



Celebrating a year of achievement

The Regional Office for West Asia
Annual Report 2014



The Regional Office for West Asia

The IUCN West Asian region comprises of 13 countries including Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, the Syrian Arab Republic, Yemen and Iran in addition to the Gulf countries including Bahrain, Oman, Kuwait, Qatar, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates. West Asia is part of three eco-regions that incorporate a variety of ecosystems, including Mediterranean forests, deserts, plains, rangelands, savannas, oases, mountains, rivers, lakes, springs, mudflats, swamps, marshes, mangroves and coral reefs. All of which provide a wide array of ecosystem services and ecological corridors for migratory species through the region.

IUCN Regional Office for West Asia aims to be active in all 13 countries in various conservation and sustainable development activities. The critical issues facing the region are:

- Land degradation, aridity and desertification
- Unsustainable water extraction and use
- Biodiversity and habitat loss, and species extinction.
- Threats to sensitive marine ecosystems through pollution, habitat destruction, Invasive Alien Species, and unplanned coastal development.

Moreover, some of these countries face severe consequences of conflict and warfare along with its associated large-scale human suffering, destruction of infrastructure, and environmental degradation leading to a critical need of post-conflict environmental reconstruction.

IUCN ROWA's role is to coordinate activities within four major themes in the overall region; Water & Climate Change, Protected Areas & Biodiversity, Drylands & Livelihoods, and finally Marine & Coastal Zone Management. Other cross cutting issues that also include gender mainstreaming and natural resource management are also major issues IUCN ROWA work on. This comes as a challenge since environmental priorities are intimately associated with poverty, equity, security and conflict. Therefore, mainstreaming conservation efforts with the development agenda becomes very crucial. IUCN ROWA's mandate is to work supportively and in collaboration with our members and partners in the region that include NGOs and governments, to achieve a new paradigm for sustainable development based on the concept of people centered development.

Its role is to share critical conservation knowledge with all members and partners and currently focus on providing services which brings added value to the ongoing activities, while also building awareness of the West Asia region and its special strengths. One of many IUCN ROWA strengths is its ability to catalyze policy.

On a national and regional scale, IUCN ROWA experts are involved in a wide range of UN environmental policy events and are continually requested by governments to help update national policies, strategies and action plans regarding UN conventions. IUCN ROWA also takes pride in providing this technical assistance to state members in West Asia. Moreover, recognizing the important role that women can play in this regard, governments also request IUCN ROWA assistance in drafting gender sensitive Programs for mainstreaming gender in other topics like climate change in the region.



Working with Members & Partners

During 2014, this regional office has grown tremendously despite regional challenges, with over 20 different donors that include the European Union, DROSOS, MAVA, UN agencies and Governmental agencies. Through the Biodiversity & Business program, IUCN ROWA works with global businesses like Holcim, Shell and the HSBC Bank.

The work of IUCN ROWA can only be possible with the help of regional members which include governments and NGOs. In 2014, the number of members in the region increased from 44 to 51 with a great achievement of finally including 2 members from Palestine.

IUCN ROWA recognizes that its ability to implement excellent programming depends on the quality of its partnerships. ROWA has significantly increased its ability to work in partnership with members, commissions and partners. ROWA will continue to work with members & commissions to strengthen the management, execution, knowledge management and governance. ROWA will seek to deepen its partnerships with members, partners and donors that support the nature conservation at different levels.

A partnership is the preferred mode of programme implementation. IUCN ROWA gives priority to projects and initiatives that can be implemented with and through its Members and Commissions. It also forges strong partnerships with leading regional organizations that are active in the field of conservation and sustainable development. These partnerships will be strengthened and used as a mechanism for capacity building and capacity exchange, especially for the benefit of IUCN Members.

ROWA approach is to work with members and partners (government, non-governmental organizations business, and donors) to achieve ROWA programme results. ROWA's reputation for being accountable, inclusive and constructive means it can bring a broad range of stakeholders to the discussion table as well as contribute to the debate in a positive way.

IUCN ROWA proudly runs professional units which include 4 different programmes, documentation and communication, membership, procurement, finance and more.

In 2014, over 7 new staff members joined the team with 2 professional staff members heading 2 programmes. This has allowed IUCN ROWA to move its premises to the current new premises in Amman which has a total of 20 full time staff members.



IUCN ROWA has disseminated its knowledge, experience and achievements in over 10 Regional conferences and workshops in 2014 which also and are not confined to:

- [The Third Near East Forestry Week](#)
- [The World Parks Congress](#)
- [The World Water Week](#)
- [Planning for Climate Change & Water Management in the MENA region](#)
- [Al Hima Forum : Possibilities are Endless](#)
- [HazWaste MENA Forum: An Opportunity to Raise Awareness about Hazardous Waste Management](#)
- 3rd Arab Water Forum

ROWA has explored innovative approaches and strategic partnerships to attract new donors. ROWA will continue strengthening its capacity to manage the relationship with its most critical donors, and invest in innovative new approaches to fundraising with the aim to increase and diversify its supporters to deliver its programme strategy, this will include establishing strategic relationships with government and private sector to change their policies and practices, as well as bringing in more funds.





The Water & Climate Change Programme

The Water & Climate Change Programme

Aim:

The WCCP aims to promote good water and climate change governance in the region. It assists countries to strengthen their national capacities to revise existing and/or adopt new legal frameworks for the management of water resources in a sustainable manner and help manage nature resources.

Projects:

- Regional Knowledge Network on Systemic Approaches to Water Resources Management ([RKNOW](#))
- Increased social and ecological resilience in watershed ecosystems of the Mediterranean Region in the face of climate and other drivers of change ([SEARCH](#))
- WATER Development Resources Opportunity Policies for the water management in semi-arid areas (Water-[DROP](#))
- Sustainable Water Integrated Management ([SWIM](#))
- [Building Capacity in Water Integrity](#)

Accomplishments in a nutshell

The WCCP program has been able to maintain its strength in 2014 with over 10 years of extensive experience in integrated water management. Identifying knowledge and different cases around the region is currently its best achievement; with the Regional Knowledge Network on Water (RKNOW) being created and launched in 2014. This network will open new doors to new knowledge and experience in different fields related to water.

The WCCP has undertaken intensive capacity building initiatives in the region to improve the water governance and use of DSS in water management and implemented household rain water harvesting in poor communities to improve access to water. Furthermore, the program has led 5 national assessment studies -Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, Tunisia and Morocco - in the MENA region on water integrity risks and corruption in water management and developed a regional synthesis report.

The WCCP has been able to strengthen the extra component (it being climate change) in less than a year. The programme is currently known as a knowledge hub in the MENA region for climate change; it directly took over the climate change scene by taking on the third communications report for the UNFCCC in Jordan and has produced the major component related to vulnerability and adaptation. It has also pioneered in creating a Toolkit towards increasing climate change resilience in the MENA region, the first of its kind.

Knowing that the climate change and water is a cross cutting issue towards all programmes, this programme is pleased to have prepared various water resource evaluations to various other projects in other ROWA programmes. In addition, the WCCP has demonstrated new ideas for the reuse of the treated wastewater in agriculture by implementing a Decentralized Wastewater Treatment Plant in the region and produced a manual for the reuse of waste water.

Regional & International Conferences:

- [The World Water Week](#)
- [Planning for Climate Change & Water Management in the MENA region](#)
- [Water Management and Water Quality Monitoring and Assessment in the Arab Region](#)
- [New NAMA Steps Developed for Solar Power Pumping in the Jordan Valley](#)
- [The Arab Region Environmental Information Network](#)
- [Groundwater Integration Dialogue](#) Case study on the management of the ground water in Jordan and enforcement of ground water laws.
- [Wastewater Treatment: A New Turn in the Arab World](#) Presentation was presented on decentralized treated wastewater in Jordan.
- [3rd Arab Water Forum : SEARCH climate resilience toolkit and findings of Water Integrity risks in the MENA region were presented in two session](#)

Publications

- [A Guiding Toolkit for Increasing Climate Change Resilience](#)
- [Tools for Increasing Resilience at Watershed level with a focus on Institutional Change Processes](#)
- [SEARCH Policy Brief](#)

- [The third communications report to the UNFCCC in Jordan](#)
- [Number of Case studies on water management in the region](#)

Documentaries

- [SEARCH, Increasing Local Community Resilience in the MENA Region](#)
- [Increasing Climate Change Resilience in Palestine - SEARCH](#)
- [Increasing Climate Change Resilience in Jordan - SEARCH](#)
- [Increasing Climate Change Resilience in Lebanon - SEARCH](#)
- [Increasing Climate Change Resilience in Morocco - SEARCH](#)
- [Increasing Climate Change Resilience in Egypt - SEARCH](#)

Donors & Partners:





**Protected Areas, Biodiversity & World
Heritage**

Protected Areas, Biodiversity & World Heritage

Aim

The overall aim of the programme is to establish a comprehensive, effectively managed and ecologically-representative national and regional systems of protected areas. It is also there to help protect, identify and conserve elements of the region natural world heritage sites. This programme also concentrates on protecting, conserving and restoring species, habitats and ecological processes in the region.

Projects

- [Tabea Programme](#)
- [Holcim Quarry Rehabilitation](#)
- [Institutional Strengthening & Capacity Building to Support Iraqi Marshlands Management](#)
- [Biodiversity Conservation & Ecosystem Management for Iraqi Marshlands](#)
- [Protected Areas Rangers Capacity Building](#)
- [Management Plan for Protected Area in the West Bank](#)
- [Protected Area for Orchids on Holcim Land, Kfarhazir – Lebanon](#)
- [Mediterranean experience of Eco-tourism.](#)
- Pre- Biodiversity Assessment for Kfarhazir Site
- [Revision of the National Biodiversity and Action Plan including the Fifth National Report to the Convention on Biological Diversity Project](#)
- Strengthening Protected Areas Financing and management System in Egypt

Accomplishments in a nutshell

Protected areas in ROWA region are becoming increasingly complex institutions that require highly diverse skill sets to manage. However, many protected area directors, managers and staff lack the necessary range of skills to ensure the effective and equitable management of these areas, and they have limited capacity for sustained and adaptive organizational management. Despite being responsible for the complex management of a significant proportion of the world's natural capital, protected area management is still not recognized in many countries as a distinct profession with its own standards, qualifications and career structure.

The protected areas programme was revived in 2014, with less than 3 projects in 2013, this year has been a promising step towards success. In just under 1 year, the program was able to restructure its strategic goals and align them with regional and international visions. A set strategy that includes objectives of each of its components (biodiversity and protected areas, world heritage and business and biodiversity) has been established and is being implemented.

This programme is proud to have helped and increased the capacities of the Iraqi delegation towards nominating the Iraqi marshlands for a world heritage site. It has also helped in economically evaluating habitats and protected areas in the region which therefore asserted IUCN's role in producing the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan for Jordan and is taking lead in that process in Palestine as well. With many political problems in the Middle East, this program was still able to produce a protected area for orchids in a corporately privately owned land from Holcim in Lebanon and produce a biological survey on orchids in that area.

This programme has targeted global goals by acting regionally and nationally in order to conserve biodiversity and nature in west asia. It is also leading the partnership for Professionalizing Protected Area Management that supports the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity to achieve Aichi targets regarding protected areas.

Publications

- Protected Area for Orchids on Holcim Land- Kfarhazir
- [The National Biodiversity Strategy for Jordan](#)
- [Marine natural heritage and the World Heritage List : interpretation of World Heritage criteria in marine systems, analysis of biogeographic representation of sites, and a roadmap for addressing gaps \(ARABIC\).](#)
- [The 5th biodiversity national report for Jordan](#)
- [It Is Possible, Watch It Here; The Rehabilitation of Holcim Quarry in Chekka, Lebanon](#)
- [TABE'A Programme, Natural Heritage in Arab States.](#)
- Mediterranean Quarry Rehabilitation Manual

Regional & International Conferences:

- [Building Capacities within West Asia Region on Conservation and Management of Protected Areas](#)
- [Sharing Experience: Biodiversity Conservation and Protected Areas Management in West Asia](#)
- [Linking Tourism with Coastal World Heritage Sites Management in Bahrain](#)
- [Assessing the Management of Socotra World Heritage Site](#)
- [Stakeholder Engagement Helps to Drive Long-term Sustainability](#)
- [International Training Workshop on Conservation of Biodiversity and Ecosystem-2014](#)
- [Serial of Stakeholders engagement workshops for CBD report.](#)
- [Serial of stakeholders engagement workshops for developing the national biodiversity strategy in Jordan](#)

Donors & Partners:





Drylands, Livelihoods & Gender

Drylands, Livelihoods & Gender

Aim

Through the Dryland, Livelihoods and Gender Programme, IUCN supports the development and integration of an integrated land management approach in a wider landscape through reviving the Hima system to ensure mainstreaming of rangeland biodiversity in economic production activities.

Projects

- [Economic Valuation of Rangeland Ecosystem Services & Degradation](#)
- [Mainstreaming Sustainable Land Management Practices](#)
- [Mainstreaming Biodiversity in the Sylvo-pastoral and Rangeland Landscapes in Al Sharah](#)
- [Securing Rights and Restoring Lands for Improved Livelihoods](#)
- [Arabian Pastoralist Communities Network](#)
- [Sustainable Dryland Landscapes in Africa & the Middle East](#)
- [Updating the Jordan National Strategic & Action Plan for Combating Desertification](#)

Accomplishments in a nutshell

The program was previously part of the REWARD programme, in 2014 the programme gained its place beside other programmes in IUCN ROWA further proving its importance in the region. This programme and in less than 1 year has become the knowledge hub for land economic valuations. For the 1st time in Jordan, an economic valuation was attempted by a team of experts which later helped in preparing the aligned national strategy for combating desertification in Jordan. They have also helped in preparing the national report for the UNFCCC for Jordan.

The program was also part of many regional initiatives among which have created the first hima site in Jordan and have helped upscale this concept in 4 other governorates. These initiatives have helped in proving that participatory approaches are key for achieving goals and increasing local community participation.

In mid-2014, IUCN has initiated the creation of the Hima Promise, a hima regional declaration which was later endorsed by HRH Prince Hassan bin Al Talal. This project is proud to be known for its expertise and accomplishment in dryland and rangeland management. Further recognizing the importance of integrating gender within policy in the region, IUCN ROWA is proud to take role in assisting initiatives in drafting gender sensitive programs to mainstream gender in climate change efforts in the region. The Program furthermore outlines a framework for integrating a gender perspective in climate change efforts in Jordan over the period 2011–2015. It also establishes objectives, outlines substantive activities with reachable indicators within the ambit of the four priority and 2011 the program endorsed and approved by the Prime Ministry in Jordan.

Publications

- [Al Hima : possibilities are endless](#)
- [Al Hima Declaration](#)
- [Knowledge Books \(13 knowledge books\)](#)
- An Economic Valuation of a large – scale rangeland restoration Project through the Hima system within the Zarqa River Basin in Jordan ELD policy brief
- [Increasing Sustainable Land Management in Jordan: a Joint Venture](#)
- [Economic Valuation Study – Jordan](#)
- [Participatory videos](#)
- [Gender Mainstreamed in Improved Pastoralism](#)
- The Aligned Action Plan to Combat Desertification
- The Governance of Rangelands - Collective actions for sustainable Pastoralism

Regional & International Conferences:

- [Al Hima: Possibilities are Endless](#)
- [The Third Near East Forestry Week](#)
- [Embedding Biodiversity Considerations into Policies, Strategies and Practices](#)
- [A Glimpse about the Mainstreaming Sustainable Land Management Practices Project](#)
- [Regional Autumn School: Natural Resource Rights in the Arab Middle East and North Africa](#)
- [Discussing the Proposed Operational Objectives of the United Nations Convention on Combating Desertification \(UNCCD\) 10-year Strategy](#)
- [Building Member Capacities: Using Participatory Planning Tools](#)

Donors & Partners:



Enabling poor rural people to overcome poverty



THE WORLD BANK





Marine & Coastal Zone Management Programme

Marine & Coastal Zone Management Programme

Aim

Through the marine and coastal management program both strengthening sustainable management of marine and coastal zone resources are key. This would only be possible through ecosystem approaches; promoting the equitable use of the land, water and living resources and recognizing that humans, with their cultural diversity, are an integral component of ecosystems.

Projects

[Sustainable Fisheries Management](#)
[Knowledge Sharing & Networking](#)

Achievements in a nutshell

The programme has helped in promoting knowledge exchange and mutual learning between members in areas related to the management of Marine and Coastal Zones by exchanging experience in the creation of new MPAs in the region. Within months, the programme revived its activities regionally and internationally. Efforts have been made to develop multi-partner projects towards the protection and conservation of Deep Sea and Escarpments in the East Mediterranean. Other regional initiatives have focused on the Arab World Marine Protected Areas strategy and action plan.

The programme has also offered a networking platform to tackle ecosystems and critical habitats regionally in the favor of fisheries resources, rehabilitation and restoration of critical habitats and biodiversity conservation. On the national level, IUCN ROWA supported policy and legislative development for mainstreaming sustainable management of marine and coastal ecosystems in Lebanon. Two new Marine Protected Areas in Lebanon will further confirm Lebanon's commitment towards this cause. Marine conservation has also been mainstreamed in the updated National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan for Jordan, which has further increased ties with national organizations and partners. Among many achievements, IUCN ROWA is proud to have affected the number of blast fishing in Tyre, Lebanon by reducing it by 80% with the help of local partners.

The programme has effectively strengthened capabilities in finance, fund raising, advocacy, and representation of MPAs in the region through tailor made capacity building programme supported by regional and international expertise. With these accomplishments, over 4 pipeline projects are aiming at further protecting and conserving coral reefs in the region in 2015.

Publications

- Lebanon Marine Environment features - production in process
- Effect of Trammel Nets on the Silty Bottom Benthic Communities in Eastern Mediterranean - unpublished

Regional & International Conferences

- [UAE Taking a Step Forward to Stop Shark-Finching in the Middle East](#)
- [The Arab World Marine Protected Area \(MPA\) Symposium](#)
- [Capacity-building workshop for West Asia and North Africa on ecosystem conservation and restoration to support achievement of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets](#)
- Integrated Sustainable Coastal Development - MENA Region.
- World Park Congress. Sydney

Donors & Partners:



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