



# HIMA

A METHODOLOGY  
FOR LOCAL  
INVOLVEMENT  
IN DISTINCTIVE  
LANDSCAPE  
MANAGEMENT

HIMA GUIDELINE MANUAL

PLACES MATTER, THEY MAP OUR LIVES

**HIMA**

A METHODOLOGY  
**FOR LOCAL  
INVOLVEMENT  
IN DISTINCTIVE  
LANDSCAPE  
MANAGEMENT**

HIMA GUIDELINE MANUAL

## ● EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Medscapes is a project to demonstrate the importance of landscape and establish a common approach towards its management and conservation in Mediterranean countries. MedScapes Project is funded by the “Mediterranean Sea Basin Programme” which is part of the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) and its financing instrument (European Neighborhood and Partnership Instrument - ENPI) for the period 2007-2013. MedScapes links together eight partners from four countries in the Mediterranean Basin for this two-year project: Cyprus, Greece, Jordan and Lebanon. Each country is represented by one non-governmental organization (NGO) and one University<sup>1</sup>, and are led by the Laona Foundation for the Conservation and Regeneration of the Cypriot Countryside. The project aims to support stronger protection of and reduced risk to the landscape heritage through the introduction of an integrative landscape character assessment (LCA) framework for enhanced and sustainable territorial planning and decision-making.

One of the project tasks, work package 6, promotes the Hima community-based approach for the conservation of distinctive landscapes in collaboration with the local communities. It is led by SPNL-Society for the Protection of Nature in Lebanon aiming to transfer the experience, where the community and stakeholders play an important role in the conservation,

management, and decision making on social, political, economic, natural, and cultural Level within a landscape area and to help adapt the Hima approach in the partner countries. This is done through promotion of the Hima participatory framework and its adaptation to the context of the partner countries. As a result of Work Package 6, this text, the Hima Guideline Manual as well as a short film documentary are being issued to represent the results and activities in the work package and the case studies of the different Hima sites that were established during the project. This will be useful as a capitalization tool for building on the project and moving from theory to action in the Hima sites in Cyprus, Greece, Jordan, and Lebanon. The manual targets audiences from all fields and sections of landscape activity, including such as environmental, cultural, social, policy-making, planning, law enforcement, and educational sectors.

The Hima Guideline Manual provides information on the Medscapes project, its aim and vision, and highlights briefly the content of the different work packages. The Manual, and as the title inters, focuses on the Hima approach and states the history, functions, and the revival of the concept by SPNL and its adoption by many national and international organizations. The mission and vision of the Society for the Protection of Nature in Lebanon is to call for the protection of nature, birds, and biodiversity, the sustainable use of natural resources, and working with communities for achieving the best protection measures. SPNL has been reviving the Hima concept for the past ten years to come up with what is called

---

<sup>1</sup> Laona Foundation and the Open University of Cyprus, Med-INA and University of the Aegean in Greece, Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature and the German Jordanian University, and Society for the Protection of Nature of Lebanon and the American University of Beirut.

today the “Hybrid Hima” that meet and adapt to the current environmental, cultural and social situation of a certain site today.

The Manual is the result of the Medscapes Work Package 6. It focuses on the community participative process (based on the traditional Arab Hima concept plus other participatory models and tools) to build on the results of the Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) carried out as the key task of Medscapes. In mapping and assessing the landscape character, there are always distinctive landscape sites of an importance that need specific measures for its protection. The Hima concept has been chosen as the participatory approach of the project as it has proven success over the past years in being able to conserve a site, yet keep the local community involved in the decision making and management of the site. The Hima training framework is composed of a Methodology outlined in Chapter V and its practical application in Chapter IV, as implemented in each project country.

A Hima training workshop was held in February 2015 for the project partners to transfer the knowhow on the implementation of the Hima participatory framework in their countries. The workshop took place in the town of Byblos- Jbeil where the methodology and tools for the implementation of the Hima were introduced. The site was used as a pilot area where all partners worked in groups to establish a Hima in Byblos, studying all aspects of the site. Afterwards the partners started applying the Hima approach in two selected sites per country. The SPNL team visited Jordan, Cyprus, and Greece during November 2015, for mentoring

visits to each of the Hima sites established in the partner countries.

Experience in partner countries has shown that the partners’ protected areas systems, such as SPA, Natura 2000, UNESCO geo-parks, etc, mandates the involvement and participation of the local communities in decision-making. But the current situation is often poorly implemented by informing the local communities only, through open meetings, rather than using an approach that involves the local community in analysing the situation and reaching its own conclusions. Based on the use of the Hima participatory framework during the case studies in the partner countries, **the Hima bottom up participatory approaches has proven to be a highly useful methodology to empower the local communities and ensure their engagement in managing their distinctive landscapes.** The Hima approach is inclusive, designed to preserve and protect ecosystems for the sustainable use of their resources by the people and for the people, while taking into account the social and cultural particularities of the area.

An account of the lessons learned, challenges faced, as well as recommendations for future implantation, are given in Chapters VII to X.



**Assad Adel Serhal**  
Director General, SPNL

# ● ● TABLE OF CONTENTS

● Executive Summary	2
●● List of Abbreviations	5
I. Introduction to the Medscapes Project	7
II. Background to HIMA Approach	11
III. Background to SPNL	15
IV. Background to the project's Work Package 6 Community participative process (based on Arab Hima concept plus other models) to build on the results of the Landscape Character Assessment	19
V. Hima Tools and Methodology	21
VI. Hima Practical Implementation: the experiences of Partner Countries	29
1. Cyprus: Mesogi village, Paphos	30
2. Cyprus: Arsos village, Limassol	34
3. Greece: Sigri, island of Lesvos,	40
4. Greece: Fourka (Epirus)	48
5. Jordan: Swaimah	58
6. Jordan: Alshaela	66
7. Lebanon: Tarshish,	72
8. Lebanon: Byblos (Jbeil)	76
VII. Lessons learned from the experience of partners	81
VIII. Challenges and obstacles faced	82
IX. Recommendations	83
X. Suggested adaptation of HIMA Framework and conclusions	84



# ● ● ● LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<b>LCA</b>	Landscape Character Assessment
<b>ENP</b>	European Neighborhood Policy
<b>ENPI</b>	European Neighborhood and Partnership Instrument
<b>SPA</b>	Special Protected Area
<b>NGO</b>	Non- Governmental Organization
<b>SPNL</b>	Society for the Protection of Nature in Lebanon
<b>UNESCO</b>	United Nation Education, Scientific, and Cultural Organization
<b>IBA</b>	Important Bird Area
<b>KBA</b>	Key Biodiversity Area
<b>IUCN</b>	International Union for Conservation of Nature
<b>WANA</b>	West Asia North Africa
<b>RAAKS</b>	Rapid Appraisal for Agricultural Knowledge
<b>EU</b>	European Union



Swaimeth - Jordan

Sigri - Greece



# ● INTRODUCTION TO THE MEDSCAPES PROJECT

**MedScapes** is an innovative project that comprises a multidisciplinary approach. It presupposes cross-border cooperation between neighboring Mediterranean European and third party countries. The project aims to develop and apply a best-practice methodology for East-Mediterranean Landscape Character Assessment and Mapping in selected pilot areas of Cyprus, Greece, Lebanon and Jordan. The ultimate goal is the promotion and use of Landscape Maps- by the competent authorities- as a tool for sustainable land-use decision-making and for protection of the natural and cultural heritage in the specific geographic context of particular landscapes.

**MedScapes** is a two-year project funded by the European Neighborhood and Partnership Instrument for the Mediterranean Sea Basin Joint Operational Programme (ENPI). Partners come from Cyprus, Greece, Jordan and Lebanon and are lead by the Laona Foundation for the Conservation and Regeneration of the Cypriot Countryside. Other project partners are the Open University Cyprus, the University of Aegean, the Mediterranean Institute for Nature and Anthropos from Greece, the American University of Beirut and the Society for the Protection of Nature of Lebanon, as well as the German Jordanian University and the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature of Jordan. .

The project comprises eight work packages, as follows:

- **Work package 1:** The project management and coordination which is the responsibility of partners on a country level and by Laona Foundation on a partner level. It includes the monitoring of progress, generation of project results, verification of achievement of project purpose/ overall objective and effective implementation of the capitalization strategy.

- **Work Package 2:** The production of a Communication - Visibility - Dissemination (CVD) plan to define common communication strategies managed at project level and implemented at partner level.

- **Work Package 3:** The development of a strategy securing effective mechanisms for capitalization of the project results, exploiting opportunities in the partner countries geographical area or beyond. The package aims to promote the project's results and experience through existing networks, programmes, and international organizations in the Mediterranean region, to seek funding opportunities and to integrate LCA into national and regional policies and extend it outside the pilot areas of the project. It also provides for the establishment of an East Mediterranean Landscape Observatory. This is a digital tool that will include the cultural, environmental, geological and other spatial elements of the landscape, providing a more holistic understanding of the dynamics created in different areas of each country.

- **Work Package 4:** The development and application of a best-practice methodology for identifying, mapping and assessing Landscape



Character in pilot areas, and the promotion of the results as a tool for sustainable land use decision-making and landscape-scale protection of the natural and cultural heritage in the East Mediterranean context.

- **Work Package 5:** The preparation of a cadre of fully trained and experienced Landscape Character Assessment practitioners in all partnership organizations followed by landscape mapping and character assessment work in all countries.

- **Work Package 6:** The Identification of two communities in each country where principles of land stewardship based on the Al-Hima concept are applied. This is for conserving distinctive landscape areas and supporting local communities and adopting best practice for using Hima type process in the wider East Mediterranean Basin.

- **Work Package 7:** The development of a spatial and risk-assessment model and Decision Support System that integrates the results of the Medscapes LCA allowing for a better understanding of the implications in land-use and conservation decision-making, in view of the natural and man-made risks to cultural and natural heritage.

- **Work Package 8:** The development of educational material about landscape character assessment to be targeted in post-graduate courses and through distance-learning; and also development of a series of actions that will capitalize on its work and add future value.



Arsos Folk Art museum - Cyprus



Alsha'el - Jordan

Alshaela - Jordan © Mohammed Malkawi / RSCN



## ● BACKGROUND TO HIMA APPROACH

Hima means “protected area” in Arabic. Hima is a traditional approach for the conservation of natural resources that has been prevalent in the Arabian Peninsula for more than 1500 years. It started with the tribal system and the need to secure their livelihood in harsh environment. The Hima approach evolved with the Islamic culture that added to it values such as equity, common good, equal opportunity, common decision making,... As it is an important cultural precedent for sustainably managing public natural resources, all individuals enjoy the rights of responsibly using these resources. In countries where the general population exploits the communal lands; the “tragedy of the commons” is widely spread. Thus, the Hima approach marks as a reliable and efficient approach that can produce significant positive results in terms of preserving natural resources, conserving ecosystems and supporting local communities.

During the twentieth century, political and socio economic changes in the region led to the weakening of the Hima system, exposing the environment to a multitude of anthropogenic transformations and degradation factors. The fall of the Ottoman Empire resulted in stronger control by smaller states that emerged in the region. Tribal land was nationalized and increased demands for products led to the abuse of natural systems. Sustainable systems of land use and management declined; and so did the diversity and health of habitats.

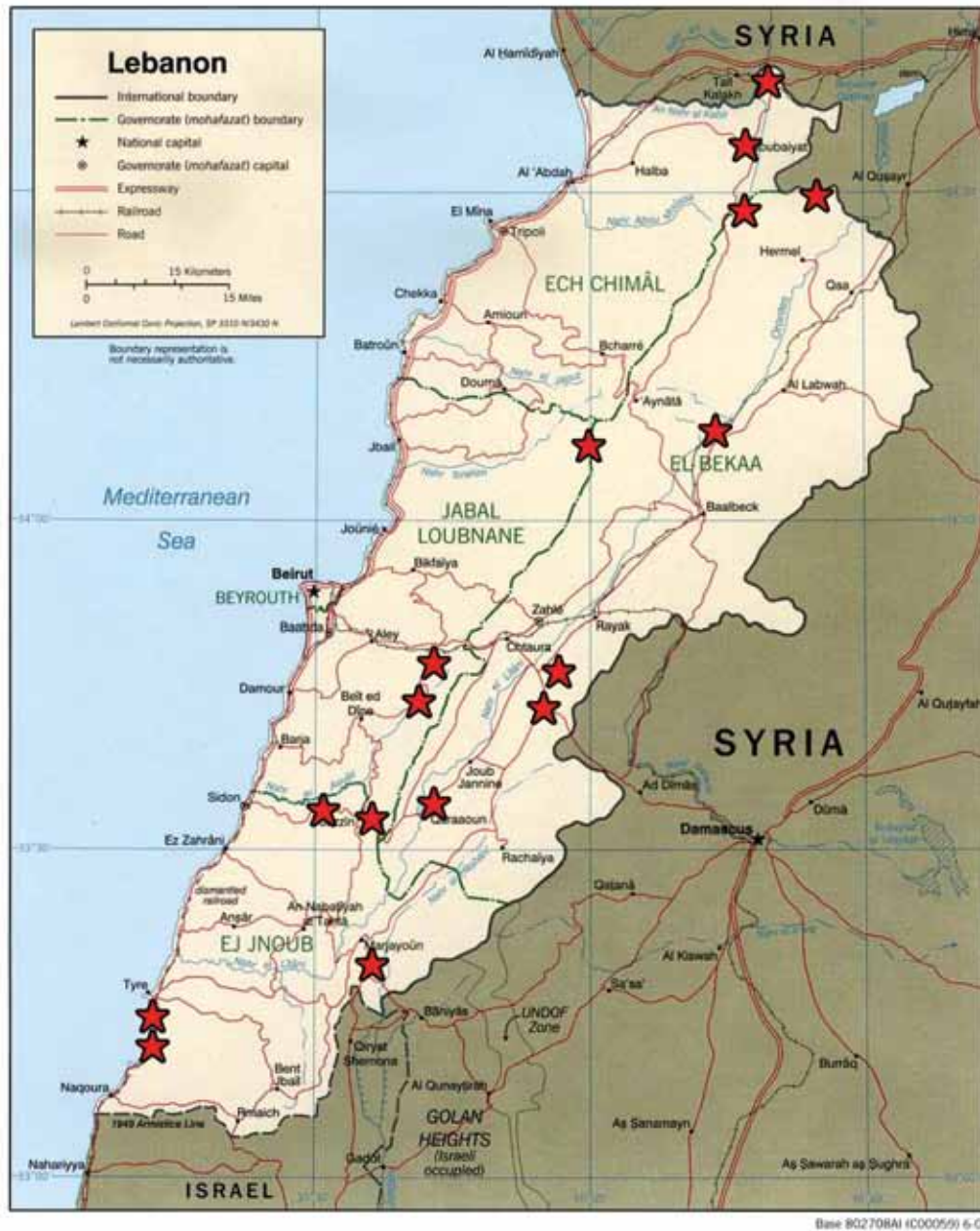
Recent years have witnessed several trends and campaigns in order to conserve nature and its resources, of which some were via the revival of the Hima concept with the local communities. The most successful revival attempts in the Middle East to date have taken place in Lebanon as conducted by SPNL. SPNL is merg-

ing between the values of the traditional Hima approach and the modern scientific approaches in nature conservation. Accordingly, SPNL aims through its work to promote and spread the sustainability concept among the communities using the Hima approach as the bridge to achieve sustainability. The Hima approach concentrates on empowering local communities, upgrading their livelihood, and promoting sustainable use of natural resources.

SPNL's leading role in nature conservation in Lebanon took a new path in 2004 with the discovery of the Hima concept. A new voyage of history research began to accompany the ornithological fieldwork, which consists essentially of declaring Important Bird Areas (IBAs), identifying Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs), and raising the capacity of local communities. The first Hima in Lebanon was announced in the village of EbelesSaqi in South Lebanon. Today, there are 16 official Himas established in Lebanon by SPNL declared on municipal land in collaboration with municipalities-local authorities (through municipal decisions); namely: Ebeles-Saqi in South of Lebanon, Anjar and KfarZabad wetland in the Bekaa region, Qoleileh and Mansouri in the southern coast, MaabourAbiad, Andket, Menjez and Charbein in Upper Akker-North Lebanon, Jdeidet El-Fakiha in Bekaa, Roum and Qaytouli in Jezzine, AinZebdeh, KherebetAnafar and Qaroun in West Bekaa, and Tarshish in Mount Lebanon.

SPNL's experience with the Hima revival initiative after eleven years of rigorous fieldwork and research resulted in great success stories in different parts of Lebanon. International recognition of these achievements was at its peak during the BirdLife World Congress that was held in Ottawa- Canada in June 2013. During

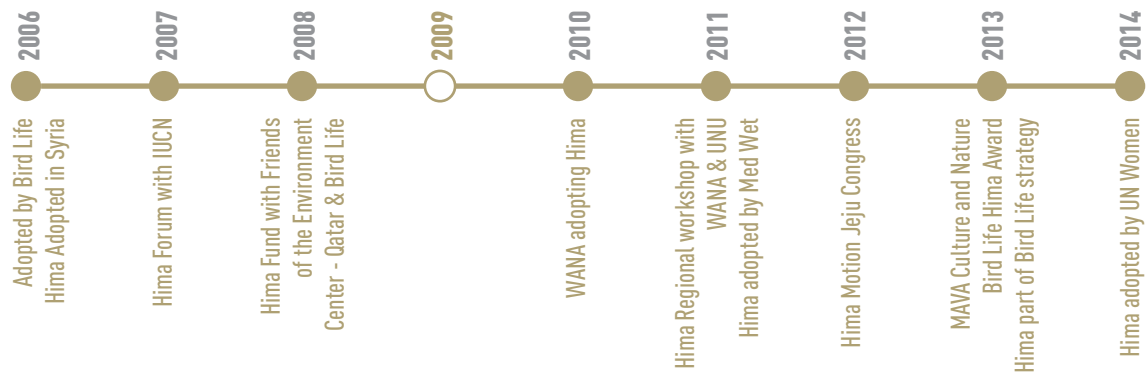




### Map of Lebanon with the 16 Hima sites



## SPNL Regional Progress in Hima Revival



the congress, SPNL was rewarded with BirdLife Partnership Award for the revival of the Hima approach and its contribution for biodiversity conservation and the protection of IBAs.

In another context, the fifth IUCN World Conservation Congress that was held in Jeju-South Korea in October 2012 also recognized and adopted the Hima approach. Motion 122, “Promoting and Supporting Community based Resource Management and Conservation as a Foundation for Sustainable Development”, recognized the Hima community conservation as a holistic approach that empowers local and traditional knowledge, and conserves natural resources and culture. Ninety five percent (95%) of the participants at that time voted for the adoption of Motion 122 that was presented by SPNL in cooperation with the Austrian Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment, and Water.

Today, many organizations have adopted the Hima concept for being the most efficient participatory approach where communities manage their lands and conserve and ensure the sustainable use of natural resources such as BirdLife International, IUCN, MedWet, UN Women Fund for gender Equality and WANA Forum. It is adopted by the Ministry of Environment within the national draft decree for

protected area management in Lebanon; also SPNL was the leader for the establishment of the “Hima Fund” in Qatar for the conservation of Hima and Globally Threatened Species.

People are more ready to accept conservation initiatives when they emanate from their heritage and language. In Lebanon, the word “Hima” resonates more positively in people’s ears than the word “mahmiyah” that is used to describe the conventional centralized protected area such as a nature reserve. The link lies within the people’s collective memory that is deeply engraved with the word “Hima” and the right of people for decision making on their resources. The Hima is associated with a way of life that focuses on human wellbeing not to forget the strong connection with nature and the conservation of all of its resources.

**The Hima system has proved to be the best solution for sustainable use of natural resources and for the conservation of culture and traditions.**



## ● BACKGROUND TO SPNL

The Society for the Protection of Nature in Lebanon (SPNL) was established in 1983 under the Lebanese Laws, and licensed by the Ministry of Interior by decision no. 6/AD dated 8/1/1986. As a national environmental NGO in Lebanon, SPNL has widely contributed to both raising awareness on environmental issues and concretely protecting natural areas in Lebanon. Being Lebanon's BirdLife International partner it considers birds as entry points for the conservation of wider natural resources. In addition SPNL is a member of the International Union for the Conservation of nature (IUCN), hence, it has helped develop the first biodiversity project in Lebanon, known as the Protected Areas Project. Further, it is a member in MedWet, Med NGO network, WANA Forum, and a founding member of the Lebanese Environment Forum.

The main programme for BirdLife International partners is the Important Bird Areas programme. SPNL adopts scientific field research in order to identify IBAs<sup>2</sup>/KBAs<sup>3</sup> in Lebanon comparing the results to internationally adopted criteria. In collaboration with ARocha Lebanon, SPNL identified 15 IBAs distributed all over the country and diversified in habitats, ecosystems, social and cultural assets. Ever since its establishment in 1986, SPNL advocated the establishment of protected areas and initiated with the Ministry of Environment the protected areas in Lebanon. After twenty years of experience working with nature reserves through government agencies, SPNL is now reviving and advocating the Hima community based conservation approach that has been prevalent in the Arabic region for more than 1500 years.

Since 2004, SPNL is promoting the “Hima” community based approach for the conservation of these key biodiversity sites in collaboration with municipalities-local authorities. This approach concentrates on the involvement of local communities in decision making, promotes sustainable use of natural resources, and supports poverty alleviation through providing alternatives for income generation.



© Asaad Saleh

- 
- <sup>2</sup> Important Bird & Biodiversity Areas
  - <sup>3</sup> Key Biodiversity Areas



# Mission

SPNL aims at protecting nature, birds and biodiversity in Lebanon and to promote sustainable use of resources with people through reviving the Al Hima Approach.

SPNL bases its work on sound science and passionate commitment, which through transparent and democratic processes, leads to a well-informed public. SPNL strives to advocate a better quality of life for people and nature, through conserving sites, protecting species, and assuring sustainability.

# Vision

SPNL works in a cooperative manner to fulfill its mission statement, i.e., in partnership with its partners, government institutions, municipalities, local communities, other NGOs, associates and the private sector. SPNL strives to trigger advances in strengthening capacities and influence. Its strategy revolves around four fundamental building blocks for promoting sustainable development:

- Sites and Habitats • Species • People
- Sustainability





Fneideq forest - Lebanon © Karim Farah



Mt Smolikas dragonlake (alpine lake) - Greece



# IV ● BACKGROUND TO THE PROJECT'S WORK PACKAGE 6

## Community participative process (based on Arab Hima concept plus other models) to build on the results of LCA

### LINK BETWEEN HIMA AND LCA

The European Landscape Convention, has defined “Landscape” “to be an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors.” Thus, Landscape is not a view or a land, it is how people perceive an area, how they act towards it, and what elements in that area they find valuable for these elements contribute to their survival.

The Hima in its concept is mainly an area used to promote a better livelihood for the public and protect it for the advantage of all creatures of the environment. For this, landscape and Hima meet in having the terms “area”, “people”, and “action and interaction” as a base for their definition. Both coincide in linking nature to people to culture.

For this, in order to achieve conservation and adequate decision making, it is important to have communities lead the process since people are the most knowledgeable of their land and are most supportive for the conservation where they sustainably use natural resources to ensure their survival. People seem to have more respect for the “bottom up” Hima agreements than for conventional ‘top-down’ protection measures in which they have no say. Through the Hima approach, there has been a shift from Technical/management capacities of land-planning, to a user-friendly

interactive spatial framework that summarizes spatially the risks/problems and sets out the vision and goals for each landscape area with the community and for the community.

In the project, SPNL is responsible for work package 6 which is Community Participatory Approaches (based on Arab Hima Concept plus other models) to build on the results of LCA. The aim of this work package in the project is to promote the implementation of community based managed areas where the community and stakeholders play an important role in the conservation, management, and decision making on social, political, economic, natural, and cultural perspective within a landscape area. This is done through promotion of the Hima participatory framework and its adaptation to the context of the partner countries.

#### The work package includes different main activities:

**6.1** Participate in workshop/ field visits in Lebanon and adapt Hima approach to partner countries

**6.2** Trial Hima-based process in 2+ communities per country, document as case studies (successes, problems, lessons learned, opportunities)

**6.3** Contribute to production of Hima Guidelines Manual (review, comment, adopt through decision of SC)

Hima Arsos meeting with local authorities



For the purposes of the Medscapes project the SPNL organized a Hima training workshop for all partners, described in this page. It was held in the Cultural Center of Byblos, in collaboration with the Municipality of Byblos- Jbeil. The remainder of this chapter is the explanation and presentation of the HIMA methodology.

## The Byblos pilot study

Partners of the project from Greece, Cyprus, and Jordan attended the training that was held from 24 to 26 February 2015. The aim of the workshop was to train project partners on the Hima concept as a model of participatory approach, to be developed and piloted in their countries.

Byblos was selected to host this workshop for being a UNESCO world heritage site and an important social, cultural, and natural area in Lebanon. Stakeholders such as the Fishermen's Cooperative, Byblos Sur Mer Hotel Manager, Municipality, Cultural Center, and Fish Fossil Market were selected to be the focal points where the partners implemented their survey, identification of problems, and developed a common vision and objectives for the site.

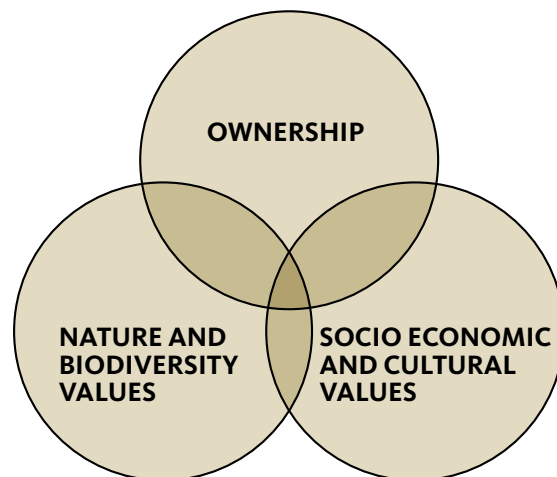
The workshop was divided into different sections including presentations and group work. The important presentations were about:

- The Legal Perspective in Lebanon for the conservation of nature (Hima vs. Natural reserve, agriculture forests, IBAs, KBAs, Ramsar, etc...),
- The criteria for the selection of Hima site
- The Hima participatory framework for community involvement,
- The participatory approach in partner countries and overview of the different systems.

The presentations were followed by group work using Byblos as the example and pilot area chosen for the implementation of a new Hima. After an introduction to the city of Byblos, the work officially started. All aspects of the site were studied, starting with the current status of the site to identifying and meeting with primary and secondary stakeholders who play a role on site level; identifying natural and cultural problems and threats; drawing a vision, and classifying main objectives and activities needed for a better protected site, so as to ensure the sustainable use of natural resources, conserving biodiversity, promoting and enhancing the livelihood of the local communities.

## TOOLS AND METHODOLOGY

### 1- Criteria for the selection of Hima and Hima approach and management



- **Ownership** which is divided to Governmental Lands, Municipal Lands, Religious holds

and private land; however, the Hima site is best to be publically owned in order to serve the good of all members of the society, especially underprivileged groups.

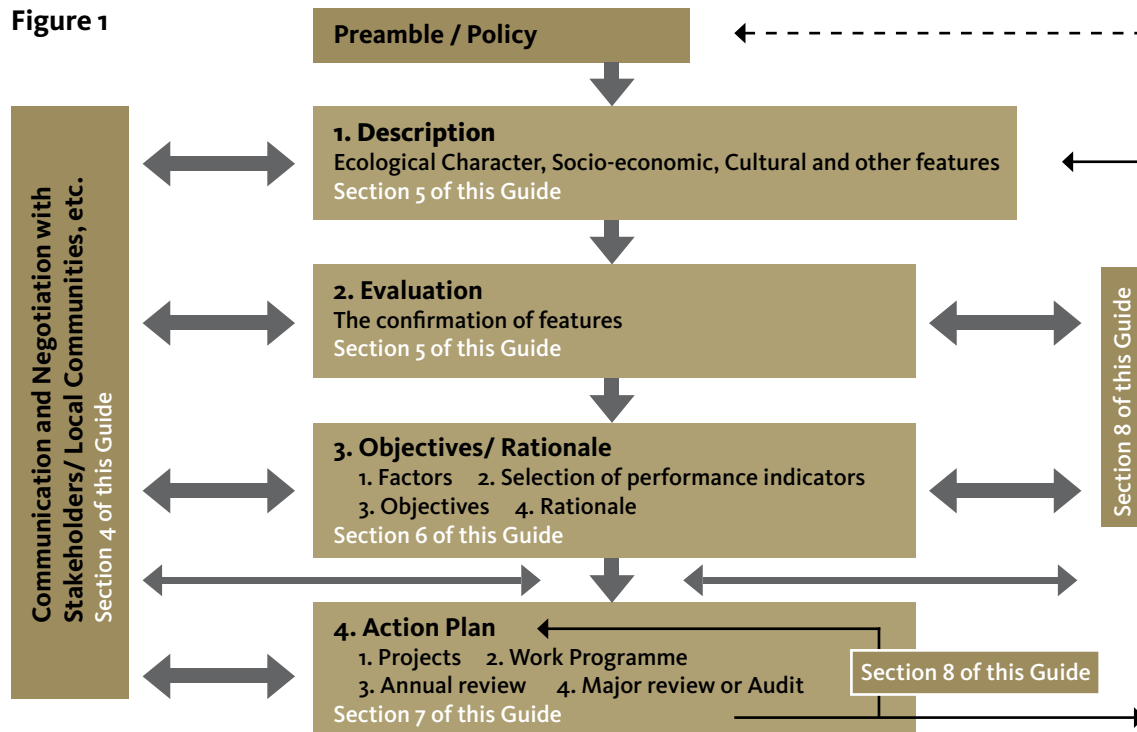
• **Nature and Biodiversity Values** which include Important Bird Areas (IBAs), Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs), Important Forest Areas, and Important Water Bodies which possess globally endangered/ endemic species of flora and fauna and/or constitutes important natural resources. Through the Medscape project, the landscape value has been added.

• **Socio Economic and Cultural Values** which poses historical and cultural heritage, and sustain livelihoods of fishing, agriculture, and grazing communities. Its sustainability and management contributes to the livelihoods of the local community (i.e. economic benefit), it supports the empowerment of minority groups, allows social cohesion, and empowers traditional and cultural norms.

## 2- SPNL Preliminary Information for Designating HIMA sites (Figure 1)

- Identify a potential IBA or KBA
- Investigate about site ownership Public/ Private
- If public, proceed by contacting the public authority highlighting its biodiversity importance & development potential
- Identify stakeholder's needs/ interests/ threats.
- Identify problems threatening biodiversity/ socio-economic aspects
- Come up with solutions which serve site conservation and community empowerment
- Problems & Solutions are translated into project proposals submitted to national and international donors
- An Ecotourism master plan is proposed as

Figure 1





one of the means to support the site Management and local empowerment aspects

All of that information end up in the Management Plan developed in collaboration with the community through multi-stakeholder participation, and which concentrate on sustaining biodiversity and livelihoods

### 3- Participatory tools for data gathering and collection (Figure 2-3)

The Management Planning Cycle sets the process for data gathering and situational analysis, setting a common vision for the Hima site, strategy development, development of management plan, implementation, evaluation and monitoring.

The situation analysis is mainly studying the site from all perspectives and it includes:

- Stakeholder analysis (including conflicts)
- Visions and opportunities
- Problems and issues
- Biological/physical environment
- Resource assessment
- Organisations
- Infrastructure
- Policies, legal setting & institutions
- Economic conditions and markets
- Social and cultural setting

**Figure 2** The Wetland Management Planning Cycle

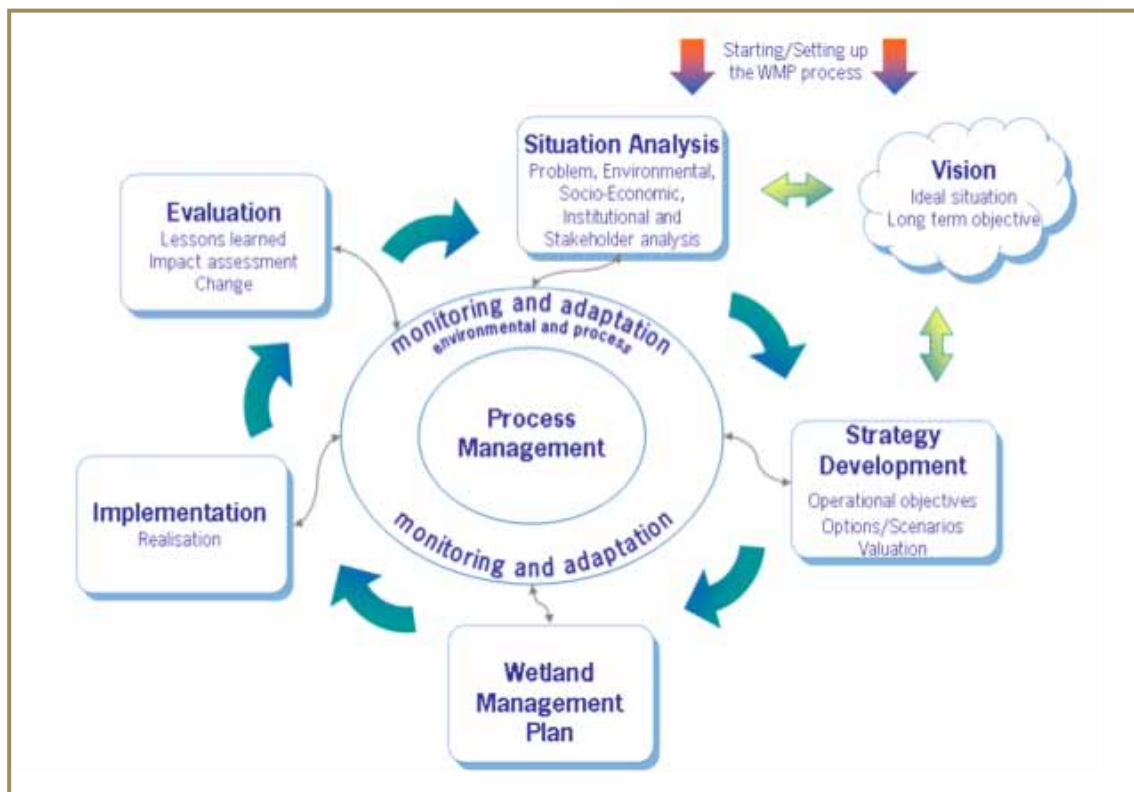
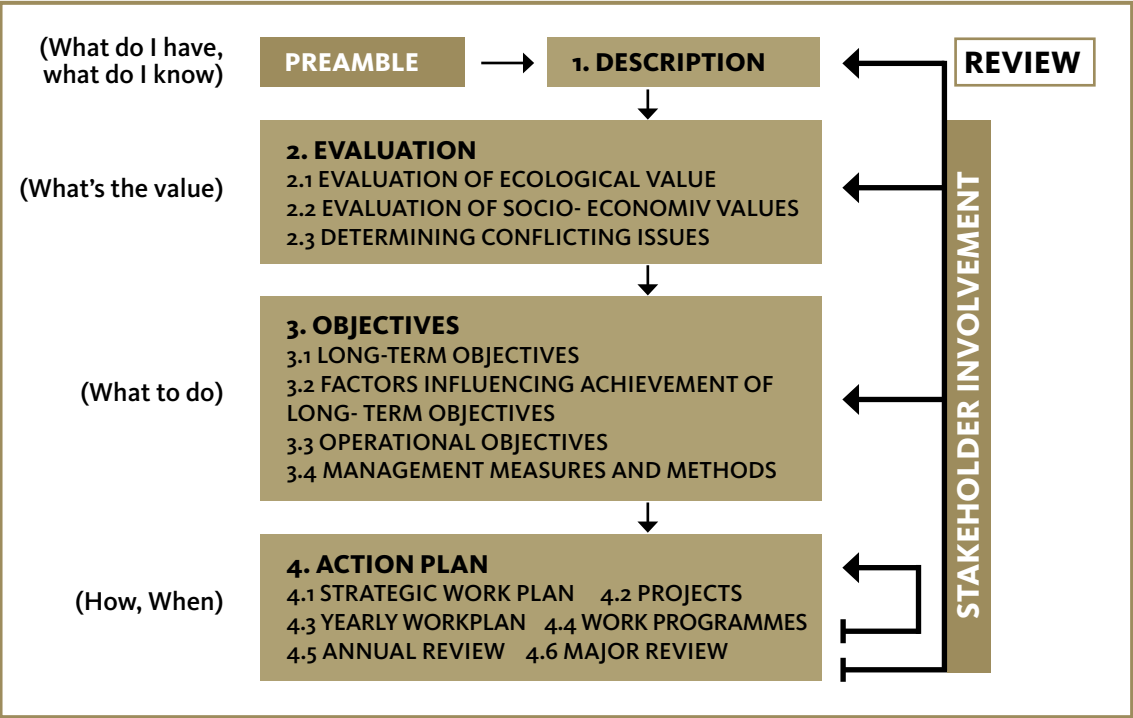


Figure 3



## Stakeholder Analysis

The stakeholders<sup>4</sup> are important in understanding a system and assessing their respective interest (and involvement) in that system. To do the stakeholder analysis a set of questions must be put to identify the main stakeholders of a site and then RAAKS, Rapid Appraisal for Agricultural Knowledge tool is used to identify the position and impact of each stakeholder.



Table1 Stakeholder Analysis Checklist (RAAKS)		
Stakeholders	Position (Rank the power in decision Making)	Impact (Rank the impact they have on sustainable wetland management)
Farmers		
Ministries		
Donors		
NGOs		

Scale from 1-5 (1 = highest)

## Problem Analysis (Figure 4)

Data gathering for problem analysis is the process of identifying and analysing what problems affect people (or organisations, or institutions) and ecosystems in a given geographic context at any level (local, national, regional, international). This is usually done through “semi-structured interviews” using open ended questions with main site stakeholders.

Problem analysis is mostly done through problem tree identification and Rich Picture (current situation). Problem tree analysis helps to illustrate the linkages between a set of complex issues or relationships by fitting them into a hierarchy of related factors. The problem tree analysis starts by brainstorming with stakeholders which problems or concerns they consider to be priority, select the core problem (or ‘starter problem’, identify the direct/ main causes of the starter problem and what other causes are leading to the same starter problem.

### It is used to:

- Link together the various issues or factors which may contribute to an institutional problem
- Help to identify the underlying or root causes of an institutional problem
- The major assumption underlying the problem tree is the hierarchical relationship between cause and effect



Example of Rich Picture (current situation)



Example of Rich picture (future situation)

---

<sup>4</sup> An agency, organization, group or individual who has a (direct or indirect) interest in the project / program, or who affects or is affected positively or negatively by the implementation and outcome of it.

# Visioning

Vision as stated is a statement that describes a future state; i.e. it is identifying and analysing what changes the project / programme / organisation would like to bring about in the future to a given time period for about 20 years. Vision: also called ‘development goal’ or ‘overall objective’. The realization of a shared vision requires planning for action, and detailing strategies of how goals and vision over time will be realized.

There are different ways of reaching a vision (guided dreaming, rich picturing, role play, and resource mapping); however, the most effective one is the rich picturing. Rich picturing as the saying states “a picture is of a thousand words.” Rich picturing is a drawing of the future situation that illustrates the main elements and relationships that need to be taken into consideration or are important in a particular situation and helps to see all the interactions and connections between different stakeholders and issues. It is called a rich picture because it illustrates the richness and complexity of a situation.

# Objective Tree (Figure 5)

Translating the problem tree into the objective tree (from negative to positive).

# Strategy Analysis (Table 2)

The strategy analysis is divided to three parts:

- **Clustering**

To create a simple overview of objectives in terms of similarity in sector, activity or expertise  
Draw dotted line around the cluster.

Name each cluster.

- **Scoping:**

To focus down the choice of a goal for the project by making explicit priorities for project implementation

Preliminary choice of intervention strategies

- **Scoring:**

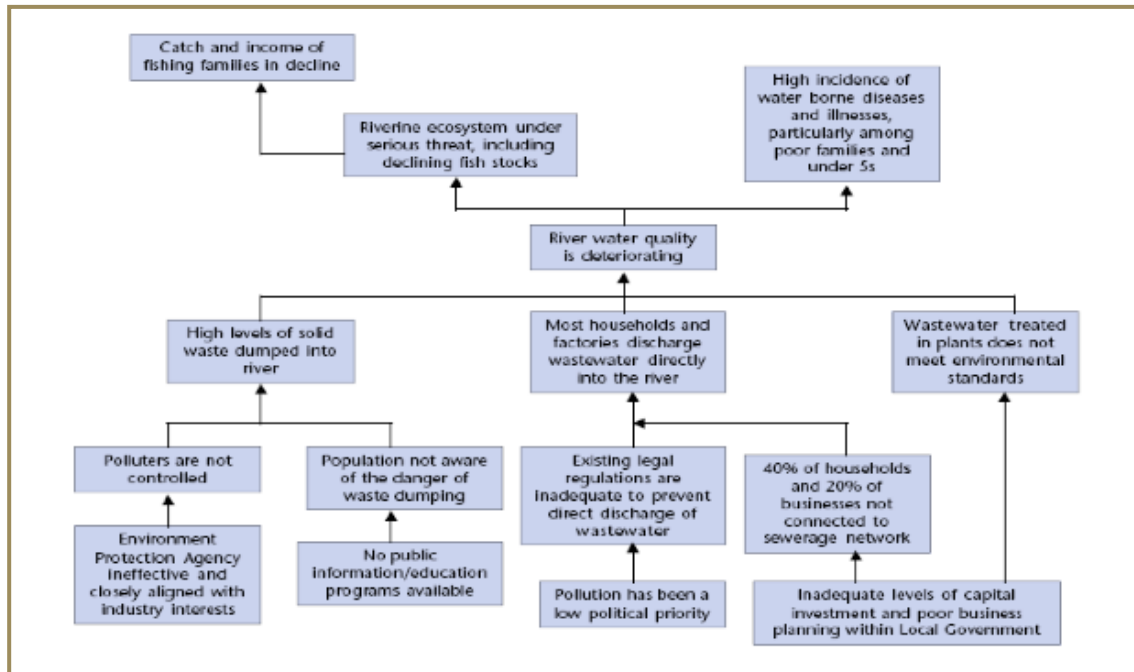
Decision on choice of actions / strategies (The more positive, the higher the score)

Selection criteria	Strategy 1 Awareness	Strategy 2 Tourism	Strategy 3 Agriculture	Strategy 4 Policy dev.
Relevance	4	1	2	3
Cost	1	3	2	4
Sustainability	2	4	1	3
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>10</b>
Feasible in terms of time	3	2	4	1
Participation by stakeholders	1	4	2	3
Technical capacity available	1	4	3	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>16</b>

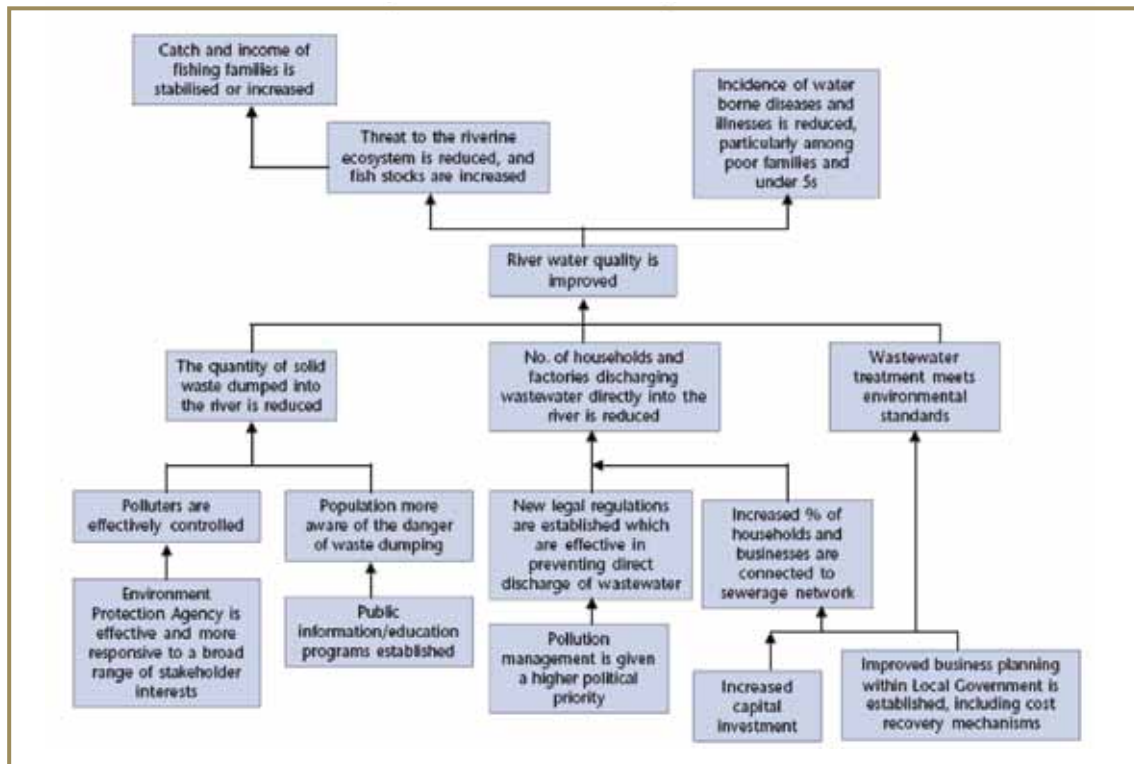
Table 2 Example of Decision Matrix<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Reference for tools and methodologies: Wageningen Institute

**Figure 4** Problem Analysis - river pollution



**Figure 5** Objective Tree - river pollution



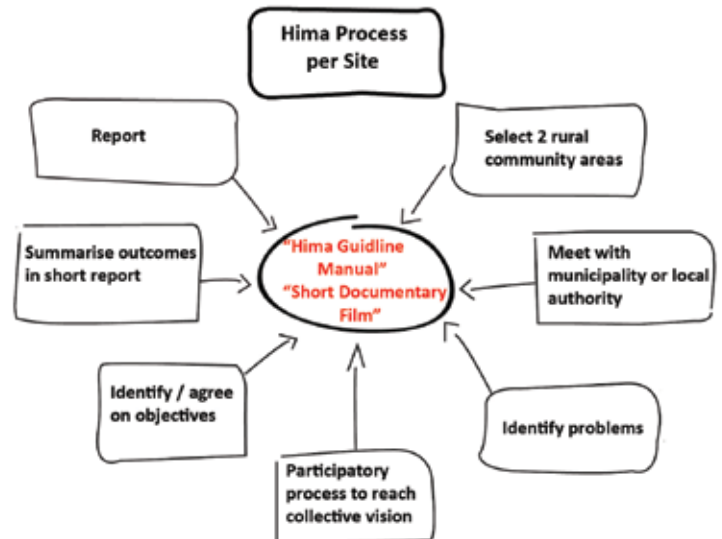




# ● HIMA PRACTICAL IMPLEMENTATION: THE EXPERIENCES OF PARTNER COUNTRIES

Based on the Hima regional workshop, partners selected 2 rural community areas per country, met with the municipality/Local authority, used the Hima participatory framework to reach collective vision, identified problems, solutions and priorities; and then summarised their experience in short report.

SPNL team organized Hima mentoring visits to partner countries in order to provide further guidance and support in implementing Hima participatory approach framework.



# 1. Cyprus: Mesogi village, Paphos

This case concerned the clean-up of a river bed which was part of a landscape

## 1.1 Background information on the site

The Klokarkas river has a significant natural and ecological value, as it lies in the middle of highly developed land (Mesogi village and Paphos city), being one of the last natural strips of land in the area. Moreover, species of ecological importance can be found in the riverbed, such as Oaks (*Quercus infectoria*), Carob trees (*Ceratonia siliqua*), various species of orchids etc.



## 1.2 Social and Ecological characteristics

Mesogi (Greek: Μεσόγη) is a village in the Paphos District of Cyprus, located 5 km north of Paphos. The population in the village is rising (approximately 2000 citizens compared to 1,208 in 2001), becoming a suburb of the main town of Paphos. Between the village and the city lies the industrial zone of Mesogi, a large complex of industrial buildings.

The village used to be prosperous before the 1950s, based on agriculture (mainly vegetables, potatoes, onions and citrus fruits). After the 1950s most of the villagers moved either abroad or to the main cities of the island. Now the community is growing again as a 'dormitory town', following the development of the nearby city of Paphos.

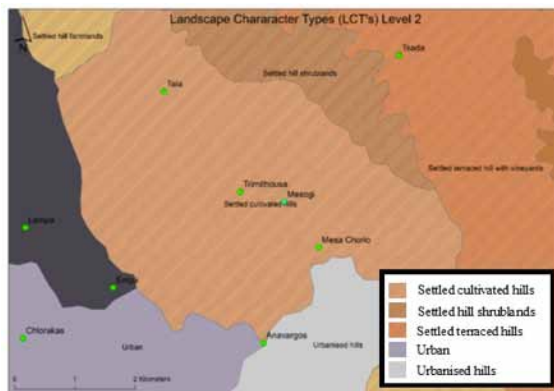
The nearby Natura 2000 site (SPA CY4000021) is protected for holding significant populations



of several bird species: *Aquila fasciata*, *Buteo rufinus*, *Coracias garrulus*, *Merops apiaster*, *Falco peregrinus*, *Oenanthe cypriaca*, *Sylvia melanothorax*.

### 1.3 Landscapes found in the Hima site

The most distinctive landscape characters of the area are “settled cultivated hills” (undulating, settled, arable hills, where most, if not all, the landscape is regularly ploughed to grow crops), “urbanized hills” and “urban” (built-up areas). See map below.



### 1.4 Description of Hima approach for the site

**a.** Laona Foundation’s approach was firstly made towards the local primary school which backs on the river. We found that they were in favor of using the river bed for lessons in

nature, provided it could be made accessible. The riverbed had become degraded due to local indifference, and as a result it had been illegally used as a dump. The HIMA implementation in the area aimed at restoring the riverbed, to create pathways and access points so that it can be used by the school for training in nature, and also for visitors and for recreation purposes.

**b.** Having secured the backing of the school Laona met with the local authority, the Parents Association and the schoolchildren to explain the importance of a) landscapes generally b) their landscape in particular and the role of the river within it.

**c.** When the protagonists were in agreement, Laona’s team prepared the budget and widened our initiative towards secondary stakeholders via the government departments that had to consent with our actions (Forestry Department, Water Development Department) and also the District Administration which is responsible for local authorities and their funding. In the process it was agreed that no mechanical means were allowed to be used for the clean-up work, which was organized in two phases: a professional team for the heavy items and a team of parents, teachers and pupils to collect the scattered rubbish.

**d.** In order to ensure that the riverbed remains usable, the community has undertaken a ‘river watch’ initiative, while the Laona Foundation will organize practical biodiversity training for the teachers who will be taking pupils to the site.





View of the riverbed before the clean-up

## 1.5 Legal aspect

Riverbeds in Cyprus are protected under the “Single Water Management Law” [Ο Περί Της Ενιαίας Διαχείρισης Υδάτων Νόμος - 79(I)/2010 Του (Κ.Δ.Π. 452/2010)” - 79 (I) / 2010].

Therefore, the Klokarkas riverbed is under the authority of the Water Development Department (WDD), while the flora of the area is managed by the Forestry Department and the Fauna by the Game and Fauna Service. No further status was required for the purposes of this action.

The Water Development Department is responsible for the good condition of the river and monitors, studies and manages its water resources. Under the order of the Minister of Agriculture the WDD can undertake any measures or plans for the management of the riverbed under the Law. It can also check any developments that may affect the river, distribute the water for household or other consumption etc. It is responsible for giving permission to others, e.g. the local authority to enter and clean the riverbed.

## 1.6 Hima procedure

For implementing the Hima in the Klokarkas site, the following steps were taken:

- Preparatory meeting with the basic stakeholders (Municipal Council President, Director of Primary School, Forest Department representative, Water Development Department representative)
- Field visit with Forestry Department representative to discuss the implementation of HIMA in the area and the way to proceed
- Contacts with responsible authorities (Forest Department, Water Development Department, Provincial Administration) to acquire their approval for the proposed management of the riverbed
- Official meeting with all stakeholders to discuss the implementation of the HIMA method and draft the Memorandum of Understanding
- Site visit with the technical leader who supervised the clean-up
- ‘Phaser’ cleaning of the site with skilled workers for cleaning construction debris and other large-size objects and creation of a walkway



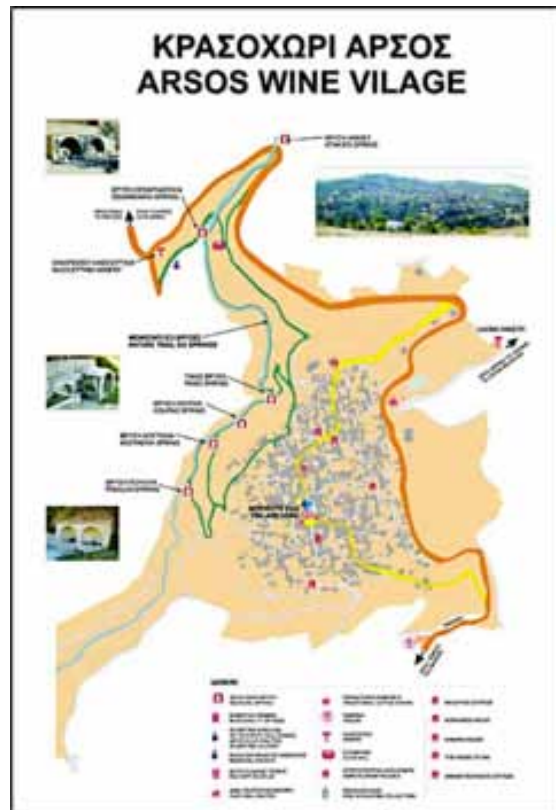


View of the riverbed after the clean up

- ‘Phase2’ cleaning the remaining trash by the schoolchildren and community members of Mesogi village.
- Launch of the Hima initiative with a small ceremony at the primary school in the presence of all stakeholders and schoolchildren.

#### **Future steps:**

- Mesogi’s Primary School Parent Association with the Mesogi Community Council will raise awareness among the residents of Mesogi regarding the value of the river and will be alerted to avoid any future illegal dumping in the riverbed.
- The school community, teachers and students will monitor the riverbed so that it remains clean and immediately notify the Local Authority and the District Administration Office for any illegal dumping cases.
- In cooperation with the Cyprus Environmental Studies Centre, Laona Foundation will seek to train the teachers of the school on biodiversity lessons in the riverbed.
- The Mesogi Primary School will conduct at least seven courses a year in the riverbed.

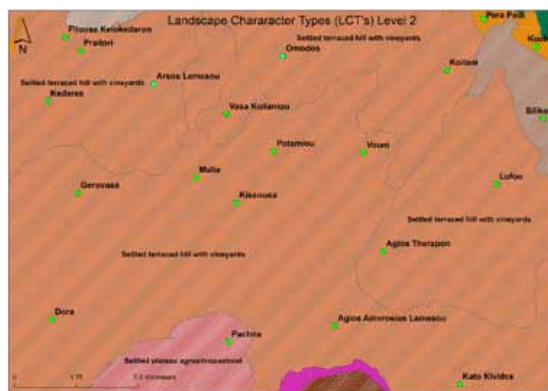
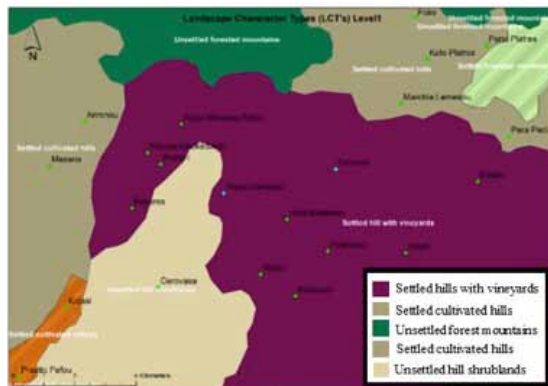


retired; they are the keepers of a tradition rich in manners and customs. But for how long?

The Arsos landscape boasts a rich flora, such as plane trees, willows, poplars, walnut-trees, and willows. As regards the fauna, soft water crabs, frogs, foxes etc. Endemic and migratory birds, rare species of butterflies and insects have been observed.

## 2.3 Landscapes found in the Hima site

The most distinctive landscape characters of the area are “settled hills with vineyards”, “unsettled hill shrub lands” and “settled terraced hills with vineyards” while in the surrounding area you can also meet “settled cultivated hills”, “unsettled forested mountains” and “settled hill shrub lands” (see attached maps).



**Settled hills with vineyards:** undulating, in places steeply sloping hills occupied by vineyards with significant areas of natural vegetation (natural areas); fields located along narrow, stone walled terraces.

**Unsettled hill scrublands:** undulating low hills (below 400m) topography; largely unsettled with a covering of shrubs and other semi-natural vegetation.

**Settled terraced hills with vineyards:** Undulating, in places steeply sloping hills occupied by vineyards with significant areas of natural vegetation (natural areas); fields located along narrow, stone walled terraces.

**Settled cultivated hills:** Undulating, settled, arable hills, where most, if not all, the landscape is regularly ploughed to grow crops.

**Unsettled forested mountains:** A heavily wooded, largely unsettled, highland landscape associated with steeply/sloping, high (mostly above 500m) mountains.

**Settled hill shrub lands:** Undulating hilly topography with covering of shrubs and other semi-natural vegetation; settled landscape

## 2.4 Description of Hima approach for the site

The terraced landscapes initiated in the early 20th century, as a necessity both for cultivation of vines and for earth retention purposes, had bequeathed a wonderful cultural heritage to the area, which however, is no longer utilized to a large degree. From the discussions with the locals, it emerged that a new paradigm must now be sought to correspond to 21st century needs. The possibilities examined were:

- Acknowledging that abandonment of terraces was a result of abandoning agriculture more generally, it would be unrealistic to expect that cultivation can be encouraged anywhere, but at least it could be done in areas nearer the village.

- Consider the introduction of other fruit species that could grow on the terraces near the village
- Consider if the size of terraces should be adapted to new produce
- Consider what would be the best strategy for abandoned terraces where natural succession has taken over. This applies to large sections of former vineyards located at a distance from the village
- Consider that other income-earning activities could be encouraged in order (a) to keep the existing plantation and (b) encourage back “third age” inhabitants who migrated to the cities but now wish to return to Arsos

Through the collaboration with Arsos Community Council, the local Development Association, former residents, local women and farmers in the area, some initiatives have been identified and will be developed aiming at introducing new economic interests that contribute to maintaining the historical landscape of the area. Where agriculture is unlikely to be re-introduced, ‘abandonment’ could be ‘managed’.



Common spaces within the village of Arsos

## 2.5 Legal aspect

A small part of the area is protected as a Natura 2000 site, while most of the land is categorized as Z1 zone by the Town Planning Department, meaning that developments in the area are very limited (Natura 2000 sites are established under EU regulations and are fixed indefinitely while the zoning of the Town Planning Department is subject to change every five years based on decisions of the Council of Ministers).

The Environment Department is responsible for Natura 2000 site while the Forestry Department is responsible for the plants and the Game and Fauna Service is responsible for the fauna. Regarding the non-protected rural areas, the Town Planning Department is responsible for zoning the land into different development zones with various restrictions regarding their use and development.

## 2.6 Hima procedure

**For implementing the Hima in the Arsos site, the following steps were taken:**

- Preparatory meeting with the Community Council to discuss the possibility of implementing the HIMA participatory approach in their community and further informal discussions in the local coffee shop.
- Site visit to Arsos village and its surroundings to identify the different elements that can be



Part of the natural trail within the village of Arsos





Panoramic view of the landscape in Arsos village

included in the HIMA process (situation analysis), and to informally present the landscape mapping of the area

- Official meetings with all community stakeholders to analyze the village's prospects together, to explain the HIMA method, discuss the strategy and draft the Memorandum of Understanding
- Preparation of the finalized Memorandum for official approval by the Community Council
- Launch of the Hima initiative with a small ceremony in the presence of all stakeholders and the community.

#### Future steps:

- Consider the possibility to proceed with characterization / mapping of the landscape of Arsos on a larger scale (1:1000 or 1:5000), so that the main elements of the area relating the natural and cultural heritage will be highlighted.
- Contact all members of the community's Development Association and identify through a survey which residents or villagers now living in town are interested in participating in calls for sustainable development projects.
- Research project proposals that promote / implement the desires / goals of the residents and organized groups of Arsos Community, aimed at the enhancement of the landscape and the natural and cultural heritage of the area.

#### • Available participatory approaches in the country:

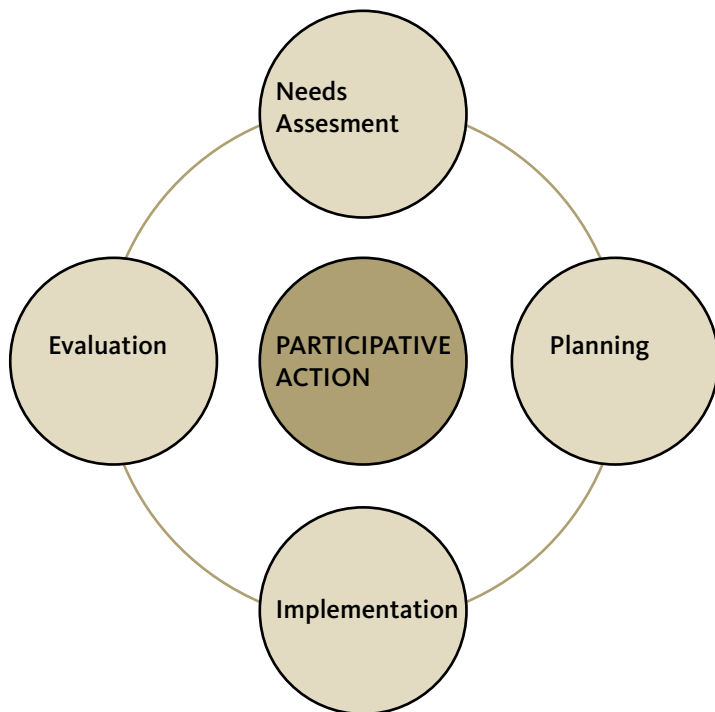
The participatory approach, practiced in an informal and limited way (gathering the community in the village coffee-shop and informing of a government initiative) has been traditional for many decades. Formal public consultations have been established under the Aarhus Convention, which states that "each Party shall guarantee the rights of access to information, public participation in decision-making, and access to justice in environmental matters". Cyprus enacted the Convention into law in 2004.

According to the Convention, each Party shall make appropriate practical and/or other provisions for the public to participate during the preparation of plans and programmes relating to the environment, within a transparent and fair framework, having provided the necessary information to the public. To the extent appropriate, each Party shall endeavor to provide opportunities for public participation in the preparation of policies relating to the environment.

For better implementation of the Convention in Cyprus, the Ministry of Finance has issued a 'Guideline Manual' to be used by public authorities which refers to such matters as:

- Types of public consultation
- Locate, approach and stakeholder involvement

- Publication of consultation documents
  - Written communication and evaluation of input from stakeholders
  - Internal Evaluation of the Consultation process
- Furthermore, the “Future Together Project”, implemented by Cyprus Technical Chamber (ETEK) and the Union of Chambers of Turkish-Cypriot Engineers and Architects (KTMMOB) with support by UNDP-ACT through funding by USAID, has developed two reports to examine current participatory approaches used in inter-communal projects in Cyprus. Aiming to share best practices more widely in Cyprus and the region, these reports were entitled: ‘Participatory Development Models – the Cypriot experience’ and ‘Training Manual’. The chart below is taken from those publications and describes graphically the participatory approach:



- **Shared experience on Hima approach application:**

Through the establishment of Hima sites, the goal was to empower the local communities, increase public participation in common management, which would also protect the traditional landscape, promote sustainable use of natural resources in an area becoming urbanized (Hima Mesogi) and preservation of local knowledge and customs within a contemporary framework in an area being abandoned (Hima Asros).

The main challenge faced when implementing the Hima approach in Cyprus was to identify appropriate sites and willing communities. As environmentally protected sites in Cyprus are already identified and backed up by strong Cypriot and European Legislation, there is a certain fear that any agreement about land will involve limitations on its use by owners. It was a challenge to identify an area suitable for applying a participatory approach in conserving the ecological value of the site or sustainable use of its natural resources, and to place this initiative within the framework of maintaining the landscape. The other challenge was to overcome apathy and technocratic delays. Ownership of the property was also an issue, as public land in Cyprus is usually managed centrally, while private land is managed individually, under restrictions according to the

zoning of the Planning Authority (Department of Town Planning and Housing).

Other challenges faced were:

- Explaining the Hima concept, finding a terminology in Greek and adapting it to European reality.
- Limited timeframe for implementing the Hima concept since the whole duration of the project was 21 months and Hima training had to follow landscape character assessment
- Bureaucratic delays in implementation of certain actions due to the number of responsible authorities involved (e.g. in the case of Mesogi riverbed it involved apart from the local authority, the Forestry Department, the Water Development Department and Regional Administration)
- Aging population of the agricultural communities

#### • **Lessons learned:**

The Hima approach has certain benefits compared to the European conservation approaches. The bottom-up approach for the management of the site, general consensus of all main stakeholders for the vision and goals of the area, the participatory approach and flexibility in the implementation of the strategies developed ensure the acceptance of the local communities for the management of the site. The EU Directives for protected areas, in Cyprus at least, have been introduced in a rather exclusionary fashion, focusing mainly on natural and ecological characteristics of the site without reference to cultural heritage. The Hima method is inclusive, designed to preserve and protect ecosystems for the sustainable use of its resources by the people and for the people, including the social and cultural particularities of the area.

While it is evident that we shall need to follow up and “watch over” the Hima sites, otherwise there will be a lapse into the previous apathy, this experience has reinforced our conviction

that NGOs are the most suitable agencies to undertake such initiatives because they are prepared to invest the time and effort required on a long-term basis.

#### • **Challenges and recommendations:**

- People are more ready to accept conservation initiatives when they emanate from their heritage and language, it is therefore useful to tie them into existing practices.
- The need to learn more about the traditional conservation approaches has been already identified by the Barcelona Declaration on Land Stewardship 2014 and it would be useful if links were created between Hima and the Stewardship Movement.
- The need to demonstrate that protected areas are for the public good and to ensure that their benefits remain valid
- Since the bottom-up approach takes much more time than top-down directives, and given that NGOs are prepared to work outside office hours and to come back again and again until consensus has been obtained, NGOs should be encouraged to become involved and formal authorities should recognize this contribution and support it.

# 3. Greece: Sigri, island of Lesvos

## 3.1 The HIMA case study in Sigri

### 3.1.1 Preparatory actions

For the purposes of implementing the HIMA approach in Sigri, the team proceeded with conducting extensive bibliographic research on the area of Sigri. The bibliographical sources and information gathered referred to the HIMA methodology and case studies, on participatory practices and experience in Greece, and finally on the area's geomorphology, socio-economic and environmental characteristics, legal protection status and other relevant information, which allowed the team a first impression on the character, issues and potential of the area.

A stakeholders' analysis for the area followed, focusing on the development and protection of the wider area of Sigri, which identified more than thirty relevant stakeholders, both internal (local fishermen, farmers, tourism operators, municipality, etc) and external (Prefecture, Forestry Department, Ephorate of

Antiquities, Geotechnical Chamber of Greece, etc). Interviews were subsequently carried out with twenty-one out of the thirty three identified stakeholders. The open-ended questions referred to a) the strong points of the Sigri area that were considered worth protecting, preserving and developing, b) the main issues hindering development, c) other possible stakeholders, and d) the availability and willingness of stakeholders to participate in a Workshop on the protection of the landscape of Sigri.

The results of the interviews revealed the interest of the local stakeholders in the development of the area, in the high value of the local landscape, and in the major development issues and lack of infrastructure that plague the area.



Lesvos Island and the village of Sigri



### 3.1.2 The two-day Workshop

The Participatory Workshop took place in two consecutive sessions, on Friday the 11th and Saturday the 12th of June 2015, on the premises of the “Theofanis Sigrianos” Cultural Society, in Sigri, Lesvos. This is an area of spectacular beauty and very particular landscapes. The workshop had the title “Our landscape, our place: exploring opportunities for the future” and its objective was the review of the main issues regarding landscape management in the wider Sigri area, as well as the examination of potential solutions, ideas and proposals for the area’s promotion and development. Twenty-two stakeholders participated in the Workshop, including representatives of Local Authorities (Lesvos Municipality), the Geotechnical Chamber of Greece, the Regional Ephorate of Antiquities, local groups, representatives of the Natural History Museum of the Lesvos Petrified Forest, local professionals and residents.

#### **The Medscape members who worked towards the organisation of the participatory Workshop were:**

- Theano S. Terkenli, Professor, Geography Department, University of the Aegean, Scientific Coordinator for Medscape Project.
- Madeleine Theochari, Participation Consultant, Communication Officer for Medscape.
- Aikaterini Goltziou, PhD, Agronomist – Landscape Architect, Project Manager in Medscape for the University of Aegean
- Dimitrios Kavroudakos, Assistant Professor, Geography Department, University of the Aegean, GIS Expert for Medscape Project

### 3.1.3 Process

At the very beginning of the Workshop, the Medscape team was introduced to the participants and encouraged the participants to present themselves. Then the team proceeded to the presentation of the project, its goals and achievements, and finally the method and specifics of HIMA.

During the next part of the Workshop, the participants’ opinions concerning advantages and strong points of the Sigri area were firstly recorded, using processes of brainstorming and card sorting, resulting in 8 thematic groups. These strong points were then briefly discussed, in order to inform and alert the participants as to what makes Sigri a special place and to create a list of advantages, which could then be used in the resolution of issues or in order to provide potential for further development.

The same brainstorming and card sorting techniques were used for the identification of the main issues impeding or hindering sustainable development. Following their identification, the issues were discussed and analysed, thus arriving at 6 thematic groups. The participants were then asked to brainstorm on possible



The village of Sigri



The islet of Nissiopi

solutions, ideas and proposals for these groups of obstacles and problems. As before, the ideas were discussed and grouped under the corresponding issue.

On the second day, the main issues recorded on the previous day were prioritised by the participants, using pair-wise ranking, in order to choose the two most important issues. The criteria for the prioritisation were the following:

- the issue resolved to be particularly helpful for the area
- the ability of the participants to resolve the issue through their contribution
- the willingness of participants to deal with the particular issue

Following that, the participants were divided into two groups, in order to develop their proposals, which were organised and formulated into Action Plans. Next, the Action Plans were presented to the plenary and discussed thoroughly. The results of the Workshop were placed and presented in an H-diagramme, thus composing a vision for the development of Sigri and the greater area, while protecting and preserving the natural and cultural heritage of its landscape.



The completed H-diagramme

## 3.2 Results

### 3.2.1 Strong points

The first part of the procedure involved a brainstorming session on the advantages and strong points of Sigri, elements which are worth preserving, maintaining and exploiting for the resolution of local issues. The participants focused mainly on advantages, such as the natural landscape, cultural heritage, local cuisine and human resources of the Sigri village and area.

Specifically, the main advantage point of the Sigri area, identified by all participants, is the outstanding beauty of the natural environment and the unique 'wild' landscape that surrounds the village of Sigri. The next most significant strong point of the area is the sea and nearby beaches. The third strong point, regarding the physical landscape, is the petrified forest, in conjunction with the Natural History Museum

of the Lesvos Petrified Forest, whose premises are located in the village of Sigri. Furthermore, the value of history, tradition and cultural heritage was highlighted, since a number of monuments can be found in the village, such as Ottoman fountains, the fortress of Sigri, the Ottoman baths etc. The local cuisine was indicated as a significant component of the local cultural heritage, due to the excellent quality of raw materials, despite the fact that the village does not boast of any particular local delicacy, being established as a Greek village, after 1922. The participants added the existence of development perspectives, in several sectors, as livelihood prospects for its human resources, also considered as one of Sigri's strong points. Finally, the positive feelings of peace and quietness which visitors experience when in Sigri were proclaimed as a strong point, constituting a category of its own right.

### 3.2.2 Main issues

During the second part of the first day, the participants identified the main issues and factors inhibiting sustainable development in the area, through degrading or endangering

the landscape. Greater attention was paid to the issues and problems that can be resolved or alleviated by actions of local stakeholders and residents. Among the key issues mentioned were the lack of employing the cultural heritage for the promotion and development of the area and attitudes towards the environment, including issues such as the neglect of the landscape and urban sprawl. Participants also mentioned the lack of infrastructure (e.g. lack of a medical practitioner and an ATM machine), coupled with accessibility problems (e.g. problematic road connections to the capital city of Mytiline), significantly complicating the residents' everyday lives. Finally, the attitudes of local stakeholders and public authorities and the mentality of the local residents were recognized as the main, interrelated problems, that are key to resolving all of the aforementioned issues. The indifference of the authorities and the distance of Sigri from the decision-making centre of the island, coupled with a lack of dialogue and social cohesion among the residents and their local actors, make it difficult to solve even the simplest of the village's problems.

STRONG POINTS IN SIGRI										
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Natural environment:	Beautiful Nature (mentioned twice)	Nature	Natural environment	Wild landscape	Beautiful nature in conjuncture with native land	Natural Landscape	The hills	Character	Landscape (mentioned twice)	Excellent landscape: I came in Sigri when I was 8 and have been returning every summer since.
the Sea:	the Sea (mentioned twice)	Meltemi (northern summer wind)	Location next to the sea and seaside/beaches	Natural beauty and especially the beaches						
Opportunities for Development:	Development opportunities in many sectors	Opportunities for earning a living								
Human Resources:	The people									
Cultural heritage:	Archaeological sites (fortress, Turkish bath)	Historical tradition	Cultural heritage	Ancient fortresses						
Gastronomy:	Ouzo!!!	The food (mentioned twice)								
Petrified forest and the Museum of Natural History:	Petrified forest (mentioned twice)	The Natural History Museum and the petrified forest (mentioned twice)								
Other:	Peaceful nature	peace and calm	it is beautiful!!!							

**Table 1** Strong points of the Sigri village and area



Second day of the Hima Workshop



Participants in the second day of the Hima Workshop

MAIN ISSUES								
<b>Lack of utilization of cultural heritage:</b>	No promotion of the place	Development and natural resources use at the expense of cultural heritage	Danger from the dilapidation of cultural heritage sites	The fortress	Lack of promotion of cultural monuments	Lack of identity	Neglect of landscape	
<b>Attitude towards the environment:</b>	Attitude towards the environment	Lack of environmental sensitivities	Lack of utilization of natural resources	Irresponsible interventions	urban sprawl			
<b>Lack of infrastructure:</b>	Lack of interest on behalf of (external) stakeholders due to diminishing population	Lack of infrastructure	Doctors	Medical center	Infrastructure	Prohibition of approaching yachts	ATM	
<b>Accessibility:</b>	Isolation (road and boat)	Difficulties in transportation	Distance from other villages and urban center and lack of transportation	Difficult road from Mytilene to Sigi	Isolation	Accessibility (road)	Distance from capital	Lack of means of transportation
<b>(External) Stakeholders:</b>	Lack of interest on behalf of central administration	Distance from decision making centers	Local authorities	People	lack of organisation			
<b>Local/Internal stakeholders:</b>	Apathy of local residents	Lack of vision	Aging population	Lack of social cohesion	Lack of team spirit	Lack of dialogue	Attitude of local residents towards the commons	

**Table 2** Main identified issues in Sigi area

### 3.2.3 Ideas, solutions, proposals

The third part of the Workshop included the identification of ideas, solutions and proposals towards addressing the issues/ problems identified in the second part. Participants were asked once again to contribute their ideas, no matter how feasible. The only issue where no proposals were made, was that of the village's accessibility, as this problem goes beyond the competence of local residents and stakeholders.



**Table 3** List of ideas from brainstorming session

IDEAS / SOLUTIONS / PROPOSALS						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Lack of exploitation of cultural heritage	Attitude towards the environment	Lack of infrastructure	(External) Stakeholders	Local (internal) stakeholders	Accessibility	Other ideas
Actions for the advertisement and promotion of the landscape	Reconstruction of petrified forest with real plants	Fundraising by expatriate Sigris	Cooperation with the University of Aegean (Geography – Sea – Environment)	Do not do to others what you don't want to be done upon you		Use and dissemination of personal knowledge
Albert Camus in Sigris	Giving as communities and individuals	Development of new large tourist units	Enhance decentralization to increase local population	Reinstate the institution of personal labor		Volunteering (mentioned twice)
Food festival in Sigris (invitations to TV, media)	More attention and care to the issue of cleanliness	Better prices for services and products	Utilization of personal networks	Connection and cooperation of the Museum of Natural History with local community		
Restoration Ottoman fortress	Volunteer work for the maintenance of the natural landscape		Lobbying of central governance	Collective/team effort		
Development of cultural pathways in the ancient fortresses of Sigris	Development of environmental consciousness		Conference with authorities and stakeholders on an island level for existing development opportunities	Development of a vision		
Development of coastal path from the fortress to the beach			Cooperation between authorities	Identification of the desired kind of tourism		
Utilization of fortress in the way of Imaret in Kavala			Attempt communication with similar institutions	Change of attitude of professional towards visitors		
Make the fortress accessible in cooperation with the Museum				Collective actions		
Resource utilization to increase revenue				Cooperation and dialogue for decision making		
				Regular meetings		
				Participation in the commons		
				Acquiring teamwork mentality locally		
				Raising awareness through events such as HIMA in Sigris		
				Cooperation and solidarity for the common problem-solving		

### 3.2. 4 Action Plans

At the beginning of the meeting, on the second day of the Workshop, the issues that were identified previously were evaluated in pairs and ranked according to three criteria:

- the issue resolved to be particularly helpful for the area
- the ability of the participants to resolve the issue through their contribution
- the willingness of participants to deal with the particular issue

This prioritisation revealed the interest in mobilizing stakeholders, local actors and residents, to solve several problems in the area and to promote sustainable development.

Subsequently, participants were divided into two groups and each group developed ideas, solutions and proposals, corresponding to these two issues. This offered the opportunity to create two Action Plans for the mobilisation of authorities, local stakeholders and residents.

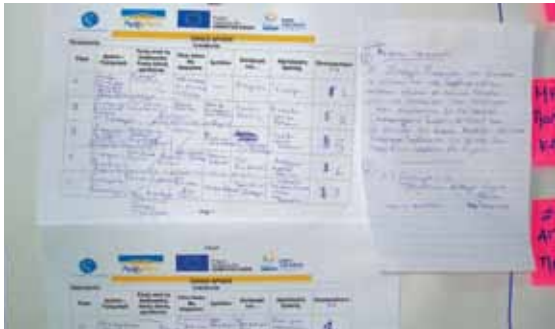
	A	B	C	D	E	F	Score
A							1
B							0
C							3
D							2
E							4
F							5

Pair-wise ranking matrix

**The Action Plans were structured as follows:**

- Subject – The broader issue or theme to which the action refers
- Action - Description of the proposed action
- Who drives the process? Who else is involved?  
- Organisations / persons who will initiate the action, or call other stakeholders / individuals into action
- When / how long? - The timing and duration of the action
- Obstacles – Causes of prevention of the realization of the action
- Possible contributions – Parties who can help overcome obstacles or realize the action
- Evaluation – Method of evaluation of the action's success
- Prioritisation – Order of actions within the comprehensive Action Plan

On the issue of better cooperation and dialogue initiatives for the promotion and development of the area among local stakeholders



Completed Action Plans

and Sigri residents, participants proposed the following actions:

- promotion of the area through conventional and new media
- advertising of the spectacular landscape of Sigri and the wider region
- informing residents and visitors about the local sights, history etc.
- improvement of banking infrastructure, regarding the lack of ATM machines
- improvement of services to yachts and
- improvement of public transport connections

ACTION PLAN 1										
	PROMOTION – ADVERTISING – INFORMATION					INFRASTRUCTURE				PARTICIPATION IN THE COMMONS
Subject	ΔΙΑΦΗΜΙΣΗ ΕΝΗΜΕΡΩΣΗ	ΔΙΑΦΗΜΙΣΗ, ΕΝΗΜΕΡΩΣΗ	ΔΙΑΦΗΜΙΣΗ, ΕΝΗΜΕΡΩΣΗ	ALBERT CAMUS	ΕΦΑΡΜΟΓΗ ΓΙΑ SMARTPHONE ΚΑΙ WEBSITE	CASH BACK	CUSTOMER SERVICE FOR YACHTS	CUSTOMER SERVICE FOR YACHTS	INCREASE BUS ROUTES	REINSTATEMENT OF PERSONAL LABOUR INSTITUTION
Action – Description	INFORMATION BOARD, PARK A.D.	INFORMATION BOARD IN MUSEUM	ADVERTISING VIDEO PRODUCTION	TRIBUTE	INTERNET	VISITORS/ CUSTOMERS SERVICE	LICENCE FOR DOCKING OF YACHTS	CONSTRUCTION OF PERMANENT MOORINGS	INTERVENTION TO PRERACTURE	REINSTATEMENT
Action initiator, Other stakeholders	CULTURAL ASSOCIATION, FOREST DEPARTMENT	CULTURAL ASSOCIATION	SIGRI'S YOUTH	ASSOCIATION AND PREFECTURE, MAYOR FOR CULTURE, ΚΑΤΑΚΟΙΤΗΣΙΣ FOUNDATION	SIGRI CULTURAL ASSOCIATION OF ATHENS	BANKS, MUSEUM, INDIVIDUALS	HELLENIC NAVY AND MOUTOURIS	PORT AUTHORITY, HYDROGRAPHIC SERVICE, SAILING SOC. OF MYTILENE	NORTHERN AEGEAN PRERACTURE, CULTURAL ASSOCIATION, TOURISM ORGANISATION OF ERESSOS	PARLIAMENT
When/time scale	2 MONTHS	1 MONTH			4 MONTHS	IMMEDIATELY	IMMEDIATELY			
Obstacles	FINANCIAL, TECHNICAL	FINANCIAL, TECHNICAL			FINANCIAL, TECHNICAL	TECHNICAL, LACK OF INFORMATION	BUREAUCRACY	BUREAUCRACY, FINANCIAL COST	FINANCIAL, PLANNING	LEGISLATION
Help needed	MUSEUM, FOREST DEPARTMENT, SPONSORS	CULTURAL ASSOCIATION, SPONSORS	SIGRI'S YOUTH, SPONSORS	ASSOCIATION AND PREFECTURE, MAYOR FOR CULTURE, SPONSORS	SIGRI CULTURAL ASSOCIATION OF ATHENS, SPONSORS	BANKS, PARTICIPANTS IN SIGRI PROJECTS, SPONSORS	LOCAL AUTHORITIES, SPONSORS	LOCAL AUTHORITIES, HELLENIC NAVY, SPONSORS	NORTHERN AEGEAN PRERACTURE, TOURISM ORGANISATION OF ERESSOS, SPONSORS	SPONSORS
Evaluation of Action	INCREASE IN VISITS, PUT UP BOARD	INCREASE IN VISITS, PUT UP BOARD			DOWNLOADS					
Priority (1-5)										

**Table 4** Action Plan for local stakeholders mobilization

On the issue of cooperation of local stakeholders with external authorities, for their assistance in the development of the area, participants proposed the following:

- Improved cooperation of local societies, such as the Cultural Association of Sigri, the Cultural Association of Sigri in Athens and the newly formed Tourism Association (intended to coordinate Sigri inhabitants engaged in tourism)

- closer cooperation with a) with the University of the Aegean, in research concerning the local community, b) the Ephorate of Antiquities of Lesvos, to promote local monuments, c) cooperation with the Tourism Agency of Molyvos, in order to promote Sigri, and d) intensification of cooperation with the Natural History Museum of the Lesvos Petrified Forest.

ACTION PLAN 2						
	COOPERATION BETWEEN SIGRI (INTERNAL) STAKEHOLDERS		COOPERATION WITH EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS AND AUTHORITIES			
Subject	2 <sup>nd</sup>	6 <sup>th</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>	5 <sup>th</sup>
Action – Description	COORDINATION OF LOCAL ASSOCIATIONS FOR COMMON ACTION	VISITS IN FOLKLORE MUSEUM	INTEGRATION IN MOLYVOS TOURISM BODY THROUGH RESPECTIVE ASSOCIATION	COOPERATION BETWEEN THE CULTURAL SOCIETY AND THE MUSEUM ON LOCAL LEVEL	COOPERATION WITH UNIVERSITY OF AEGEAN IN RESEARCH REGARDING LOCAL COMMUNITY	COOPERATION WITH ARCHAEOLOGY SERVICES
Action initiator. Other stakeholders	LOCAL COUNCIL / NEWLY CREATED TOURISM SOCIETY, CULTURAL SOCIETY OF ATHENS AND SIGRI	NO-ONE / CULTURAL & TOURISM SOCIETY	TOURISM BODY OF MOLYVOS	CULTURAL AND TOURISM SOCIETIES / MUSEUM	SIGRI CULTURAL COUNCIL / UNIVERSITY SOCIETY	LOCAL COUNCIL & EPHORATE OF ANTIQUITIES / CULTURAL SOCIETY & HATZAKIS
When/time scale	BEGINS IMMEDIATELY	IT NEEDS TO START	IN THE FALL THE SOCIETY WILL BEGIN OPERATING	IMMEDIATELY	BEGINS IN THE FALL	HAS STARTED / IN 3 YEARS
Obstacles	LACK OF COOPERATION AND COOPERATION CULTURE	INDIFFERENCE		LACK OF INITIATIVE	LACK OF TIME	FUNDING
Help needed	CHRISTOS LEONTIS (MAYOR)	CULTURAL SOCIETY	LAWYER	PRESIDENT OF THE SOCIETY	LOCAL COUNCIL	CULTURAL SOCIETY
Evaluation of Action	COMMON ACTIONS ACHIEVED	WHEN VISITS BECOME POSSIBLE	INTEGRATION	COMMON ACTIONS ACHIEVED	RESEARCH CONDUCT	WHEN VISITS IN FORTRESS & HAMMAM BECOME POSSIBLE
Priority (1-5)	2	4	1	5	6	3

**Table 5** Action Plan for external stakeholders' cooperation

### 3.3 Recommendations and future prospects

The presentation of the HIMA principles and methodological approach to the management of landscape resources was met, in the community of Sigri, with very positive and encouraging comments. Both local authorities and residents found the example of HIMA very interesting and useful, especially in creating communication channels between citizens and authorities. Since public participation

and community engagement is well legislated in Greece, but poorly carried out, the HIMA method could be very useful in raising awareness and informing, especially small communities, about successful examples of community-based resource management in areas bearing similarities to rural Greece, rather than to Northern Europe.

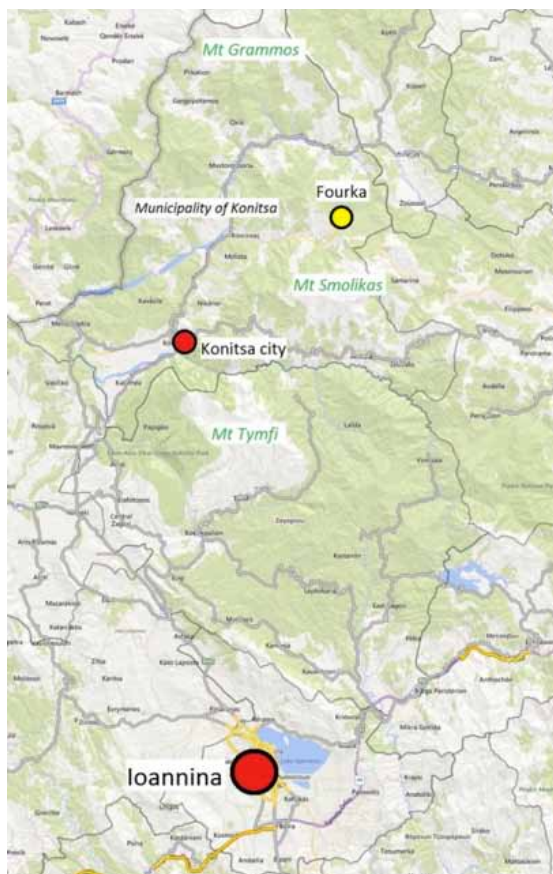
## 4. Greece: Fourka (Epirus)

### 4.1. Background information on the site

#### 4.1.1. General Information

The Hima site for the study area of Epirus is the former community of Fourka in the Municipality of Konitsa. Fourka is a small village located northeast of the city of Konitsa, which used to form an independent community before the national administrative reform of 2010. Today, the former community has been integrated into the enlarged Municipality of Konitsa and

its management and administration largely falls into the hands of the Municipality. In this respect, part of the information presented in this report refers to both territorial levels.



General site map



Location of the Municipality of Konitsa in the Region of Epirus



Location of the former community of Fourka in the Prefecture of Ioannina, Epirus

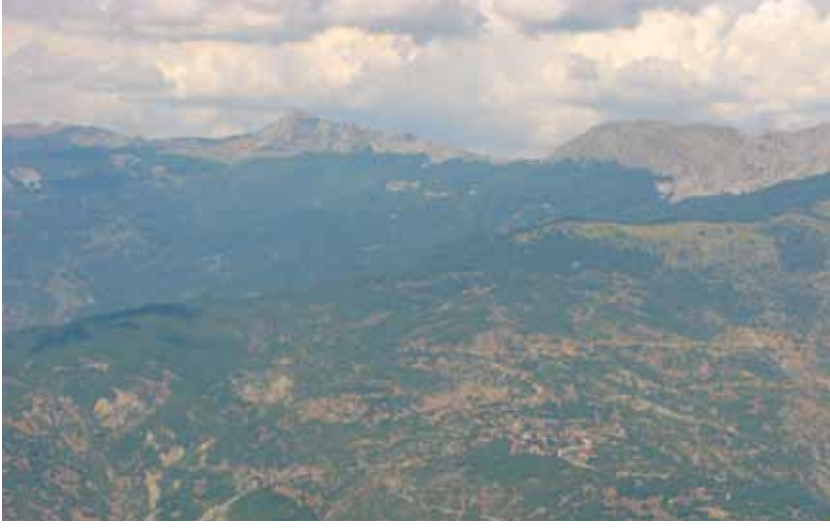


The city of Konitsa, seat of the homonymous Municipality, is located at a distance of 64 km from Ioannina, capital city of the Region of Epirus. Fourka is located at another 40 km NW of Konitsa, being one of the most remote villages of the wider area.

Konitsa is the most mountainous Municipality in Greece; in its administrative borders lie Mt Smolikas, second highest mountain in the country (2,637m) and Mt Grammos, third highest mountain (2,520m). Fourka is located on Mt Tambouri, a smaller mountainous volume (1,876m) that rises between Smolikas and Grammos. The valleys of Sarantaporos and Vourkopotamos traverse the Municipality of Konitsa at a general E-W direction, separating Mt Tambouri from the two adjacent high mountains. Fourka is built at an altitude of approx. 1,400m., being the second highest standing village of Epirus.



Mt Smolikas



Mt Grammos



Sarantaporos valley



Yourkopotamos valley

### 4.1.2 Socio-economic characteristics

According to the last census of 2011, the Municipality of Konitsa has a registered population of 6,362 inhabitants, being the fifth less inhabited Municipality of continental Greece (population density of 6.69 residents/sq.km.). The city of Konitsa is the only settlement that maintains its population since World War II, counting a total number of 2,942 inhabitants in 2011. All the other 39 villages in the Municipality (once thriving), face continuous demographic decline during the past 70 years.

Fourka is no exception, with a registered population of 90 inhabitants in 2011 (compared to 178 in 1961 and 808 in 1940); in reality though, not more than 10 people actually live in the village on a permanent basis.

Table 1 Population of Konitsa and Fourka								
Area	2011	2001	1991	1981	1971	1961	1951	1940
Municipality of Konitsa	6,362	7,648	7,676	9,663	10,037	14,405	13,915	19,498
Konitsa city	2,942	2,869	3,079	2,859	3,226	3,542	3,716	2,313
Fourka	90	117	58	68	93	178	214	808

Source: National Statistical Service of Greece

Traditionally, primary sector has been the main economic activity in the area. Farming, based on the large plain of Konitsa at the west; transhumant pastoralism and woodcutting on the mountainous areas around Fourka at the east. Masonry and handcrafting (wood-crafting, embroideries, etc.) have also been thriving in the villages at the north (called Mastorochoria, i.e. “villages of craftsmen”). Today, traditional activities are facing decline, and tourism is becoming an increasingly important economic

activity, benefitting from the unique natural environment and important cultural heritage of the area.

Fourka has always been –and still is– a transhumance stockbreeding village; herders bring their livestock for grazing in the area during summer and move them to warmer, lower altitude areas in Thessaly at the southeast in winter. This traditional activity has gradually declined and changed character, as motorized

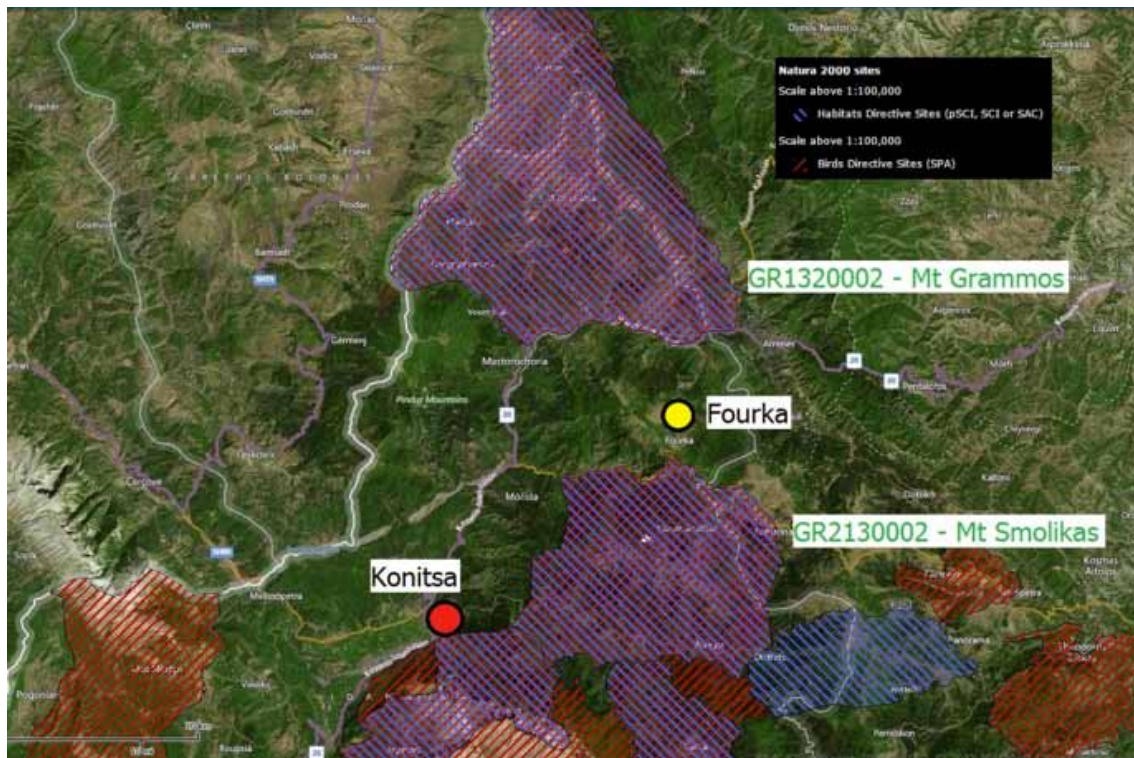
transport has replaced the practice of moving on foot; in recent years though, many herders are unable to cover transportation costs as a result of the financial crisis, and return to the traditional practice of moving their flocks on foot.

Livestock in Fourka used to be mainly sheep and goats; today cattle numbers are rising, while the number of sheep and goats has declined to approx. 2,000 in comparison to approx. 15,000 a few years ago.

### 4.1.3. Biodiversity value and legal status

The Municipality of Konitsa is characterized by significant biodiversity, as indicated by the presence of two important Natura 2000 sites within its administrative boundaries:

- GR2130002 – Mt Smolikas (19,975ha), a very rich and highly diverse in forest habitats area that is very important for some of the rarest mammals of Europe, such as the bear and otter. The site is the only locality in Europe for the rare Asiatic species *Veronica bornmuelleri*, and is also an important site for breeding raptors, alpine and forest species. The largest part of the site falls within the National Park of Northern Pindos, which is officially designated and managed by a dedicated Management Body.
- GR1320002 – Mt Grammos (34,357ha), a quite undisturbed and undeveloped area with extensive forests and alpine grasslands. It is also an important site for threatened species such as the bear, chamois, *Triturus alpestris* and birds of prey; the site is important for resident raptors and species associated with alpine habitats. There is no Management Body or plan for the whole site.



The Natura 2000 sites (SCI and SPA) of Mt Smolikas and Mt Grammos



The area of Fourka, as can be seen from Figure 8, lies between these two important biodiversity areas but does not enjoy a particular protection status or a management plan.

#### **4.1.4 Management structures**

A typical case for Greece, management responsibilities in the area fall under the jurisdiction of different bodies, often with overlapping competencies:

- The Municipal Authority is responsible for territorial planning and land management (including grazing management) for the whole area of Konitsa Municipality, including Fourka; recently (2014) the Local Territorial Plan has been approved (only covers the southwestern part, which corresponds to the boundaries of the Municipality before the 2010 administrative reform).
- The Management Body of the National Park of Northern Pindos is responsible for management of the National Park, but its institutional role is mainly advisory (although possessing significant know-how and specialized staff that carries out important maintenance and monitoring activities).
- The Forest Directorate of Konitsa is responsible for forest management in the whole area of the Municipality, including the National Park and the Natura 2000 sites.

No territorial plan or other management structure exists for the area of Fourka. The former community is represented by one delegate at the Municipal Council and grazing lands are managed by the Municipality on a yearly process of conceding communal land for grazing to local herders.

#### **4.1.5 Land ownership and management**

Apart from the farming fields in the plain of Konitsa, most land in the Municipality (that is, the rangelands and forests) is communal. There is no integrated plan for grazing and forest management and the Municipal Authority grants usage rights to herders on a yearly basis in accordance with their livestock capital needs. In Fourka, management of rangelands has been conceded to the local agricultural cooperative. However, the cooperative has been inactive for some years now due to local conflicts and these lands are now being grazed informally (i.e. outside the general regulatory framework in place).

#### **4.2 Reason for choosing the site for protection**

The significant biodiversity value of the area, which is a corridor between two designated protected areas (of Mt. Smolikas and Mt. Grammos) is a key reason for choosing the site for protection. Perhaps even most importantly though, the main reason of the particular selection for the Medscapes project, is the particular landscape character of the site. As mentioned above, Fourka has always been, and still is, a transhumance stockbreeding village. This activity, although declining, has diachronically shaped the landscape of the area, which is dominated by the presence of extensive rangelands standing amidst deciduous beech forests. This dynamic relationship between the natural environment of the sub-alpine forests and human activities (mainly grazing, but also woodcutting) is still evident on the landscape today. The lack of an integrated plan for grazing and forest management and the fact that most of the land (rangelands and forests) is

communal, add up to the challenges of the particular selection. Finally, it should also be noted that Med-INA has been working during the past years in the wider area (i.e. of the National Park of Northern Pindos and of the Municipality of Konitsa), and has developed good contacts with local stakeholders, as can be seen particularly through the establishment of the Vjosa/Aoos river Ecomuseum network in early 2014.

### **4.3 Summary on land use and interaction of residents with it**

The largest part of Konitsa Municipality is mountainous and densely forested, including:

- coniferous forests (particularly the black pine and the very characteristic white pine in the alpine zone),
- broad leaved deciduous forests (mainly beech forests in the sub-alpine zone),
- sclerophyllous evergreen forests (mostly evergreen oak forests in lower altitudes and around valleys).

The alpine landscape of the high mountains of Smolikas and Grammos, with their natural grasslands used for grazing, is very characteristic (see Figures 4 and 5 above) and has thus been selected as a distinct landscape character type in Level 1 LCA mapping. The area of Fourka, on the other hand, has also been added as a distinct landscape character type (see Figures 9 and 10 below), named “Grazed high uplands”. This landscape type appears along wide mountain ridges and is characterized by significant grazing activity and low settlement density, having a sense of openness and continuity. In terms of landform, it can neither be characterized as a plateau nor as a mountain, due to its intermediate slope pattern; in terms of landcover, its shrubland character is a



The rangelands of Fourka (characterized as “grazed high uplands”)

product of intense grazing and not of climatic conditions (as is the case in high mountains), since it lies below the alpine vegetation zone.

The above remarks clearly show the significant diachronic interaction of the local population with the natural environment, which results in the particular landscape character of today.

#### **4.4 Shared experience on Hima community-based approach application in the site (problems, vision and action plan)**

The local Hima workshop has taken place on the 22nd October 2015 in the city of Konitsa, at the Environmental Education Centre. Participants included a number of local stakeholders and citizens with an interest in the area. The Med-INA team briefly presented the outcomes



Photo from the Hima workshop in Konitsa

of the project (mapping process and landscape typology), focusing on the Municipality of Konitsa and the former community of Fourka.

The main points of the open discussion that followed can be summarized as follows:

- The landscape character of the area has shifted from agricultural - grazing to natural, as the significant decrease of traditional pastoral activities has led to an extensive reforestation of the area (in Fourka, it has been reported that livestock population has decreased to around 10% of what it used to be a few decades ago); as a result, what is considered to be a dynamic landscape by the project team (that is, a landscape with active management), is only seen as the residue of a once thriving era by the locals.
- The main socio-economic issues (problems and trends) related to landscape management are:
  - The depopulation of mountainous areas, leading to significant decrease or even abandonment of traditional activities –in particular transhumance (until recently at least), but also forestry and logging.
  - The social depreciation of the shepherd's profession.
  - The recent trend of returning to the homeland by younger generations (mainly due to the financial crisis and unemployment in cities) with different characteristics in comparison to the past.
  - The traditional patriarchic model, which stands as an obstacle for innovations by the younger generation.

- The shift to enclosed stockbreeding replacing traditional free range grazing; traditional activities are not been properly incentivized so as to continue being practiced.
- The main institutional and management related problems are:
  - The absence of management plans, regulatory frameworks and implementation tools (i.e. lack of forest and grazing management plans, lack of forest maps, etc.), which significantly hinder the productive potential of primary sector activities (i.e. reduced production potential of forests, prohibition of free range grazing in areas that have been reforested, etc.).
  - Overlapping responsibilities and inability of cooperation between different authorities, which reduces the possibility for coordinated actions towards active land management (for example, the Management Body of the National Park has the necessary expertise and staff but not the potential to carry out active management interventions because its official mandate is limited to an advisory role).
  - The failure of agricultural cooperatives, which has led to a neglect of communal land management.
- The vision for future development, as shared by all stakeholders, builds on landscape conservation, protection and enhancement of the natural and cultural heritage.

The issues of consensus have been agreed to guide future activities for conservation and development in the area, to foster integrated, active, management by the local community. Strong emphasis has been given on enhanced cooperation at all levels.

## 4.5 Challenges and obstacles faced

The main challenges that need to be effectively addressed if integrated active management by the local community is to be exercised are:

- How to provide increased employment opportunities for young people.
- How to establish efficient management tools at the local level, within an otherwise centralized administrative system at the national level



Photo from the Hima workshop in Konitsa



(see in particular the institutional and regulatory framework for rangelands and forests management).

- How to build a productive model based on different and complementary activities (farming and stockbreeding activities, tourism, culture, education).

The main obstacles are both institutional (centralised system of competencies) and financial (lack of funding, especially at the local government level, which also results in significant under-staffing).

## **4.6 Successes and opportunities**

The possibilities for an active and integrated management of the area depend on enhanced cooperation between the various local authorities. The representatives of the Municipal Authority and the Management Body of the National Park have agreed to cooperate more closely in the design of future projects in regard to ecotourism, promotion of local products, environmental management and cultural heritage enhancement.

Ecotourism is the main activity that can support local income, making better use of the rich natural and cultural assets of the area (thermal tourism, religious tourism, hiking, rafting and canoeing, etc.). In addition, forest management is the number one priority for the future. The local authorities have agreed to actively pursue the preparation of the necessary management plans which fall under the jurisdiction of the Regional Authority.

## **4.7 Lessons learned**

The process of active and effective community-based management in Greece still has a long way to go. Experience, both from the Medscapes project, but also from previous projects, has shown that the mobilization of resources at the local level heavily relies on individual efforts and circumstantial factors, as the overall administrative structure –but also the prevailing mentality and attitudes– are based on a very centralized concept of governance. External funding is still a major question and a necessity, particularly in the current, dire, economic conditions. Successful efforts, in any case, rely on good cooperation and voluntary agreements in accord to shared conservation and management objectives, in order to substitute for the absence of effective, streamlined processes at the national level. In this respect, the main challenge for Greece today is not so much legislative (i.e. available instruments), but rather practical (i.e. efficient structures and commonly shared objectives).

## **4.8 Recommendations**

The success of an endeavor, such as the one pursued through the Medscapes project's Hima-based component, strongly relies on the possibility to overcome the above-mentioned issues. External facilitators, such as NGOs involved at the local level, should definitely seek to carry out the necessary follow up actions and continuously cooperate with the local stakeholders, providing technical advice and expertise for new funding mechanisms and implementation tools.

# 5. Jordan: Swaimeh

## Location and General Information

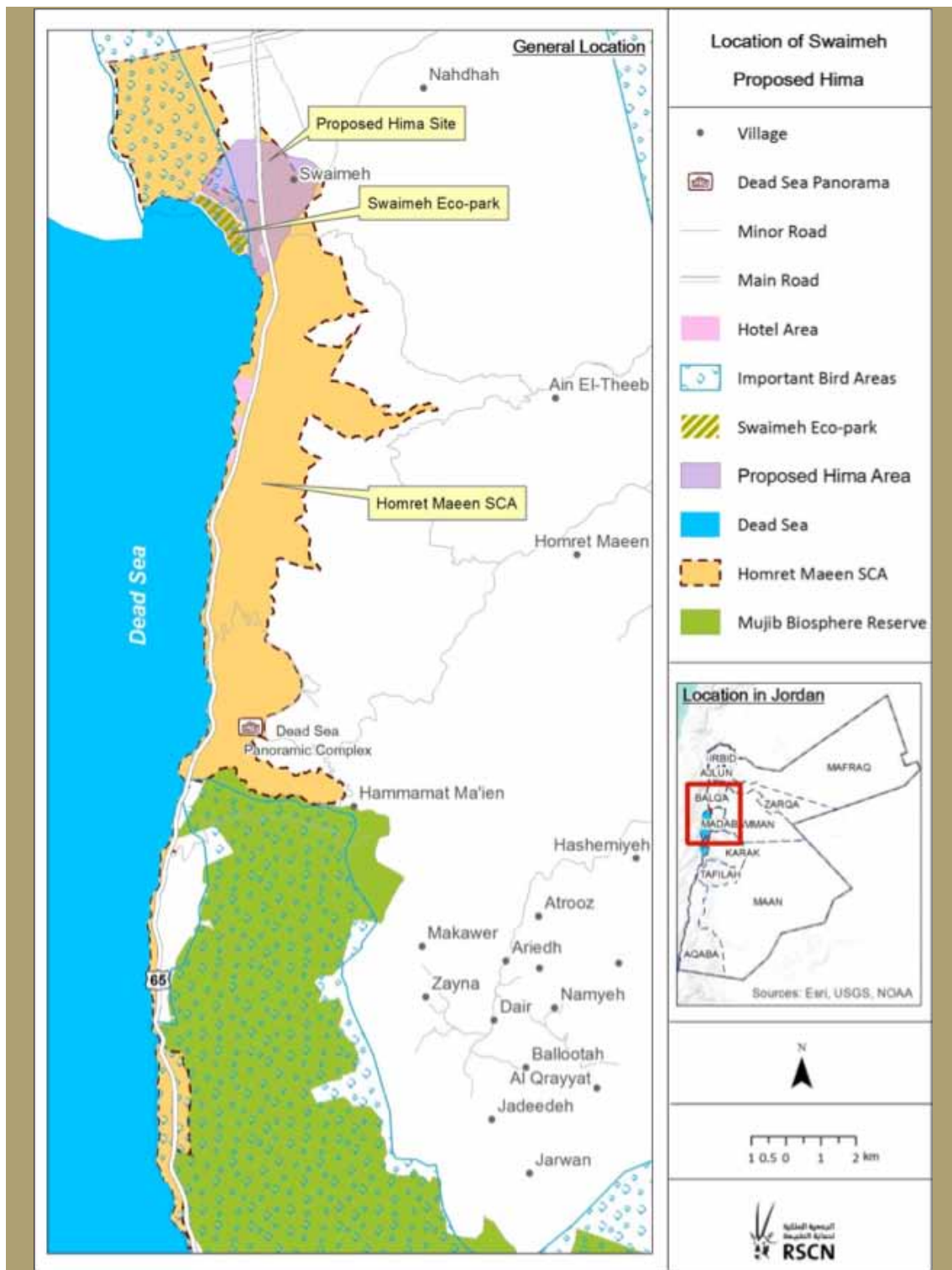
The Swaimeh proposed Hima site is located to the North of the Dead Sea within Balqa Governorate. The proposed Hima site includes the Swaimeh Eco-Park, which is located within Homret Maeen Special Conservation Area SCA. (Map 1) The land is mostly government owned with some private farms, mostly owned by people from Amman. The area is used for agriculture and tourism as it is in the vicinity of several important tourism sites like the Dead Sea area. The site is also about 10 km from the Baptism Site, a major religious destination.

Part of the area including the Eco-park is under the authority of Jordan Development Zones Company, where The Development Zones Law No. (2) is applied. The law aims to introduce and provide a legal foundation that facilitates the creation of economic growth within certain zones, and ensures a business-friendly and investment attracting environment. The Law of Municipalities No 13, Year 2011 is applied to the rest of the Swaimeh area including the village itself. Swaimeh is a small village of 4,200 people with a predominantly young population (67% being under the age of 30) and is characterized by large family size (an average of 7.53 persons), with low immigration rate. Two main tribes inhabit the Swaimeh village: 95% of the community is from the Jaarat, the rest are Bedouin tribes.

The proposed Hima site partially overlaps with Jordan River Important Bird Area IBA. The Dead Sea Sparrow is a restricted ranged species and is becoming a flagship species for the conservation program in the Swaimeh important bird area (IBA). The Dead Sea Sparrow is

classified as class 1 (first priority threatened species) according to the threatened species national criteria. In addition, in recent assessments using IUCN redlist criteria the species was proven to be nationally threatened due to the various direct threats to the breeding habitats, which are located only along the Jordan River and in Swaimeh and Fifa IBAs.

The area is mostly dominated with saline (Halophytic) vegetation, which is composed of succulent and high salty tolerant plants. Swaimeh eco-park contains about 35 plants which belong to 13 families. One locally threatened species *Ochradenus baccatus* is recorded.



General location of the Swaimenh area



General view of the Swaimch area

## Reasons for choosing the Site as a Hima Site

The site has several elements that encouraged the Medscapes project team at the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature RSCN to nominate it as a proposed Hima Site. The site's ecological importance is largely due to the presence of the native Tamarisk forest and other native plants, which are the main habitat for the restricted range species, the Dead Sea Sparrow. The habitat in the area is threatened with some invasive species which are replacing the native species. The community is having a better understanding of this environmental problem which is not only affecting the native plants and birds but is also affecting their daily livelihoods and traditional practices. Many springs have dried in the area due to the over-consumption of water by the invasive species. The invasive species are not suitable for grazing which is also a common practice in the area. The community is increasingly realizing their role in the wise management of their natural resources. Their willingness to cooperate, their awareness, and the fact that many solutions to this environmental problem is in their own hands were among the reasons to choose the



Tree plantation project in the area using water boxes



Swaimah area and community as a proposed Hima site.

## Summary on land use interactions

The current land use in the area includes agriculture, grazing and tourism. The Community is interested in the plantation of the native species. The plantation of the native species is extremely important for the local community as they need to replace the invasive species like the Prosopis with native species. The Prosopis causes the springs in the area to dry and it's not palatable by the animals, and can't be used for grazing, while the Tamarisk has value for the biodiversity and it also can be grazed by animals.

The Master Plan of the Jordan Development Zones JDZ sets the development vision and land use plan for the area in the parts that are under its authority.

The Eco-park has a proposed zoning plan which has been developed for the site by RSCN, JDZ, and in consultation with the local community. The zoning plan for the site shows some proposed infrastructure and gives an idea on how the land should be managed. The zoning plan is produced with three aims:

- Ensure the ecological and forest integrity of the eco-park in a natural asset based approach to development.
- Allow for the maximum levels for ecosystems and forest rehabilitation within the site in response to the long periods of human induced impacts.
- Promote the site as a model for sustainable tourism and visitation activities contributing to improving the tourism offering, diversifying nature based tourism products and enhancing local economy, awareness raising and collaboration for site protection and long term sustainable development.



The Swaimah Community discussing their environmental problems

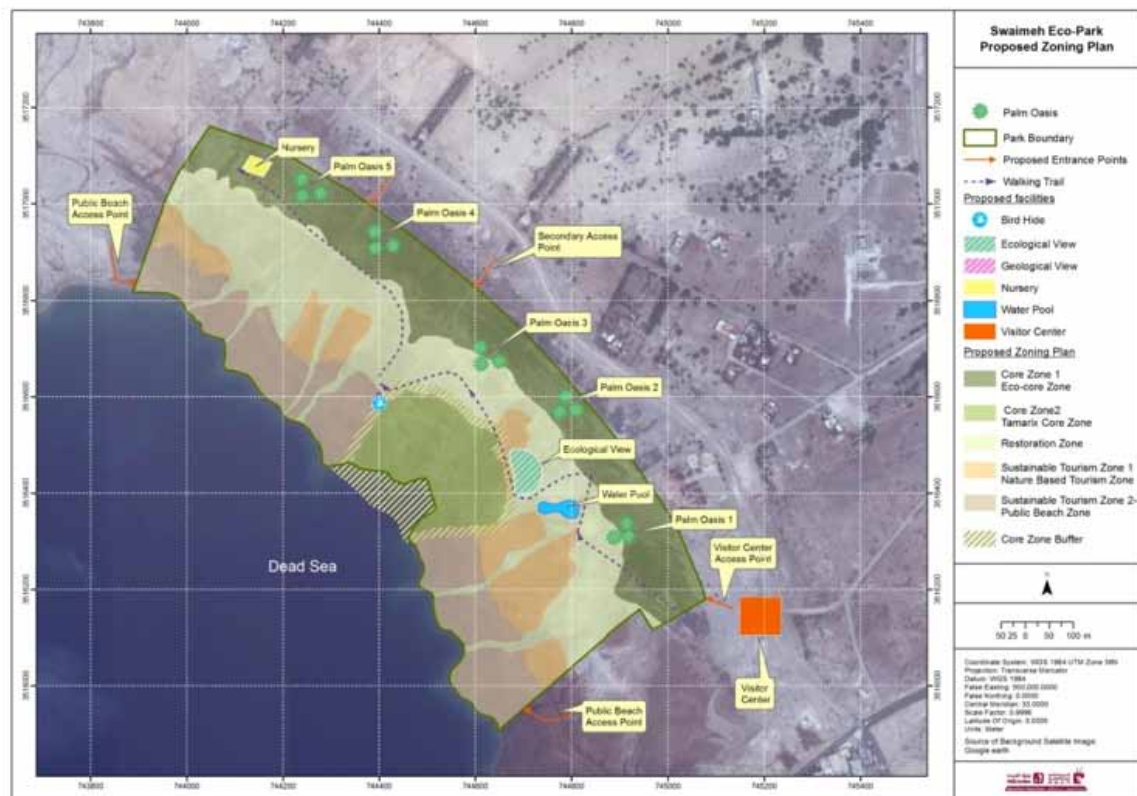
**The zoning consists of three zone categories as follows:**

**The Core Zone:** The main management objective is to safeguard the ecological and forestry integrity at the habitat and species levels. Allow for natural regeneration and rehabilitation of the ecological system along with a strong enforcement and monitoring schemes. **The Restoration Zone:** this includes the habitat restoration and the Tamarix restoration zones from the ecology and forestry zoning plans respectively.

The management objective of this zone is to allow the maximum possible level of habitat and species restoration through active management and direct interventions. Hence, the zone will host most of the afforestation schemes, the propagation plans and the edu-

cational initiatives. The zone would also host a reasonable level of visitation without diverse effects on the ecology and landscape. The zone will primarily act as a buffer for the core zone in transition towards the more intensive use of the site in the sustainable use zone.

**The sustainable tourism zone:** The management aim of the zone is to promote sustainable use of natural resources and enhance public enjoyment and interaction with the natural spaces. The zone will embrace all semi-intensive and intensive activities with focus on nature based tourism in the northern strip and public recreation in the public beaches. The zones are farthest from the core zones and their impact on the site resources is a means of management trade-off.



Proposed Zoning of the Swaimeh Eco-Park

## Shared experience on Hima community based approach application in the site

RSCN has started introducing the HIMA concept to the local community by holding several meetings with community representatives and government officials. RSCN has organized early in September, 2014 a study tour for the Swaimeh community to Dana Biosphere Reserve. The Swaimeh community had the chance to see examples of the actual benefits of the shared wise management of natural resources. They had the chance to listen to the representatives of the Barrah Society on how they organize grazing and manage rangelands with the support and help from RSCN. The study tour was followed by problem analysis workshop attended by representatives of local NGO's, officials from the municipalities, and members of the local community. The workshop's main output was the formulation of a local committee composed of 22 members responsible for the follow up of the designation of Swaimeh site as a Hima. During the workshop RSCN facilitated a SWOT analysis (Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) exercise where the community had the chance to identify the main threats and opportunities that encounter the declaration of the site as a Hima. One of the main challenges that faced the community was their lack of technical experience in leading the Hima designation process. They have requested from RSCN the technical assistance in developing the Swaimeh Hima designation file, as the process of designation has a lot of technical requirements, data and mapping which RSCN could provide.



Study tour of representatives from Swaimeh community to Dana Biosphere Reserve

## **Challenges and obstacles faced**

RSCN faced a number of challenges when approaching the Swaimeh Community; the main challenge was that the community was lacking awareness towards environmental issues and about the ecological value of their area. The study tour and awareness meetings held with the community significantly increased their awareness towards many environmental problems. Another challenge that faced the RSCN's Medscapes team was the fact the community was a very poor community. They were more interested in environmental projects which have an income generating aspect or economic benefits.

Another challenge that faced RSCN's Medscapes team was the multiple authorities involved in the management and planning of the land as mentioned above. The area was partially under the Jordan Development Zones Authority while the rest of the area was under the authority of the local municipality. The Hima designation process though, would include a wider range of stakeholders like the Ministry of Environment, Jordan valley Authority and Ministry of Agriculture.

One main challenge to Swaimeh community supported by RSCN is to follow the Hima legal designation process. In order for the site to be officially declared as a Hima, it will be declared as a Special Conservation Area SCA according to the Special Conservation Areas regulations. A nomination file with a proposed management and zoning plan has to be submitted and approved by the Ministry of Environment before the site is officially declared as Hima Swaimeh Special Conservation Area.

## **Successes and opportunities**

One of the greatest achievements of the Medscapes project in introducing the Hima approach was because the team worked in

close collaboration with the local community from the beginning of the project. The Hima concept was introduced to the community gradually and it was not imposed to them. The study tours to other communities who have experienced and benefited from the participatory management of natural resources had a very positive effect. Swaimeh community had the chance to hear directly from other community with very similar issues. In later stages, the Swaimeh community had the chance to see examples of success stories from Lebanon during the mentoring visit of the Society for the Protection of Nature in Lebanon SPNL. The mentoring visit had a very positive impact on the local community, and opened their minds to new prospects and benefits of the Hima application.

The fact that the Swaimeh community has established a local committee from local NGO's, community members and the Head of the Municipality requesting technical assistance from RSCN to proceed with the Hima designation process was one of the project's greatest achievements in the Hima work package.

## **Recommendations**

The Medscapes project has introduced the Hima approach in the Swaimeh area but the work is in progress on the full nomination file that will be presented to the Jordanian Ministry of Environment. RSCN recommends to continue to support Swaimeh community to submit the full nomination file with a proposed management and zoning plan. In addition, have a new joint regional project that would build on the Medscapes Hima work package outcomes, and support the proposed Hima sites into fully operational sites. RSCN also recommends securing a fund to organize more study tours and exchange visits for the communities targeted in the Hima work package.



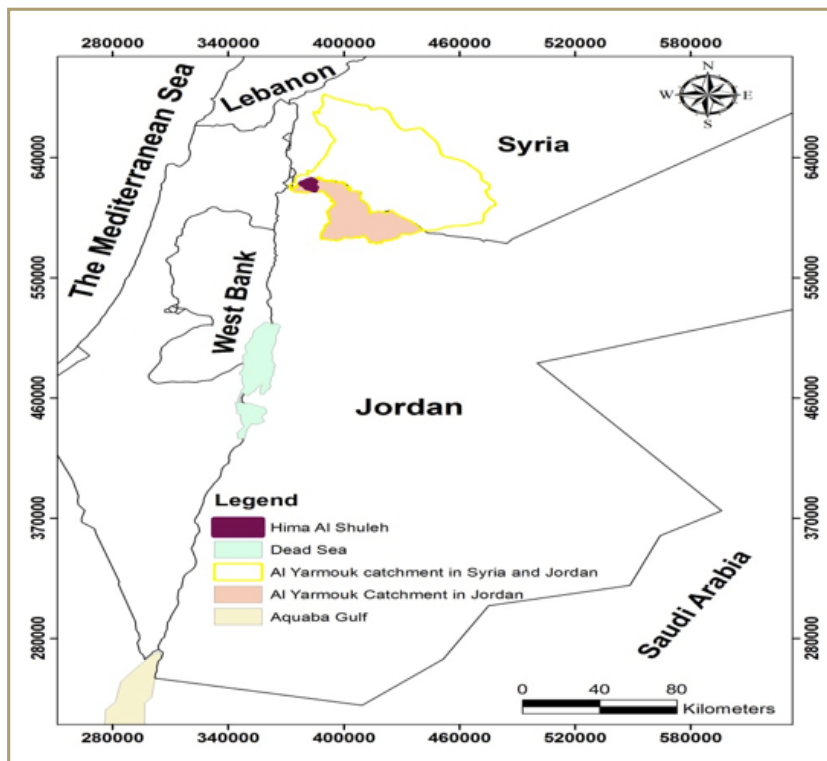


Invasive species threatening the native plant species in the area

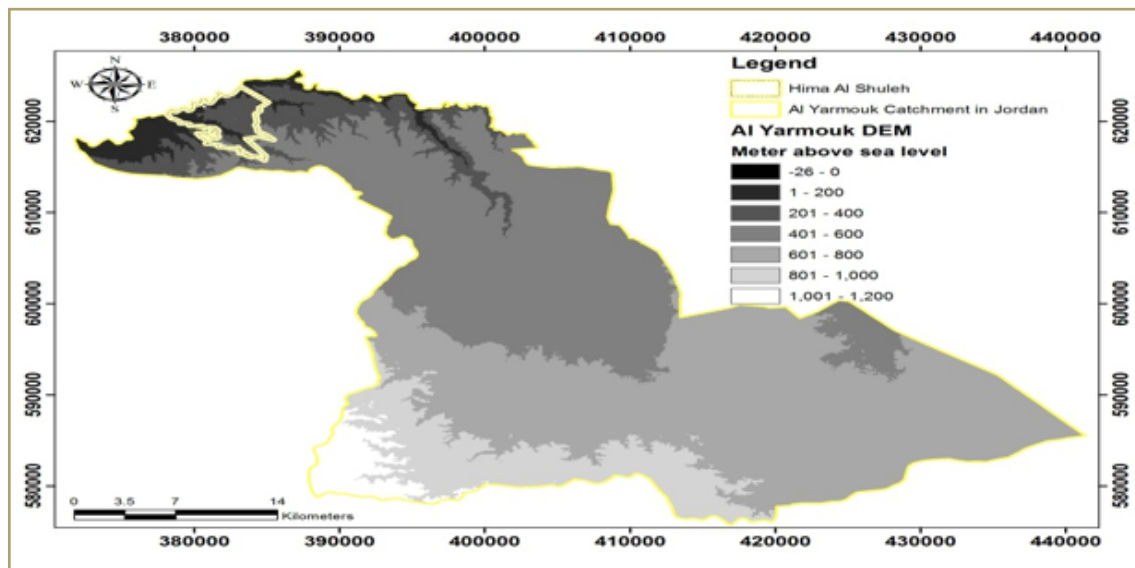
## 6. Jordan: Alshaela

### Location and General Information

The proposed Hima site at Alshaela is located to the northwestern tip of Jordan on the borders of the Syrian occupied Golan Heights, and along the eastern part of the Yarmouk River and the hills overlooking it. The size of the proposed area is 26.4 km<sup>2</sup>. The proposed Hima site includes the villages of Saham, Samar, Ala'sheh. The land is mostly private farms (65%) which are mostly owned by local people, while the rest is government owned (35%). The area is mostly used for agriculture and tourism, as it is in the vicinity of several important tourist sites.



The general location of the Alshaela area



The climate in Alshaela area

The presence of dense forests and springs in the region makes it an attractive area for local informal tourism activities.

The Alshaela is in the Mediterranean climatic region, and is part of the mountainous highlands in Jordan. The elevation ranges from 150 m below sea level to 500 meters above sea level, as shown in the map. The average

rainfall ranges between 400-600 mm, which occurs as precipitation between the months of November and March. The region constitutes the most fertile areas of Jordan, and the best climate, relatively hot summers and winters mild to cool, and temperatures ranging from 6.8 to 38.2 C°



A general view of the Alshaela area



The borders of the occupied Golan Heights with the Yarmouk River



## Reasons for choosing the site as a Hima Site

The site has several elements that encouraged the Medscapes project team at the German Jordanian University to nominate it as a proposed Hima Site.

The site's ecological importance is largely due to the presence of the deciduous oak forests (Malloul) *Quercus ithaburensis*. There are also clusters of pine trees, orchards and olive groves. There are some plant species which are rare and endangered, such as cyclamen *Cyclamen persicum*. The area also contains a number of animal species. These include Red fox, Arab Wolf (an endangered species), and the Broad Toothed Field Mouse, which is linked to the presence of oak trees. Fresh water springs are also important elements of the landscape in the area.

The targeted area is threatened by logging and informal tourism activities. Grazing activities

also deplete much of the floral biodiversity. The community has a good understanding of these environmental problems, which not only affect the flora and fauna, but also affects their daily livelihoods. Their willingness to cooperate, their awareness, and the fact that many solutions to these environmental problems are in their own hands were among the reasons to choose Alshaela area and its community as a proposed Hima site.





The ecological importance for the site





Alshaleh Community discussing their environmental problems

## Summary on land use interactions

The current land use in the area includes agriculture (olive groves, and various citrus fruits, grains and seasonal crops grown by the local community), goat and sheep grazing, and tourism. Local herds may reach up to 350 goats or sheep while herders from outside the region bring herds with as many as 900 animals. Tourism is unregulated and activities include barbecues, which cause fires, and litter. Logging, although prohibited, is also a severe problem. Hunting (especially bird hunting, as well as wild boar) is practiced in the region, and it is often random and unauthorized. Hunters are mostly from outside the region, and are a significant threat to the area's biodiversity. Contamination of water sources and of ground-water springs is another important issue. The community is interested in using the area in a sustainable way for this environmentally important area.

## Current Protection

The protection of the region is a joint responsibility between the local community (through the municipality of Alshulaeh) and the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature. This arrangement is based on the designation of the area as a "Special Protection Area" under the Environment Protection Law.

The General Command of the Jordanian armed forces in this region, being a border area, is responsible for access to areas that concern national security.

## Shared experience on Hima community based approach application in the site

Our team introduced the HIMA concept to the local community by holding several meetings with community representatives and government officials. In March, 2015 a study tour for the local community to Ajloun Reserve was arranged, and the local community had the chance to see examples of the actual benefits of wise management of natural resources. They had the chance to hear from representatives



A meeting with stakeholders

of the RSCN how the organize and manage. The study tour was followed by several meetings with stakeholders in addition to a problem-analysis workshop. This was attended by representatives of local NGO's, officials from the municipalities, and members of the local community. The workshop's main output was the formulation of a local committee, composed of 15 members, responsible for the follow up of the designation of the site as a Hima. During the workshop a SWOT analysis exercise was conducted where the community had the chance to identify the main threats and opportunities that encounter the declaration of the site as a Hima.

## Challenges and obstacles faced

Our team faced a number of challenges, including the lack of awareness among the local community of the difference between the concept of Hima and legal status of the Special Conservation Area. It took a long time to be convinced because of the presence of Yarmouk Reserve on the border of the proposed Hima. Other challenge that faced our team was the large number of stakeholders and different visions and multiple authorities involved in the man-

agement and planning of the land. Another issue faced by the municipality and the RSCN is reaching agreement on the parameters of the legal status of Hima, and its relationship with the SCA.

## Successes and opportunities

Of the most important achievements of our team after multiple meetings with stakeholders was to get the initial approval declaring the region as Hima. The exchange of ideas gave the local community and stakeholders some successful models in the Hima experience in other countries such as Lebanon (Hima Anjer) and how beneficial it will be in the region.

## Recommendations

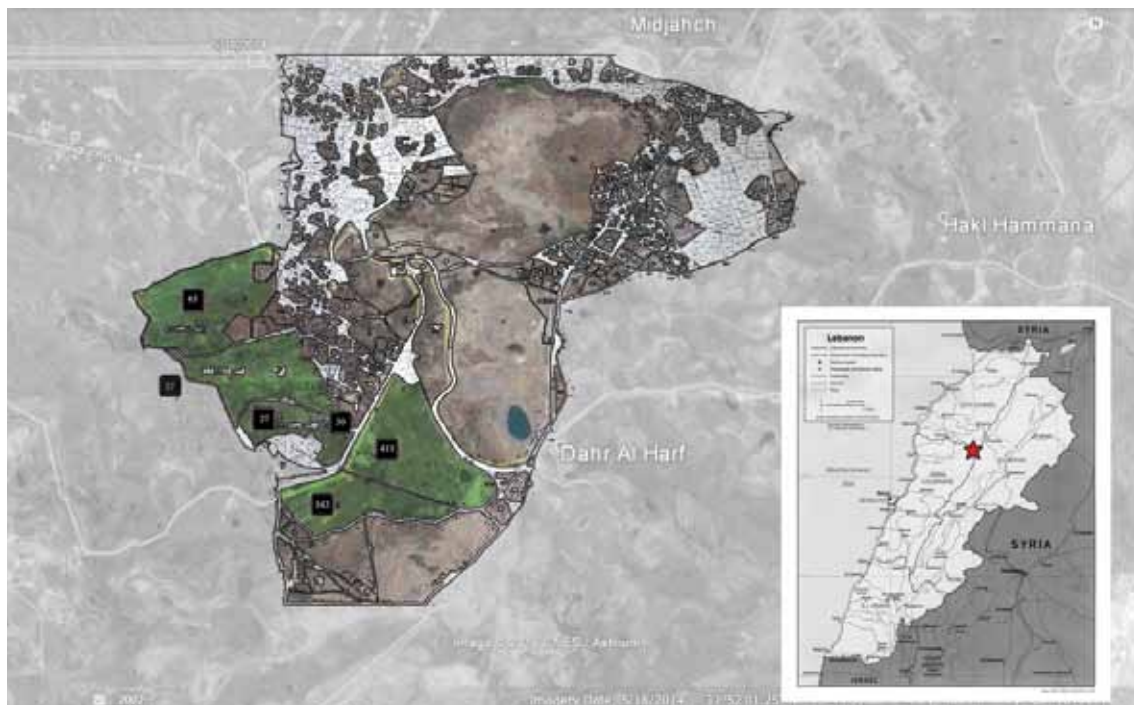
The success of the process in this area offers encouragement that the process could also be replicated in other areas where sensitive landscapes are under threat.

# 7. Tarshish, Lebanon

## 7.1 Background information on the site

Tarshish is located in Baabda district in Mount Lebanon. It has an average altitude of 1600 meters and covers an area of about 1000 hectares. Fifty kilometers separates Tarshish from Beirut and fifteen kilometers separates it from Zahle. The population of Tarshish reaches almost to 4000 inhabitants.

Some experts think that Tarshish is a Semitic pronunciation of Turchicha, which means the “marble mountain”, or that is a Persian word meaning “the precious stone”. The name also means “the impenetrable mountain”.



Site of Hima Tarshish





This village is commonly known for its agricultural background, it has orchards of apples, cherries, chestnuts, walnuts and blackberries. From the location called “Hooat Al Dara”, springs a part of the water feeding Beirut’s River. In ancient times, it was known as the river of Magoras, which connects to the sea after crossing of almost 20km land.

Majdel Tarshish is the neighboring village to Tarshish, it is used to be a station for the retinue of passengers on their way to Metn-Bekaa. The Romans paved roads to cross it, linking, thus, the seaside with the inner plains. They are especially evident in “Bourj Al-Hamam”, (tower of pigeons). Majdel Tarshish was a well fortified castle in time of invasions that raided down the Bekaa. Rocky sarcophaguses of the Roman era bear witness to that glorious age.

## 7.2 Reason for choosing the site for protection

SPNL team visited the village and met with the municipality, a rapid assessment report was conducted, and five main economic sectors have been identified in Tarshish namely: hunting, grazing, ecotourism, water, and agriculture.

The site is of natural and cultural importance. There is a quite fauna and flora biodiversity which makes the site a distinctive area from the surrounding villages. Tarshish has been stressed knowing that Tarshish is a connection village between the Bekaa valley and Beirut.

## 7.3 Summary on land use & interaction of residents with it

The community depends mainly on hunting, grazing, ecotourism, water, and agricultural activities as income generating activities. Thus, the land is the main source of income which drives them to sustainably use the land for long term and better livelihood. The traditional knowledge is an important aspect that the community depends on for its living.

The community is highly aware of the cultural and natural importance of the land and knows how to deal with the changes of the land in the different seasons.

## 7.4 Shared experience on Hima community based approach application in the site (process of implementation, identified problems, vision, objectives, developed action plan with the community, decision of establishing Hima community managed area).

SPNL has started collaborating with the Tarshish local authorities and community in its mission to protect the environment by promoting the Hima system. The municipality of Tarshish signed the decision to adopt the new Hima annexed with maps that locates the Hima as following: Marej Issa from the east Kferselwan from the south, private land from the west, and a small river from the north.

Hima Tarshish is the most recent Hima, it was established in 23rd of May, 2015. The site was studied and analyzed with the community to be used for the economic benefits. The Hima action plan included building an eco-village, providing job opportunities for the women of Tarshish, raising organic crops, establishing responsible hunting area, promoting responsible farming and goat keeping.

The revival of the Hima system is empowering communities to take responsibility for managing local resources. This approach is being championed by the Society for Protection of Nature in Lebanon (BirdLife in Lebanon) as part of their Important Bird Areas programme, and is helping to build capacity for local economic enterprises, linked to the wildlife and landscape conservation.

## Action Plan

**Objective:** *Implementing preliminary rapid assessments on current situation of the involved Hima sites from the Syrian Influx*

**Activity 1:** Signing the contract with the municipality for the establishment of Hima Tarshish

**Activity 2:** Development of capacity building for local community

**Activity 3:** Enhancing the livelihood of the shepherds through purchasing a traditional tent, and marketing their traditional dairy products and handicrafts from wool and goat skin

**Activity 4:** Map shepherd trails between Hima Kfar Zabad and Hima tarshish to become a full program for eco-tourism (Hima to Hima).

**Activity 5:** Identifying and collecting medicinal and edible plants to enhance and empower the women in the area

**Activity 6:** Rehabilitation of the gravity pools to supply water for the local communities

**Activity 7:** Promote responsible hunting practices

**Activity 8:** Establishing visitor center, information desk, and gift center

## 7.5 Challenges and obstacles faced

Each Hima establishment is a big challenge, despite the fact that many from the community were supporting the Hima approach; yet many still feared it (fear from top down approach until the difference is clearly understood). The mayor in the village has always worked on environmental, cultural, and fundraising programs for the communities which makes the community a more understanding one.

## 7.6 Successes and opportunities

Tarshish is not only a Hima today, the area has become part of a program called “On the Move from Hima to Hima”, where Bedouins move from Hima Kfar Zabad in the Bekaa valley during summer to settle in Tarshish since it is colder, and move back to Hima Kfar Zabad in Winter. This process has given the chance for communities to work together, share the benefits of their land, and get along for a better environment. The grazing communities value their land and give it more than they take from it. This link between grazing, the land, and the communities have increased the biodiversity and given the area a more exquisite value.



## 7.7 Lessons learned

Hima Tarshish has proven that all parts of the land are significant. Nature and culture have been combined to feed all elements of the site and ensured the long term survival of all natural resources and better livelihood of all the community.

## 7.8 Recommendations

Transparency in dealing with the communities is highly important in order to overcome concerns and fears of the top down approach, and to avoid over expectations from the community.



## 8. Lebanon, Byblos (Jbeil)

### 8.1 Background information on the site

A town found by Cronus, as the Greek mythology he is the leader and the youngest of the first generation of Titans, as the first city in Phoenicia around 8800 to 7000 BC.

The Papyrus papers were called Byblos for being exported from Egypt, through Byblos, to the Aegean and the Greek word Biblia (Bible). Many civilizations passed through Byblos from the Phoenicians, Crusades, Canaanite, Ottoman, and discovered by Pierre Montet from 1921 until 1924 during the French Mandate.

Byblos links the sea to the mountains highlighting environmental and cultural importance. Nature is of high value in the area starting from the diverse marine ecosystem, surrounding mountain forests that are main attractions and habitats for bird and wildlife species, natural wells that flow from ground water at the mountain tops to the coast, and a grazing trail that links Anti-Lebanon Mountain Range horizontally with the Lebanese Coast (Byblos).



Fish Fossils - Byblos



Byblos Port





Site of Hima Byblos

The deep cultural status represents the ancient history of the city with the old architectural techniques in houses due to the presence of different civilizations, very old Churches' bells ring and Mosques' call for prayers at the same time, traditional food products produced by the surrounding villages are sold in the old market, famous for the fish fossils production, and very well-known restaurants serving seafood.

## 8.2 Reason for choosing the site for protection

Today, Byblos is a modern city that still retains its historical past, one of Lebanon's major tourist sites, the oldest occupied city in the world, and a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The land mainly belongs to the government and municipality.

The site is visited by millions every year; there is a major threat and stress over the natural and cultural resources. For this, the city is in major

need for some sort of protection. The municipality and community are very much aware of the status and needs support in order to deal responsibly with all elements of the site.

## 8.3 Summary on land use & interaction of residents with it

The community live in Byblos and depend on its resources for their livelihood. Mainly, most of the community work as fishermen, others have shops in the old souk to promote their handcrafts, traditional food products, and some others have restaurants.

The tourism in the area is the main income generating activity for most of the residents Byblos. The community makes sure that tourism is eco-friendly and causes no harm to any of the natural and cultural elements of the site for it is what they work on for a living.

## **8.4 Shared experience on Hima community based approach application in the site (process of implementation, identified problems, vision, objectives, developed action plan with the community, decision of establishing Hima community managed area)**

Many meetings have been made with the Municipality of Byblos and the Cultural Center as introductory meetings for the establishment of the Hima. The Hima training workshop for the Medscapes project was done in Byblos and the partners studied the site accordingly. All information was gathered to build and develop an action plan for the site to be discussed with the Municipality of Byblos and the Cultural Center.

December 2014, SPNL in collaboration with the Municipality of Jbeil and the Municipal Cultural Center of Byblos organized a remarkable event “On the Move Exhibition” and “Souk El Hima”. The aim of the festival was to highlight the importance of grazing as a cultural practice and promote the shepherds of the different Hima sites, empower and market the traditional products of the women in the Hima sites, and enhance the livelihood of the local communities inside the Hima territories on socio-economic level.

On Thursday 29 October 2015, a meeting was held in the Cultural Center with the Municipality of Byblos to discuss a draft action plan for the sight. Further amendments were done for the action plan according to the site and community's needs. Today, the action plan has been finalized, and the declaration of the Hima will be officially finalized in January 2016.

## **Action Plan**

**Objective:** Link the cultural and environmental heritage from Hima to Hima

### **Activities:**

#### **1- Annual festivals for Transhumance and Marketing Souk El Hima Products:**

- On the Move from Hima to Hima and link the forest and grazing trails from Byblos to Aqoura (part of the tour), in addition to maps for eco-tourism and undersea museum of the statues and the fish and the establishment of annual festivals on these routes.

- Marketing the products of the local communities that links to the cultural heritage and spreads the awareness on the environment in Souk El Hima Program.

#### **2- Database for nature and linking it to the information center at entrance of Jbeil**

- Add a section on cultural and environmental heritage in the tourist information center of the city and the region (Database, field guides, SNOW educational activities)

#### **3- Monitoring system for Bird Migration, marine trails, link it to fishermen as eco-tourism**

- Book / guide for marine biodiversity in Jbeil and fish fossils

- Book / guide to plants in the region

- Conserve marine life (revive the Murex Shell, Sea Urching, beach plants, and sea turtles )

- Encourage sustainable fishing and hunting

- Monitor and observe birds ( migratory birds and bird flyways) and link it to eco-tourism with fishermen

- Study the region's plants and animals (land and sea) and raise awareness about its importance

- Convert Byblos Harbour to Green Harbour (Guide for responsible fishermen)

- Responsible hunting in Aqoura and Tannourine

**4-Develop a program to educate children on the importance of biodiversity in Jbeil (SNOW Program)**

## 8.5 Challenges and obstacles faced

SPNL faced too many challenges before the agreement on having Byblos as a Hima site. The community, municipality, and cultural center were hesitant on declaring the site as a Hima because any kind of protection measures were thought to be a top down strict protection measure opposite to what the bottom up Hima agreements.

## 8.6 Successes and opportunities

The establishment of a Hima in Byblos is a success story by itself for the site links all natural, cultural, historic, economic, and social aspects. This is a distinctive landscape area where a community based management is needed to keep the essence of the site yet protect it for its benefit and long term survival.

## 8.7 Lessons learned

Community engagement is highly important but it is a long term process that needs time and efforts to maintain. But once community is convinced, and ownership is ensured, long term sustainability for sustainable use of resources will be the normal trend.



Culture and Nature Festival in Byblos



Meeting with Municipality and Cultural Center of Byblos



Fourka rangelands - Greece





# VII ● LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE EXPERIENCE OF THE PARTNERS

Based on the partners' experience in implementing the Hima participatory framework, the main lessons learned were:

- Most of the partners had previous experience in implementing participatory approaches with the local communities.
- The Hima approach has certain benefits compared to the European conservation approaches. The bottom-up approach for the management of the site, general consensus of all main stakeholders for the vision and goals of the area, the participatory approach and flexibility in the implementation of the strategies developed ensure the acceptance of the local communities for the management of the site, as expressed by the Cyprus partner.
- The EU Directives for protected areas, in Cyprus at least, focuses mainly on natural and ecological characteristics of the site. The Hima approach is inclusive, designed to preserve and protect ecosystems for the sustainable use of its resources by the people and for the people, taking into account and including the social and cultural particularities of the area.
- The need to monitor Hima sites has become clear otherwise there will be a lapse into the previous apathy. This experience has reinforced our conviction that NGOs are the most suitable agencies to undertake such initiatives because they are prepared to invest the time and effort required on a long-term basis.
- The presentation of the HIMA principles and methodological approach to the management of landscape resources was met, in the community of Sigri-Greece, with very positive and encouraging comments. Both local authorities and residents found the example of HIMA very interesting and useful, especially in creating communication channels between citizens and authorities.
- Conservation initiatives should be coupled with poverty alleviation alternatives for the local community, providing them with economic benefits and job opportunities.
- Community engagement is very important but it is a long term process that needs time and efforts to maintain. But once community is convinced, and ownership is ensured, long term sustainability for sustainable use of resources will be the normal trend.

# VIII • CHALLENGES AND OBSTACLES FACED

Dounieh - Lebanon



Below is a summary of the main challenges and obstacles faced by partners:

- The main challenge faced when implementing the Hima approach in Cyprus was to identify appropriate sites and willing communities. As environmentally protected sites in Cyprus are already identified and backed up by strong Cypriot and European Legislation, there is a certain fear that any agreement about land will involve limitations on its use by owners. It was a challenge to identify an area suitable for applying a participatory approach in conserving the ecological value of the site or sustainable use of its natural resources, and to place this initiative within the framework of maintaining the landscape.
- Ownership of the property was also an issue, as public land in Cyprus is usually managed centrally, while private land is managed individually, under restrictions according to the zoning of the Planning Authority (Department of Town Planning and Housing). It is not usual for large pieces of land to be held by communities.
- Lack of awareness of the local community towards environmental issues and about the ecological value of their area. The study tour to other successful initiatives and awareness meetings held with communities significantly increased their awareness towards many envi-

ronmental issues and gained their acceptance.

- Fear by the community of the centralized approach and loss of decision-making for their land. This fear is eliminated by time, as the Hima community based approach is explained with its benefits to the community.
- Explaining the Hima concept, finding a terminology in Greek and adapting it to European reality.
- Limited timeframe for implementing the Hima approach since the project implementing is short for such initiative.
- Bureaucratic delays in implementation of certain actions due to the number of responsible authorities involved.
- Institutional: How to establish efficient management tools at the local level, within an otherwise centralized administrative system at the national level. The main challenge was the multiple authorities involved in the management and planning of the land. Collaboration between local stakeholders is a key factor toward success for ownership, proper planning and implementation.
- Financial: lack of funding, especially at the local government level. Collaborative efforts are needed to mobilize international funding for specific objectives and plans.

# IX. RECOMMENDATIONS



Qamouaa Forest - Lebanon

Based on the partner's experience in implementing the Hima participatory framework, here are some of the important recommendations highlighted:

- People are more ready to accept conservation initiatives when they emanate from their heritage and language; it is therefore useful to tie them into existing practices.
- The need to learn more about traditional conservation approaches. This has been already identified by the Barcelona Declaration on Land Stewardship 2014, and it would be useful if links were created between Hima and the Stewardship Movement.
- The need to demonstrate that protected areas are for the public good and to ensure that their benefits remain valid.
- Since the bottom-up approach takes much more time than top-down directives, and given that NGOs are prepared to work outside office hours and to come back again and again until consensus has been obtained, NGOs should be encouraged to become involved and formal authorities should recognize this contribution by NGOs and support it.
- External facilitators, such as NGOs involved at the local level, should definitely seek to carry

out the necessary follow up actions and continuously cooperate with the local stakeholders, providing technical advice and expertise for new funding mechanisms and implementation tools.

- Since public participation and community engagement is well legislated in Greece, and Cyprus but not always fully carried out, the HIMA method could be very useful in raising awareness and informing, especially small communities, about successful examples of community-based resource management in areas bearing similarities to rural Greece and Cyprus, rather than using Northern European examples .
- Transparency in dealing with the communities is highly important in order to overcome concerns and fears from the top down approach, and to avoid over expectations from the community.



## ● SUGGESTED ADAPTATION OF HIMA FRAMEWORK AND CONCLUSIONS

The protected area system in Lebanon includes several categories within the several ministries and authorities such as nature reserves and natural sites under the Ministry of Environment, protected forests under the Ministry of Agriculture, World Cultural and Natural Heritage sites under the Ministry of Tourism. This in addition to international ecological designations such as Ramsar sites, IBAs, KBAs, Man and biosphere, etc., all under strict conservation measures and on public land.

In order to promote the conservation of ecologically important sites on municipal and private lands, SPNL has revived the Hima approach as the best public participatory approach which people seem to accept as it allows sustainable use of resources, promotes local community involvement in decision-making, and support in alleviating poverty.

SPNL has come up with the Hybrid Hima, a community-based approach to sustainably managing natural and rural resources that merges modern science with the values of the traditional Hima embedded in our heritage, viz.

- Using scientific assessments for the identification of sites.
- Adopting social tools for stakeholder analysis assessments.

- Adopting participatory approaches to ensure ownership by the community.
- Stressing the values and culture embedded in the traditional Hima.

The municipal law in Lebanon allows municipal councils to declare Hima within their own geographic jurisdiction. This facilitates the conservation work and allows proactive action on the ground. On the contrary, legal systems in partner countries do not allow such freedom and decentralized authority.

Nevertheless, experience in partner countries has shown that their protected areas systems (such as SPA, Natura 2000, UNESCO geoparks) mandate the involvement and participation of the local communities decision-making. The current situation is poorly implemented, limited often to merely informing the local communities through open meetings without a full consultation process. This results either in decisions that are not fully 'owned' by the inhabitants, and therefore not supported; or in local demands that have not been properly analysed and are not necessarily rational or sustainable. Based on the use of the Hima participatory framework within the pilot areas in the partner countries, the Hima bottom up participatory approaches has proven to be as



highly useful methodology to empower the local communities and ensure their engagement in managing their distinctive landscapes! The Hima approach is inclusive, designed to preserve and protect ecosystems for the sustainable use of its resources by the people and for the people, including the social and cultural particularities of the area

The Medscapes project has introduced the Hima approach in the partners' pilot areas which has captured the interest and approval of the local communities. Common vision, identification of threats and problems, possible solutions, objectives and action plans were developed in close collaboration with the communities. Building blocks have been established, but the communities have expectations for further support towards implementation. Partners are planning to develop one or more new joint regional projects that would build on the Medscapes Hima outcomes, and support the proposed Hima sites into becoming fully operational sites, in addition to study tours and exchange visits for the communities targeted in the Hima work package. The partners involved will be exploring further funding possibilities for the communities HIMA objectives. Thus, moving from theoretical planning into action and providing benefit to nature, culture and communities!



© Karim Farah



© Karim Farah

### Credits

---

Visual Concept and Graphic Design | **Karim Farah** | [3al-khatt.blogspot.com](http://3al-khatt.blogspot.com)  
Printing | **Chemaly & Chemaly printing press**

---

The content of this manual/publication does not reflect the official opinion of the European Union. Responsibility for the information and views expressed in the manual [therein] lies entirely with the author(s).

---



This project is funded by the European Union



[twitter.com/SpnlOrg](https://twitter.com/SpnlOrg)



[www.facebook.com/SpnlOrg](https://www.facebook.com/SpnlOrg)



[plus.google.com/+SpnlOrg/](https://plus.google.com/+SpnlOrg/)



[instagram.com/spnlorg](https://www.instagram.com/spnlorg)



[www.linkedin.com/company/society-for-the-protection-of-nature-in-lebanon](https://www.linkedin.com/company/society-for-the-protection-of-nature-in-lebanon)



[www.youtube.com/toyourna](https://www.youtube.com/toyourna)



[www.flickr.com/photos/toyourna/](https://www.flickr.com/photos/toyourna/)

**Address** | Hamra, Awad Bldg. 6<sup>th</sup> Floor, Abdel Aziz St. | P.O.Box: 11-5665 | Beirut - Lebanon | Tel/Fax +961 1 343 740 +961 1 344 814  
+961 1 748309 | [news@spnl.org](mailto:news@spnl.org) | [www.spnl.org](http://www.spnl.org)