

Consultations with Local Communities in Dunqonab and Mohammed-Qol, on The ESMF, December 2012



Meeting with the Communities

Four meetings took place two with men and two with women at the villages Mohammed-Qol and Dunqonab on 24 -25/12/2012. About 40 persons participated in every meeting while the visiting team consisted of

Dr. Mohammed Badran:	PERSGA
Mr. Memdouh Ahmed:	Consultant; Mr. Bahaeldin was absent due to health reasons.
Mr. Ohaj Saeed Hamid:	Ministry of Environment – Red Sea State, DG of Environment.
Mr. Nasreldin Elamin:	Wildlife Administration, Director of MPAs.
Ms. Ekhlash Adam M:	Higher Council for Environment, Director of Marine Environment.

All four meetings were similar and followed the one structure. Main proceedings of the meetings are summarized below

Meetings Proceedings

Dr. Badran delivered the Project presentation as follows:

Today we are visiting you to present a project adopting the approach of the ecosystem based management of the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden; and to discuss the mechanism of addressing the grievance in the event of emergence of disagreements to avoid negative impacts of the project.

Almighty Allah has made available this universe for us to benefit from and utilize it for our own interests, but God granted us the mind to properly manage the universe in a sustainable way. We understand that unregulated exploitation of the natural resources of the terrestrial environment, where the Aladleib which is grazed by camels began disappearing from the area. Similarly unless

appropriate measures are taken, what happened to terrestrial resources could as well happen to the marine resources. As a coastal community, your history and your fathers and grandfathers history are associated with the sea and your culture as well, what is acquired and your experience by doing are not less important than scientific qualification. The project is aimed at how to take use of the expertise, information and marine culture to develop an effective management system for protected coastal area based on participation, motivation and dissemination of knowledge about marine resources in the countries of the Regional Organization of the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden, which include, Djibouti, Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Somalia and Yemen.

Protected area does not mean a closed/prohibited area as is prevalent in the general understanding, but in fact protected area is an area with appropriate management aiming at protecting the environment and human benefit. The ecosystem approach harmonizes between mankind and the environment; it is based on the integration of the local culture and history throughout the ages with modern information and scientific discoveries. In the adoption of the ecosystem approach, there should be no contradiction with your environment or culture.

The project has four components: -

- 1- Strengthening management pattern for the protected area and stakeholder participation.
- 2- Find new mechanisms and patterns to improve income, by developing small-scale livelihood projects in collaboration with you.
- 3- Adoption of a mechanism for the environmental and social monitoring to find out levels of impact on the environment and community. This includes activities associated with the project or any other activities inside the protected area. For example, small fishing boats may or may not affect the resources, but the social and economic conditions may be affected by the revenues of the project. When working together, we can figure out this by monitoring and surveillance.
- 4- Project Management: Where the project will be managed by the Regional Organization for the Conservation of the Environment of the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden. Communication with you will be through a national coordinator who will be closer to you.

The project will guarantee your participation in the planning, implementation and this requires strengthening your ability to participate in the surveillance/monitoring, data collection and analysis, and understanding their results so as to become strong partners in determining the levels of allowable catch, enforcement and modify of policies if employment or fish harvesting fish tends to decline. In this context, there are three aspects where your community will play a key role in monitoring the activities of the project, in direct coordination with the Omdah through the National Coordinator of the project, these roles are: (1) the baseline data (2) the environmental conditions and (3) the sustainability of livelihood.

Mechanism of Grievance for impacted groups

Your life is associated with the sea and the sustainability of the marine environment should ensure the sustainability of the sources of your livelihoods. There are some of you who practices fishing as a primary source of livelihood and if restriction is imposed on fishing in a certain area, there can be expected negative impacts on this group more than the others. Although there is a possible public benefit, there should be a mechanism of grievance and mitigation of the impact on the affected group. Here we are talking about two directions. The first one is between yourselves each other and your local management and the second one is between you and the project. In both directions grievances will be raised, disagreements will be avoided and any negative impacts will be addressed by adoption of laws and the prevailing tribal customs which the project will not interfere to change or hinder.

In general, complaints will be looked into and resolved at the lowest possible level (the village) and the Omdah will be the reference. Disputes will be taken to the next higher level only when it is proven that the problem cannot be resolved at the lowest level. Also, it is preferred that resolving of conflicts to take place immediately without delay. However, where complaints cannot be resolved, the affected person, has the right to file his/her grievance to the official administration or the appropriate judicial body stipulated in the relevant national legislation.

Resolution of disputes and the mechanism of complaints at the simple level can be managed by the Beja Majlis (council) to address conflicts resulting from different reasons, and the project could be involved in the Majlis on issues related to the project, where the first focal point is the national coordinator National, who will be closer to the local community and interacted with it continuously through the Omdah. The National Coordinator will support what is reached to in the Majlis, in coordination with the local authorities as well as with the support of the PCU in PERSGA.

The concept of the marine customary law (marine silif), which is based on the existing customary law of Baja, can be very useful for the Beja communities that depend on marine resources for their livelihood. By doing so, they will be able to formalize the existing rules and practices of the silif, related to the use and management of marine resources, and the allocation and ownership of these resources and bring them in line with regulations that will be developed for the protected area. This customary law can be placed at the heart of the planning processes of the environmental management of the protected area and formalize it by linking to the State laws, Sudan federal laws and the rules and regulations related to the general management of marine protected areas.

On the other hand, conflicts arise often as result of differences in perceptions or understanding. For that, a proactive approach will be adopted in an attempt to avoid conflicts before they commence; this includes:

- a- Dissemination and disclosure of basic information and details of the project as widely as possible.
- b- Clarify the eligibility criteria for assistance and clarify the duties and responsibilities of all stakeholders.
- c- Training the local community to conserve the environment and building the capacities in relation to the value of protected areas, the threats imposed on and the options provided by and the mitigation of their impacts.

These implementation arrangements were put in the document of the project Process Framework, and it is important for us that you be aware and familiar with the management patterns that will be implemented to ensure the effectiveness of mitigation measures of affected people. Also, it is important to us to make clear the roles of stakeholders in undertaking measures of grievance and equitable access for every individual/household as well as ways of involving you in monitoring and implementation. To ensure an active role for the local stakeholders during the implementation process, the project can enhance the capacities of the existing community organizations, such as the village development committees, fishermen cooperatives, women's cooperatives and particularly women practicing fishing.

Audience were asked; are the mechanisms of conflict resolution and grievance clear to them?

They replied “Yes”

As well they were asked whether they agree to that or they have another opinion.

Agree, they replied

Ideas of Alternative Sources of Income

Some possible livelihood alternatives have been mentioned within the project, and notification was made on the need for the participation of all, the youth and women to think about this matter. Emphasis was made that the ideas must be applicable, in terms of feasibility/viability and their environmental and social impacts; as well, ideas will be subject to environmental and social studying prior implementation. Activities such as fish processing (cleaning and packaging), manufacturing of fishing nets, training young men and women on tour guiding for eco-tourism and on cultural diversity as a attracting element to tourism and working as guards in the protected area.

Additional discussion took place through which the audience identified additional suggested livelihood activities.

Disclosure of documents

It was agreed with the community the best place preferred fro the documents to be disclosed

