

Interim Report August, 2001

Introduction

This interim report covers the third 6 month period of the Life Project TCY 99/M/95, from February to July, 2001, and includes a list of activities for the said period. The period falls midway the three year project.

The management of Ghajn Tuffieha and ir-Ramla involve the integration of a number of environmental projects, identified as follows:

Project Names:

1. Olympus: Coastal conservation
2. Elysium: Biodiversity
3. Dionysius: Beach management
4. Phoenix: Waste management
5. Poseidon: Marine Conservation
6. Persephone: Organic Farming
7. Hermes: Dissemination of Information
8. Odysseus: Eco Tourism
9. Galatea: Management of historic sites (funded separately from the LIFE programme).

Activities:

General Management

1. The ecological management plan for ir-Ramla was approved by the Environment Protection Department in April, 2001.
2. A final draft management plan for the historic monuments at ir-Ramla was completed. This has been communicated to the Museums Department and The Planning Authority for approval.
3. A draft Conservation Order for Ghajn Tuffieha was received from the Planning Authority. A detailed assessment of the Order was remitted to the Authority to be incorporated in the final Draft.
4. In mid April, an assistant manager was employed to assist in the management of the projects.
5. Consultation meetings were held in connection with the Ramla management with the Ministry for Gozo, The Xaghra Local Council, The Superintendent and Inspector, Victoria Police Station, representatives of the local surfers and the local snack bar operators.

Project Hermes

6. The Website of the Project was totally upgraded to cover details of each project. This is located at www.projectgaia.org
7. A project was conducted throughout the month of May with a group of 4 students from James Madison University, Virginia, under the supervision of one of their tutors, to work on information boards on the main projects under management. Finishing touches need to be put to the boards prior to production.
8. In May The Foundation was invited by DEPANA (Defensa della Patrimonio Natural) in Tarragona, Spain, to make a presentation of the Integrated Coastal Zone Management Implementation in Malta. The seminar was organized by Depana, as part of its own "LIFE Project for the sustainable management of la Punta de la Mora in Taragona. The costs of The Foundation were borne by Depana.
9. In June, The Foundation was invited to attend a workshop in Sweden organized by "Globalgarden". The workshop focused on practical ways of implementing sustainable methods of living. The Foundation interacted and made a presentation of its own pilot projects in Malta. The costs of the Foundation were borne by Globalgarden.

Ir-Ramla

10. The first phase of the implementation of ir-Ramla management was initiated. This included:
 - a. The placing of bollards at access points.
 - b. Production of information signs
 - c. Coordination with The Malta Maritime Authority for safety at sea.
 - d. The laying of safety lines at Ramla following consultation with surfers on the underwater currents.
 - e. The production of an information brochure for visitors to the site.
 - f. Agreement with The Commissioner of Police to share the use of the two roomed structure situated at Ramla for wardening, first aid and other civil protection equipment.
 - g. The said room was repainted and set up in order to make it useable.
 - h. Wardening of the site, especially on weekends.
 - i. The hiring of police through extra duty to assist in security.
 - j. The planting of trees and shrubs around the foot of the clay slopes that are subject to heavy erosion.

Ghajn Tuffieha

11. Safety lines for bathers were set up as usual at Ghajn Tuffieha Bay. Owing to three tragic incidents at Golden Sands Bay, North of Ghajn Tuffieha, last Autumn, The Mellieha Local Council was approached and asked whether it would finance a similar set of safety lines for the Bay. This was accepted. The lines were put in in July after consultation with Borg Water sports who operate from the beach in order to locate the most dangerous spots.

12. Land Patrols of the sites under management were effected, especially on weekends.
13. Extra work was carried out at Ghajn Tuffieha in order to allow the shooting of a film, on The Spartans. This involved the removal of signs and safety equipment.
14. The new application was submitted to the Planning Authority for basic amenities to Ghajn Tuffieha, including the provision of refreshments and public conveniences, following a refusal of the first application in 1999. This has not yet been approved.

Project Persephone

15. A list of fruit and vegetables to be planted as a permaculture project was updated from the Persephone Report in order to increase the variety to the customer.
16. The list was set out according to calendar based upon lunar phases for the different species.
17. Vegetables and fruit were planted throughout the months from March to July. A full list is found in the annex marked P.
18. The Persephone Organic Food Club was launched in June. A weekly box of organic produce is supplied directly to 15 members, with another 15 on the waiting list. Extra vegetables have been planted to provide for up to 40 members.
19. Discussions have been held with three farmers, two in Gozo and one in Malta, with a view to assisting them in setting up organic farming.
20. A brochure has been produced to give information and awareness on sustainable agriculture and the organic food club.

Project Phoenix

21. The waste management system for the area was upgraded. A separated waste system was again placed at Ghajn Tuffieha, while organic waste is being collected from three outlets on site for composting at Elysium Nursery, namely, Apple's Eye Restaurant, Hal-Ferh Holiday Complex and the local fruit vendor. Organic waste from project Persephone is returned to the fields. Posidonia Meadows collected from Ghajn Tuffieha is no longer going to the landfill, but placed at the edge of the Persephone fields for composting over the winter.

Project Elysium

22. An adopt a tree campaign was launched in April to increase public awareness and support of the biodiversity project.
23. A number of species were propagated at the nursery for future planting. Details are found in annex Elysium 1.
24. plants were planted on site at Ramla and Ghajn Tuffieha from February to April. Details are listed in the said annex Elysium 2.
25. The Foundation was involved in consultation for tree planting biodiversity projects initiated by the Ministry responsible for lands and Local Councils. A project for three new sites was approved by Cabinet in July.
26. Work carried out at the Elysium Nursery included

- a. the placing of gravel in all pots in order to reduce weed growth and evaporation
- b. the application and obtaining of a change of use permit converting the old sewage treatment plant into an agricultural center,
- c. the construction of a greenhouse for seeding trays,
- d. the laying of shading to protect the younger plants from the heat,
- e. further restoration of an underground reservoir.
- f. The setting up of a work plan for propagation of indigenous and endemic species (Annex Elysium 3).

Project Odysseus

27. Tours were conducted on site at Ghajn Tuffieha for a German Tour Operator Studiosus, giving an introduction to the coastal management projects.
28. A Seminar organized by the Malta Tourism Authority on eco tourism and nature trails was attended by the Foundation.
29. Meetings were held with the Malta Tourism Authority to discuss cooperation for the encouragement of eco tourism in coastal areas in the North West and Gozo.

Project Poseidon

30. The Poseidon boat has been used since July for marine patrols around the North West from Fomm ir-Rih to Majjiesa and the Ramla area in Gozo. Patrols covered problems related to waste and beach safety. On weekends patrols were carried out with the assistance of police officers commissioned on extra duty.

Conclusion

All activities listed in the projected activities list February to August, 2001 have been implemented, as detailed above, with the exception of point 27 relating to the introduction of a staircase to Ghajn Tuffieha Tower, the planning application of which is still pending. This activity is not part of the Life project and will be funded through other sources. The other action still pending is the introduction of renewable energy at the support centre. The delay in the obtaining of a mains electricity supply from Enemalta has also the delay in the introduction of wind and solar power.

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