

SHARING KNOWLEDGE

From Red Sea to Dead Sea – Water and Energy

Geneva, June 6–8, 2007

On June 6-8, 2007, twenty five experts from universities, government, industry and legal areas met to discuss ways to boost this colossal mega project which is considered to harbor enormous benefits, challenges and responsibilities.

This meeting followed the session at a conference of the Sharing Knowledge Foundation held in Trieste last October 2006 which attracted special interest. The present meeting was organized so that the interested parties could concentrate on the Red Sea – Dead Sea Project together to exchange information and promote international action to study the feasibility of the important project.

The goals of the project today are to:

- Solve the increasing and acute water scarcity problems of the region.
- Save the Dead Sea, its spectacular landscape, its health resources and minerals and preserve this unique cultural, historic treasure at the lowest spot on earth.
- Meet the technical challenge of a mega project — civil engineering, desalination, power while protecting the ecology and environment. Technology has developed dramatically since the first proposals of bringing water to the Dead Sea. Desalination costs have consequently plunged but location of the plant at –400 meters, the lowest spot on earth, and pumping water up to an elevation of up to 1,000 meters on both sides of the sea is a further challenge.
- Secure the interests of the potash industries of Jordan and Israel.
- Develop the desert areas bordering the canal and sea for providing jobs through tourism, agriculture and health industries.
- Study effect of mixing of the waters of the Red Sea with the Dead Sea.
- Compare with alternative routes. The Red Sea – Dead Sea canal is the project now under consideration after other routes had been considered leading from the Mediterranean Sea and even the questionable possibility of restoring waters of the Jordan River to the Dead Sea.
- Foster peace through cooperation with benefits to the three partners in the region — Jordan, Israel and the Palestinian Authority.

Now the World Bank is on the brink of issuing the Terms of Reference (TOR) for a feasibility study. The study is crucial to ensure that the project succeeds in its aspirations for great benefit and avoids any catastrophes to the sea and the environment.

The aims of the Sharing Knowledge Foundation (SKF) and the European Desalination Society (EDS) coincide in their mission to share knowledge between Europe and the MENA region. Whilst the SKF has a broader scope addressing many fields, EDS deals with a major component of this scheme – desalination and provision of clean water to the three partners.

The costs involved are estimated at:

Feasibility	\$15.5 million
Entire project (9 year period)	\$5–7 billion
For desalination	\$1.6 billion (capacity of 800 m cum/y)

The mission of this group of public and private participants is to disseminate information, encourage frequent meetings and close interaction among the partners to help boost understanding and help advance the project.

Several governments have expressed interest and are to be thanked for their support: USA, France, Japan, The Netherlands, Switzerland, Italy and Greece. The Ambassador of Japan to the UN in Geneva gave a vision of Japan for this project and some of the other lectures are enclosed.

An evening session open to the public was held at the Dufour University of Geneva as well as Press Conference at the Geneva Press Club.

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