
Preface

The *Jordan River*, the river with the lowest elevation in the world, originates on the slopes of Jabal al-Sheikh (Mount Hermon) on the Syrian–Lebanese–Israeli border, flows southward through northern Israel to the Sea of Galilee, and then divides Israel and the Palestinian West Bank on the west from the Kingdom of Jordan on the east, before flowing into the Dead Sea at an elevation of about 427 m below sea level.

The *lower part of the Jordan River* is the section of the Jordan River that flows between the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea. As it flows out of the Sea of Galilee, intercepts with the Yarmouk River and next meanders for 200 km through the Jordan Valley down to the Dead Sea. The Jordan Valley, the focus of this report, is shared by Jordan, Israel, and Palestine and is renowned around the world for its remarkable geographic features, its ancient civilizations, and its religious relevance. The environmental and ecological values of the valley have declined drastically during the last sixty years: Its water has been diverted; its ecological systems demised; and its natural absorption capacities have been pushed to the limits. Large flows of untreated wastewater and saline water are discharged directly into the valley, and substantial parts of the valley are no longer accessible for the inhabitants who live there.

Water and Environment Development Organization (WEDO) under the umbrella of EcoPeace Middle East in partnership with the Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI) and the Global Nature Fund (GNF) has assigned Royal HaskoningDHV and its partner MASAR in Jordan, CORE Associates in Palestine, and DHVMED in Israel to develop this Regional NGO Master Plan for Sustainable Development in the Jordan Valley. The overall objective of this project is to promote peace and prosperity within the Jordan Valley. The specific objective of the plan is to identify feasible interventions that will restore the valley's environmental and ecological values within a realistic financial and economic framework, in which a future State of Palestine will be recognized as one of the three riparians to the Jordan Valley, side by side with Israel and Jordan with all three nations entitled to an equitable share of the valley's resources. The plan assumes furthermore free access to the valley for all people within appropriate and negotiated security arrangements. This plan will be used as an advocacy tool toward Jordanian, Israeli, and Palestinian decision makers and the international community for the implementation of the proposed interventions.

An estimated 500,000 Jordanians, 49,000 Israelis, and 56,000 Palestinians live today on both sides of the Jordan River. This Master Plan provides first a summary of the current status of the valley in terms of its land use and its natural and cultural resources; next it describes the people living in the valley, including their socioeconomic circumstances and the different economic sectors and related water demands; and it describes the current governance of the valley. Next, this Master Plan shows projected population and economic figures for the years 2025 and 2050 and related land and water requirements, and it identifies the major challenges to be addressed.

Next, it presents a series of strategic objectives for the valley including related interventions that aim at restoring the basin's water, environmental and ecological challenges within a realistic financial and economic framework, leading to a sustainable and economic prosperous region within a safe and politically stable environment, and a healthy and lively Jordan River.

Finally, it described the organizational, financial, and planning aspects related to these interventions. This Master Plan has been developed in close cooperation with a number of important stakeholders in the valley. During a series of workshops, these stakeholders have been consulted and participated in discussions to identify the major problems in the valley and to formulate and prioritize the appropriate interventions to address these problems.



Royal HaskoningDHV
in partnership with:



MASAR Jordan
CORE Associates
DHVMED



EcoPeace Middle East / WEDO / FoE*
in co-operation with:



SIWI – Stockholm International Water Institute



GNF – Global Nature Fund



European Union's
Sustainable Water
Integrated
Management
(SWIM Program)

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* The future scenarios and strategic objectives for the Jordan Valley Master Plan presented in this report reflect the vision of EcoPeace Middle East, and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the European Union, project partners or the individual consultants and their sub-consultants

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