



ECOTOURISM POTENTIAL IN THE ARTISANAL FISHERIES SECTOR ALONG THE LEBANESE COAST

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The Lebanese Coastal Zone

- ~ 220 km long with 80% rocky and 20% sandy
- Narrow continental shelf, being widest in the north (21 km)
- The coastal zone is under severe anthropogenic pressure with 80% of the population living in coastal urban areas
- Habitat destruction has been extensive
- The productivity of the coastal marine environment has been deeply affected for several decades
- This is threatening the wellbeing of the communities depending directly or indirectly on its resources



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Artisanal Fisheries Sector in Lebanon

- Artisanal fishery is an ancient practice that dates back to the Phoenicians
- The sector is fully artisanal
- Fishing usually occurs to a maximum depth of up to 200 m
- Most activities take place at an average depth of 50 m
- ~ 1700 fauna species with more than 80 being of commercial importance
- Main gears: longlines, trammel nets, gill nets, purse seine nets and beach nets
- Historical fisheries data are sporadic
- The past few years have seen the launching of several initiatives to address the problems plaguing the sector



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Artisanal Fisheries Sector in Lebanon

Artisanal fishing communities are faced with:

- Overexploitation of resources
- Rapid population growth
- Displacement from coastal areas due to industrial and tourism development
- Pollution and environmental degradation
- Introduction of invasives
- Absence of long-term management plans for the sector

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State of Fishermen in Lebanon

- Per capita seafood consumption in 2011 was 6.03 Kg, which is ~ 1/3 of the average for the Mediterranean in 2005
- Fishermen income in 1998 was equivalent to US \$800/yr (PescaMed, 2011)
- Access to loans and credit is almost non-existent. Fishermen rely on fish sellers for loans and credits (PescaMed, 2011)
- Salaries are generally low, with approximately 20,000 LL (ca. 13 USD) per day/per crewman for a crew of three and one captain (PescaMed, 2011)
- Education level is low, but fishermen children have minimum levels of education as required by the Lebanese law
- The income per boat-owner is 20% lower than the national GDP per capita
- A fisher who is not a boat-owner earns 70% less than the GDP per capita and about 45% less than the minimum wage of the country
- All fishers are not allowed to be members of the national social security system and therefore do not benefit neither from a pension nor from medical insurance
- The fishing community is considered as one of the poorest communities in Lebanon

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Ecotourism in the Fisheries Sector

- Artisanal/small scale fishermen are among the poorest groups of society
- The FAO Advisory Committee on Fisheries Research recommended further research into the linkages between poverty and fisheries
- As supplement to income of fishermen, some alternatives focused on nondestructive ideas like ecotourism activities
- Fisheries ecotourism is still in its emerging phases and concentrates mainly on recreational fishing
- ~ 700 million individuals are involved creating millions of jobs
- Other activities have also been established dependent on the natural assets of the area
- Aim: support local communities by making ecosystem conservation and management of natural resources a source of economic benefits

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Coastal Tourism in Lebanon

- Country is dominated by the services sector where tourism is one of the major sub-sectors
- Coastal tourism is based on activities within urban structures: beach resorts, hotels, restaurants, country clubs and casinos
- Most tourism assets are located on the coast: 71% of hotels & 68 beach resorts
- Alternative types of tourism such as ecotourism or nature tourism have increased in Lebanon, mostly concentrated in mountain regions and the countryside
- Coastal ecotourism is concentrated on the PINR, the TBNR, recreational scuba diving and some recreational fishing using fishermen and their boats
- Tourism sector has not evaluated the possible integration of fisheries ecotourism in its plans



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Goal

Commissioned by the UNDP – Lebanon, the report has the main goal of:

- Highlighting potential ecotourism activities that could be introduced in the artisanal fisheries sector in Lebanon
- Proposing steps for the diversification of the economic activities of Lebanese fishermen in a sustainable manner
- Proposing steps for re-creating the marine culture that Lebanon has been famous for

including budgets and timeframes for the different identified sets

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Potential Ecotourism Activities

Set One: National Fishermen's Week

Fishing and rowing tournaments

- Involves recreational and professional fishermen
- Rowing competition using fishermen boats and held at several scales from local, to regional to national

Sea Food Festival

- An opportunity for sharing and preserving inherited seafood knowledge and recipes
- Competition could be held on national level for sea food dishes prepared with only local ingredients

Women activities

- Observe women manufacturing and mending different types of nets, creating artifacts etc.
- Visitors may experience net mending and create their own designs from colorful shells and other preserved sea organisms

Traditional Boat Building and Painting Competition

- This inherited knowledge is currently threatened of being lost
- Introduce the public to this art to revive a dying sector
- Support local artisanal carpenters and painters by providing them with the occasion to exhibit and sell small wooden handmade crafts

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Potential Ecotourism Activities

Set Two: Guided Fishing and Diving Trips, Camps and Lodges

Guided Fishing and Diving Trips

- Fishing enthusiasts will have the privilege of fishing under the guidance of professional local fishermen who will share their knowledge of the best fishing spots and fishing techniques with recreational fishers
- Collaboration between diving clubs and fishermen and their cooperatives to locate the best diving sites. Fishermen boats can also be rented for such activities

Lodges

- Provide the tourist with a glimpse of the daily lives of fishermen
- Fishermen can host visitors in their homes at half or full board

Camps and Camping Sites

- Certain coastal towns with fishing cooperatives still have the privilege of having unique natural surroundings offering great possibilities for creating camping sites
- Sites can be established, managed and run by fishermen cooperatives
- Campers can benefit from an array of marine activities guided by fishermen

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Potential Ecotourism Activities

Set Three: Cultural Activities

Fisheries Museum

- Expose the culture and traditional fishing techniques of Lebanese fishermen
- Expose the evolution of the sector through the centuries
- Display the diversity of sea organisms of the Lebanese coast, extinct and present
- Material can be bought from/donated by local fishermen

Traditional Music and Theatre Festival

- Best held during the “National Fishermen’s Week” to attract more visitors as well as expose the culture of fishing communities

Photography and Painting Competition

- Best held during the “National Fishermen’s Week”
- Will concentrate on exposing the interaction between fishermen and the sea
- Awards can be provided by sponsors and supporters

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Recommendations

- Fisheries ecotourism can offer varied activities for tourists for the benefit of both fishermen and local communities. The cornerstone of such activities is embedded in the remaining traditional attributes preserved among fishing communities
- Action planning, including business planning, is required to bring any of the suggested sets of activities to fruition
- Joining forces between the public and private sectors is essential for the success of fisheries ecotourism activities
- This will contribute to creating new economic opportunities for the fishermen and improve the livelihood of one of the poorest communities in Lebanese society
- Fisheries ecotourism activities can be self-sustaining from the funds generated by the events, in addition to the funds provided by sponsors and advertisements that are attracted by similar actions

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THANK YOU



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