



## EGYPT: Red Sea Sustainable Tourism



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### Background

Over 1.2 million tourists visit the Red Sea coast annually, bringing in over \$1.2 billion in foreign exchange and generating more than 275,000 jobs. The Red Sea has become one of Egypt's premier tourism destinations, based in large part on its unique and fragile marine environment. In recent years, however, tourism development has come increasingly into conflict with protection and conservation of Red Sea resources.

To assure that future tourism development in the southern Red Sea preserves the environmental resources that make the area so attractive to tourists, the Egyptian government proposed development of a land use management plan identifying zones for different types and levels of development and preservation. In addition, to counteract tourism's negative effects while still encouraging economic growth, the government proposed a program to protect designated marine and coastal areas through the establishment of nature reserves, and to build the capacity of national and local government agencies, as well as private tourism enterprises, to cope with the many challenges presented by a booming tourism industry.

### Objectives

USAID's tourism activities on the Red Sea were conducted under the larger Egypt Environmental Policy Program (EEPP), which held the main policy objective of enhanced management and conservation of the Red Sea. Multiple government agencies have authority to manage Red Sea resources – the Egyptian Environmental Affairs Agency (EEAA), the Tourism Development Authority (TDA), the Governorate of the Red Sea, and the Ministry of Education (MOE) – and all have somewhat differing agendas and responsibilities. To work effectively toward Red Sea resource protection, USAID first developed strategies to unite the various entities behind the common goal of contributing to the sustained health and vitality of environmental, economic and social development in Egypt.





## Contractor Roles in Promoting Sustainable Tourism in the Red Sea Region

<p><b>PA Consulting</b> Sustainable Tourism Land Use Management Ecotourism Environmental Management Systems Green Hotel campaigns</p>	<p><b>IRG/Winrock International</b> Red Sea Nature Parks management Scientific/technical studies of Red Sea ecosystems Red Sea Rangers workforce GIS mapping Mooring buoys installed to protect coral reefs</p>	<p><b>AED/GreenCOM</b> Social marketing Educational and public awareness campaigns Unify overall program efforts, catalyzing partnerships and synergizing existing programs</p>
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### Approach

USAID employed the expert services of several contractors to implement activities in the pursuit of EEPP objectives in the region, each with a specialized role, but all with a unified focus. Partners provided technical assistance to:

- **Design and implement protective policies and zoning** for environmentally sensitive areas
- **Develop and disseminate environmentally sound practices** for the tourism sector from design and construction to operational phases.
- **Develop strategic communications and education campaigns** to increase understanding, acceptance, and adoption of environmental policy measures by relevant constituencies

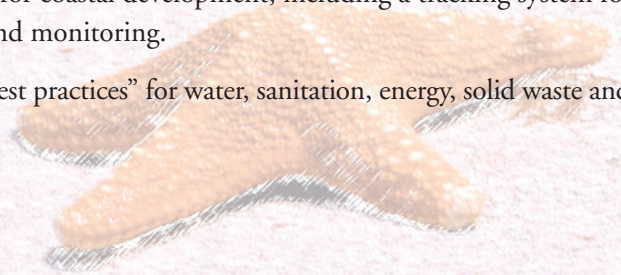
### Achievements

#### Protective Policies and Zoning

- Ecologically sensitive zoning plans developed for and adopted in TDA lands south of Marsa Alam.

#### Environmentally Sound Practices

- Increased appreciation and understanding of sustainable tourism, including a development plan and standards for the Southern Red Sea Region.
- Introduction of environmental management systems for hotels and resorts, including Green Globe 21 certification of seven properties.
- Development of standardized Environmental Impact Assessment screening forms for coastal development, including a tracking system for EIA approvals and monitoring.
- Promotion of “best practices” for water, sanitation, energy, solid waste and landscaping.





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- Development of computerized decision and information support systems to strengthen regional tourism planning and environmental management capacities.

### Communications and Education Campaigns

- Technical assistance in developing communications and education campaigns and materials for all stakeholders to increase their understanding and acceptance of environmental policy measures.
- Exhibit design for a new Red Sea Exploratorium and Visitor Center in Port Ghaleb.
- Video promoting a land-use management plan for the Southern Red Sea.
- Public awareness strategy and related materials encouraging hotel general managers to adopt environmental best practices and provide environmentally friendly services.
- Signage design and installation for TDA properties and EEAA Protectorate areas.
- Teacher training workshops, informational materials, and beach and underwater clean-up campaign events to help increase public awareness among children and adults about the Red Sea's fragile resources and the need to protect them.

### Lessons Learned

A truly multi-faceted effort is needed to ensure that tourism development on such a large scale is sustainable. The Red Sea project utilized a wide variety of outreach approaches and mechanisms to connect with the array of stakeholders involved with managing, developing, supplying, and participating in tourist activities and enterprises.

To make sure that policy development and implementation of sustainable tourism are perceived of as a true need and not a luxury, all planning, design and development activities must take place with active cooperation from all interested parties, particularly the private sector and local communities.

Although TDA has drawn up new regulations and legal requirements for development activities, it has learned, when dealing with developers, to encourage rather than discourage, provide incentives rather than penalize, and guide rather than command. In addition, to control the impacts of new development, TDA has identified a preferred approach of Tourism Centers consisting of a planned concentration of tourism activities within a defined area that follow an approved Master Plan.





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Proactive sustainable tourism awareness-building should include a range of stakeholder consultation vehicles such as forums, workshops, training courses, study tours, and multimedia campaigns targeting the public in order to achieve lasting results. Using this approach, all of the key Red Sea stakeholders learned to appreciate each other's sometimes differing objectives, and they found ways to share in their common goal of creating a world class tourism destination that contributes to, rather than detracting from, the area's remarkable natural and cultural assets.

**For Further Information:**

<http://egypt.usaid.gov>

<http://www.nric.net/tourism.htm>

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