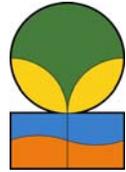




Egyptian Environmental Policy Program
Egyptian Environmental Affairs Agency
Tourism Development Authority
Red Sea Governorate
U.S. Agency for International Development



**Red Sea Sustainable Development –
Nature and Culture-Based Tourism Sub-Component**

D E L I V E R A B L E N o . 6

**Nature and Culture Based Tourism (NCT) Activities
Baseline Study Report**

March 2004



International Resources Group and partners:

Winrock International
PA Government Services, Inc.
Development Alternatives, Inc.
Environmental Quality International
Capacity Building International

September 2004



Egyptian Environmental Policy Program

**Red Sea Sustainable Development And Improved Water Resources
Management**

**RED SEA SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT/NATURE AND CULTURE-BASED
TOURISM**

**Nature and Culture Based Tourism (NCT) Activities
Baseline Study Report**

March 2004

**Prepared for
U.S. Agency for International Development - Cairo
Ministry of Water Resources and Irrigation
Ministry of State for the Environment
Tourism Development Authority
Red Sea Governorate**

by

**Environmental Quality International
and International Resources Group**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Background	1
1.2 Context	2
1.3 Objectives	2
1.4 Methodology	2
CHAPTER TWO: FINDINGS	4
2.1 Red Sea Governorate: Background	4
2.1.1 Location	4
2.1.2 Population and Demography	4
2.2. Local Communities in the Study Area	7
2.2.1 Marsa Alam	7
2.2.2 - Shalateen	11
2.3 Prevailing Economic Activities	12
2.3.1 Herding	13
2.3.2 Fishing	13
2.3.3 Agriculture	15
2.3.4 Handicrafts	15
2.3.5 Trading	17
2.3.6 Tourism	18
2.3.7 Mining	22
2.4. Institutional Context in Marsa Alam and Shalateen	22
2.4.1 Governmental Institutions	22
2.4.2 Civil Society Institutions	24
2.4.3 Financial Institutions	28
CHAPTER THREE: CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS	29
3.1 Conclusion	29
3.2 Recommendations	30
REFERENCES	31

TABLE OF TABLES

Table 1: Population of the Red Sea Governorate	6
Table 2: Workforce in the Red Sea Governorate by Employment Status	7
Table 3: Animal Production in 2002	13
Table 4: Arable Land in 2002	14

TABLE OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Education Status in the Red Sea Governorate	6
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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Over the last decade the traditional concept of 'fences and fines' in the management of natural resources and protected areas has been increasingly viewed as unsuccessful¹. This is attributed to its inability to conserve biodiversity and the health of the ecosystem. Moreover, it dispossesses traditional peoples of their lands, resources, and lifestyles.

The 'new conservation' approach argues that if the cultural identity and the lifestyle of local communities is lost, their indigenous knowledge will eventually disappear, which will detract from their respect for nature and understanding of the natural environment and its processes. The way forward - according to this approach - revolves around three arguments.² The first contends that since the indigenous technical knowledge of local communities reveals a sophisticated understanding of environmental processes, natural resource management should move from being a state-centric activity to being more society-based.

The second argument challenges the idea of conservation as preservation in favor of the notion of sustainable development in which both conservation and development goals are achieved at the same time. Hulme and Murphree (1999) argue that 'No longer do things that are to be conserved (species, habitats or biodiversity) have to be automatically set aside: rather, they can be viewed as renewable natural resources that can be utilized as long as that does not compromise sustainability'.³ The Brundtland Report (1987) cautions that it is both futile and an insult to the poor to tell them that they must remain in poverty to protect the environment'.⁴

The third argument lies in the neo-liberal economic thinking that argues that free market processes give individuals the greatest freedom in choosing what natural resources are used and how. If local communities have a sense of ownership of their natural resources, they will place high economic value on what is considered unique and scarce, since the security of their livelihood is based on the sustainable utilization of these resources.

Empirical evidence from the developing world shows the merits that can be gained from the adoption of 'new conservation' and 'community-based natural resource management' and their relation to eco-tourism. Eco-tourism – defined by the International Eco-Tourism Society as "*responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and sustains the well being of local people*" - can play an important role in creating new jobs in remote regions that have not benefited as much as the more populated areas from economic development programs. In addition, eco-tourism can increase the political and financial support needed to preserve biodiversity, maintain watersheds, and so on. Involving local communities in eco-tourism is portrayed as an excellent opportunity through which the merits of 'new conservation' can be realized. However, there are some who suggest that careful consideration both in theory and practice should be given to issues of governance, including the roles and relationships of the state, of society (of which communities are an integral part), and of markets.

¹ Brandon, K.E. and Wells, M. (1992). "Planning for people and parks: design dilemmas"

² Hulme, D., and Murphree, M. (1999) "Communities, wildlife and the new conservation in Africa"

³ Ibid, 1999.

⁴ World Commission on Environment and Development (1987).

1.2 Context

This baseline study has been undertaken as part of an effort to identify activities and types of nature and culture-based tourism projects that are both economically feasible and environmentally sustainable in the southern Red Sea zone of Egypt, and to develop a number of pilot activities and loan facilities that might be expanded in the context of a future USAID follow on project to the Egyptian Environmental Policy Program (EPPP). The project aims to involve and encourage local communities in business activities that relate to the eco-tourism sector by providing them with access to small-scale eco-tourism loans. The initiative is anticipated to promote a proper appreciation of the natural and cultural heritage of these communities, and in turn, to foster its conservation. The project intends to encourage local communities to use their indigenous knowledge and skills to come up with their own business initiatives. In addition, it will provide local communities with financial and non-financial services to acquire the business setup needed to provide quality goods or services to tourists seeking a nature and culture-based eco-tourism experience. By providing a unique and memorable travel experience, both the community's livelihood and Egypt's revenues from the tourism industry will be enhanced.

1.3 Objectives

The objectives of this baseline study are to:

1. Identify and evaluate the traditional skills of marginalized Bedouin communities in the southern Red Sea zone (the area under the mandate of the Marsa Alam and Shalateen councils), and to assess their willingness to participate in the project.
2. Identify existing and potential NCT small-scale eco-tourism activities such as those related to community-based tourism.
3. Assess the adequacy of the available institutional infrastructure for the implementation of a small-scale eco-tourism loans program. This entails the identification of regional NGOs operating in the Red Sea area as a whole, local CDAs, and governmental institutions that might qualify for participation in the project, their scope of operations, and geographic jurisdiction, as well as an evaluation of their present capability and experience.
4. Identify training, institutional capacity building and public awareness requirements for the successful implementation of a small-scale eco-tourism development scheme.

1.4 Methodology

The research team consisted of senior socioeconomic researchers, a small-scale handicraft marketing specialist, a community development specialist and a poverty lending specialist. The research methodology included both a literature review and field research.

Secondary sources providing specific information on the area were found to be scarce, and most of the available literature outdated. Despite the recent establishment of the information center in the Red Sea governorate, accurate and updated information was lacking. Within these limitations, a desktop review of the available anthropogenic and

sociological literature on tribes residing in the Marsa Alam and Shalateen area was undertaken to investigate their ethnic origins, cultural heritage and economic activities. Also reviewed were different narratives on the management and conservation of natural resources and the role of indigenous knowledge in their protection, as well as the extent to which eco-tourism activities promote environmental sustainability and the socioeconomic well being of populations residing in proximity to conserved areas. Recent demographic statistics on the tribal populations and their employment status, as well as structural constraints to the physical and economic development of the study area were accessed through the Central Authority for Public Mobilization and Statistics (CAPMAS) and the Information Center in Hurghada.

It is widely recognized in the literature on field methods in development studies that qualitative methods are often more appropriate for capturing the social and institutional context than quantitative methods. Accordingly, the research methodology used to carry out the baseline investigation combined semi-structured individual interviews with focus group discussions.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the Executive Board of prominent non-governmental organizations (NGOs) operating at regional level throughout the Red Sea governorate, and community development associations (CDAs) located in Marsa Alam, Sheikh Shazly, and Shalateen. The interviews were carried out with the aim of identifying the objectives and activities of the regional NGOs and local CDAs, and determining the extent to which they address the needs and priorities of the local communities they serve. In particular, the interviews aimed to assess the experience of the regional NGOs/local CDAs in managing micro-finance schemes, their willingness to participate in the project, their institutional capacity, and their technical and/or financial assistance needs.

Interviews were also conducted with key informants at the Ministry of Social Affairs, managers and rangers at the Protectorate Offices in Hurghada, Safaga, Qusseir, Marsa Alam and Shalateen, and civil servants at the City Council, Local Units, and Development Departments in the governorate. Supervisors of the Productive Families Units for handicraft activities were also interviewed. One of the main purposes of these interviews was to assess the relevance of the project and solicit their feedback regarding its implementation, including factors that might impact project performance, and suggestions for overcoming constraints.

Focus groups discussions were conducted with members of the local communities. Questions were prepared beforehand, to guide the discussions. During the discussions, participants were encouraged to openly voice their opinions. The data gathered from these discussions focused on assessing the involvement of these communities in eco-tourism activities, as well as their interest and willingness to enroll in an eco-loans scheme. In addition, the discussions assisted the research team in triangulating the data gathered from the interviews conducted with the key informants in the governmental and non-governmental institutions. In addition to the focus groups, case studies were carried out with selected members of the community when deemed necessary to add further depth to the information gathered during the baseline. Because of the local cultural environment, discussions with men and women occurred separately. A female researcher from the team undertook semi-structured interviews or focus groups to capture the perceptions of women.

CHAPTER 2: FINDINGS

2.1 Red Sea Governorate: Background

2.1.1 Location

The Eastern desert comprises about one-fourth of the total land surface of Egypt, covering an area of about 85,690 square miles. Adjacent to that, the Red Sea coast stretches 1151 km from the Sinai Peninsula in the north to Bab El Mandab in the south. The main cities along the coast are Hurghada, the capital of the Red Sea governorate, Ras Ghareb, north of Hurghada, and Safaga, Qusseir, Marsa Alam and Shalateen, south of the capital. The governorate is accessible through two international airports, one in Hurghada and another in Marsa Alam. The Government of Egypt (GOE) has also made improvements to highways and roads linking the major towns and cities.

2.1.2 Population and Demography

The population of the South Red Sea Zone is made up of Ababda and Bisharin, as well as new settlers from the Nile Valley. While all communities along the coast are from the Ababda tribe, the Bisharin are located only in Shalateen and Abu Ramad. The Ababda, along with their neighbors, the Bisharin, are among five Bedouin sub-tribes⁵ that make up today's main modern Beja tribe⁶. The Beja tribes are the descendents of the ancient inhabitants of that area that extends from the western shore of the Red Sea in Egypt and down to the Sudan and Eritrea. The Beja tribes lead a nomadic life that is probably very similar to the one their ancestors lived 1000 years ago⁷. They are best known for their camel and goat herding activities.

The first recordings of the Beja are found in Egyptian monuments and date back to 3000 BC. The Beja were known to the Ancient Egyptians as the Blemmyes⁸. The Beja territory is said to have contained gold and emerald mines⁹ and was therefore of strategic importance to the Ancient Egyptians, for whom the Beja became meat providers, trading their cattle in return for other goods. They also served as mercenaries in armies, were designated the protectors of the gold mines, and secured desert routes to quarries and port facilities of the Red Sea trade with Punt¹⁰. However, the Beja probably existed before dynastic Egypt and records tell of a small empire established sometime between 300 BC and 600 AD¹¹. The languages spoken by the Beja are To Bedawie (or TaBedawie) and Tigre. The former language is spoken by the majority of the Beja and is a Cushitic language, which is not written. It is therefore, a language without recorded literature¹².

⁵ The other Beja tribes are the Hadendowa, the Amarar and the Beni Amir (Kosc, 2001)

⁶ The population of the Beja tribes is approximately 2 million, distributed over Egypt, the Sudan, and Eritrea.

⁷ Zbigniew Kosc, 2001 "The Ababda Bedouins of the Eastern Desert".

⁸ (H.A. Mac Michael, 1967, "A History of the Arabs in the Sudan, Zbigniew Kosc, 2001 "The Ababda Bedouins of the Eastern Desert" & Geoproductions website.

⁹ Zbigniew Kosc, 2001 "The Ababda Bedouins of the Eastern Desert".

¹⁰ Geoproductions website.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Zbigniew Kosc, 2001 "The Ababda Bedouins of the Eastern Desert".



Member of the Bishari tribe

Today, the Red Sea governorate constitutes a distinct geomorphologic region occupying about 119 thousand km², of which 71 km² is inhabited. The population of the Red Sea governorate is estimated at around 191,923 inhabitants, constituting less than 0.5 percent of Egypt's entire population. In recent years, however, the Red Sea governorate has been the only governorate in the south of Egypt to attract new settlers. Its share of internal migration is estimated at 9.7%. It is anticipated that this pattern of internal migration will continue in the coming years and will contribute to a shift in the conventional pattern of migration that takes place from Upper Egypt to the North, diverting it increasingly towards the East (Sinai and the Red Sea governorate).

Table 1 shows the total population of the governorate, categorized by administrative centers and urban/ rural residence. From the table it is evident that in 1996 the populations residing in Ras Ghareb, Hurghada, Safaga and Qusseir were predominantly urban, while the populations of Marsa Alam and Shalateen were more evenly distributed among urban and rural areas.

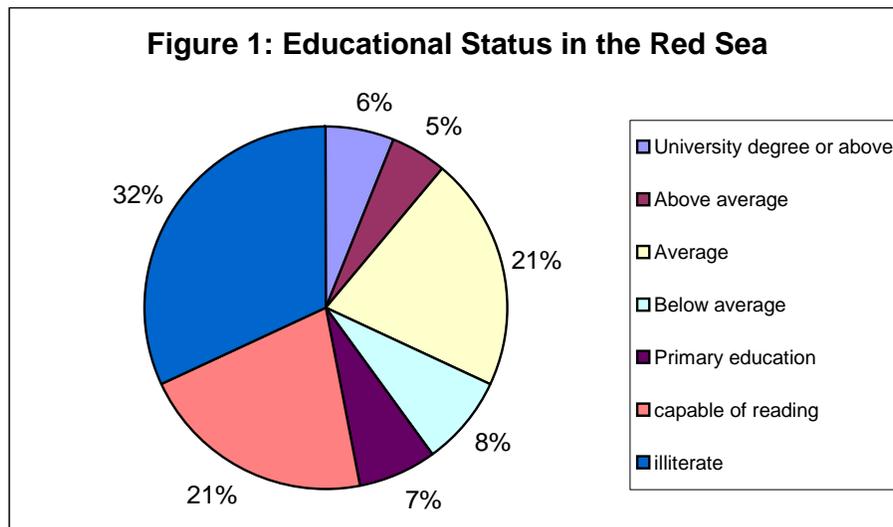
In 2003, the same patterns continued with the exception of Marsa Alam, where the size of the population residing in urban areas increased noticeably, while the population in rural areas decreased slightly. This can be attributed to the tourist industry, which has started to boom in Marsa Alam in the last few years.

Table 1: Population of the Red Sea Governorate

Administrative Center	1996			2003		
	Urban	Rural	Total	Urban	Rural	Total
Ras Ghareb	27433	1003	28436	33467	1224	34691
Hurghada	60085	---	60085	73329	---	73329
Safaga	23507	3205	26712	28679	3901	32580
Qusseir	20472	7146	27618	24972	8716	33688
Marsa Alam	1646	1736	3382	2457	1670	4127
Shalateen	5078	6004	11082	6197	7311	13508
Total	138221	19094	157315	169101	22822	191923

Source: Information and Decision Making Support Center, Hurghada (2004)

The number of schools, hospitals, and recreational/ cultural centers in the governorate are inadequate. This is mainly due to insufficient municipal funding.¹³ Illiteracy rates in the governorate are very high (see Figure 1 below), especially among women.¹⁴



Source: Information and Decision Making Support Center, Hurghada (2004)

The unemployment rate among males has risen over the last few years, but is still relatively low, at around 4%. The unemployment rate among females is much higher, at around 15%. It must be noted, however, that casual laborers constitute 80% of the male workforce and of the female workforce. (See Table 2)

¹³ Source: The Red Sea Governorate 15 –year Plan, 2002.

¹⁴ Ibid, 2002

Table 2: Workforce in the Red Sea Governorate by Employment Status

Gender	Business Owner	Self Employed	Casual Laborer	Voluntary worker	Unemployed	Recently Unemployed	Total
Male	1621 (2.69%)	7552 (12.54%)	48667 (80.83%)	42 (0.07%)	286 (0.47%)	2144 (3.56%)	60212
Female	48 (0.70%)	130 (1.91%)	5606 (82.25%)	1 (0.01%)	75 (1.10%)	956 (14.03%)	6816
Total	1669	7682	54173	43	361	3100	67028

Source: Information and Decision Making Support Center, Hurghada (2004)

2.2. Local Communities in the Study Area

The Red Sea governorate is divided administratively into the six City Councils of Ras Ghareb, Hurghada, Qusseir, Safaga, Marsa Alam and Shalateen. The geographical scope of this study is limited to the administrative centers of Marsa Alam and Shalateen. Several communities along the coast and inland fall within the jurisdiction of these two administrative centers.

2.2.1 Marsa Alam

Marsa Alam is a small town located 270 km south of Hurghada and 130 km south of Qusseir. It is situated on the T-junction that connects Edfu (in the Nile Valley, 220 km west of Marsa Alam) to the Red Sea coast. Marsa Alam can be considered a promising tourist destination because of its pristine beaches and marine ecosystems that are unique to the Red Sea, and because of the many ancient heritage sites located further south of the city.¹⁵ Scattered along the southern coast of Marsa Alam are numerous hotels and tourist resorts that are attracting a growing number of tourists, especially since the establishment of Marsa Alam airport, north of the city.

The total population of Marsa Alam is approximately 4000. About 90% of the population is Ababda, while the rest are new settlers from the Nile Valley. The majority of the population is engaged in brokerage, mining, fishing, herding and trading. Positions in the civil service and the tourism industry tend to be dominated by new settlers. Mr. Mohamed Salem, the Director of the Social Affairs Unit in Marsa Alam, mentioned that 'less than 5% of the Ababda are formally employed by the tourism industry. This is mainly attributed to their weak educational background and their nomadic culture, which has not accustomed them to long working hours and to discipline'.

¹⁵ Guidelines for Ecotourism Development in the Deep Range of the Red Sea Region, 2003, Red Sea Sustainable Tourism Initiative (RSSTI).

Marsa Alam houses one functional hospital and another under construction, in addition to primary, preparatory and secondary schools for both boys and girls, an Azhar school for boys and girls in their primary and secondary years, a Social Unit, a Registry office, a health unit, a post office and a CDA. The CDA runs two children's nurseries, a social club, a women's club and a children's club. Transportation facilities between Marsa Alam and most of the other cities, towns or communities are available in the form of minibuses and or coaches.¹⁶ There are no formal and regular transportation facilities to Sheikh Shazly, however, which is one of the constraints faced by the local communities. A desalination plant supplies the community with potable water. Electricity is also available.

Marsa Alam is divided administratively into two main local units, namely Berenice and Sheikh Shazly.

a. Berenice

Berenice is situated on a highway 110 km south of Marsa Alam. Named by Ptolemy II, this ancient trading port (275 BC) hosts some of the country's Roman treasures. Remains of the Semiramis Temple are situated near the modern town. The landscape of Berenice, with its blue lagoons, rich marine life and unspoilt bays, is among the most breathtaking in the Red Sea area. Situated offshore is the island of Zabargad, which is famous for olivine - a semi-precious stone - and has been a source of mining since 1500 BC. The coast, on the other hand, is covered with mangrove swamps.



Mangrove swamps in Berenice

¹⁶ The Upper Egypt Company for Transportation and Tourism operates the coaches, while the minibuses are privately owned.

About 170 – 180 families (approximately 900 individuals) make up the community of Berenice. The majority of the inhabitants (about 80%) are herders, while the rest of the population depends on fishing for a living. Berenice boasts a primary school and a preparatory school, a local unit, a first aid center, a weaving center for girls, and a military airport. A generator supplies the town with electricity.

Several communities fall within the geographic scope of the Berenice Local Unit. These are listed below in order of proximity to Marsa Alam.

i- Awlad Baraka

The community of Awlad Baraka lives 14 km south of the town of Marsa Alam. It is made up of 32 families (about 120 individuals) who rely mostly on fishing for a living. Because of their proximity to some of the tourist camps, about 40% of the inhabitants are employed in tourism - as cleaners, boat guides, or sailors. Animal husbandry is practiced on a small scale, for family consumption purposes. The neighboring tourist camp supplies the community with electricity.

ii- Wadi El Gimal

Wadi El Gimal, which is inhabited by a community of about 15 families (about 90 individuals), lies around 55 km south of Marsa Alam. Because of its wildlife and abundant mangroves, Wadi El Gimal has been declared a Protectorate. The nearby Shams Alam resort employs about 30% of the community as gardeners, housekeepers and guards. The rest of the inhabitants are fishermen. Electricity is provided by Shams Alam resort.

iii- Abu Ghessoun

Situated 80 km south of Marsa Alam, Abu Ghessoun is inhabited by a relatively large population of about 1200 persons, approximately 150 of whom are settlers from other parts of Egypt. The Phosphates Company and the civil service employ about 20% of the workforce, while the majority of the population (around 80%) is involved in either fishing or herding activities. Abu Ghessoun houses two co-educational schools, a primary school, and a preparatory school. It also has a youth center, a first-aid center and a health unit. Most houses are wooden shacks. A very limited number of concrete houses have been provided by the state as part of a settlement program, in accordance with family needs and size. The Phosphates Company and the City Council supply electricity to the community. There is also a port at Abu Ghessoun that belongs to the Phosphates Company.

iv- Hamata

Hamata, which is made up of about 65 families (or 320 individuals), lies 110 km south of Marsa Alam. The majority of the workforce is engaged in either herding or fishing, while about 20% are engaged in tourism-related activities. There are two schools - a primary and preparatory school – in Hamata, as well as a children’s nursery and a first-aid center. Hamata also houses the Local Unit of the village of Berenice. An electricity generator and a water desalination plant supply the community with electricity and potable water respectively.

v- Ras Benas

The fishing community of Ras Benas is situated 180 km south of Marsa Alam, 50 km of which are off the paved road further along the coast. No facilities are available to its 60 families. Children in Ras Benas do not have access to their own schools, and the nearest health facility is in Hamata, 70 km further north. The Hamata Local Council transports water to Ras Benas. A generator is available, but it is out of order much of the time.

vi- Manazik

Located along the coast 165 km south of Marsa Alam, Manazik is home to a small fishing community of about 30 – 40 families (approximately 200 individuals). Animal breeding is practiced on a small scale, for household consumption purposes only. The community of Manazik lacks basic services. There are no schools and no health facilities. Health care can be obtained at the first-aid center in Berenice. Water is transported from Hamata. A small generator, on the other hand, supplies the community with electricity.

b. Sheikh Shazly

Sheikh Shazly lies 150 km southwest of Marsa Alam. Together with its satellite conglomerations, Sheikh Shazly is home to a relatively large community of about 250 families (approximately 1400 individuals). There are numerous service facilities within Sheikh Shazly, including a primary and preparatory school, a Social Unit, a Local Unit, a CDA, a Mother and Child Health Unit, a nursery, a children's club, a women's club, a police station and a hospital. About 80% of the community lives in concrete houses provided by the state, while the rest of the community lives in shacks.



Local Communities in Sheikh Shazly

The inhabitants of Sheikh Shazly are mainly herders, many of whom also engage in trading. The traders rely on the seasonal marketing of their goods during the community's numerous religious festivities, which bring in visitors from all over the

country¹⁷. The main celebrations take place during the Kurban Bairam Feast. Sheikh Shazly, however, receives visitors at other times of the year.

The following communities exist within the jurisdiction of the Sheikh Shazly Local Unit:

i- Sheikh Sidi Salem

Sheikh Salem lies 40 km west of Marsa Alam on the road junction to Edfu. It comprises a small community of herders made up of about 25 families (approximately 120 individuals). The only facilities available to the community are a first-aid center and a generator. The Local Council transports water from Marsa Alam. Sheikh Sidi Salem houses the mosque and shrine of Sidi Salem, which, unlike the Sheikh Shazly shrine, only draws local visitors from the neighboring communities.

ii- Hafafeet

The community of Hafafeet is made up of about sixty scattered families residing along the road between Sheikh Shazly village and Sheikh Salem village. The Hafafeet are mainly herders, and therefore move continuously between grazing grounds. As a result, they have no access to educational or health services, or to electricity. Water is transported from Sheikh Shazly. The shrine of Om Ghanam is located in Hafafeet and is visited annually by local Bedouins.

2.2.2 Shalateen

Shalateen is located 250 km south of Marsa Alam. Together, Shalateen, Abu Ramad and Halayeb are home to approximately 30,000 inhabitants¹⁸. The population of Shalateen is made up of Ababda and Bisharin, as well as some Rashayda (migrants from the Sudan but whose ancestors were from the Arabian Peninsula) and some settlers from the Nile Valley. The majority of the Ababda and Bisharin are either herders or work as traders in the Shalateen market. While some of the Ababda and Bisharin are involved in fishing, new settlers from the Nile Delta, especially those who have experience in fishing, dominate this activity.

The Rashayda live on the southern outskirts of Shalateen and are restricted to geographic boundaries since they do not possess Egyptian citizenry. It is worth noting that while the Ababda and Bisharin are mainly herders, the Rashayda are known to be skilled traders, running prosperous camel trade and money exchange businesses. In addition, the Rashayda women produce beaded work of notable quality.

The Shalateen market is a hub of trade-related activity, and the camel market, in particular, is a principal tourist attraction. Most merchants are from the Sudan, different governorates in Egypt, and the more prosperous local Bedouins.

¹⁷ The holy shrine of Sheikh El Shazly is located in the area.

¹⁸ This estimate was cited by the General Mostafa El Serafy, the Local Unit Head, and is based on the rations provided by the Unit to the local Bedouins.



The camel market in Shalateen

As part of its settlement plan for Bedouins in Shalateen, concrete houses have been provided by the state. So far, however, only a limited number of houses have been built, and they are dispersed over a portion of the city. The majority of the population still lives in wooden shacks made of sheets of compressed wood, while a smaller number of Bedouins, particularly those living in the mountains further inland, live in shacks made of timber.

Public amenities in Shalateen include electricity, a desalination plant providing water to the community and transportation in the form of privately owned minibuses. There are primary, preparatory and secondary schools in Shalateen as well as an Azhar Institute for all school levels. Social facilities are provided through the local CDA, which has a youth club, a children's club, a women's club and a senior citizen's club. An independent Youth and Sports Club is also found in Shalateen.

Shalateen council oversees five local units: Marsa Hemeira, Abrak, Ras Hadarba, Abu Ramad and Halayeb. Only Marsa Hemeira falls within the geographic scope of this study.

Marsa Hemeira, which is located 220 km south of Marsa Alam, is a satellite of the mother village of El Gahiliya in Shalateen. About 40 households reside in Marsa Hemeira, which encompasses a primary school, a Social Unit, a Local Unit, a first-aid center, an electricity generator and a water desalination plant. There is also a well in Marsa Hemeira where water is sold. Economic activities in Marsa Hemeira focus on herding and fishing.

2.3 Prevailing Economic Activities

The Bedouin communities in the study area rely on herding and fishing as their main sources of livelihood. While most of the communities along the coast are engaged in fishing and to a lesser extent in herding, those deep-range communities located further

inland are exclusively herders. Fishing and herding are not restricted to men alone. Women engage in shoreline fishing and herding as well.

2.3.1 Herding

Most members of the local communities are shepherds and goatherds. Some of them also raise camels. Because of the drought over the past seven years, some families travel with their herds as far south as Shalateen in search of suitable grazing land.

Table 3: Animal Production during 2002

Administrative Center	Animal production (In Tons)
Ras Ghareb	383
Hurghada	464
Safaga	132
Qusseir	282
Marsa Alam	587
Shalateen	1078
Total	2926

Source: Information and Decision Making Support Center, Hurghada (2004)

To make ends meet, families attempt to diversify their economic activities by engaging in charcoal production or trading as an alternative source of income-generation. However, Bedouins claim that the Protectorate law prohibiting charcoal production is often improperly implemented, since law enforcers prohibit charcoal production without carefully investigating its source. Participants in the focus group discussion said: “We never use live trees or parts of them in charcoal production. Such practices are completely against our traditions. We only collect and use dead trunks. That way we clean up our environment and make economic use of the waste”.

2.3.2 Fishing

Fishing is one of the main activities of the local communities that reside along the coast between Marsa Alam and Shalateen. Fishermen in that area face several constraints. The mushrooming of tourist resorts along the coast has limited their fishing areas, particularly for those involved in shoreline fishing. Inhabitants of other governorates have also begun to fish actively along the coast. Fishermen claim that, because of the increase in fishing activities, the fish are moving away from those areas where they used to be found in abundance.

For fishermen who work on boats in Shalateen harbor, a major constraint is the oligopoly practiced by brokers. Brokers own most of the large boats, as well as the storage and transport facilities. They collect the catch from the local communities, and transport the fish, in equipped cars, to Qusseir, Safaga and Hurghada, and further north to other governorates. Fishermen are at the mercy of the brokers, who determine the selling price. Prices range from L.E. 4-6 per kilo, when their real worth is about L.E. 10. The merchants or their brokers provide the fishermen with a down payment of around LE 200 to LE 300 to cover the expenses of their trip and to allow them to support their families financially during their absence. It is unusual for brokers to still owe money to the fishermen even if the latter return with a good catch. This keeps the fishermen constantly in debt. Fishermen lack the necessary storage and transport

facilities that would help them break this oligopoly and start earning a profit from their activity.



Shalateen harbor

Yet another constraint is the relatively high price of motors, which can range from L.E. 5000 to L.E. 15,000 depending on the size of the boat. Because they cannot afford to buy a motor on their own, small groups of fishermen generally pitch in to buy a single motor. The fishermen interviewed said that loans were not an option, because fishing is a seasonal activity restricted to periods of good weather (usually June to September), and they cannot guarantee a regular yield that would allow them to pay the installments.



Fishermen in Sharm El Luli

A decree issued in January 2004 prohibited the use of tightly woven nets traditionally used by fishermen because they trap the progeny of different species of fish, thereby damaging the marine ecosystem. The decree also prohibits other fishing malpractices such as leaving the nets in the water for a long enough time to cause the suffocation of sea species like turtles or dolphins that may get entangled. As a result, 75 of the 200 boats in Shalateen harbor have been halted from fishing, since their boats are not designed to use alternative fishing techniques.

2.3.3 Agriculture

Agricultural activities are almost non-existent in the southern Red Sea zone when compared to other administrative districts in the north zone (see Table 4). According to the Head of the Shalateen Social Unit, however, a development program funded and administered by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) has recently been launched with the aim of introducing the local communities to agricultural activities through the provision of wells, farming supplies and equipment.

The Head of the Local Council in Shalateen added: “We are placing a great deal of hope on the success of the project as it can enhance the local communities livelihoods. However, we are skeptical about the acceptability of the project by the local communities. The project aims at settling the Bedouins and changing their livelihood strategies from herding to agriculture, which is completely alien to their nomadic nature.”

Table 4: Arable Land in 2002

Administrative Center	Arable Land (in feddans)
Ras Ghareb	417
Hurghada	70
Safaga	12
Qusseir	---
Marsa Alam	---
Shalateen	---
Total	499

Source: Information and Decision Making Support Center, Hurghada (2004)

2.3.4 Handicrafts

The main handicrafts in the study area are woven rugs, leather bags, and beaded jewelry. They are produced by women alongside their fishing or herding activities, mostly for household use.

Goats, sheep, and the carcasses of animals provide the women, particularly those in herding communities, with reasonable access to raw materials such as wool and leather that is sufficient for household use or limited production for their local use. Other types of raw materials, such as yarn to make rugs, and beads to make ornamental items, need to be purchased. This usually entails a trip to Edfu or Shalateen, which adds to the initial cost.



Jewelry made of beads

Little attempt has been made to develop handicraft production into an income generating activity. This is mainly due to the fact that, other than tourist resorts, which are not in close proximity to many of the communities, there are very few marketing outlets for these products. The communities of Kulaan and Hamata are an exception. The picturesque landscape of Kulaan attracts many tourists, while in Hamata, kiosks along the road sell handicrafts as well as beverages and foodstuff.



Leather bag in Shalateen market

When the idea of a loans program was introduced, some of the women expressed a preference for loans in cash, while others said they would prefer to be supplied with raw materials. All of them, however, agreed that before they could even contemplate participating in a credit program they would need to be certain that there was a market for their products.

Tent Production in Berenice

Women in Berenice are particularly gifted at producing natural wool tents decorated with leather. Their skills have nearly disappeared from the southern region of the Red Sea governorate. In a focus group discussion, a number of women who are involved in tent making in Berenice explained the difficulties of producing tents as a business: “Tents are very expensive for the local communities when compared to the price of wooden shacks, and the quality of the tents is not suitable for the tourist market. In any case, we do not have access to the tourist market.”

Although tents are currently being produced using very limited technology and with little knowledge of market needs, the activity has good commercial potential. However, for that potential to be realized, four requirements would need to be satisfied: the producers would need to have access to better quality raw materials; basic machinery and tools would need to be introduced to ensure time efficiency and improve the quality of the products; a quality control system would need to be put in place to ensure compliance with minimum quality standards; and links would need to be established with potential buyers prior to production in order to guarantee sales at both the local and national levels.

Once the market links have been established, women will be eager to start producing. Accordingly, a micro finance system would need to be put in place to allow the women to access the necessary input. The methodology of the lending mechanism could vary, depending on the mechanics of production.

The women in the focus group said: “Three of us can work together on one tent. If we were to work five days a week, we could finish a 6m² tent [could accommodate four people] in forty days. The average price of the tent would range from L.E. 2800 to L.E. 3200 depending on the quality of the raw materials used and the finishing”

Reviving the tent-making skills of the community would engage them in an environmentally sensitive income-generating activity. Since tent making is a labor-intensive activity, this would guarantee that many households would benefit. The head of Hamata village asserted that the women of Berenice are hard working, live up to their commitments, and are highly responsible.

2.3.5 Trading

The larger towns of Marsa Alam, Sheikh Shazly and Shalateen offer dynamic markets where traders can sell their goods. Outside of these cities, however, few marketing opportunities exist for locally produced goods and services.

Camel and sheep trading constitute the main trading activities in the southern Red Sea zone. A significant proportion of the financial transactions take place at the camel market in Shalateen, where camels are sold at L.E. 3000 – L.E. 5000 depending on their age

and general condition. The Ababda and Bisharin, who used to control the camel markets at Daraw, north of Aswan, are known to breed the best camels in the world ¹⁹.

Medicinal herbs and spices constitute another major trading activity. Most of the herbs and spices are ground and imported from the Sudan, but some of the local communities are involved in the collection and processing of these herbs. The Shalateen and Sheikh Shazly markets are noted for their herbs and spices and their medicinal variants.



Herbal medicine shop in Shalateen

Wild plants that grow in the desert are of considerable economic importance to the Bedouins, providing them with food, health, shelter, protection and recreation. A host of medicinal plants were on display at the market in Shalateen, including *Hamdar* for rheumatic pains, *Mashba* for skin or chest allergies, *Arak* for urinary tract afflictions, *Hargal* for kidney problems and *Al Yosr* for headaches, to mention a few. These same herbs were found repeatedly in the Bedouin camp bazaars located in Hurghada in the northern Red Sea zone.

2.3.6 Tourism

An estimate of the number of hotels in the South Red Sea Zone in 2004 yielded the following figures:

- 5 five-star hotels and resorts with a capacity of 1362 rooms and 2528 beds
- 2 four-star hotels and resorts accounting for 390 rooms and 790 beds
- 12 resorts still pending evaluation by the Ministry of Tourism, providing 1069 rooms and 1837 beds

The findings revealed that there are 2337 Egyptians employed in tourist resorts in Marsa Alam and the South Red Sea Zone.²⁰ No data is available, however, on the number of local inhabitants actually employed in the industry.²¹

¹⁹ Janet Starkey, 1989, "Perceptions of the Ababda and Bisharin in the Atbai" & Zbigniew Kosci. 2001, "The Ababda- Bedouins of the Eastern Desert".

Although tourism is considered to be the driving economic activity in the governorate, the increase in tourism developments has not been paralleled with an increase in employment opportunities. The hotels employ a very limited number of locals, who fill menial positions. According to one of the hotel managers interviewed, the members of the local community do not qualify for other positions because they do not have the necessary educational level, language skills and work experience. He said that, aside from the fact that it would not be cost-effective to hire members of the local community given the training required to qualify them for more skilled positions, they themselves are not willing to work in areas other than those that make use of their traditional skills.

It is widely recognized that the wealth of Bedouin traditions and knowledge can be lost to the processes of sedentarization and the commercialization of desert land as a result of conventional tourism developments. Eco-tourism, on the other hand, can contribute to preserving the indigenous knowledge of local communities and to enhancing their well being²². The current situation, however, as witnessed by the research team, indicates that the tourism industry has not invested enough in creating partnerships with the local communities and promoting eco-tourism principles, which would derive maximum benefit from the cultural heritage, indigenous knowledge and unique surroundings of the area. Members of the local community claim that minimal attempt is being made to involve them in eco-tourism activities or to allow them to benefit from the increase of tourism in the region. The community of Kulaan is a case in point (see box).

²⁰ Data was collected from the Red Sea Governorate Support and Decision Making Center - Department of Information and Statistics

²¹ The vast majority of workers in this industry in Marsa Alam and the South Red Sea Zone are probably migrants from the Nile Valley

²² Donald Cole & Soraya Altorki. 1998, "Bedouin, Settlers and Holidaymakers: Egypt's Changing Northwest Coast" & Joseph Hobbs, 1989, "Bedouin Life in the Egyptian Wilderness".

The Case of Kulaan



Set against a background of crystal blue waters and sandy beaches, amidst a profuse swamp of mangroves and sparsely grown acacias, Kulaan's pristine beauty makes it a tourist attraction. Kulaan is situated around 100 km south of Marsa Alam. It is inhabited by about 16 families, who have no access to fresh water and whose main economic activity is fishing.

Tourists were first introduced to Kulaan a few years ago, when a local tour operator began bringing in groups to visit this unique spot. Since then, the influx of visitors has been steady. Every week, about 6 coaches bring tourists in from different resorts along the coast to enjoy the landscape and swim in the lagoons. They make minimal contact with the local community.

Hamdalla Saad Hamed, an inhabitant of Kulaan, believes it is essential to tap on the tourism industry to improve the community's standard of living and promote its well being. He added that efforts to promote tourism in the area should be accompanied with measures and practices that conserve the environment and the customs and traditions of the local community.

During the focus group discussion with some of the local inhabitants, they mentioned that they benefit minimally from the tourists who come to spend 2 to 3 hours in Kulaan. They said: "The *makalamaneia* [tour operators] have full control of the tourists and their interaction with our local community. We have tried to serve tea and *gabana* [traditional coffee] to the tourists but we have not been successful because the *makalamaneia* tell them not to buy from us and offer them beverages from their resorts instead."

"Our women produce beadwork to sell to tourists. The tourists rarely buy them, however, as they are told by the *makalamaneia* to avoid contact with us. The only way we benefit is when the *makalamaneia* involve our women in cleaning up the beaches used by the tourists. Our women clean up the beaches for tourists regularly but they are offered a very small gratuity, if at all. We are trying to overcome the monopoly of the *makalamaneia* but with very limited success since none of us speak the language of the tourists."

Activities that draw on the cultural heritage of the local communities, their lifestyle, food, dance and music, are almost not existent in the Southern Zone. They can be found, however, in the Bedouin stations in Hurghada, with varying degrees of success. There are currently 9 Bedouin stations in Hurghada, each supporting an average of 10 to 15 families. The research team visited four stations, namely Om Dalfa, El Ridda, Wadi

Rasheed, and Kharaz Milk, and conducted in-depth interviews with the *sheikh* (head of clan) of each station (see box).

Bedouin Stations in Hurghada

The very first Bedouin station, Om Dalfa, came into existence in 1982, to give tourists a glimpse of the Bedouin way of life and an opportunity to experience the desert. Bedouins at the station welcome their guests, offering them refreshments (water and tea) and traditionally baked bread, and singing and dancing their traditional dances 'samer' or 'debeya'. Camel and beach buggy rides are also offered at some of the stations. Common to all stations is the Bedouin market, where traditional



handicrafts such as woven rugs, beadwork, and leather products are sold, along with medicinal herbs and a variety of rocks and stones collected from the desert.

The Bedouins who own the stations are from the Maaza tribe²³. Although few Bedouins found it profitable at first to settle in a station, the economic hardship they have experienced as a result of the drought has now made living in a station a viable economic option. Bedouins who were no longer able to feed their sheep and goats have settled in these stations in search of alternative sources of income.

The sheikhs of Om Dalfa, El Ridda, Wadi Rasheed, and Kharaz Milk all feel that the Bedouins are not remunerated fairly for their work. At one point in time, the tour operators were paying the Bedouins an average of L.E. 6 per tourist. A year ago, the sheikhs got together and agreed on the price of L.E. 10 per tourist per day. However, because of the competition between the Bedouin stations, some of the stations began giving discounts to the tour operators. As a result, the agreement failed and prices plunged to a low of L.E 3 in some stations, a nominal amount compared to the 35 Euros per tourist that some tour operators charge.

Tour operators justify this difference on the grounds that they provide the tourists with transportation and lunch. They conveniently ignore the expenses incurred by the Bedouins, and the services they provide. Water, in particular, is a major expense due to the general absence of wells. A ton of water costs LE 25 on average, higher than the price for Bedouins who are located off the main road. The tour operators also do not allow the Bedouins to serve the tourists their traditional meals, which would generate additional income.

²³ The Ma'aza Bedouins live in the northern half of the Eastern desert, east of the Nile River.

2.3.6. Mining

The Red Sea governorate is rich in such mineral deposits as phosphates, zinc, lead, gold, and other valuable natural resources such as marble and yellow sand. Employment opportunities in mining and excavation are therefore accessible to a large proportion of the male population. In Marsa Alam alone, about 20% of the workforce is employed in mining. However, only jobs that require minimum education are available to the local people.

2.4. Institutional Context in Marsa Alam and Shalateen

The main objective of this section is to review the existing institutional setup – governmental and non-governmental organizations and lending institutions - within the study area. This section will highlight the role and responsibility of each institution and the extent to which they respond to the needs and priorities of the community. In addition, this section will illustrate their experience in micro-finance and/ or eco-tourism, if any, and their perception of the proposed Small-Scale Eco-Tourism Loans activity.

2.4.1. Governmental Institutions

2.4.1.1. The City Councils and Local Units

There is a strong presence of governmental institutions in the Red Sea Governorate, particularly in the southern zone where Local Units play a major role in the lives of the Bedouins who view them as key service providers. As mentioned earlier, the City Council of Marsa Alam oversees two Local Units (Berenice and Sheikh Shazly), while the Shalateen City Council oversees five Local Units (Marsa Hemeira, Abrak, Ras Hadarba, Abu Ramad and Halayeb). From the focus group discussions it was clear that local communities perceive the Local Unit as a very important institution that affects their livelihoods, and that they believe that governmental institutions are the most aware of the concerns and needs of the Bedouins and of their existence.

The City Councils and Local Units in Marsa Alam and Shalateen play an important role in addressing the needs of the local communities under their jurisdiction. In addition to their conventional roles, they provide food supplies to deprived households, as well as allowances and meals for students. Each deprived household receives 25 kg of flour, 2 kg of sugar and 2 bottles of oil. The students receive basic stipends that go towards covering book expenses and provide them with pocket money. The allowances per pupil are at L.E. 30 per month for those in primary education, while students in preparatory and secondary schools receive L.E. 50 per month. Secondary students receive an additional L.E. 100 during the end of year examinations. Students in Abu Ramad and Halayeb receive a daily allowance of L.E. 3, in addition to three meals per day funded by the Ministry of Education; while students at all levels at the Shalateen Azhar Institute receive an allowance of L.E. 3 per day and a meal ²⁴.

The director of the Shalateen City Council stated that: “People here have had a hard time over the last few years because of the general economic and political situation and also because of the drought in the area. People here depend on us entirely and consider the

²⁴ Students from the Shalateen Azhar Institute represent the areas of Shalateen, Halayeb and Abu Ramad.

food supplies and the students' stipends to be their right rather than aid or a gift." He added: "In Berenice, Hamata and Abu Ghessoun, the Food and Agriculture Organization is implementing a program to help the local communities by digging a well and providing the communities with access to needed input for agriculture. Although the main aim of the project is to help the nomads settle down and improve their livelihoods, the local communities are not responding very well to the project and prefer to continue with their nomadic lifestyle. We are trying to encourage them to participate in the project by giving them additional wheat and sugar, but they are still not responding very well and they want us to continue with the food assistance."

The director of Marsa Alam City Council stated: "The council is very concerned about creating employment opportunities and improving the economic standard of the local communities. Accordingly, we decided to get the *Shorouk Program*²⁵ to fund a project to build a training center for the enhancement of women's skills."

2.4.1.2 The Development Department

The development department is located in Hurghada and is represented at both the City Council and Local Unit levels. One of the main responsibilities of the department is the planning, monitoring and implementation of projects funded by the *Shorouk* program. This includes projects in four key sectors, namely water and sanitation, electricity, solid waste management, and road paving. The Local Fund for Development is also administered through the department. It extends loans of L.E. 1000 – L.E. 5000 to small and micro enterprises, and also extends loans to women, particularly female heads of households. The department directors of the Marsa Alam and Sheikh Shazly City Councils mentioned that the local communities were not enthusiastic about the loans program and that it is not being successfully implemented. They added that one of the main obstacles to the effective operation of the program is the need for guarantees.

Mr. Abbas Faras, the Department Director, had the following to say about the proposed loan program: "The local communities will benefit greatly from a micro-finance program, as it will help them improve their living conditions and preserve their environment. However, the loans program implemented by our department is not functioning very well, mainly because of the guarantee requirements. I believe it would be very helpful to improve the marketing of the products by improving the quality of the handicrafts using the assistance of professionals who are aware of the preferences of tourists. Such assistance can be channeled through community development associations (CDAs). Another important factor that must be considered is promoting effective coordination between the CDAs and hotels.

²⁵ The Shorouk Program is a rural development program managed by the Government of Egypt. Its specific objectives are to improve incomes and the quality of life in rural communities; and to promote equitable access to credit for the rural poor, unemployed youth and women. In addition, the project is expected to enhance the capacity of local communities and the local government to plan, appraise, co-finance, implement and manage rural infrastructure subprojects.

2.4.1.3 The Directorate of Social Affairs

The Social Unit channels part of the financial aid provided by the state to the community, including pensions to female heads of households, and the old and disabled. The majority of herders are also recipients of financial aid. According to the Director of the Shalateen Social Unit, the 5000 households or so who are registered at the unit receive food supplies in the form of flour and sugar. Each household receives 12 kg of flour and 2 kg of sugar every six months. Each household also receives a monthly stipend ranging from L.E. 50 to L.E.70. The Social Unit also extends monetary assistance in cases of emergency or death. In addition, the Social Unit regularly provides students with food supplies and financial assistance.

Credit programs administered by local CDAs operate within the framework of the Social Units. From the focus group discussions and the interviews it was clear that the local communities appreciate the credit program and sincerely believe it may have a very positive impact on their livelihoods. However, one of the main constraints is the fact that borrowers are unable to provide collateral. The Social Unit has tried to get around this problem by using an alternative guarantee system, which relies on retaining the *sarky* (a ration card used by the Social Unit to document food supplies and financial aid received by the families) until the loan is fully repaid.

Mr. Salah Amar, the Undersecretary at the Directorate of Social Affairs in Hurghada stated that: “The CDAs in the Red Sea governorate can be a very effective platform for micro-finance projects. However, their human and financial resources should first be strengthened. Intensive capacity building activities need to be implemented in order to strengthen their ability to recruit volunteers and mobilize community resources, and to promote their financial sustainability. Technical assistance in improving the quality of the products being produced and the ability to market them is also badly needed.”

2.4.1.4 The Red Sea Protectorates

Because of their unique natural and cultural heritage resources, Wadi El Gimal and Shalateen have been designated protected areas. Each protected area is managed by a protectorate office. The two offices have begun to play an increasingly important role in the community, as a result of their direct interaction with the local communities, on the one hand, and the inclusion of some of the local communities as full-time staff to assist the rangers, on the other. The rangers of the protectorates have become fully integrated into the communities that fall within their geographic jurisdiction. They have become not only the protectors of the environment but also of the communities, as they have become highly sensitive to their needs.

2.4.2. Civil Society Institutions

2.4.2.1 Gamiyet El Takaful Al Igtimaiya

A limited number of NGOs operate regionally all over the Red Sea governorate. The most prominent of these is Gamiyet El Takaful Al Igtimaiya, which is centrally operated through its headquarters in Hurghada. The NGO board consists of five members and is chaired by the Head of the Directorate of Social Affairs in Hurghada. The board meets at least four times a year in accordance with the NGO’s internal regulations. Extraordinary meetings are also arranged at the request of the board to

discuss pressing needs or issues. The General Assembly includes about one hundred and fifty members and it meets at least once a year.

A committee has been created in every town in the governorate to manage and supervise the activities of the NGO at the local level. The Head of the Directorate of Social Affairs usually chairs the committee. He is assisted by the heads of the Social Units. A full-time staff of forty employees provides technical, financial and managerial expertise.

The NGO chairman stated: “We have experience in delivering needed services to the local communities. Our NGO portfolio includes several projects that are implemented all over the governorate. These projects include childcare, women and youth clubs, vocational and technical assistance, and services to the handicapped.”

The NGO’s main sources of funds are MoSA, the annual subscriptions of General Assembly members, and fundraising activities. It is worth mentioning that the NGO’s budget for the year 2003 exceeded L.E 250,000, which is huge compared to the budgets of other NGOs in the governorate.

The NGO clearly has administrative capacity as well as efficient reporting and documentation systems. The chairman of the board mentioned that they were considering providing micro-finance services in cooperation with the local CDAs. “I believe that this service will have a very positive impact on the social and economic well being of the local communities,” he said.

Asked what they considered to be their priority capacity building needs, the board members cited training for the board and staff in stakeholder networking, and staff training in the use of computer software applications for accounting and project management purposes.

2.4.2.2 The Marsa Alam Community Development Association

The Marsa Alam CDA was established in 1991. Its geographic scope extends from Baraka, 14 km south of Marsa Alam city, to Wadi El Gimal, about 80 km south of the city. Also included is Tarambu, a community of approximately 15 families living 20 km off the road to Edfu, and Gebel Rossas, a Bedouin community of about 5-6 families living 15 km further north.

The CDA board consists of seven full-time government employees working in the City Council, the school and the Egyptian Institute for Communication. They meet on a regular basis to discuss management issues and to plan for CDA activities. Because of their work connections, the board plays a very effective role in coordinating and networking with governmental institutions.

An Executive Committee facilitates the decision-making process and ensures that the activities implemented are in line with the CDA’s mission. The committee includes the chairman of the board, the vice chairman, the secretary and two board members. In addition, each project implemented by the CDA is managed by a committee that is chaired by a board member.

The CDA’s General Assembly consists of one hundred and twenty members, who pay an annual subscription of LE 6 each. The members are mostly new settlers from Upper

Egypt and the Delta. The chairman of the board stated that attempts were being made to involve members of the Ababda tribe in the CDA's activities.

The CDA runs a kindergarten and a children's club (which together benefit more than seventy children), a women's club with over thirty-five members, and a social club with a membership of about 120. The head of the women's club committee mentioned that the most important activity they were implementing was basic handicrafts training, adding that: "Women are very keen to know more about sewing and leatherwork; however, financial assistance is needed for the purchase of more equipment and tools."

Through its relations with the City Council, the CDA was able to rent two apartments that have been converted into its permanent headquarters. The CDA was also able to secure funding from MoSA to cover its staff salaries and the operational costs of the kindergarten and the three clubs. Other costs are covered through the annual General Assembly subscriptions and annual grants from MoSA.

So far, the Board and staff have not benefited from any capacity building activities. The board members indicated they need training in community mobilization, as well as project management, project evaluation, and financial sustainability. The women's committee also cited the need for an equipped center for handicrafts, as well as marketing assistance.

2.4.2.3 Sheikh Shazly Community Development Association

The Sheikh Shazly CDA was established in 2001. Its geographic mandate includes the community of Sheikh Shazly, in addition to a number of scattered communities, such as Sheikh Salem, a community of herders made up of about 20 families, who live in shacks/tents around 40 km east of Marsa Alam.

The CDA board consists of seven members who meet on a regular basis. They are mostly full-time government employees who work at the Local Unit or the school. Accordingly, the CDA maintains very good relations with the local government in Sheikh Shazly.

An Executive Committee is responsible for managing day-to-day activities and implementing the decisions of the board. The committee is made up of the chairman and the secretary of the board, and three board members.

The CDA's General Assembly consists of fifty members, made up for the most part of members of the Ababda tribe in addition to a number of new settlers from Upper Egypt and the Delta. The Assembly meets at least once a year to review the CDA budget and activities. Each Assembly member pays a yearly subscription of LE 3.

The CDA is located in the town of Sheikh Shazly in a one-floor building which contains the board meeting room and a handicrafts center. Another location is currently being built by the *Shorouk* program, and will include a women's club, a kindergarten and a library.

The handicrafts center was built, equipped and refurbished in 2000 by the Local Council. The Marsa Alam CDA was responsible for managing and supervising its activities. The center was handed over to the Sheikh Shazly CDA in 2001,

immediately after its establishment. The two full-time employees who run the center indicated that they are training about 30 women in sewing, embroidery and crochet, and that they also supervise the production of the products. They said: “We participated in the productive families exhibition last year and our products received much praise. We are really eager to improve the quality of our production, and we are sure that with advanced training we will be able to produce better quality products and more diversified handicrafts.” A MoSA representative said that the women at the Sheikh Shazly handicrafts center were skilled and that their location was an advantage since the Sheikh Shazly festival offers a large market for a variety of products, including handicrafts.

The CDA’s financial resources are very limited. It relies on grants from the Local Unit, which are provided through the *Shorouk* program, and to a lesser extent on grants from MoSA, in addition to the revenues from the handicrafts center and the member’s subscriptions.

According to the Board and the staff, capacity building activities are definitely needed. The Board members mentioned that they need training in how to achieve financial sustainability, as well as in stakeholder networking, fund raising, project management and implementation, including the implementation of simple awareness campaigns. Similarly, the staff at the handicrafts center indicated that they needed technical assistance and training to help them tailor their products to the needs and requirements of tourists, and to improve the marketing and distribution of their products.

2.4.2.4 Other CDAs in Marsa Alam

The CDA in Hamata was established in 1996. Its board consists of seven members while its General Assembly is made up of 40 members. The CDA runs a nursery for children. A representative at the Ministry of Social Affairs stated that the Hamata CDA had real potential for expansion and development. He added that community members in Berenice, Ras Banas and Abu Ghessoun had recently been trying to establish CDAs. “We [the MoSA] are doing what we can to help them establish their CDAs and we are sure that they will be able to play an important role in the development and well being of their communities’

2.4.2.5 Shalateen Community Development Association

The Shalateen Community Development Association, the most prominent CDA in Shalateen, is located in a district called “Hagar El Assass” in the town of Shalateen. The CDA was established in 1994. Its board consists of seven members who are mainly Bisharin. The CDA’s General Assembly includes 130 members, made up of Bisharin and Ababda, as well as settlers from the Delta and Upper Egypt.

The CDA runs a handicrafts center that trains women in sewing, embroidery, crochet, and knitting. The CDA also markets the women’s products, both locally and through national exhibitions organized by the Productive Families. The training center is under the management and supervision of the Hurghada Productive Families Association, which falls under the Directorate of Social Affairs. With financial assistance from the Program, the center provides the trainee at the end of the training period with a sewing machine, which the trainee pays for in installments. The CDA also receives funding

from MoSA to allow it to implement other activities and deliver needed services, such as a children's club, a senior citizen's club, a women's club, and a social and cultural club.

A MoSA representative mentioned that they were careful when offering loans in Shalateen. "People, especially Bedouin tribes, are used to receiving funds and assistance and the idea of micro finance is still new to them." He added that they had to provide a guarantee from a government employee, or, in some instances, a document that proves they are eligible for government assistance.²⁶

From the meeting with the board members of the Shalateen CDA as well as key MoSA informants, it was clear that the Shalateen CDA's capacities are fairly developed compared with other CDAs in Marsa Alam. Members of the board mentioned, however, that they needed training in fundraising and project management. In addition, the staff at the training center indicated that they needed assistance in improving the quality of production.

2.4.2.6 Other CDAs in Shalateen

Six CDAs were registered with the Ministry of Social Affairs in 2003 to work within the administrative geographic scope of Shalateen. They are the Ezbet Aly Gomaa CDA, the Ezbet Gamoon CDA, the Amrab CDA, the Marsa Hemeira CDA, the Ezbet El Kamhatab CDA, and a women's NGO. All six CDAs work under the supervision and management of the Shalateen CDA. From the interviews, it was apparent that all six CDAs had not yet implemented serious activities and that they had not received funds from the Ministry of Social Affairs or any other donor agency²⁷. In addition, only Ezbet Gamoon and Amrab CDAs are headquartered in concrete buildings, while the remaining four CDAs are located in wooden shacks. A MoSA representative in Shalateen stated that the Egyptian government's strategy is to strengthen the capacities of CDAs to enable them to provide services traditionally provided by the state.

2.4.3 Lending Institutions

A very limited number of credit extension programs operate in the South Red Sea Zone. Banque du Caire, which has two branches in Hurghada and Safaga, is a notable example. To investigate the willingness of the bank to extend ecotourism loans in the area, a meeting was arranged with the Manager of the Hurghada branch. The manager emphasized that due to the high operating costs in the area and the nomadic nature of the local communities (small and scattered communities over a long stretch of land and continuously moving), a credit extension program would not be economically feasible. He said that the Hurghada branch does not currently offer micro-loans but within a month the market in Hurghada city should be ready for credit extension. If such a program is to work in the South Red Sea Zone, non-conventional methods of financing, such as a mobile banking unit, must be explored to achieve maximum outreach, and training modules sensitive to the concept of eco-tourism and the environment should be included in the guidelines.

²⁶ A monthly amount of L.E. 70 is offered to most of the Bedouin households in Shalateen to contribute to their livelihood.

²⁷ CDAs are entitled to receive funds from MoSA only after two years from date of establishment.

CHAPTER THREE: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 Conclusion

The team identified several local communities along the coast from Marsa Alam to Shalateen as well as scattered deep-range communities located further inland. By virtue of their geographic location, these communities have been engaged in either herding or fishing activities, or both.

While both men and women are involved in herding and fishing, the production of handicrafts lies entirely in the domain of women. However, it has not yet realized its full potential. A great deal of attention needs to be given to improve the quality and quantity of production in order to turn it into a profitable business.

Trading was found to be a dominant activity in the larger towns and among the larger communities. The camel market and the handicrafts and medicinal herbs markets in Shalateen and Sheikh Shazly could be good market niches for ecotourism.

The local communities make little use of their natural surroundings to cater to the ecotourism market. The lack of adequate involvement of the local communities in such activities as the organization of wildlife excursions, bird watching, and desert safaris, for example, is mostly due to the fact that activities of the kind are dominated by tour operators, who have the upper hand in planning tourist programs, and setting the fees.

There is a strong presence of governmental institutions in the Red Sea Governorate, especially the Local Councils, Local Units, Social Units and the Protectorate offices. They are in close contact with the locals and are most aware of their concerns and needs. The local communities regard these institutions as key providers of such basic necessities as water and food supplies. However, the government's vision in the governorate is to gradually shift the role of service provider to civil society organizations and the private sector.

The presence of regional NGOs in the southern zone of the Red Sea is very limited. On the other hand, local CDAs are well represented. The two CDAs in Marsa Alam and Shalateen have the most experience in managing and implementing activities.

Although most CDAs are limited in their scope of activities, the local communities anticipate a greater role for them, especially in identifying their needs and priorities and initiating activities to enhance their livelihoods. Key informants share the same view of the local communities, provided that the necessary attention is given to strengthening the capacity and capabilities of the CDAs. Among others, the CDAs need to strengthen their linkages with the tourist facilities, in order to ensure a market for community-made products.

3.2 Recommendations

- 1) Undertake feasibility study to examine the potential of providing micro loans to promote the development of activities such as herding, fishing, handicrafts, and other eco-tourism related activities.

- 2) Provide intensive training to the CDAs in the field of primary governance, networking and creating partnerships, project planning and evaluation, financial sustainability, and reporting and documentation. In addition, build/strengthen their capacity to implement credit extension programs.
- 3) Provide technical assistance to improve the quality of the handicrafts produced by women. Such assistance should include introducing new designs and techniques, as well as different raw materials, and could be provided in partnership with local CDAs.
- 4) Strengthen existing linkages between the CDAs that fall under the geographic scope of the Marsa Alam and Shalateen administrative boundaries by setting up the Marsa Alam and Shalateen CDAs as umbrella organizations.
- 5) Build the organizational capacity of the Marsa Alam and Shalateen CDAs with emphasis on the management and utilization of resources, and development of strategic leadership. In addition, given the scattered locations of the local communities as well as the cultural and religious taboos constraining women in marginalized communities from accessing input and product markets, the CDAs' capacity in marketing and promotion should be strengthened.
- 6) Encourage the participation and partnership of the various stakeholders in the planning, implementation and monitoring of the project. Special attention should be given to involving local and marginalized groups as well as the private sector. This can be achieved through the creation of a committee in Marsa Alam and another one in Shalateen made up of representatives of the CDAs, MoSA, community leaders, the City Council, the Development Department, the Tourism Development Authority and the private sector.
- 7) Launch promotion and awareness campaigns targeting the different stakeholders involved in the project to introduce the project's objectives and activities. Encourage the private sector (tourist facilities) to mainstream corporate social responsibility into their agenda, by ensuring that local communities benefit from tourist activities.

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