



UNDP Jordan Signs an Agreement with Aqaba Touristic Glass Bottom Boats Society to Conduct a Citizen Science Fisheries Management Data Gathering Campaign

In the framework of the ENI CBC MED supported Project Mediterranean Forum for Applied Ecosystem-Based Management (MED4EBM) and emphasizing the Project's objectives of enhancing local communities' contribution, the Lead Beneficiary of the Project, UNDP Jordan Country Office signed an agreement on Sunday September 3rd 2023 with Aqaba Touristic Glass Bottom Boats Society to conduct a Glass Bottom Boats Site Seeing Management Data Gathering Campaign during the period September 03rd – October 02nd 2023. The Society represents about 200 glass bottom boats owners and operators who will actively participate for the first time in collecting field data concerning underwater glass bottom boats site seeing in Aqaba, Jordan. To facilitate the process the society assigned one young female specialist and three young data gathering assistants. The data gathering campaign focuses on the opportunities and challenges faced by this traditional craft, which has a high heritage value and provides livelihoods to around 200 families. Tourism is a main engine of the economy in the Jordanian coastal area. Aqaba is the primary tourist destination for both local and foreign tourists, due to its world-renowned coral reefs and diving sites; sandy beaches with favorable climate; rich history and culture; and nearby mountain and desert landscapes. Touristic Glass Bottom Boats Play a considerable role and have considerable contribution to tourism in Aqaba. This makes proper management of this activity high priority at the official and public levels. MED4EBM Project involves two other citizen science data gathering campaigns that will run parallel to the Glass Bottom Boats Site Seeing data gathering. These also relate to high heritage value and livelihoods crafts in the coastal environment, focusing on tourism: leisure and awareness diving and sustainability of living resources: fishing practices and fisheries management in Aqaba.

The agreement between UNDP Jordan Country Office and Touristic Glass Bottom Boats Society will result in detailed daily data on visitation frequency of touristic boats sites in the Jordanian sector of the Gulf of Aqaba, map the distribution of touristic boats loads in terms of guest numbers, biographic info, experience adherence to environmental directives, environmental conditions at visitation sites through glass bottom boats operators observations and note taking and descriptions of visitation sites attractions, facilities and accessibility. Three data analysis reports will also be produced discussing the status of glass bottom boats visitation sites based on the collected data findings. Despite being short and compact, this initiative gains significant importance as it sets the ground and provides the necessary protocols for long term monitoring targeting better understanding of touristic glass bottom boats under water site seeing. Another important added value of this campaign is that the data collected will be entered in the database that MED4EBM Project provided as data collected for the first time and will be analyzed using the Integrated Special Planning (ISP) software that the project has also introduced at the four target areas where it is implemented in Jordan, Lebanon, Italy, and Tunisia.



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