

**TO DO! 2002  
Contest Socially Responsible Tourism**

***Award Winner***

***DANA NATURE RESERVE***

in  
Al-Qadisiyya, At-Tafila District, Jordan

represented by:

**Mr. Mohammad Al Qawaba'a  
Manager of the Dana Nature Reserve**

**Rationale for the Award**

by

**Dr. Hermann Warth**

## **Abbreviations**

CDF	Community Development Fund
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
DEC	Dana Ecotourism Cooperative
DNR	Dana Nature Reserve
GEF	Global Environment Facility
HSS	Hanns-Seidel-Foundation
IUCN	International Union for the Conservation of Nature
JTB	Jordanian Tourism Board
NRO	Non-governmental organisation
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
RSCN	The Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature
SDC	Swiss Development Cooperation
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Investigations into the candidacy of the DANA NATURE RESERVE (DNR) took place between January 22nd and 31st, 2003 at the Kingdom of Jordan. At the request of the Study Institute for Tourism and Development the data concerning the concept and objectives of the project as stated in the contest documents could be verified in situ without any problem. The task of the appraiser was to judge the tourism component of the DANA NATURE RESERVE in the community of Al-Qadisiyya in the district At-Tafila in southern Jordan. The project application for the TO DO! 2002 contest was submitted by the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature (RSCN).

The authorised appraiser proposes that the DANA NATURE RESERVE be awarded the TO DO! price at the ITB 2003.

## **2. BACKGROUND**

### **2.1 Wadi Dana and surroundings**

One can define the Wadi Dana area in southern Jordan as an historic landscape where man and nature have been co-existing for centuries. In ecological terms the area is of great importance. Within a range of 20 kilometres the terrain drops by 1.650 m to 50 m below sea level (1,600 m altitude in Al Qadisiyya, minus 50 m in Grega in the Wadi Araba). The different altitudinal zones provide habitat for a rich fauna and flora. Twenty-five plant and animal species that are endangered all around the world live in the craggy main and smaller wadis, protected from wind and water erosion. The DANA NATURE RESERVE in its core

zone is state territory, surrounded by a so-called buffer zone which is partly privately and partly state-owned.

## 2.2 The population

In its central zone DANA NATURE RESERVE stretches over a surface of 308 square kilometres (Lake of Constance 439 square km). Fourteen Bedouin tribes live in the buffer zone surrounding the nature reserve and in the core zone itself which have been using this area for centuries to eke out their livelihood (animal keeping, firewood, hunt). There are altogether some 15,000 people.

Even today 52 families live off animal keeping (sheep and goats), taking their animals back to their houses or tents in the evening. Bigger locations are Dana/Qadisiyya and Grega. But some Bedouin families continue to live in tents within the nature reserve, east of Grega and south of Qadisiyya, respectively (see map).

Members of most of the other families are employed by the army, the police or local government, in the industry (particularly cement and potash factories) and in the building industry. Others are self-employed, and some are unemployed. The formerly nomadic Bedouins have for the most part settled down in the locations mentioned above. This process began in the middle of the last century. The process of settling down and the turning away from a subsistence economy has led to social upheavals: The traditional social safety nets and co-operation mechanisms gave way to individualisation, rampant rivalry and to some extent also to nepotism. A number of Sheiks have lost their authority and their integrating function for the tribe. The former readiness to a way of life of self-sustenance has turned to the widespread attitude of hoping that problems are solved from outside or from third parties, respectively.

The obvious consequence of the disintegration of traditional structures can be seen from the poorly kept agricultural areas of Dana and the decay of most of the 500 houses in the location: All the members of a family are entitled to a share of the heritage; but since in most cases the power to a common settlement is lacking, the houses and fields of Dana are rather heading towards a sad future.

The concepts and activities described from item 3 must be seen against this background.

## 2.3 Tourism offers and infrastructure

The DANA NATURE RESERVE belongs to the main attractions of tourism in Jordan, apart from Jerash, Petra and Wadi Rum. It is favourably situated: In less than a two-hours car drive one can reach the Dead Sea, Petra, Wadi Rum and Aqaba.

At first sight Dana looks very attractive, a village situated at 1100 m altitude in the upper third section of Wadi Dana, but in fact it is largely dilapidated and abandoned, the beautiful terrace gardens in the eastern part of the location have gone rather wild. Most inhabitants have moved to modern houses in Qadisiyya situated at an even higher altitude (1 600 m). Some return to Dana during the summer months.

There are nine hiking trails with a length of 1 to 16 km stretching through the DANA NATURE RESERVE demanding 1 to 6 hours hiking time.

Dana houses the administration, three workshops, guest houses (23 beds), meeting room for about 25 people and the information centre of the DNR. In addition, DNR has a big camping site in the area named Rummana (Bedouin tents with up to 60 resting places/comfortable mattresses). In Feinan a lodge (50 beds) is presently being built by the Royal Society for the

Conservation of Nature. It is envisaged to set up two further camping sites. In addition an observation restaurant at the eastern edge of the Wadi Dana is presently under construction. Later on the ownership will be transferred to the local Dana Ecotourism Cooperative (DEC). (As to the DEC please refer to chapter 4).

Nearly all of the 80 families of Dana/Qadisiyya are members of the DEC. Since the families involved own different amounts of cooperative shares they will share in the profits according to their holdings. The DEC manages a simple, clean hotel with 26 beds in Dana. The manager, a cook and waiter, who is also responsible for the room service, are permanently employed. Two tour guides are paid according to their assignments. The DEC owns a small bus which operates a regular shuttle service between Dana and Qadisiyya. Two small, open trucks facilitate the transport of tourists from and to Feinan and Rummana. In addition there is the two-storey Tower Hotel in Dana, run by a former DEC member with a surprisingly low degree of socio-cultural sensitivity (16 beds).

### **3. THE DANA NATURE RESERVE – HISTORY AND OBJECTIVES**

#### **3.1 The role of the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature**

By appointment of the government the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature is the project holder of the DANA NATURE RESERVE. The RSCN is a non-governmental organisation (NGO) founded under the patronage of King Hussein in 1966. On behalf of the Jordanian government it is engaged in nature conservation in combination with socio-economic support of affected communities and communes with the slogan “Helping Nature Helping People”. So far the RSCN has been entrusted with 6 nature reserves. The RSCN has about 2,500 members, some among them are also from the Dana area. Every four years the members elect the board of directors composed of 11 persons. So far, none of the directors comes from Dana (see organisation chart in the appendix).

#### **3.2. The DANA NATURE RESERVE and its development (1993 to 2000)**

##### **The deficits in the first phase**

In 1976 the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) identified 12 valuable habitats in Jordan, among which also the Wadi Dana region.

In 1989 the RSCN agreed with the Ministry of Agriculture to administer the state-owned land of the Wadi Dana region.

From 1991 a group of prosperous well-meaning women from Amman, “Friends of Dana” , has been supporting the Dana population under the umbrella of the RSCN with around 500,000 US dollars (renovation of mosque and houses (65 houses), road repair, fruit processing, distribution of clothes and foodstuffs) – but without any prior socio-economic analysis and without asking for any contribution on the part of the people involved.

In 1993 the DANA NATURE RESERVE was legally declared to be a nature reserve. The stated objective was to protect biodiversity. The implementation of this goal started in the traditional style: Nature conservation without the participation and compensation of the population, in fact even against their will. As a consequence there was violence against material assets.

## Re-thinking in the second phase

As a signatory of the Biodiversity Convention in the wake of the Rio process of 1992, the Kingdom of Jordan received contributions from the Global Environment Facility (GEF) in 1994, a fund of the World Bank and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The DANA NATURE RESERVE was to receive altogether 1.13 million US dollars. However, the GEF criteria require that with all pending nature conservation measures the interests of the affected population must be taken into account. From now on the population has gradually been involved. Through consultations and compensations programmes such as:

- Alternative income generation (e.g. through the establishment of a number of workshops for jewellery or leather, soap production or fruit processing)
- Marketing support
- Share of income gained through the tourism industry
- Increased employment of local staff (meanwhile all 63 people employed in the DNR come from the Wadi Dana region, 29 in the above mentioned workshops, 34 in the park management and tourism sector)
- Support of the Dana Ecotourism Cooperative (DEC) – see chapter 4
- Support of organisations in the surrounding villages through a community liaison officer whose tasks are the identification of development activities and fundraising for the implementation of the respective measures.

Two staff of the RSCN headquarters were remarkably open when they analysed the mistakes made and the steps towards a stronger participation of the population in the article “Local People in Jordan Protected Areas: Learning from our Mistakes” which appeared in 1999.

Still, the RSCN headquarters in Amman continued to exercise a strong leadership role in matters such as employment of personnel, designing plans, land use regulations and their implementation, focusing activities on Dana and its nearer surroundings, etc.

## Participation in the third phase (2001 – 2003)

In 1999 the project character (national and international funds for the DANA NATURE RESERVE) came to an end. At this point income from tourism – about 200,000 Euro per year – covered all costs. In concrete terms: The entire costs for the park management, including 34 salaries (for park management and staff in tourism activities) can be covered through income from tourism. A major part is earned through entrance fees of the presently 35.000 visitors per year. Half of them are Jordanians and half foreign holiday makers. Local people pay 1.50 Euro, foreign visitors 7.50 Euro.

To be able to stand on their own feet economically boosted the emancipation of the DANA NATURE RESERVE staff. Further training measures of the DNR manager and community liaison officer in methods of Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA)<sup>1</sup> supported this process which is described in the next chapter in more detail.

## 4. APPRAISAL

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<sup>1</sup> PRA is participatory development approach aiming at the self-determination and mobilization of local groups and at the decision-making and ownership of marginalized groups in local development initiatives. Ideally it is the local participants that are in charge of the analysis, planning and the management of the measures during a PRA process.

The comparison of the approach and activities of the DANA NATURE RESERVE with the TO DO criteria for a socially responsible tourism results in the following appraisal:

**Contest criterion:**

**Taking into account the different interests and needs of the local population through participation**

The tourism component is an integral part of the overall concept of the DANA NATURE RESERVE. The park management is to cover itself through income from tourism, at the same time the local population is to profit from gains – as a compensation for the limited user rights within the nature reserve.

Since the government owns the DNR only the degree of participation of the local people on a partnership basis reached so far can be analysed and judged. This is characterised as follows:

- From among the 63 employees of the DNR 26 are working in the tourism sector – as mentioned before, all from the Wadi Dana region. Therefore, a high degree of participation in the sense of ownership has been reached in the field of personnel.
- The last two annual plans were elaborated by the staff of the DNR and approved by the headquarter, that for 2003 was approved without any amendments.<sup>2</sup> The latter one includes assignments such as the improvement of communication with the local people, the catching up with PRA measures in the Feinan region, the setting up of a Dana Council for the protection of culture and architectural style as well as the introduction of a systematic communication and documentation structure between the different DNR sections.
- In the Annual Plan 2003 the tourism team made the development of the second five-year tourism master plan its task. According to the DNR manager special emphasis is put on the analysis and improvement with regard to local participation.
- Planning takes place in steps from the bottom up: Each section of the DNR (DNR management, tourism, socio-economic section) develops an annual plan of its own. This is then combined into a common Annual Plan which is passed on to the RSCN headquarters in Amman for approval.
- The items in the annual plan related to tourism are implemented by the staff of the DNR, but increasingly also through the aforementioned local Dana Ecotourism Cooperative. More on this subject further down.
- There is regular monitoring on the part of the DNR leadership. Records are taken of these meetings.

**Contest criterion:**

**Strengthening the awareness among the local people with regard to the chances and risks of tourism development in their everyday economic, social and cultural life.**

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<sup>2</sup> This does not mean however that the DNR team is completely protected from interventions of the headquarters. The headquarters decided and implemented the construction of a 50 bed lodge in Feinan at the western entrance of the DNR without a PRA and outside the measures envisaged in the Annual Plan 2002.

- The population is aware of the economic chances and risks in tourism development. Since the DNR staff live with their families in the village, this issue is also a topic in the domestic realm (one person represents five to six family members).
- In order to participate in the upcoming tourism industry the local Dana Ecotourism Cooperative (DEC) was formed shortly after the establishment of the DANA NATURE RESERVE in 1994. From its inception it was supported by the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature. The people are well aware of the seasonal and political imponderability of the tourism industry and therefore count on the diversification of income. Either through the four DNR workshops already mentioned (a third of whose products are marketed in connection with the tourism business), or through activities of the community liaison officer, paid by the DANA NATURE RESERVE, who assists local initiatives (outside the nature reserve) in creating income possibilities and who tries to facilitate start-up capital.
- The same community liaison officer also regularly visits all of the 64 schools in the region and engages in awareness-raising with regard to ecology and tourism. Didactic material needed for this purpose is available. Forty-six Eco school clubs with 20 to 40 students each were formed. They camp out in holiday camps in the DANA NATURE RESERVE, collect rubbish and sort out reusable material for the recycling plant in Amman.
- On the socio-cultural plane the families try to strike a proper balance. On the one hand the 27 female members are allowed to work outside their homes (in the different workshops of the DNR), on the other hand attempts are made to preserve/control the socio-cultural identity of the location of Dana. For instance by setting up a council for the protection of culture and architectural style.<sup>3</sup>

**Contest criterion:**

**Participation of a broad local population strata in the positive economic, social and cultural impact of tourism.**

Economic impact:

Since the financial contribution of the GEF the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature is aware that it has to satisfy expectations set in it. The tourism component of the DANA NATURE RESERVE makes the following contribution to compensate for exploitation rights which the local people have lost due to the formation of the nature reserve.

- Thirty-four salaries of DNR employees are paid with income from the tourism business. Another 29 employees get their income from the sale of products of the four workshops (silver jewellery, fruit, soap, leather goods).
- Five percent of the income from tourism (entrance fees, fees for guides, income from board and lodging) are paid to a Community Development Fund (CDF) which so far stands at 7.500 Euro.
- The Dana Ecotourism Cooperative (DEC) got an amount of 30,000 US dollars from GEF funds for the renovation of its hotel in Dana. Another 20.000 US Dollars are envisaged for the construction of an observation restaurant with a museum which will be handed over to the DEC. DEC's contribution to the construction of the restaurant consists of unpaid voluntary work.

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<sup>3</sup> The members envisaged are: the Department of Tourism and the District Government's Department of Environment, the mayor, the chairperson of the DEC, the manager of the Tower Hotel, the manager of the DNR

- Fifty percent of the entrance fees of those tourists who also spend the night at the hotel of the Dana Ecotourism Cooperative – about 300 per year – are transferred to the DEC.<sup>4</sup>
- In addition: The DANA NATURE RESERVE buys the fruit needed for processing from the farmers living in the puffer zone surrounding the nature reserve.

#### Sociocultural impact:

- The entire DNR programme is run exclusively through local skilled workers (presently 63).
- Twenty-seven of the 29 workplaces are occupied by women. They produce for the tourism market but also beyond that.<sup>5</sup> They are considered to be ambassadors by the RSCN to disseminate the idea of “Helping Nature Helping People” to the families. An impact analysis carried at the end of 2000<sup>6</sup> describes through a number of interviews to what extent the work in the workshops has contributed to the emancipation of the women working there.
- Both tourist guides of the DEC were trained by the RSCN Dana.

#### Contest criterion:

#### **Guarantee of the attractiveness of jobs in tourism for the local people by improving working conditions in relation to payment, social security, working hours, education and further training.**

- Permanent employment is much in demand. Many of those interviewed prefer this secured income to an independent entrepreneurship. To get permanently employed they accept a certain dependency: work contracts, fixed salary and – in the case of those working in the workshops – purchase of raw material and marketing of the products through the RSCN in Amman. The written work contracts are in line with the Jordanian laws (notice can only be given in the case of drunkenness, criminal action or unexcused absence from work for more than ten days), the monthly pay is in accordance with the average pay in Jordan (between 300 and 450 Euro).
- The work performance is jointly assessed by the employer and the employee every year, something which is not usual practice in Jordan.
- The DNR staff in the tourism sector gets a bonus from tourism income on top of their salaries. The staff of the workshops are given a share of the profits from the sale of their products in addition to their salaries.
- The courses offered for further training are very much appreciated by the staff and contribute to the high feeling of corporate identity. In the annual plan for 2003 it is explicitly envisaged that the personnel identifies its training needs itself, and that it elaborates and implements a plan to this effect.

<sup>4</sup> In view of the 300 overnight stays per year the DNR rest-house is not so much seen as a competitor (because of the higher prices there) but rather the cheap Rummana camping site of the DNR with up to 60 overnight stays daily during high season.

<sup>5</sup> 35 % of the products are sold on the tourism market, the rest through purchases of the palace, big firms, hotels and through export.

<sup>6</sup> Knight, Amberly (2001), Combining Conservation and Development: An evaluation of the socio-economic Strategies of the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature in Dana, Jordan, Brigham Young University, p. 119: “Many women who work with the RSCN feel that it has helped them to develop a sense of confidence and independence. As girls who stay at home all the time, they feel like an economic burden on the family and the society. When they work (sc. outside, they begin to realize that they can feed themselves.”

- So far more than 48 women have been working in the various workshops. If they leave the workshop because of marriage or for other reasons they take with them the asset of the training and education received.

**Contest criterion:**

**Enhancing local culture as well as the cultural identity of those living in tourism destination areas.**

- The building complex of the DANA NATURE RESERVE emphasises the beautiful architectural style of Dana village.
- The products in the workshops are developed with the landscape and tradition as a backdrop. Archaic rock paintings, animals and plants originating from this region serve as design patterns. Local fruit are processed to jam, juices and jellies. Local olives are used for soap production. Goat skins are used for the leather production. All of this is apt to enhance the attachment to the homeland and local culture.
- The continued interest of thousands of tourists in the location of Dana and the terraced gardens will surely revive the sense of preciousness on the part of the local population. There are first signs of families now living in Qadisiyya wanting to return to Dana.

**Contest criterion:**

**Avoidance or minimisation of social and cultural damage caused by tourism in destination areas**

- At the entrance to the DANA NATURE RESERVE each visitor is handed out a leaflet with guidelines to proper behaviour.
- Until recently a “book on etiquette” was also put in each room. New copies are being provided.
- Tour guides are encouraged to politely point out wrong behaviour to the visitors.
- As mentioned earlier the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature supports the formation of a local council for the protection of culture and architecture.

**Contest criterion:**

**Projects and Measures entered for the contest must be in line with the principles of environmental compatibility.**

- The approach followed by the DANA NATURE RESERVE is oriented towards the protection of an ecological balance – between nature and users. The latter are Bedouin families with seasonal grazing rights (with the exception of the innermost zone of the nature reserve) and of course domestic and foreign tourists.
- Rubbish is collected (also by school classes), sorted out, and reusable materials are transported to the recycling plant in Amman, some of it is processed in the jewellery workshop.
- For food processing only such fruit are being used which is grown in the terraced gardens of Dana without chemical fertiliser and pesticides. It is true though that the proof of purity for the products from the buffer zone is a difficult task.

- For the sake of protecting the biodiversity the visitors are only allowed to walk on the nine authorised paths; they must be accompanied by DNR personnel on eight of the nine paths. Nothing must be removed or taken from the reserve. Local people are allowed, with the exception of the core zone, to collect firewood.
- It must be mentioned, however, that the construction of the 50 bed lodge at the western entrance to DNR in Feinan (see footnote 3) is not in line with environmental standards – not only according to the appraiser. Here is a quotation from the DANA NATURE RESERVE Tourism Development Plan 1996 – 2001: “This area has high conservation and archaeological value, and intensive developments at Feinan should be prevented. The development of more sophisticated visitors’ reception facilities could be encouraged at the nearby village of Grega.”

**Criterion to safeguard the future:**

**Which measures/mechanisms assure the economic and institutional sustainability of the project?**

In terms of economy:

- Through the diversification of income (tourism, workshop production) the DANA NATURE RESERVE is standing on two feet, economically. If there is no major crisis in the tourism sector it might be possible to build up some reserves.

In terms of institution:

The Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature manages and uses state-owned land on behalf of the government.<sup>7</sup> As long as the government leaves this mandate with the RSCN, the institutional sustainability is guaranteed, but exclusively that one. The economic, ecological and socio-cultural sustainability depends on the quality of the RSCN management of the DNR and its buffer zones in co-operation with the people living there.

- Some Bedouins, mainly those who are living off grassland farming, have the feeling that they have lost their freedom and control over “their” land and “their” resources due to the restrictions in grazing rights and the ban on hunting.<sup>8</sup> For this reason, but also for the sake of subsidiarity, decentralisation and the commitment and attachment of the population it is recommended to continue treading the path of participation. It is also recommended to form a supervisory/steering committee of the DNR management. Represented in this committee should e.g. be sheikhs, the Ecotourism Cooperative, mayors of the buffer zone, the district government, the RSCN and perhaps the Jordanian chamber of Commerce. With the setting up of such a committee the RSCN would have an institutional partner at the local level.

<sup>7</sup> Therefore the RSCN shoulders sovereign functions, but in serious cases it delegates them to the traditional mediation instance of the Bedouins or to the local police.

<sup>8</sup> Interviews carried out by Amberly Knight at the end of 2000 revealed this psychological problem: “they feel like they have lost their land (one of the most important things in Middle Eastern culture) and their freedom. Those in the community are asking for three items from RSCN: income, support, and involvement.”

- With this partner the DANA NATURE RESERVE could be further developed on a long-term conceptual basis – for instance in the following direction:

(1) The Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature restricts itself to assignment commissioned by the government, namely, the protection and observation/documentation of biodiversity, a task which could be fulfilled together with the local people.

(2) The RSCN transfers the entire tourism component, including intensive training and further training elements, to the Dana Ecotourism Cooperative (DEC), to which other interested parties from other communities in the buffer zone should naturally also have access.

(3) The RSCN discusses the option with the staff of the workshops of becoming independent entrepreneurs which would naturally require a training in marketing and the mastering of the English language (internet marketing!), as well as the cooperation with experts from the most important markets (e.g. Amman, Petra, Wadi Rum, Akaba, Jerash).

In doing so the RSCN would still fulfil its mandate (1), but at the same time it would pass on a number of competencies to the local people, which in turn would enhance the latter's ownership of the DANA NATURE RESERVE. The RSCN would still have its vote through its representation in the supervising and steering committee.

The Community Liaison Officer urgently needs additional staff! His working area (both in terms of content and geography) is enormous, and he assumes great responsibility (3.1.3). So far it was Dana/Qadisiyya which has got the biggest share of economic support (ca. 6.000 persons). The other inhabitants of the buffer zone (about 9,000) deserve and explicitly anticipate equal consideration. This can just not be achieved with one single person who, on top of it, is also in charge of awareness raising in 64 schools

### **Conclusion:**

From the year 2001 it can be maintained that the different interests and needs of the local people with regard to planning and implementation of the measure DANA NATURE RESERVE are being considered/taken account of. The highly motivated DNR personnel recognise the principles of communication, transparency and participation, they practice them and are committed to abide by them and to develop them further. Although the sustainability of the project cannot be guaranteed in all areas, the appraiser suggests that the DANA NATURE RESERVE be awarded the TO DO! 2002.