** Website: [www.deadsea.com](http://www.deadsea.com)

## **Hammamat Ma'in**

Hammamat Ma'in is a unique national resort tucked away in the Ma'in valley of Jordan, just a stone's throw away from the Dead Sea and comprises of numerous springs of hot and cold waters highly charged with revitalizing minerals that have been a national treasure for many centuries. Situated a staggering 264 meters below sea-level allows the temperature of Ma'in to remain a good ten degrees Celsius above the rest of the country, thus enabling the hotel guests to enjoy a mild winter from October to April.

Close by are two sites linked by tradition to Herod the Great. One is the palace at Makawer (machaerus), where Salome traditionally danced, and where John the Baptist was beheaded; now Hammamat Ma'in, the thermal mineral springs, where Herod was said to have bathed in its medicinal water, where people have come for thermal treatments or simply to enjoy a hot soak, since the days of Rome. A newly renovated hotel with the „Six Senses Spa“ using the hot springs.



### **Accommodation in Hammamat Ma'in**

The hotel Janna Spa & Resort offers 78 rooms, 14 suites, different types of SPA possibilities as well as meeting and event possibilities. It is a newly restored Hotel with all the luxury. [www.jannaspa.com](http://www.jannaspa.com).

## Petra and Wadi Musa

Often described as the eighth wonder of the ancient world, it is without doubt Jordan's most valuable treasure and greatest tourist attraction. It is a vast, unique city, carved into the sheer rock face by the Nabataeans, an industrious Arab people who settled here more than 2000 years ago, turning it into an important junction for the silk, spice and other trade routes that linked China, India and southern Arabia with Egypt, Syria, Greece and Rome.

Petra and Wadi Musa, up-front a „History & Culture“ destination; however, the region has interesting eco landscapes and the Taybet Zaman hotel built in an old traditional Bedouin village and the availability of small scale eco tourism by organized camel treks to Wadi Rum form a fundament for Eco-tourism to be developed on a larger platform.

Staying over night in this destination the city near Petra Wadi Musa (means "Valley of Moses") offers a large number of 5 to 2 star Hotels.

