

“Healthy Ecosystems for Rangeland Development (HERD)”

Success Story

1. Introduction

The Healthy Ecosystem Rangeland Development (HERD) initiative aimed at ecosystem restoration and sustainable management of pastoral rangelands. It contributed to the provision of ecosystem services, biodiversity conservation, and combating desertification. The project adopted the Nature-based Solutions (NBS) and inclusive rangeland governance mechanisms during implementation. The GEF-funded project was jointly implemented by CEDARE, UNEP, IUCN, the Desert Research Center (DRC), the Ministry of Environment, and relevant stakeholders.

2. Nature-based Solutions (NBS)

2.1 Al-Hima Approach



Caption: Rangelands

Community-based rangeland restoration was implemented by reviving local and inclusive governance systems as the basis for improved coordination of livestock herding. This included reviving the ancient

concept of Al Hima, which is a mechanism through which communities can assert management over an area of land and implement restoration actions. Al-Hima approach acts as social fencing to control and organize access to rangelands under rehabilitation. The management approach focuses on reviving traditional herding strategies of rest and recovery for pasture zones, based on local knowledge supported by scientific knowledge and monitoring.

Important components in community-based rangeland restoration are improved coordination between public institutions, securing land management rights of livestock-keeping communities, and enabling coordinated herd management through community resource management groups. This implies strengthening governance at multiple levels in a coordinated and transparent way.

2.2 Water Harvesting

Matrouh Governorate relies entirely on rainfall for irrigation and agriculture. HERD contributed to the construction of water harvesting facilities with a total capacity of 3760 m³. It established around 40 wells for water runoff harvesting for the project beneficiaries. Some of these wells are used for domestic use and livestock.



Caption: Water Harvesting

3. Inclusive Governance of Rangelands

3.1 legislation for Sustainable Rangeland Management

CEDARE, in collaboration with the DRC and the Arab Organization for Agriculture Department, drafted a legislation on “sustainable rangeland management” with the objective of preserving rangeland resources, regulating exploitation, and emphasizing the consequences of non-compliance (Adhering to the concept of rights and duties).

The legislation was drafted in participation with local communities, Parliamentarians, tribal leaders, local authorities, relevant ministries, international organizations, and Matrouh Governorate. After the proposal was adopted by Matrouh Governorate and the Ministry of Agriculture, it was presented to the members of the parliament and was signed by one-tenth of its members. Then the parliament president referred the draft to a joint committee composed of different sectors, including agriculture, irrigation, constitutional and legislative affairs, and local administration.

3.2 Rangelands Management Unit

A task force group was established in Matrouh Directorate of Agriculture. This group is responsible for organizing, managing, and monitoring rangeland conditions in Matrouh and serves as a nucleus for the future rangeland management unit. This group received training on sustainable rangeland management, good practices, and participatory planning. The establishment of this unit is part of the proposed legislation.

3.3 Revolving Fund

HERD established a revolving fund to empower small-scale projects for Bedouin women and livestock breeders. The fund was endowed from HERD budget and was subsequently increased from the government's budget through a governor's decision. H.E. the Governor supported the revolving fund with an equal amount of the project's budget.

A committee was formed to manage the revolving fund, involving the Village Development Department of Matrouh Government, the Central Agricultural Cooperative, and Al-Ramis Association. The fund initially targeted 50 beneficiaries and expanded to over 170 beneficiaries, contributing to fund income-generating projects that support local communities in Matrouh.

4. Impacts on Biodiversity Conservation and Combating Desertification

HERD resulted in the green cover restoration of about 500 feddans in Matrouh and the regrowth of Indigenous pastoral plants, which in return contributed to the preservation of livestock, enhanced socio-economic conditions, and improved the livelihoods of the local communities. HERD played a great role in combating desertification, biodiversity conservation, and food security.



Before HERD



After HERD