

SWOT analysis of St Katherine Protectorate

Strengths:

- The topography and the beauty of Nature of the area
- The heritage and Bedouin experience.
- Rich biodiversity
- Presence of important religious and cultural sites
- Presence of trained staff
- Co-operation between Bedouin and the Management Unit of the Protectorate
- Activity of some management programmes (veterinary – health)
- The European Union project fund and the presence of a professional manager during the period of the project (Dr John Grainger)
- Motivation of the staff to protect the area

Weaknesses:

- The entrance fees are not helping or serving the Protectorate
- Delaying in the approval and functioning of the plan for the Visitor Centre
- Not enough funds and resources to implement the management plan
- The deficit in the number of staff needed (researchers, technicians, drivers, rangers)
- Not enough awareness about the Protectorate to increase income; no annual fees for permanent visitors
- The deficiency of published papers about the Protectorate
- Not enough communications or services in tourist sites
- Not enough facilities in the Protectorate to allow staff to do their work in a professional manner
- The mechanism for imposing permits for biota collection are not effective in the Protectorate
- There is neither replacement nor maintenance for the Protectorate cars
- The Mount Sinai programme is not supported (hygiene, injuries, tracks etc.).
- The presence of the town of St Katherine inside the Protectorate

Opportunities:

- Ecotourism
- Entrance fees to the Protectorate
- The presence of current projects in the region (Operation Wallacea – BioMAP – Medicinal Plants Project)
- Presence of NGOs such as Heritage and Nature Conservation
- Private Bedouin projects e.g. use of medicinal plants, drying vegetables and fruits.
- The Monastery as a place and source of attraction, with religious and historical value for this area
- Presence of specialized ecological facilities (e.g. Ecolodge)
- Presence of many attractive places for tourism in the Protectorate

Threats:

- Salaries are very low in relation to the nature of the work e.g. fieldwork under tough and demanding conditions, especially for specific jobs, such as the community guards and some temporary workers
- There are no proper official or accommodation buildings for the staff
- Delays in receiving the annual budget, which is in any case deficient in relation to need

- Uncontrolled tourist activities and projects
- City council activities pay no attention to environmental concerns, for example:
 - Introduction of alien plants for town ornamentation
 - Random stratification and establishing of metallic roads
 - Un-planned buildings in the city with no environmental awareness
 - Noise pollution produced by mobile sellers within the town
 - Random and intense lighting in the town and other areas
- Egyptian and some foreign tourists (especially from Cyprus, Malaysia and Africa) leaving rubbish behind them
- Increasingly workers come from outside Sinai to obtain employment
- The city agricultural management unit is not effective enough to face the agricultural problems of Bedouins
- There are no maintenance programmes for maintaining the efficiency of the available facilities
- The occurrence of injuries and sometimes death on Mt Sinai or elsewhere, and the lack of an emergency evacuation plan
- The general services in the town are inadequate, and the available ones are very bad (transportation– education – medical services)
- There is no coordination between different decision-making authorities
- Delay in cross-ministerial decisions concerning urgent environmental issues (e.g. Visitor Centre)
- Absence of enough support from the Nature Conservation Sector and the Environmental Affairs Agency
- Lack of training programmes for staff; sometimes the wrong people are nominated
- Centralization of the budget especially for major items (e.g. equipment, furniture)
- Changing the system of sending salaries leads to delays in receipt by employees
- Absence of a functional airport in St Katherine
- Absence of any system of encouragement within the NCS for good employees
- Deficiency of water resources in the area and absence of a management plan for water use
- Inactivation of the planning system for building structures in the protectorate
- Presence of prohibited agricultural activities, mainly drug fields
- Spread of responsibilities between different authorities with no clear distinction for the role of each party (e.g. Monastery – city council – protectorate – security offices – monuments and architecture offices, etc.).
- Some of the activities of the Monastery are not environmentally responsible e.g. establishment of random gardens, digging wells, etc.
- Too much bureaucracy and too many permissions required from different offices to encourage the international tourism industry

SWOT analysis of Gulf of Aqaba National Parks

Strengths:

- All parks are well connected and easy to reach via the water
- The great biodiversity richness of the area
- Highly trained staff who can cope with their daily tasks
- Adequacy and abundance of buildings and accommodation facilities for the staff
- The geographic position and the unique topography of the area
- The richness of economic resources through several activities within the Protectorates
- Presence of opportunities to conduct unique scientific research

Weaknesses:

- Absence of a comprehensive management plan
- Lack of both the definition and the role of the Protectorates; their staff have no clear terms-of-reference for their duties
- Lack of ability to determine work priorities
- The low level of the new temporary-employee salary
- Shortage of scientific rangers who are doing research
- The deficiency of budget and resources
- Absence of a budget for maintenance of the equipment and infrastructure
- Absence of an emergency plan (for oil spills, for example)
- Absence of rules to regulate and integrate the work with that of other Ministries and Authorities, and a general lack of communication
- Ignoring collecting fees for the management unit for Ras Mohamed National Park
- Scarcity of the scientific research about South Sinai and the Red Sea
- The area of Taba National Park is huge, but it has very few resources or trained staff
- Absence of a public-awareness programme in some areas

Opportunities:

- Presence of Bedouin
- Presence of NGOs
- Presence of opportunities for fund-raising within the region

Threats:

- The gradual increase in the number of tourists within the region
- Misunderstanding of some decision-makers about the nature of the area; no clear view about how to manage and conserve natural resources
- Centralization of decisions, even minor ones
- The Protectorate professionals are not asked to be involved in decision-making concerning their Protectorates
- Absence of an incentive system for encouraging good people and important work
- Misuse of the benefit-right scheme with public and private sectors
- Lack of coordination with resources users (e.g. Ministry of Tourism, Fisheries Authorities, etc.)
- Absence of a plan to sustain the capacity of the staff
- Lack of mechanisms to sustain the work of foreign projects after they finish
- Lack a mechanism to secure coordination and integration with other authorities

