

THE RED SEA – DEAD SEA WATER CONVEYANCE PROJECT: AN OPPORTUNITY FOR REGIONAL COOPERATION AND IMPROVED WATER MANAGEMENT IN THE JORDAN RIVER BASIN?

Interdisciplinary Research Group “Society – Water – Technology”

Tuesday, December 3, 2013

GFZ German Research Centre for Geosciences
Building H (Room V1–V3)
Telegrafenberg, 14473 Potsdam



Foto: UFZ

BACKGROUND

The Dead Sea is presently undergoing serious environmental damages. The excessive use of water from the Jordan and Yarmouk rivers for agricultural and industrial purposes of the riparian states has reduced its water level by more than 30 meters over the past fifty years. Since more water is withdrawn than renewed, the water level is currently dropping at a rate of about one metre per year. Damages of the decline include the loss of freshwater springs, occurrence of sinkholes and river bed erosion. Without countermeasures, more severe environmental, cultural, and economic damage is expected. As part of international efforts to save the Dead Sea, the transfer of water from the Red Sea to the Dead Sea – referred to as the “Red Sea-Dead Sea (RSDS) Water Conveyance Project” – has been proposed. In 2005, Israel, Jordan and the Palestinian Authority agreed to study the feasibility

of such a water conduit, which would also allow for the desalination of water and generation of hydroelectricity. Recently, the World Bank has published a series of studies regarding the planned RSDS project, including a feasibility study giving a positive assessment of the project.

WORKSHOP OBJECTIVES

The workshop aims at discussing the technical, ecological, political and economic aspects of the planned RSDS project as well as its potential alternatives. In particular, possible effects of the RSDS project on regional cooperation and transboundary water management in the Jordan River Basin will be analysed. The workshop is meant to provide a basis for identifying the need for further research and to stimulate the scientific and political debate.

INTERDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH GROUP “SOCIETY – WATER – TECHNOLOGY”

The interdisciplinary research group “Society – Water – Technology” at the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities addresses the central question of whether large-scale water engineering projects can serve as an instrument for efficient, sustainable and integrative management of water resources. The research group pays particular attention to the vulnerability of such projects to far-reaching environmental, economic and/or social changes. In addition, it looks at how large-scale water projects may shape the ecological, social and economic development of a region in terms of path dependencies. The Jordan River Basin in the Middle East is one of its focus areas.

PROGRAMME

9.00 am / Registration

9.15 am / Welcome

Reinhard F. Hüttl

Spokesperson of the Research Group, GFZ German Research Centre for Geosciences, Germany

9.30 am / Jordan Valley: Presentation of the Cluster

Hans-Joachim Kämpel

Member of the Research Group, Federal Institute for Geosciences and Natural Resources, Germany

9.45 am / Overview of the Water Law in the Jordan River Basin

Ute Mager

Faculty of Law, Heidelberg University, Germany

10.30 am / Coffee Break

10.45 am / Dead Sea Drop and Recent Development of the Water Sources in its Basin with a Focus on the Planned RSDS Project

Elias Salameh

University of Jordan, Amman, Jordan

11.30 am / Red Line at the Kinneret, Red Card for the Dead Sea?

Uri Shani

Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel

12.15 pm / The Palestinian Water Needs in Light of the RSDS Project

Muath Abou Sadah

Palestine Hydrology Group, Ramallah, Palestinian Territories

01.00 pm / Lunch

02.00 pm / Reclaiming the Dead Sea: Alternatives for Action
Yacov Tsur

Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel

02.45 pm / Climate Change Impact on the Availability of Water Resources in the Jordan Basin

Harald Kunstmann

Karlsruhe Institute of Technology, Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany

03.30 pm / Groundwater Management around the Dead Sea
Stefan Geyer

Groundwater Resources Research Group, Helmholtz Centre for Environmental Research – UFZ, Germany

04.15 pm / Coffee Break

04.30 pm / Shadow State and Jordan Water Management
Valerie Yorke

NCCR Trade Regulation, World Trade Institute, University of Bern, Switzerland

05.15 pm / Recapitulation and Discussion

Moderator: **Hans-Joachim Kämpel**

Federal Institute for Geosciences and Natural Resources, Germany

Further Information

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Registration

The workshop will be held in English. Participation is free of charge but registration is required (dinter@bbaw.de).

Workshop Venue

GFZ German Research Centre for Geosciences
Building H (Room V1–V3)
Telegrafenberg, 14473 Potsdam

How to get there by public transport:

Potsdam Hauptbahnhof can be reached via S-Bahn and regional trains. For detailed directions refer to www.bahn.de and www.gfz-potsdam.de/en/centre/about-us/directions/potsdam/