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Executive summary

For the first time, joint efforts by many individuals, organizations, and stakeholders, were made to conserve marine mammals in the Red Sea with emphasis on Samadai Dolphin house which accommodates a large population of spinner dolphin *Stenella longirostris*. A management plan was prepared, in consultation with different stakeholders, approved by authorities and implemented at the beginning of January 2004. Meanwhile information on the marine mammals in the Red Sea were collected and verified by international experts, including *Dugong dugong* (the most threatened marine mammals in the Red Sea), and 15 species of dolphins and whales. A public awareness programmes is being launched, including preparation of brochure on the spinner dolphin in several languages (English, Arabic, Italian, French, German, Russian), video tape, a book on dolphins for children and code of conduct for dive guides. Training courses for rangers, dive guides and boat skippers were implemented. A new society for the conservation of marine mammals is being established. Cooperation with other NGO's in the Red Sea Governarate has been enhanced through participation in all stages of the conservation process. Contacts with schools in the Red Sea have been made, leading to the establishment of 10 environmental clubs. During 2004, public awareness programmes will be continued and evaluated. Meanwhile, implementation of the management plan at Samadai Dolphin house will be monitored and evaluated.

Introduction

In an effort to move closer towards sustainable tourism through the conservation of the Red Sea's vibrant biodiversity and spectacular natural beauty, the Nature Conservation Sector (NCS) prepared a project document concentrating on 'charismatic' species, which are known tourist attractions, the Red Sea Dolphins. The 'Conservation of Red Sea Dolphin Species' project focuses on Shab Samadai, a 1.2km reef in the Red Sea known as a resting and may be breeding site for dolphins and therefore frequented by dive boats. The project was inspired by a previous survey of human-dolphin interactions conducted by USAID sponsored Egyptian Environmental Policy Program, that found dive boats were disturbing dolphin living patterns, giving rise to dolphin avoidance behaviors. Experts feared that ultimately this may force dolphin populations out of the reefs. Once awarded the funding by PERSGA Community Participation Programme, NCS began the project's implementation process.

Principal Objective

In response to the situation at Shab Samadai the project's intent is to protect the dolphins by enhancing the scientific understanding of the dolphin species that inhabit the Red Sea, and increasing the public awareness on dolphins conservation (in particular Spinner Dolphins at Shab Samadai) among key target groups including; dive masters and boat captains, tourists and schools teachers. To educate youth about the dolphins, the project will support the creation of 10 environmental clubs in Red Sea schools and training school teachers on public awareness issues.

Key Partner Organizations

The key partnership for this project is between the Nature Conservation Sector of the Egyptian Environmental Affairs Agency (EEAA) and two non-government organizations, the Red Sea Diving and Aqua-sport Association (RSDAA) and the Hurghada Environmental Protection Association (HEPCA). Together these partners are working under the guidance and support of the Red Sea Governor to create 10 environmental clubs in the Red Sea. The design and technical expertise of public awareness materials is being contributed in-kind by the USAID funded Academy for Educational Development (AED).

The 'Conservation of Red Sea Dolphin Species' project has also drawn upon the experience and expertise of the Mediterranean Marine Mammals Accord (ACOBAMS). A regional dolphin expert, Dr. Guiseppe di Sciara from ACOBAMS has participated in the training activities for the Red Sea rangers and the development of a monitoring program for the Shab Samadai Dolphin Sanctuary. In addition, Video Ocean Marsa Alam has participated in all activities including preparation of brochure, video tape, and valuable time of 3 professional divers and photographers. Domina resort in Marsa Alam has provided valuable contribution in hosting and accommodating many participant in the workshop and the international expert.

Main activities

- A ranger (Mr. Mohamed Abdel Ghany) was sent to Europe for a training on conservation of dolphins.
- In September 2003, during IUCN conference, Dr. Fouda contacted experts and international organizations concerned with dolphins' conservation.
- Many letters were sent to concerned entities specialized in dolphin conservation.
- The chairman of the scientific committee of ACOBAMS, Dr. Giuseppe Notarbartolo di Sciara agreed to work with us but his fees was exceeded the budget approved by PERSGA (**Annex 6**). Italian embassy offered to pay the cost of a visit in December, and Domina resort in Marsa Alam offered free accommodation.
- Dr. Giuseppe Notarbartolo di Sciara came to Egypt, made a visit to Samadai house and discussed the management plan.
- Preparation of the workshops: -
 - A task group was established in Cairo office (6 persons) to prepare materials on marine mammals in the Red Sea and to collect information on their distribution, biology, ecology, etc.
 - The task group visited the Red Sea to prepare the workshops.
 - Hurghada office coordinated with the Governor and all related authorities to prepare the management plan, recruiting rangers to manage the site, communicating with schools, establishing environmental clubs, preparing regulations for site visits (tickets, ticket reservation venue) and providing telephone lines (**Annex 5**).
 - A brochure on Samadai Dolphin house was prepared and will be translated to many languages (English, Arabic, Italian, French, German, and Russian).
 - A video film on Samadai Dolphin in being prepared by Video Ocean .
 - Abu Salama Association for conservation of dolphins has started to record.
 - Coordination with NGO's.
- Establishment of environmental clubs (**Annex 7**).

Project Progress and Outputs:

A) Training of Rangers:

Red Sea Rangers Monitoring and Area Management Training

In order to determine the optimal level of human presence in the area and to refine procedures for a sustainable tourist activity, ACOBAMS dolphin expert, Dr. Guiseppe Notarbartolo di Sciara tailored a one-year (2004) experimental management program for Samadai Dolphin Sanctuary. This will allow the Red Sea rangers to provide a scientific basis for future long-term management of human-dolphin interaction in the area.

The management objectives are:

- To maintain human presence in the area within acceptable limits to the dolphins, thereby maintaining the quality of their habitat and ensuring that the dolphins keep using the Samadai reef as their resting area; and,
- To allow the continuation of tourist activities by promoting respectful interaction with the dolphins, thereby ensuring a prosperous local economy, and providing a high educational benefit for all who come in contact with this special marine attraction.

Red Sea rangers were trained how to monitor dolphin activity using basic equipment and procedures as well as how to guide and control human use of the reef under this strict management regime. They were also provided with the skills to analyze and assess data collected to inform decision makers on future actions. The rangers understood that the gathering of qualitative and precise data during this year long program is important for the continued presence of the dolphins ultimately leading to the area's sustainability and revenue generation for the community. (**Annex 6: Attach Monitoring Program**)

B) Training of dive masters and guides:

A one-day workshop was conducted in Marsa Alam, in January 2004, for dive-masters/guides and stakeholders in the Southern Red Sea. The workshop introduced:

- The importance of developing tourism based on marine biodiversity in Shab Samadai strategically by implementing a management plan and monitoring program to ensure sustainability.
- Presentations on marine mammals in particular *cetaceans* with an emphasis on Samadai Spinner dolphins and their special needs.
- The role of dive-masters/guides in the Samadai Dolphin Sanctuary management plan, and the requirements for Samadai certification to ensure that operators are legally authorized to bring tourists.
- An overview of *swim with the dolphins programs*, discouraging what are classified as 'Level B Harassment' of a marine mammal or mammal stock in the wild (US Marine Mammal Protection Act, 1994). That the impact of swimming with wild *cetaceans* is not well known was emphasized.
- A discussion of Shab Samadai's proposed management zoning.
- General considerations and code of conduct for tourist groups and individuals.
- Dive-masters/guides tasks:
 - Briefing swimmers
 - On the boat
 - On snorkeling
 - On the dolphins
 - On the code of conduct
 - Management of dive/snorkel groups while in the water

- Cooperation with Red Sea rangers
- Debriefing swimmers

In February 2004, two one-day workshops will be given to boat captains and skippers in Hurghada and Marsa Alam. The workshops tailored, will consist of three main topics:

- Technical training on:
 - Approaching the dive site
 - Mooring system and use
 - Handling of speed boats
 - Waste management and the International Standard
 - Dealing with staff and visitors
 - Emergency plan Medic 1st Aid and Rescue Techniques
- Environmental training:
 - Marine life in the Red Sea
 - Identify Dolphin species
 - Dolphins at Shab Samadai, habits and attitudes
- Regulations at Samadai:
 - Identifying the proposed management zoning for the area
 - Ranger/boat captain relationship
 - Guidelines and regulations for boats
 - Procedures and requirements

Awareness material distributed by the Red Sea Rangers for both workshops included regulation flip charts for boat operators and tourists, fact sheets and brochure highlighting the Red Sea protectorates and its main attractions. (**Annex 5: Attach Presentations, Material distributed, Attendance Sheet**)

C) Public Awareness of Dolphins:

Samadai Dolphin Sanctuary Management plan includes an education and awareness program to compliment the efforts being taken by the Nature Conservation Sector (NCS). Target audiences for this program include:

- Local population, mainly teachers and school children, through the formation of 10 environmental clubs in the Red Sea schools, and local officials and their constituents, through a newly formed NGO ‘Abou Salama (Dolphin) Society’ and other community gatherings including fishermen.
- Tourists: adults and children will be informed of the reef’s special properties and the spinner dolphins that reside there. A brochure has been designed as well as an educational leaflet for children to learn more about spinner dolphin characteristics. Visitors to the area will also receive a full briefing by their dive-masters/guides on the experience they will be sharing. (**Annex 9 : Attach Tourist Brochure, Children’s Leaflet**)

D) Management Plan

NCS has produced a management plan for Samadai Dolphin Sanctuary. Designated Red Sea rangers, HEPCA and RSDAA in Marsa Alam have been coordinating with NCS throughout the process of developing the new management plan. NCS is also overseeing the public awareness activities, which are being implemented by AED through in-kind contribution of time and material designs. (**Annex 3: Attach Management Plan.**)

Remaining Work Plan Tasks

Main Activities	Feb. 04	Mar. 04	Apr. 04
Workshop for Boat captains	X	X	
Workshop for School Teachers	X	X	
Workshops for Environment Clubs	X	X	
Field Trips for School Children	X	X	X
NGO Involvement	X	X	X
Creation and improvement of network	X	X	X
Preparation of awareness material	X	X	
Monitoring and evaluating management plan of Samadai house	X	X	X

Educational Awareness Program.

Objective:

Enhances the public awareness for the Dolphins and marine mammals between the school student and the public through students in the Red Sea area, this will result a good handling and dealing with sensitive creatures.

Conductivity:

This program has to run in three segments.

- In school teacher training
- In schools student training.
- Field trip for the students.

Materials:

- Compilation booklet for teachers can be simplified in two versions for school students Elementary and preparatory and secondary schools
- Poster.
- Photo Cards.
- Brochures.
- Translation of all lectures into Arabic.

Work Plan.

A) Establishment of environmental clubs:

- Determine a base or premises for it.
- Assign a teacher (s) in charge for this club, and the most important criteria for it is doing this voluntarily.
- Training for the teacher (s) in charge.
- Equipment needed such computer, printer, Internet access, microscope, tools etc...
- Furniture such disk, table chairs etc.
- Material need for experimental works.
- Boos and resources
- Activities guide line such experiments, auditing programs, etc...

B) Training:

This training has to take a practical shape more than class room lecture since we have in the Red Sea, base on the following information we put the working plan.

	Ras Ghareb	Hurghada	Safaga	Quseir	Shalateen	Total
Elementary	15	18	13	13	10	69
Preparatory	7	9	7	8	3	34
Prep Technical	0	1	1	0	0	2
Secondary	2	3	2	2	0	9
Sec. Commercial 3Y	1	2	1	1	0	5
Sec. Commercial 5Y	0	2	0	0	0	2
Sec. Technical 3Y	2	2	2	2	0	8
Sec. Technical 5Y	1	0	0	0	0	1
Tech. Professional Education	0	0	0	0	0	0
Class for Girls	1	1	0	2	0	4
	0	0	0	0	8	8
Total	29	38	26	28	21	142

Action Plan.

#	Task	W E E K S												Person in charge	Remarks		
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12				
1	Budget Analysis	■															
2	Coordination with the Board of Education	■															
3	Preparing the compilation booklet		■	■													
4	Preparation for the poster		■	■	■												
5	Preparation for the photo cards.		■	■	■												
6	Hurghada Training for teachers.					■											
7	Hurghada Training for students					■											
8	Safaga Training for teachers						■										
9	Safaga Training for students						■										
10	Qusier Training for teachers							■									
11	Qusier Training for students							■									
12	Marsa Allam Training for teachers								■								
13	Marsa Allam Training for students								■								
14	Hurghada Field trips									■							
15	Safaga Field trips										■						
16	Qusier Field trips											■					
17	Marsa Allam Field trips												■				