

The Karak Environmental Sustainability Plan (KESP)

Executive Summary

The Karak Environmental Sustainability Plan (KESP) is the **first strategic document** addressing environmental sustainability at the Governorate level in Jordan. It represents the result of the collaborative effort facilitated by the Princess Basma Community Centre in Karak belonging to the Jordan Hashemite Fund for Human Development (JOHUD). This document was developed by the Environmental Sustainability Group, specifically established by the Governor of Karak for that purpose. The process was supported by the Sustainable Use of Ecosystem Services in Jordan Project implemented by GIZ and executed at the case studies level by GOPA Worldwide Consultants; both working under the National umbrella of the Ministry of Environment.

The document preparation team included more than twenty representatives from the Governorate Development Unit, the departments of Environment, Agriculture, Tourism, Water, Education, the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature, Mu'tah University, the Municipality of Karak, three local Community Based Organizations, and five representatives from the Youth forum in Karak; in addition to the JOHUD and the GOPA project team. The plan preparation team included five women members.

KESP was prepared in line with the national development directives elaborated in the Jordan 2025 vision and strategy, and is intended to be one of the pilot models adopting the principles and applications of the Royal vision for the decentralization of governance through fostering the principles of environmental sustainability, local participation, and social equity in the management of governorate natural resources.

It is hoped that the KESP would be adopted at the local and national level as a reference document in the implementation of local development agendas of the Karak Governorate. In particular, it is anticipated to guide the decision-making process associated with socio-economic development to be based on strong local communities' engagement, while including women and youth as priority sectors, as well as ecosystem based planning and monitoring.

The plan presents a new approach to the Governorate of Karak based on identifying, addressing, and understanding "the values" of the place as the backbone of its development program. These values represent the integrated sum of the socio-economic and environmental aspects of the Governorate as the foundation for its long term development. The KESP attempts to draw a new map of the Governorate based on the understanding of the bio-physical construct rationale in support of its administrative and social classification. The KESP tries to interpret the Governorate on the basis of its ecosystem services, thus presenting a development alternative which supports the concept of sustainability, ultimately aiming to protect the right of future generations in their natural resources.

It is important to note that the KESP is NOT an environmental protection plan for the Governorate of Karak. In no way does it represent a replacement of the existing local and national frameworks adopted by the Ministry of Environment. Alternatively, the KESP presents a development model founded on the sustainability concept leading to the foreseen social and economic prosperity sought by the government for its citizens. The Plan will be carried out in an integrated manner which aims to mainstream environmental sustainability into the development sectors at local levels while providing concrete recipes which contribute to achieving the local development goals and impacts for improving quality of life of the inhabitants of the Governorate.

The structure of the 35-page document was divided into nine sections as follows:

- **An introduction** presenting the rationales and process of the preparation of the document, including a historical overview and brief description of Karak today.
- **An overview of the social frameworks** of the Karak Governorate with focus on population, education, health, income and labor, and infrastructure.
- **An overview of the economic frameworks** of the Karak Governorate with focus on agriculture, tourism, and mining.
- **A detailed description of the biophysical aspects** of the Karak Governorate including the biogeographical zones, main ecosystems, and key conservation programs; with a focus on biodiversity and water resources.
- **A description of the plan approach** in terms of mainstreaming environment into development planning.
- **The logical framework for the strategy development** including a description of the main problems facing environmental sustainability in Karak, a description of the various ecosystem services of the Governorate, a description of the challenges facing the sustainability of the various ecosystem services, a description of the implications of the problem at the local level from an ecological as well as socio-economic point of view, and a brief analysis of the direct and root causes for the environmental sustainability problems.
- **A vision statement** for the Governorate of Karak in regard to Environmental Sustainability. The adopted vision statement was: “By 2025, the Governorate of Karak will be a leading governorate in environmental sustainability through adopting the best national standards related to good governance, participation, and effectiveness.” The vision statement was attached to a set of factors influencing its successful achievement, as follows:

- Adequate levels of national political and institutional support as part of the national development agenda.
 - Adequate levels of local support – individual and group – for the concept of sustainability and the readiness of all stakeholders to share the responsibilities as well as the benefits.
 - Sufficient capacities – institutional and technical – to fulfill the requirements of sustainability planning and management.
 - Active participation of all stakeholders – especially local communities – under the principles of social equity and transparency.
 - Adequate levels of financial resources and investment needed for mainstreaming environmental sustainability into the development processes.
 - Adequate solutions - economical and scientifically ratified - for minimizing environmental degradation and providing alternative approaches to meeting sectoral development goals, including the rehabilitation of deteriorated ecosystem services.
- **A set of strategic goals** for achieving the long term environmental sustainability vision, as follows:
- To develop the legislative and institutional frameworks required for ensuring adequate levels of environmental sustainability.
 - To enhance local and national awareness and consciousness towards the environmental sustainability quest.
 - To build local institutional and technical capacities in the fields related to mainstreaming environmental sustainability into development planning and management.
 - To strengthen local participation in achieving the anticipated vision and sharing the costs and benefits of sustainability.
 - To adopt a set of demonstrative programs addressing the priorities for environmental sustainability in the various development sectors.
- **A detailed five year work plan (2016-2020)** for the implementation of the KESP under the five strategic goals. The plan includes more than 35 strategic actions and programs.

Finally, the plan included provision for the proposed steps and actions needed for the **institutional anchorage of the KESP** within the local decision making frameworks as well as **the coordination of its implementation and monitoring**.