

Red Sea-Dead Sea Water Conveyance Study Program

Question and Answer Sheet

(Updated 11 January 2013)

1. What is the Red Sea-Dead Sea Study Program?

Response: In a jointly signed letter to the World Bank dated May 9, 2005, the Beneficiary Parties (the State of Israel, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and the Palestinian Authority) requested the World Bank to undertake a Study Program to investigate the feasibility of reversing the environmental degradation of the Dead Sea by transferring water from the Red Sea.

The Study Program also aims at fostering regional cooperation.

The three Beneficiary Parties have articulated a shared vision of the Study Program, centered on:

- Saving the Dead Sea from environmental degradation;
- Desalinating water and generating energy at affordable prices; and
- Building a symbol of peace and cooperation in the Middle East.

In response to this request, the World Bank agreed to coordinate donor financing and manage the implementation of the Study Program. The Study Program involves the preparation of five interrelated studies: (i) a Feasibility Study; (ii) an Environmental and Social Assessment; (iii) a Study of Alternatives; (iv) a Red Sea Modeling Study; and (v) a Dead Sea Modeling Study. The Terms of Reference for each of the studies were collaboratively drafted by the Beneficiary Parties. Detailed information on the Study Program, including records of consultations to date, is available on the Study Program website (www.worldbank.org/rds).

2. When will the studies be made available to the public?

Response: The final drafts of the Red Sea Modeling Study and the Dead Sea Modeling Study are already available on the program website in English. Here are the links to those two reports:

http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTREDSEADEADSEA/Resources/Tahal_Initial_Final_Report_August_2011.pdf

http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTREDSEADEADSEA/Resources/Thetis_Draft_Final_Report_30_April_2011.pdf

The draft executive summaries of the remaining studies – the Feasibility Study, the Environmental and Social Assessment, and the Study of Alternatives – were posted to the web site in January 2013. These reports are available in Arabic, English and Hebrew.

3. What happens after the drafts of the studies are posted to the website?

Response: The Beneficiary Parties will carry out six public consultation meetings – two each in Israel, Jordan and the Palestinian Authority. The exact dates are not yet determined, but will commence in mid-February 2013.

Feedback and suggestions received from stakeholders on the final drafts of the studies will be reflected in the final reports. The final reports will be posted to program website likely in April 2013.

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4. What happens after the studies are finalized?

Response: After the finalized studies are published on the program website, the Study Program ends. It is anticipated that the Beneficiary Parties will consider the studies' technical information and then decide on whether and how to move forward with their shared vision.

5. At this stage, what technical information have the studies given us?

Response: Although the studies are not yet finalized, we are able to draw a few preliminary conclusions, including:

- the large scale conveyance of sea water from the Red Sea to the Dead Sea is technically possible, either using a tunnel or buried pipelines;
- a conveyance project could deliver large amounts of desalinated water using conventional processes;
- the estimated cost of a full scale conveyance project, including the supply pipes to urban centers, would be over US\$10 billion;
- mixing sea water and/or desalination brine with the Dead Sea water entails risks, and especially when the amounts exceed 300 million cubic meters per year;
- a conveyance project would also pose environmental and social impacts, mostly during construction. Through the various studies, these impacts have been evaluated in terms of alternatives and measures to mitigate, manage and monitor such impacts.

6. How have the concerns of communities affected by a conveyance project been addressed in the Study Program?

Response: Since the Study Program started in May 2006, the Beneficiary Parties have carried out national consultations with concerned stakeholders in August 2007, July 2008 and June 2010. Several hundred people attended these consultations. Concerns of communities were noted and recorded in all meetings. A detailed summary of responses to these concerns is posted to the Study Program website. In addition to these consultations, during the preparation of the Environmental and Social Assessment Study, approximately another 50 informational meetings were carried out in the region with the public, local governments, educational institutions, businesses, and local community groups. Finally, another round of national consultations will take place in February 2013. We anticipate that those consultations will take place in Amman, Aqaba, Eilat, Jerusalem or Tel Aviv, Ramallah and Jericho.

7. Has the Study Program taken into account Palestinian rights regarding the Dead Sea?

Response: The Study Program does not address this issue directly because its Terms of Reference are confined to technical issues. The Palestinian Authority, representing Palestinian interests regarding the Dead Sea, is one of the three Beneficiary Parties that drafted the Terms of Reference.

8. How does the Study Program relate to the wider challenges of sustainable access to water in the region?

Response: Sustainable access to water in the region is an inherent component of the Beneficiaries' shared vision. The identified option includes a 850 million cubic meters per year desalination plant sited at the southern end of the Dead Sea. A plant this size would substantially address the water accessibility issue.

9. Why has the Study Program assumed that the best solution to the Dead Sea problems is through conveyance of sea water from the Red Sea? What about restoration of the Jordan River or other options?

Response: The Study Program has not assumed that the best solution to the Dead Sea problems is the conveyance of sea water from the Red Sea. This conveyance is the “identified” option to address the problem under the Study Program, but there are other options to be examined under the Study of Alternatives. The Study of Alternatives examines many other options to the conveyance from the Red Sea, including the option to restore the Jordan River. However, preliminary results from the draft Study of Alternatives indicate that restoration of the Jordan River alone would not be sufficient to stabilize the level of the Dead Sea.

10. There have been reports that a potential project will include a series of lakes and channels, accompanied by extensive development for tourism in Wadi Araba. Have the environmental and social impacts of this type of activity been examined by the Study Program?

Response: The Red Sea-Dead Sea Water Conveyance Study Program managed by the World Bank on behalf of the three Beneficiary Parties consists only of a pipeline or tunnel. There are no real estate or tourism components in this trilateral initiative.

11. Will the World Bank benefit financially from a possible Red Sea-Dead Sea conveyor project?

Response: Israel and the Palestinian Authority are not eligible to borrow from the World Bank. Jordan is eligible to borrow from the World Bank. However, given Jordan’s current fiscal situation, any such support would likely be prioritized for the social sectors, such as health and education.