

Turning waste into an asset in Aqaba

Jordan faces increasing issues with waste as growing populations consume more. Municipal solid waste rose from 2.6 million tonnes in 2014 to almost 3 million tonnes in 2017, compounded by the fact that the country has very little official or unofficial recycling. The seaside city of Aqaba is beginning to apply circular economy approaches to turn its waste into an asset rather than a burden – building the business case for resource efficient approaches and providing livelihoods to vulnerable communities.



A Sustainable Consumption and Production National Action Plan (SDG12.1) was developed in Jordan through nationally owned multi-stakeholder processes, based on the country's priorities for green economic growth and circular economy. The implementation of the plan's priorities - agriculture and food, transport and waste management is ongoing through selected projects and initiatives.

The Red Sea city, popular for its clear waters and coral reefs, discards 150 tonnes of solid waste per day, significant amounts of it through the hotels and restaurants that service its tourism industry. Coordinated by the Ministry of Environment, with support by United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), EDAMA Association for Energy, Water and Environment in Jordan worked with 15 hotels and 17 restaurants to carry out a waste audit and work out ways to reduce their impact.



EDAMA initially selected pilot hotels that have branches in other areas like Petra, Amman and the Dead Sea for implementation - InterContinental Aqaba Resort; Movenpick Aqaba; Double Tree by Hilton; Kempinski Aqaba - to ensure the replication of the project in other touristic areas in Jordan and the expansion of the project.

Assessment of existing solid waste situation

The findings prompted an additional evaluation where a quantitative and qualitative assessment focusing on the food waste stream be conducted in 3 and 4-star hotels at the request of Aqaba Special Economic Zone (ASEZA) to consider adjusting the regulations on hotels produced solid waste fee and taxes. Further investigations were also done to collect data for 3 more 5 stars hotels and 17 restaurants to come up with a comprehensive and practical city level action plan on food waste.

A detailed action plan was developed for ASEZA to consider a modification/ reduction on the solid waste collection fees where reducing solid waste will result in reducing the solid waste collection fees. Currently, hotels pay a fixed tax for waste collection based on their built area. The Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority is set to change the collection fees mechanism, and link it directly to the amount of generated waste, in order to insensitive the hotel to reduce their waste.



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Training needs assessment

A training needs assessment report was developed to assist the hotels in achieving the required solid waste management goals. Areas of training, existing gaps, training objectives and tools for monitoring and evaluation were investigated and reported. Based on the results of the assessment, the training should target staff from different departments:

- **Management:** A training will be targeting staff from the management level and engineering department who have an average to good knowledge in solid waste management, this training will be technical, legal, planning, and financial solid waste management.
- **Technical:** Another training will be geared towards benefiting housekeeping and steward staff who deal directly with waste and have weak to average knowledge in solid waste management, focusing on the operational aspects in term of collection, reuse, recycle and health and safety.

National Solid Waste Management training program

The Aqaba project further developed a national solid waste management training program through assessing the training needs on a national level, designing and developing a national training program and executing advanced training programs.

Development of post-project pilot plans

To ensure project sustainability, a detailed post-project work plan was developed by EDAMA in cooperation with hotels with the purpose of fostering implementation. This workplan determines the tasks involved and the timeframe for implementation of solid waste management strategies and activities that the pilot hotels could adopt. The work plan is based on the outcomes and results of the waste assessment, showing the recycling potential, quantities generated, separation options, financial justification and opportunities for improvement.

"The training will be able to raise awareness between experts and steer the economy to invest in energy from waste projects. which can be applied in Jordan with many positive consequences like reducing the amount of trash, infectious diseases, and using less land area to push Jordan a step forward to Sustainability. "

Interview of a trainee: Nirmeen Abu Shawish, Environmental Specialist

UN Environment Programme

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