



Shouf Biosphere Reserve

Ecotourism Strategy



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Executive Summary



Introduction

The Shouf Biosphere Reserve (SBR) was declared a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve in 2005. It includes: the Al-Shouf Cedar Nature Reserve (established in 1996), the Ammiq Wetland Protected Area, and twenty four (24) villages surrounding the biosphere from the eastern and western sides of the Barouk and Niha mountains.

The link between tourism and protected areas is becoming more important as tourism activities are relying more on natural heritage combined with cultural heritage. At the same time protected areas are also becoming more interested in the role of tourism in supporting conservation initiatives. Ecotourism is a field that is very dependent on effective and efficient planning.

Goals of the ecotourism strategy

The goals of ecotourism in protected areas should always focus on conserving the environment, enhancing the quality of life for local communities, and improving the tourism product and service in a way that the ecotourism activity becomes a successful operation leading to socio-economic benefits. The Shouf Biosphere Reserve (SBR) has already achieved a certain level of these socio-economic and conservation benefits - despite the July 2006 war that brought destruction to Lebanon and a tremendous decrease in the number of visitors to the SBR.

Implementing the goals of ecotourism requires a national commitment to protected areas, and support to tourism opportunities that benefit conservation. However, tourism can have negative impact, if not well controlled, so the design of ecotourism activities needs to become a top priority in the management of the SBR. The SBR Ecotourism Strategy, as part of the SBR Management Plan, will focus on the role of ecotourism as an effective step in reconciling conservation of biodiversity with economic development.

The methodology adopted in the SBR Ecotourism Strategy was based on field work and a series of discussions with different stakeholders. Meetings, discussions, and workshops were held with the SBR management team, local communities, and a variety of key persons. This helped in formulating a strategic plan to improve income by increasing visitor numbers while minimizing threats to the environment.

Providing financial support to the SBR

The management team needs to reduce the SBR deficit by putting in place a continuous, attractive, and varied program of income generating activities all year round. The "Revised Business Plan" prepared by "ConSeil et Developpement" in January 2004 for the Al-Shouf Cedar Nature Reserve revealed a "high cost of management in

this particular reserve" which led the management team to seek donations, sponsors, and other innovative income generating activities" (C&D, Jan. 2004).

The Government of Lebanon (represented by the Ministry of Environment - MOE) provides a base annual funding amount of around US\$ 43,000 (US\$ 85,000 for two years). This contribution represents the approximate financing of 32% of the total expenditures of the reserve (C&D 2004). The rest must be secured from other external sources such as donations, entrance fees, and other tourism related services.

Working with local stakeholders

The SBR should consider increasing cooperative partnerships and develop a tourism strategy that relies less on government support and more on the SBR's partners. Building bridges with local stakeholders is essential to achieve positive changes in attitude towards the SBR. It is important to stress the need to respect the rights of local communities living near the reserve, and who in some cases, own land inside or adjacent to the SBR. This strategy is a down - top management model involving local communities in the planning, decision making and implementation process - in particular as it relates to providing seasonal transhumance paths, grazing in special zones, cutting wood, and charcoal production.

Minimizing threats from tourism activities

While the revenues generated from tourism-oriented activities may help fund conservation, tourism itself may be a source of unacceptable social and environmental change - thus threatening the values for which the SBR was established. To minimize the threats from tourism the following suggestions need serious consideration:

- develop "Green packages" for tourism that reach all types of tourists
- consider the closure of access roads inside and near the core area
- limit car parking spaces and introduce pay parking in the villages
- incorporate an environmentally clean shuttle transport (bus or other means)
- introduce an entrance fee for more sensitive sites

Linking practice to guidelines

The growing demand for tourism in the SBR currently challenges the capacity of the management team to meet this demand without a negative effect on the environmental and cultural values of the protected area. This deficiency in capacity must be addressed through increasing the level of skills in the management team and the private tourism sector. To achieve this there is an urgent need to develop a complete guideline or code of conduct that are clear and detailed as possible.



Tourism value chain

Tourism in general and responsible tourism in particular, is a highly fragmented industry composed of many small businesses that are connected and interdependent. In Lebanon the tourism chain is not a functional entity due to a multitude of factors such as the lack of planning and regulations by the public sector, and the lack of professionalism in the private sector. There is an urgent need to involve local micro- enterprises that are owned by the residents surrounding the SBR.

The Tourism Value Chain concentrates on meeting visitor expectations and involves everything from pre-visit image and marketing right through to after sales care and commitment. Its key components are: Pre-visit image and information; booking and reservation; arrival and welcome; experience; attractions and activities; infrastructure and environment; places to eat/stay; departure/farewell; and follow-up.

Each stage of the visitor's 'journey' is important and a quality experience along each of the stages will result in a satisfied customer who will talk to friends and family about his good experience.

Tourism packages

Tourism in and around protected areas must become a tool for conservation that contributes to the quality of life and economic opportunities of local communities. Tourism packages help to fulfill these goals by introducing the visitor to the uniqueness of the attractions, and at the same time benefit the local communities directly.

All the Discovery packages proposed in this study are composed of 2 days 1 night, with a large choice of activities and destinations. They are designed to encourage 'slow travel' allowing the visitor a more authentic experience and a better understanding of the natural and cultural heritage of the area. They are composed of 1 day hiking in the Biosphere reserve + 1 overnight in the B&B at the villages + 1 cultural day at the villages. Most of these packages are for the summer season (mid April – mid October), but a good number of them are feasible in winter, whether or not they are combined with snow activities.

Developing the Niha Entrance

Compared to other regions within the area of the SBR, the region of Niha el-Shouf (Niha) is very rich in tourism potential. With more time and financing it could become the hub of ecotourism in the southern portion of the SBR. Three main factors support the development of the Niha Entrance:

1- the wealth of natural, historical and geological attractions in the Niha area

2- the determination of the SBR management team to develop all the major park entrances

3- the positive attitude of the president of the municipality of Niha and his desire to see close coordination between the park and the village.

Marketing and Promotion

The marketing process is shaped by clients' needs as well as the needs of the producer of goods and services. In this context, the management of the SBR is the producer, and visitors are the clients. It is important to remember that marketing needs to meet the goals of biodiversity conservation, protection of cultural heritage, and support of local communities - without neglecting the clients' needs.

One of the first tasks of the SBR management team is to establish the goals for its marketing strategy which includes strengthening the brand identity to increase awareness of the SBR, increasing both day visitors and overnight visitors with extension stay in villages, and meeting visitor expectation in the areas of quality and customer service.

Promotional efforts must include:

- Maintaining regular contact with media, Tour Operators, Ministry of Tourism and other organizations. Host travel media and ask them to write about the new activities at SBR
- Market research identified water as a primary influence for tourists when making travel decisions. Include some water element (near the artificial lake) in the pictures used in future promotional material
- An interactive website for educational and learning activities for schools and teachers would be a very useful tool for schools
- It helps spread the right information.

1.1 The Shouf Biosphere Reserve

The Shouf Biosphere Reserve (SBR) was declared a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve in 2005. It includes: the Al-Shouf Cedar Nature Reserve (established in 1996), the Ammiq Wetland protected area, and twenty four (24) villages surrounding the biosphere from the eastern and western sides of the Barouk and Niha mountains.

The SBR is the largest nature reserve and accounts for a quarter of the remaining cedar forests in Lebanon. The size of the reserve makes it a good location for conservation of biodiversity. The SBR has become a popular destination for ecotourism activities (hiking, snowshoeing, bird watching, etc...).





للمنطقة. فهي تتألف من يوم مشي لمسافات طويلة نهاراً في محمية المحيط الحيوي + ليلة مع وجبة عشاء وفطور + يوم ثقافي في القرى. إن معظم هذه الرزم لموسم الصيف (منتصف نيسان / أبريل -- منتصف تشرين الأول) ، ولكن عدداً كبيراً منها يصلح لفصل الشتاء . إذا كانت أو لم تكن مقرونة بنشاطات على الثلج .

تطوير مدخل قلعة نبحا

بالمقارنة مع المناطق الأخرى داخل أراضي المحمية ، إن منطقة نبحا الشوف غنية جداً في الإمكانيات والمقومات السياحية. مع مزيد من الوقت والتمويل يمكن أن تصبح مركزاً للسياحة البيئية في الجزء الجنوبي من المحمية. هناك ثلاثة عوامل رئيسية لدعم تطوير مدخل نبحا: ١-- الثروة السياحية الطبيعية والتاريخية والجيولوجية في منطقة نبحا ٢-- تركيز فريق عمل المحمية على تطوير كافة مداخل المحمية الرئيسية ٣-- الموقف الإيجابي لرئيس بلدية نبحا ورغبته في تنسيق وثيق بين المحمية والقرية.

التسويق والترويج

عملية التسويق هي شكل من احتياجات العملاء. فضلاً عن احتياجات المنتجين للسلع والخدمات. في هذا السياق ، فإن إدارة المحمية هي المنتج ، والزوار هم العملاء. ومن المهم أن نتذكر أن التسويق يحتاج إلى تحقيق أهداف المحافظة على التنوع البيولوجي ، وحماية التراث الثقافي ، ودعم المجتمعات المحلية -- دون إغفال احتياجات العملاء. واحدة من المهام الأولى لفريق عمل المحمية هو تحديد الأهداف والإستراتيجية التسويقية التي تشمل تعزيز هوية العلامة التجارية لزيادة الوعي حول المحمية. وزيادة الزوار نهاراً وليلاً على حد سواء مع تمديد البقاء في القرى ، لقاء توقعات الزوار في هذه المناطق من حيث الجودة وخدمة العملاء.

تكثيف الجهود الترويجية والتي يجب أن تشمل ما يلي :

- المحافظة على اتصال منتظم مع وسائل الاعلام ، منظمي الرحلات السياحية، وزارة السياحة ، وغيرها من المنظمات. استضافة وسائل الاعلام والطلب منهم أن يكتبوا عن الأنشطة الجديدة في المحمية.
- مصادر المياه تعتبر ذات تأثير أساسي للسياح عند اتخاذ قرارات للسفر. وتشمل بعض عناصر المياه (بالقرب من بحيرة اصطناعية) لذا يجب استخدام الصور في المواد الترويجية مستقبلاً.
- موقع إلكتروني تفاعلي للأغراض التعليمية. والأنشطة التعليمية للمدارس والمعلمين من شأنه أن يكون أداة مفيدة جداً للمدارس ويساعد في نشر المعلومات الصحيحة.

ربط التطبيق بالمبادئ التوجيهية

الطلب المتزايد على السياحة في المحمية حالياً يخلق تحديات لدى قدرة فريق العمل في تلبية هذا الطلب من دون ترك أثر سلبي على البيئة والقيمة البيئية و الثقافية للمنطقة المحمية. إن هذا النقص في القدرات يجب معالجته من خلال رفع مستوى المهارات لدى فريق العمل والقطاع السياحي الخاص. ولتحقيق هذا هناك حاجة ملحة لوضع مبادئ توجيهية كاملة أو مدونة لقواعد السلوك تكون واضحة ومفصلة قدر الإمكان.

تحليل سلسلة القيمة للسياحة

السياحة بصفة عامة والسياحة المسؤولة على وجه الخصوص ، هي صناعة مجزأة بشكل كبير يتألف من عدة أعمال متصلة ومتداخلة. في لبنان سلسلة السياحة ليست كيانا وظيفيا بسبب العديد من العوامل مثل عدم وجود التخطيط والقوانين من قبل القطاع العام ، والافتقار إلى الكفاءة المهنية في القطاع الخاص. هناك حاجة ماسة إلى خلق وإشراك الشركات المحلية الصغيرة التي يملكها سكان المناطق المحيطة بالمحمية.

تسلسل القيمة السياحية يركز على لقاء توقعات الزوار وتشمل كل شيء بدءاً من مرحلة ما قبل الزيارة وتصورات الزوار والتسويق والإهتمام بعد البيع من خلال الرعاية والالتزام. إن مكوناته الرئيسية هي : رؤية ومعلومات الزائر ما قبل الزيارة ، الحجز والحجز المسبق ، الوصول والترحيب ، التجربة ، المعالم والأنشطة السياحية والبنية التحتية والبيئة ، أماكن لتناول الطعام / البقاء، الرحيل / الوداع والمتابعة. إن كل مرحلة من مراحل الزيارة هامة وتجربة نوعية لكل المراحل حيث تؤدي إلى إرضاء الزوار الذين سيتحدثون الى الأهل والأصدقاء عن تجربتهم الجيدة.

الرزم السياحية

السياحة في المناطق المحمية وحولها يجب أن تصبح أداة للحماية على أن تساهم في تحسين نوعية الحياة والفرص الاقتصادية للمجتمعات المحلية. إن رزم السياحة تساعد على تحقيق هذه الأهداف عن طريق تقديمها إلى الزائر كطابع فريد لجذب السياح ، وفي نفس الوقت تستفيد المجتمعات المحلية مباشرة.

جميع الرزم السياحية الإستكشافية المقترحة في هذه الدراسة تتكون من يومين وليلة، مع خيار كبير من الأنشطة والوجهات. وهي مصممة لتشجيع «السفر البطيء» سائحة للزائر المزيد من التجارب الحقيقية ، والتوصل إلى فهم أفضل للتراث الطبيعي والثقافي



استراتيجية السياحة البيئية (ملخص تنفيذي)

مقدمة

صنفت محمية أرز الشوف الطبيعية من قبل اليونسكو عام ٢٠٠٥ محمية مدى حيوي. وتشمل كل من: محمية أرز الشوف الطبيعية (أعلنت عام ١٩٩٦)، مستنقع عميق منطقة رطبة محمية إضافة إلى ٢٤ قرية تشكل المدى الحيوي من المقلين الشرقي والغربي لكل من جبلي نيجا والباروك.

إن الرابط بين السياحة والمحميات أصبح أكثر أهمية لأن النشاطات السياحية أصبحت تعتمد أكثر على الإرث الطبيعي مجتمعاً مع الإرث الثقافي. كذلك في نفس الوقت إن المناطق المحمية أصبحت أكثر أهمية في دور السياحة بدعم مبادرات الحفاظ على البيئة. لذلك فإن السياحة البيئية هي حقل يعتمد كثيراً على فعالية وكفاءة التخطيط.

أهداف استراتيجية السياحة البيئية

إن أهداف السياحة البيئية في المناطق المحمية ينبغي أن تركز دائماً على المحافظة على البيئة. تحسين نوعية الحياة للمجتمعات المحلية وتحسين المنتج السياحي والخدمات. بحيث أن نشاطات السياحة البيئية تصبح عملية ناجحة تؤدي إلى فوائد اجتماعية واقتصادية. إن محمية الشوف المدى الحيوي. قد تمكنت من تحقيق مستوى معين من الفوائد الاجتماعية والإقتصادية إضافة إلى الحماية - على الرغم من حرب تموز ٢٠٠٦ التي جلبت الدمار على لبنان وانخفاض هائل في عدد الزوار إلى المحمية.

إن تنفيذ أهداف السياحة البيئية يتطلب التزام وطني للمناطق المحمية. ودعم الفرص السياحية التي تستفيد منها في الحفاظ على البيئة. ومع ذلك، يمكن أن يكون للسياحة آثار سلبية إن لم تكن مراقبة بشكل جيد. لذلك إن تصميم أنشطة السياحة البيئية يجب أن يصبح أولوية قصوى في إدارة المحمية. إن استراتيجية السياحة البيئية في المحمية كجزء من الخطة الإدارية. سوف تركز على دور السياحة البيئية كخطوة فعالة في التوفيق بين المحافظة على التنوع البيولوجي من ناحية والتنمية الاقتصادية من ناحية أخرى.

لذلك فإن المنهجية التي تعتمد لإعداد إستراتيجية السياحة البيئية في محمية الشوف المدى الحيوي تركز على العمل الميداني. وسلسلة من المناقشات مع الشركاء المعنيين. تم تنظيم اجتماعات. مناقشات. وورش عمل مع فريق عمل المحمية. والمجتمعات المحلية. ومجموعة متنوعة من الأشخاص المفاتيح من رؤساء بلديات. منظمي الرحلات وغيرهم. هذا وقد يساعد المخطط الإستراتيجي في تحسين الدخل عن طريق زيادة أعداد الزائرين من ناحية وتقليل المخاطر التي تهدد البيئة من ناحية أخرى.

توفير الدعم المالي للمحمية

إن فريق العمل بحاجة إلى خفض العجز من خلال وضع برنامج مستمر. جذاب. ومجموعة متنوعة من الأنشطة المدرة للدخل على مدار السنة. إن «خطة العمل المالية المنقحة» التي أعدتها شركة «Conseil et Developpement (C&D)» في كانون الثاني ٢٠٠٤ لمحمية أرز الشوف الطبيعية كشفت عن وجود «التكلفة العالية للإدارة هذه المحمية بصفة خاصة» والذي قاد فريق العمل للتفتيش على التبرعات. والجهات الراعية. ونشاطات أخرى مبتكرة لزيادة الدخل. (C&D, Jan. ٢٠٠٤). إن الدولة اللبنانية (مثلة بوزارة البيئة) وفرت إعتماد تمويلي سنوي قدره حوالي ٤٣ ألف دولار أميركي (٨٥ ألف دولار أميركي لمدة سنتين). ويمثل هذا مساهمة تمويلية بقيمة تقريبية قدرها ٣٢٪ من مجموع نفقات المحمية (C&D, Jan. ٢٠٠٤). على أن تكون النسبة الباقية مؤمنة من مصادر خارجية أخرى مثل التبرعات ورسوم الدخول. وغيرها من الخدمات ذات الصلة.

العمل مع الشركاء المحليين

إن محمية الشوف المدى الحيوي تنظر في زيادة الشراكات وتطوير استراتيجية للسياحة التي تعتمد أقل على دعم الدولة وأكثر على دعم شركائها. إن بناء الجسور مع الشركاء المحليين أمر ضروري لتحقيق تغييرات إيجابية في المواقف تجاه المحمية. ومن المهم أن نؤكد على ضرورة احترام حقوق المجتمعات المحلية التي تعيش بالقرب من المحمية. حيث هناك بعض الحالات. ملكيات خاصة في الداخل أو أراضي متاخمة للمحمية. هذه الاستراتيجية هي من أسفل إلى أعلى نموذج إدارة لاشراك المجتمعات المحلية في عملية التخطيط وصنع القرار وعملية التنفيذ -- وبخاصة ما يتصل منها بتوفير الخدمات السياحية الموسمية. والرعي في مناطق خاصة. وقطع الخشب. وإنتاج الفحم.

التقليل من الأخطار الناجمة عن الأنشطة السياحية

في حين أن عائدات السياحة البيئية المنظمة قد تساعد في تمويل الحماية. إن السياحة بحد ذاتها. قد تكون مصدراً للتغيير غير المقبول على الصعيد الاجتماعي والبيئي -- وبالتالي تهدد القيم التي أنشئت على أساسها المحمية. لتقليل الأخطار الناجمة عن السياحة هناك عدة إقتراحات تحتاج إلى دراسة جادة:

- تطوير «الرمز الخضراء» للسياحة والتي تستهدف كل أنواع السياح.
- النظر في وقف دخول السيارات إلى داخل ومحيط منطقة قلب المحمية.
- تحديد أماكن وقوف السيارات وتأمين أماكن لوقوف السيارات في القرى.
- تأمين وسيلة نقل أقل تلوثاً (حافلة مهيجنة أو غيرها من الوسائل).
- استحداث رسم دخول لمناطق أكثر حساسية وميزة جداً.



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Part 1: Introduction



1.1 The Shouf Biosphere Reserve

The Shouf Biosphere Reserve (SBR) was declared a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve in 2005. It includes: the Al-Shouf Cedar Nature Reserve (established in 1996), the Ammiq Wetland protected area, and twenty four (24) villages surrounding the biosphere from the eastern and western sides of the Barouk and Niha mountains.

The SBR is the largest nature reserve and accounts for a quarter of the remaining cedar forests in Lebanon. The size of the reserve makes it a good location for conservation of biodiversity. The SBR has become a popular destination for ecotourism activities (hiking, snowshoeing, bird watching, etc...).

The main three functions of a Biosphere Reserves (UNESCO-MAB) are:

- 1- Conservation: landscapes, ecosystems, species, and genetic variation
- 2- Development: economic and cultural
- 3- Logistic support: research, monitoring, environmental education, and training

1.2 Objective of the Ecotourism Strategy

The purpose of the Ecotourism Strategy is to become an effective tool for conservation in and around protected areas, and enhance economic opportunities for local communities thereby improving their quality of life.

To achieve this objective a number of goals need to be set and they include providing financial support to protected areas, supporting sustainable use of natural and cultural resources, linking practice to conventions/guidelines, fostering attachment to heritage, working with local stakeholders and industry.

Implementing these goals requires national recognition and support for the protected areas, and encouragement of tourism opportunities that benefit conservation. However, tourism can have negative impact if not well controlled, so the design of ecotourism activities needs to become a top priority in the management of the SBR.

1.3 Methodology

The methodology adopted in the ecotourism strategy for the SBR was based on field work and a series of discussions with the different stakeholders. These meetings, discussions, and workshops were held with the SBR management team, local communities, and a variety of key persons from

different backgrounds. This helped with the analysis of the current situation and the formulation of a strategic plan to improve income by increasing visitor numbers, and at the same time minimizing threats to the environment and biodiversity.

The steps followed in the preparation of the ecotourism strategy are:

- Assessing the current situation (natural resources, tourism demand and facilities available, relation with the surrounding local communities, etc...)
- Establishing the goals (improve management, upgrade the tourist experience, minimize the negative impact of tourists, enhance benefits to local communities, develop future tourism /conservation scenarios, etc...)
- Strategic planning (identification and prioritization of tasks to decide the level and type of tourism activities desired, time, etc...)
- Partnerships (redefining partnership between the management team and tour operators, other NGO's , local communities, government and local authorities, etc ...)
- Monitoring and new guidelines (define the appropriate types of tourism in the protected area, minimize the impact of tourism activities, establish the appropriate carrying capacity levels, create new guidelines based on what we have, etc...)
- Implementation (establishing a solid coordination between planning and management processes, ecological and scientific values, economic and social consideration, recreational and conservation concerns, etc...)

1.4 Literature review

The "Revised Business Plan" prepared by "Conseil et Developpement" in January 2004 for the Al-Shouf Cedar Nature Reserve aimed at helping the reserve reach self sustainability by developing an appropriate marketing strategy. The study revealed a "high cost of management in this particular reserve" which led the management team to seek donations, sponsors from among the stakeholders, and other innovative income generating activities"(C&D, Jan. 2004).

The analysis of the evolution of tourism in the protected area reveals that the management team needs to reduce deficit by setting a continuous, attractive and varied program of income generating activities all year round. Special events need to be included such as aggressive advertizing campaigns and more donors solicited to support various projects. The annual contribution of the Ministry of Environment to the reserve is essential to minimize the annual deficit. (C&D, Jan. 2004).



Year	Study Projection in US\$	Annual Growth (%)	Real Annual Visitors' Contribution in US\$
(1) – 2004	52.301		70.000
(2) – 2005	62.761	20	54.000
(3) – 2006	78.452	25	37.100
(4) – 2007	103.505	30	28.000
(5) – 2008	117.677	14	60.706
(6) – 2009	135.329	15	90.000

Table 1: Annual Visitors' Contribution (in US\$)

The projection of visitors' contribution was set by the study as follows:

Year 1: 2004 = US\$ 52,301
 Year 2: 2005 = US\$ 62,761 (approximate growth 20%)
 Year 3: 2006 = US\$ 78,452 (approximate growth 25%)
 Year 4: 2007 = US\$ 103,505 (approximate growth 30%)
 Year 5: 2008 = US\$ 117,677 (approximate growth 14%)
 Year 6: 2009 = US\$ 135,329 (approximate growth 15%)

The comparison between the projected income and the real annual visitors' contribution for Year 1 - 2004, shows that income was above expectations; year 2 - 2005 was

according to expectation (despite the alarming security situation starting February 14, 2005). As for years (2006-2008) – the numbers are far below expectations due to the prolonged aftermath of the 2006 war on tourism in Lebanon. However in 2009 we see a marked improvement in income.

These figures illustrate the critical need for support intervention to enhance the capacities of the biosphere management team, and restore income generation activities through the development of a new ecotourism strategy that would put the Biosphere Reserve in the focal point of ecotourism activities.

Part 2: Goals of the Ecotourism Strategy

2.1 Providing financial support to the SBR

Conservation of protected areas is costly. The Government of Lebanon (represented by the Ministry of Environment - MOE) provides a base annual funding amount of around US\$ 43,000 (US\$ 85,000 for two years). This contribution represents the approximate financing of 32% of the total expenditures of the SBR (C&D 2004). The remaining part of the financing must be secured from other external sources. The most reliable sources are donations, entrance fees, and other tourism related services.

A number of actions need to be taken to secure funds:

- Raise awareness on biodiversity and protected areas values
- Develop efficient fee collection methods (permanent presence at the entrances, periodic collection from tour operators, and credit card payment facilities)
- Identify an equitable tariffs policy and determine what activity should be subject to a fee. Paying for a visit to a protected area should be justified by an added value; this can be in the form of equipment, or a guided tour with a biodiversity specialist, or an extended stay with food and accommodation services.
- Install park-based tourism, building solid partnerships with the private sector, which can be far more rewarding than simply depending on government funding to manage the protected area.

A good example of park-based tourism is the case study of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area of Australia (www.wettropics.gov.au). The WTWHA currently has over 200 commercial operators utilizing some 200 designated visitor sites within the WHA, and over 4 million visitors per annum.

Wet Tropics - Nature Based Tourism Strategy (NBTS)

In August 2000 the Authority released the Nature Based Tourism Strategy to provide the basis for tourism management in the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area. The Strategy divides the World Heritage Area into twelve tourism precincts according to their distinctive features and tourism focus. The overall aim is to encourage a dynamic, sustainable and professional nature based tourism industry in the Wet Tropics. The Strategy encourages cooperative partnerships between the tourism industry, land managers, indigenous people, conservation groups and the community.

Some of the tourism issues discussed in the Nature Based Tourism Strategy includes:

- Rainforest Aboriginal tourism.
- Research needs.
- Marketing the WHA.
- Marketing tourism in the Wet Tropics.
- Permit assessment and allocation of Commercial Activity Permits.
- Accreditation and training.
- Cost recovery and user pays.
- Maintaining tourism infrastructure.

The Nature Based Tourism Strategy also includes a list of tourism sites in and around the World Heritage Area and their management issues together with a map of the sites.

2.2 Working with local stakeholders

The SBR should consider increasing cooperative partnerships and develop a tourism strategy that relies less on government support and more on the SBR's partners. At present, the Lebanese government does not seem to be in a position to introduce new approaches to tourism management in the Shouf region. That is why it is imperative for the SBR to initiate cooperative local partnerships.

Who are the SBR's partners?

- Landowners in the neighborhood of SBR
- Municipalities in the villages of the High Shouf and the West Beqaa regions (El Bouhayha), and their advisory committees

- Community conservation and volunteer groups
- Guesthouse owners
- Local Tour Operators (This group doesn't exist yet in the High Shouf nor in the West Beqaa regions. In phase one, the SBR must make sure to build this kind of important partnership with Tour Operators from Beirut; and in phase two the SBR should encourage the foundation of a local Tour Operator.

Building bridges with local stakeholders is essential to achieve positive changes in attitude towards the SBR. It is important to stress the need to respect the rights of local communities living near the SBR who, in some cases, own land inside or adjacent to the SBR. This strategy is

built on down-top management model involving local communities in the planning, decision making and implementation process, in particular as it relates to providing seasonal transhumance paths, grazing in special zones, wood cutting, and charcoal production.

2.3 Minimizing the threats from tourism activities

While the revenues generated from tourism-oriented activities may help fund conservation, tourism itself may be a source of unacceptable social and environmental change - thus threatening the values for which the SBR was established. To minimize the threats from tourism the following suggestions need serious consideration:

- Develop “Green packages” for tourism that reach all types of tourists thereby enlarging the market demand for this type of tourism.
- Consider the closure of access roads inside and near the Core Area.
- Limit car parking spaces and introduce pay parking in the villages
- Incorporate an environmentally clean shuttle transport (bus or other means, and consider seriously the possibility of buying one or two Hybrid Toyota Coaster buses)
- Introduce an entrance fee for more sensitive sites (viewing nature should remain a free activity, but a fee can be justified for an added activity such as a professional guide).

2.4 Linking practice to conventions and guidelines

The growing demand for tourism in the SBR currently challenges the capacity of the management team to meet this demand without a negative effect on the environmental and cultural values of the protected area. This deficiency in capacity must be addressed through increasing the level of skills in the management team and the private tourism sector (CAB I 2007: Tourism and PA: Benefits Beyond Boundaries, Eagles).

Guidelines such as “Minimum impact principles” or “Codes of conduct” for operators and visitors can be effective in reducing the negative impact of tourism on PAs, local communities, etc.

In the recently released SBR “Eco Guide” booklet, only 1 page (out of 55) includes advice on “Safety regulations & prohibited activities”. This title should be replaced by a more friendly title such as: “What to do in the SBR” or “Code of Conduct in the SBR” or “Responsible Guidelines during your visit to the SBR”.

Safety regulations and prohibited activities

Stay on officially designated trails.

Cutting across and between trails can cause severe environmental damage and can be dangerous.

Visitors are encouraged to abide by the rules: Take only memories, leave only footprints.

The following are NOT allowed inside the reserve:

Smoking, campfires, or starting any type of fire

Hunting

Tree or shrub cutting

Collection of any flora or fauna

Camping (however there is a designated campsite near the Environmental Awareness Center in Ain Zhalta)

Bringing in domestic animals

Littering



The same positive attitude is also needed on the website. The surfer should not be confronted by a large amount of forbidden activities inside the SBR. Instead we need to inform and encourage the visitor to understand the environment in order to make him love nature and then protect it. The sequence adopted by the management team should be *Inform, Understand, Love, Protect, Help, and Promote*.

The need to develop a complete guideline or code of conduct is urgent. It must be addressed to the management team and the park rangers in the first place, then to the visitors and to tour operators. Such a code of conduct may be published as an entity by itself (not only as part of a brochure). All communication addressed to the visitor should be as friendly as possible, while communication addressed to tour operators should be more straightforward, clear and professional. Every effort should be made to make sure that the guidelines are clear and detailed as possible.

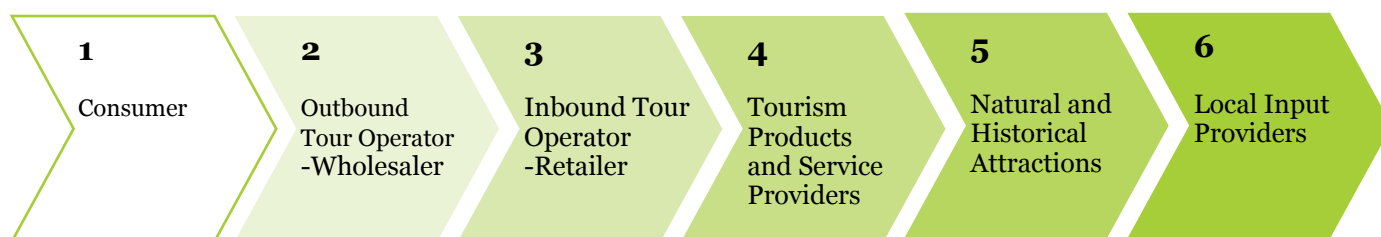
2.5 Fostering attachment to heritage

Attachment to heritage is best fostered through education and visits because of the important role they play in encouraging a respect for nature, and in the process developing a conservation ethic. More research will be needed to develop a document about the conservation education/interpretation strategy. For this to be done, a series of meetings will need to be conducted to get comprehensive information on the following: visitation numbers; source of visitors; profile of visitors; type of visitation; length of stay; motivation for visit; and visitor satisfaction.

The above information would assist in positive behavior modification both within and outside the SBR, which will in turn play a positive role in educating the visitor. However, in addition to the visitor, the SBR needs to reach the public sector at the national level. For this we need events such as National Days for Nature Reserves in Lebanon that can be used as a platform to communicate with the wider public through mediated programs and communication.

Part 3: Tourism Value Chain

3.1 International Tourism Chain Model:



1- Consumer: includes low end , mid range, high end, local, foreign visitors

Between phase 1 and phase 2 exists air transport

2- Outbound Tour Operator – Wholesaler: includes international travel agents and tour operators in the source countries (e.g. Europe)

3- Inbound Tour Operator – Retailer: includes all sizes of tour operators and travel agents in the destination country such as Lebanon; e.g. Nakhal, or Responsible Mobilities or smaller tour provider in the El-Shouf region

Between phase 3 and phase 4 exists land transport and car rentals

4- Tourism Products and Service Providers: includes low to high end hotels, guesthouses, restaurants, tourist guides, etc

5- Natural and Historical Attractions: includes biosphere reserves, archeological sites, museums, etc

6- Local Input Providers: include handicrafts, etc

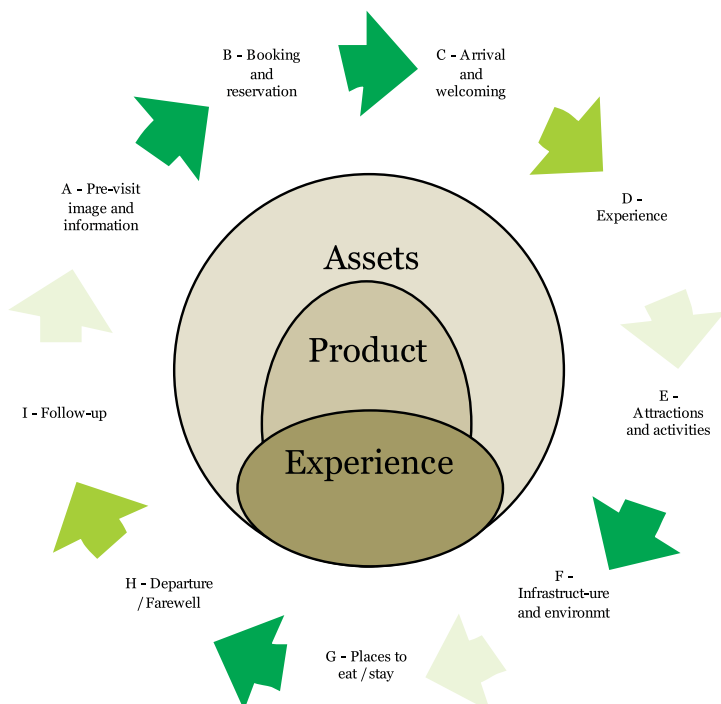
Tourism in general, and responsible tourism in particular, is a highly fragmented industry composed of many small businesses that are connected and interdependent. In Lebanon the tourism chain is not a functional entity due to a multitude of factors such as the lack of planning and regulations by the government/public sector, and the lack of professionalism in the private sector. This has led to a misunderstanding of the sustainable tourism sector and its benefits at the community level. As a result there is an urgent need to involve local micro- enterprises that are owned by the residents surrounding the SBR - from both the eastern and western side of the mountain. This type of involvement will serve as an incentive for the local communities to support the SBR and defend its conservation cause.

3.2 Tourism Value Chain at the Shouf Biosphere Reserve

At a certain destination, such as the Shouf Biosphere Reserve, serving the visitor and answering his needs requires strategic planning from a broad community of stakeholders. The challenge for the SBR management team is to bring together representatives from those communities and stakeholders. Not only to think together in a strategic way, but also to be able to deliver quality service in an integrated manner.

Such an approach can be achieved by utilising a tool such as the 'Tourism Value Chain' which is invaluable in helping both businesses and organisations to visualise the complete visitor 'experience' or 'journey'. The Tourism Value Chain concentrates on meeting visitor expectations and involves everything from pre-visit image and marketing right through to after sales care and commitment. Its key components are: Pre-visit image and information; booking and reservation; arrival and welcoming; experience; attractions and activities; infrastructure and environment; places to eat/stay; departure/ farewell; and follow-up.

Each stage of the visitor's 'journey' is important and a quality experience along each of the stages will result in a satisfied customer who will talk to friends and family about his good experience. Any dissatisfaction encountered along the way will result in negative impressions that will be passed on to friends and family!



The visitor's experience (Todd Comen: *Integrated rural tourism*. 2006)

3.2.1 Pre-visit image and information

A consumer purchases a product because of its attributes, but experiences the product through the service delivery process. That means that when a consumer chooses a vacation experience, he is making a decision based on information that describes or illustrates what the visitor will see or do during his visit. This information is communicated to the consumer through text, graphics, photographs, maps, videos, television and internet material. It will help him develop a perception of what the vacation experience will be like. And when the visitor actually begins to experience his vacation, nothing will have changed, so we can speak of 'moments of truth' across all the stages of the 'journey' at the SBR, creating positive impressions.

The Internet

Advances in information technology are profoundly influencing visitation to nature reserves worldwide. Geographical Positioning System (GPS) and wireless communication allow visitors to access digital information in real time anywhere. However, the two most important technologies are: consulting the website and pre-booking via the internet. They can help us increase the number of supporters and thus the number of visitors.

Communication between potential clients and nature reserves via internet means that the visitor can easily become aware of the various recreation opportunities, conditions and facilities available. Thus, the SBR website should provide more appropriate information about the activities that can be done in the reserve. At present the SBR website proposes a 5 day package during which the visitor hikes for three days across the biosphere core area, however, this may not be acceptable to a visitor who would like a shorter visit.

Internet availability also means that it is easier to encourage 'groups support' to promote one cause or another related to the SBR. Equally important usage of internet is as a means of providing information to groups such as tourism suppliers, environmental groups, and local communities to disseminate information about the protected area. It is essential for the SBR management team to know what is being said and written about the biosphere, and to ensure that it is correct and in accordance with SBR policy.

Printed material

Printed material is an efficient tool for promoting the SBR and should be included in a strategy of marketing and promotion, targeting current and potential visitors. The SBR has already produced a substantial quantity of printed materials that include leaflets, booklets, and maps. A review of this printed material revealed the following weaknesses:

- The map was found to be beautiful to look at but not easily usable when hiking on the trail, and it has a few mistakes.
- The leaflets are improving aesthetically but they still lack beautiful pictures and good quality printing.
- The booklet is very informative, about Lebanon and the SBR, in particular the packages proposed that link the reserve with the villages. A number of weaknesses in the booklet include:
 - ✓ The package is a 5 day offer which is too long for a visitor to spend in one region
 - ✓ The package needs a more efficient map to support the visual perception of the potential visitor [visualize the distance between villages; visualize the length of the trail]
 - ✓ The package offers only hiking in the reserve and some sightseeing in the villages. The description of the program doesn't explain the relationship between the village and its natural environment
 - ✓ The package does not include suggested tariffs
 - ✓ The booklet includes a list of tour operators, which is very useful, but are these tour operators aware of this? Do they know how to operate such tours?
 - ✓ The booklet lacks pictures of people (tourists or visitors) participating in and enjoying the proposed activity and/or scenery both in the SBR section (0 / 32 pictures) and the villages section (1 / 52). The only part of the booklet with pictures is the section on the Lebanon Mountain Trail which shows tourists in the photos.
- There is a need to improve communication through printed material, to reach our target client efficiently, and to add some interactive areas (on the internet)

Television

It is very important to consider working on building contacts with all television stations in Lebanon (and neighbouring Arab countries) who are willing to cover subjects of environmental and cultural interest. Biosphere reserves and protected areas in general should have much more time on the air, particularly in Lebanon. Another important field for television are educational shows about nature reserves for children.

3.2.2 Booking and reservation

At this stage of the search for a good vacation, the potential visitor has to make a decision about what product to buy. He identifies a variety of options and reviews promotional materials and information resources available through personal contact with a representative at a travel agency, or internet, or printed brochure. He is influenced by the products and destination that is being promoted. At this stage everything matters to the potential visitor, and his decision will be influenced by:

- ❖ first impression of the brochure or the website
- ❖ phone conversation with a reservation staff
- ❖ e-mail communication with the responsible person
- ❖ interaction with the tour operator.

The potential visitor's core requirements at this stage include:

- ✓ prompt response and friendly interaction from staff or representative person
- ✓ accurate details and information about the potential experience (the product) at the reserve
- ✓ pricing information that reflects the perceived value of the product.

Once the decision is made, the potential visitor enters the pre-arrival stage and anticipates the experience. He intensifies the information collection through more contact with the staff of the tour operator or representatives of the reserve, and finally steps into the reservation act. He will most likely pay a deposit. At this stage he stops being considered as a potential visitor and becomes a real customer.



3.2.3 Arrival and welcoming

How to create a Welcoming environment at the park?

- > *Develop a customer-focused work ethic*
- > *Conduct continuous improvement training*
- > *Make service a philosophy of the park*
- > *Strive to understand customer needs and expectations*
- > *Monitor customer satisfaction*
- > *Develop management systems focused on customer*

The arrival stage begins when the customer arrives at the SBR. He will perceive whether the reality is consistent with the expectations developed during the pre-arrival stage. Major elements that he will notice include the size of the parking area, the entrance gate and cabin, the signage, the landscape and the overall feel of the park. A warm and friendly greeting from the reserve team, accompanied by positive interaction with them, accurate directions, and high standard of cleanliness - all contribute to a positive impression.

The 'experience' stage ends when the visitor is ready to leave the park, but before he leaves SBR team should take advantage of his presence and build personal relations with him. For example they can collect feedback on the quality of service, the product or the interaction with the reserve staff, and enquire if he/she would like to receive a newsletter or be included on the SBR mailing list. The staff of the SBR can take advantage of the visitor's presence to try new options that the customer may find more interesting, and observing the customer's reaction.

3.2.4 Experience

This stage is a complex combination of the experiences of the customer. Usually the visitor to nature reserves is influenced by external factors such as visits to attractions, a meal at a guesthouse or restaurant in the region, interaction with local residents, etc. The important point is to present a successful experience early during the visit to the SBR, especially if the visitor is booked for a complete package. At this stage the visitor requires:

- ✓ caring service
- ✓ clean environment
- ✓ safe visit and activities
- ✓ safe food
- ✓ memorable experiences
- ✓ pleasing landscape
- ✓ value for the price paid.

3.2.5 Attractions and activities

Categories of visitors:

A – Visitors who arrive at the main gates (individuals and groups) without prior notice

B – Visitors with pre-reservations (individuals and groups)

In category A, we have: A1 - Individual Lebanese; A2 - Individual foreigner; A3 - Group of Lebanese; and A4 - Group of foreigners

In category B, we have: B1 - Individual Lebanese; B2 - Individual foreigner; B3 - Group of Lebanese; and B4 - Group of foreigners

To make the exercise easier, and avoid long hours of complex preparations, the management team should have pre-arranged activities and packages that best suit the needs of the different categories of visitors. Not

all the combinations need to be developed from the beginning, rather they can be developed as the market grows. Once the SBR team gains more experience they may decide establish a local tour operating business that performs exclusively with the SBR and promote exclusive 'ecotourism' products.

Attractions and activities in the SBR:

- ✓ Meditation - chose a location in the cedar forest with a breathtaking panorama, absolute silence, and peaceful environment far from any noise or hiking trail or road or village
- ✓ Hiking and snow shoeing - the trails are already delineated but the SBR team will need to look closer at combinations and loops
- ✓ Cross country skiing - was introduced to Lebanon by a French skier in 1986, at Laqlouq in the Jbeil district and requires pre-traced trails that are protected and well delineated. (Please refer to Cross Country Skiing Annex)
- ✓ Nature watch (bird/animal watching, storm watching)
- ✓ Educational - trails crossing different micro-systems with proper scientific interpretation
- ✓ Adventure and sports - chose and prepare locations in the buffer zone, or in the villages surrounding the SBR for adventure activities
- ✓ Events and festivals - at the various entrances of the SBR (see activities in villages)

Activities in the villages surrounding the SBR:

- ✓ Hiking - link the villages to each other with footpaths and organize a cultural walking tour inside each village
- ✓ Cultural sites discovery - mark/map all the important cultural sites of special interest in each village with a focus on the identity of each village and what makes it different
- ✓ Traditional Crafts - find and encourage all the craftsmen in the villages to revive traditional crafts, and allow the visitor to experience the process by which it is made
- ✓ Adventure and sports - see previous paragraph
- ✓ Events and festivals - chose and prepare one location in the buffer zone, or in the villages surrounding the SBR, for special events that attract large numbers of visitors at one time. The SBR has already held a number of successful festivals in Maaser el-Shouf in partnership with other partners. The SBR may wish to consider the development of a new package for weddings or honeymoons, in partnership with Mir Amin Palace or the SBR guesthouse at Maaser el-Shouf (refer to Annex Weddings)

3.2.6 Infrastructure and environment

The environment is the most fundamental ingredient of the tourism product in general, and in a protected area in particular. However, as soon as a tourism activity takes place, the environment is inevitably changed or modified, resulting in a less interesting experience for the visitor. Environmental conservation is now an integral part of many development strategies.

Four main categories of impact activities are described as follows:

- ✓ Permanent environmental restructuring - buildings, roads, etc ...
- ✓ Waste products generation
- ✓ Direct impact caused by tourist activities - trails destructions, vegetation
- ✓ Effects on the local population


In many environmentally sensitive tourism destinations the need for Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) has become necessary. The Ministry of Environment in Lebanon (MOE), has incorporated EIAs in its planning legislation. Even though eco-tourism is by definition environmentally friendly, however, many eco-tourism ventures in Lebanon are destroying the very ecosystems they claim to protect. With poor planning and no benefits to local people, eco-tourism ends up causing social tension and environmental degradation, as well as leaving tourists feeling dissatisfied and cheated. In order to resolve such problems and reach a balance between tourism business and protection of nature, the SBR team should work on adopting and implementing strict international standards with no compromises.

EIA natural environment checklist

1. Changes in floral and faunal species composition
2. Pollution (water, air, noise...)
3. Erosion (risks of land slides, damage to river banks...)
4. Natural resources (depletion of ground and surface water...)
5. Visual impact (buildings, car parking, litter...)

3.2.7 Departure and follow up

The departure stage is the last opportunity for the SBR team to interact directly with the visitor. They should aim at leaving a positive impression and collect feedback related to the visitor's level of satisfaction. During the departure phase the visitor may be given a short "comment sheet" to fill out.



The comment sheet must be reviewed by the SBR management to help the entire SBR team improve the service and the product. All comments need to be taken

seriously and responded to accordingly. In responding to the comment sheet never justify failures or weakness, if they are mentioned, by incoherent excuses.

Comment sheet sample:

Dear Visitor,
Thank you for visiting the Shouf Biosphere Reserve. We hope that you will take a moment to comment on the quality of your visit. Your feedback is important, allowing us improve our service. Please rate the following categories:

Very poor -->>-- Poor -->>-- Average -->>-- Good -->>-- Very good

1. Quality of the information supplied by the SBR
2. Quality of the reservation experience
3. Quality of the welcoming and arrival experience
4. Quality of the trails used during your visit
5. Politeness of our park rangers and guides
6. Quality of the interpretive information during your visit
7. Price of the products purchased at the entrance kiosk
8. Overall cleanliness of areas visited in the SBR
9. Please feel free to add any further comments in the space below.
Thank you

The follow up is very important to maintain a continuous relation with the customer. For previous guests, develop and send special invitations, newsletters, cards, or a periodic reminder that will encourage them to think of visiting the park again – in the company of their friends!

First Group of packages: ACR / village

1A: Ain Zhalta entrance + AinZhalta and Bmohray villages

1B: Ain Zhalta entrance + Ain Dara village

1C: El-Barouk entrance + El-Barouk village

1D: Maaser esh-Shouf entrance + Maaser el-Shouf village

1E: Maaser el-Shouf entrance + El-Khreybe village

1F: Maaser el-Shouf entrance + Baadarane village

1G: Niha el-Shouf entrance + Bater el-Shouf village

1H: Niha el-Shouf entrance + Niha el-Shouf village

1I: Ammiq entrance + Ammiq and Aana villages

1J: Aitanit entrance + Atanit and Bab Mareaa villages

1K: Aitanit entrance + Saghbine village

1L: Aitanit entrance + Khirbet Qanafar village

Entrances	Villages	Duration / days	Feasible in 1 day	Summer package	Winter package	Accommodation facility
Ain Zhalta*	Ain Zhalta	2	yes	yes	yes	Victoria – Ain Zhata
El-Barouk	El-Barouk	2	yes	yes	no	Boustany Guesth el-Barouk
Maasser esh-Shouf **	Maasser esh-Shouf	2	yes	yes	no	Auberge St.Michel Maasser esh-Shouf
Niha esh-Shouf*	Niha esh-Shouf	2	yes	yes	yes	Mershad Guesth Niha esh-Shouf

*Only the packages 1A and 1H are feasible in winter

**The combination between the main entrance of the SBR at Maasser el-Shouf and the neighboring villages (el-Khreybe; Baadarane; Barouk) is operational.

Most of the packages are feasible in 1 day duration.

Most of the hikes in the SBR fit the Lebanon Mountain Trail sections that cross the park.

Packages from the Beqaa side are still not developed

Barouk – 2days / 1 night

- First day hiking commencing at the Barouk entrance to the SBR and ending at Barouk village.
- Overnight at Al-Boustani guesthouse with dinner and breakfast.
- Second day cultural tour in the village with traditional lunch at a restaurant on Barouk river water source.
- This is a “Slow Tourism” designed package
- Feasible between March and November
- Cost to be determined by the SBR management team
- The activities of this package can be replicated in the locations mentioned in the above table



Second Group of packages: SBR / village (ACR + Aammiq and mountain cross trek)*

2A : Ain Zhalta entrance + Ammiq village + Ammiq wetlands

2A' : Ammiq wetlands + Ammiq entrance + Ain Zhalta village

2B : El-Barouk entrance + Ammiq village + Ammiq wetlands

2B' : Ammiq wetlands + Ammiq entrance + El-Barouk village

2C : Maasser el-Shouf entrance + Ammiq village + Ammiq wetlands

2C' : Ammiq wetlands + Ammiq entrance + Maasser elh-Shouf village

2D : Niha el-Shouf entrance + Aitanit village + Ammiq wetlands

2D' : Ammiq wetlands + Aitanit village + Aitanit entrance to Niha el-Shouf

Entrances	Aammiq wetland combined	Villages	Duration / days	Summer package	Winter package	Accommodation facility**
El-Barouk	yes	Ammiq	2	yes	no	Ammiq Ecolodge
Maasser el-Shouf	yes	Ammiq	2	yes	no	Ammiq Ecolodge
Niha el-Shouf*	yes	Aitanit	2	yes	yes	Aitanit Guesthouse

* The main purpose behind the Type 2 packages is to cross the Barouk range and includes a visit to the Ammiq wetlands

**There is an urgent need of accommodation facilities in Ammiq and Aitanit. A project of an ecolodge is under study in Ammiq area, but no firm plans for a guesthouse in Aitanit village.

Niha esh-Shouf / Aammiq – 2days / 1 night

- First day hiking commencing at the Niha el-Shouf entrance to the SBR and ending at Aitanit village crossing the Barouk range to the Beqaa side.
- Overnight at Aitanit at a local family house with dinner and breakfast.
- Second day cultural tour in the village with typical lunch at a another family house.
- This is a “Slow Tourism” designed package
- Feasible all year long (Snowshoeing in January and February)
- Cost to be determined by the SBR management team
- The activities of this package can be replicated in the locations mentioned in the above table



Third Group of packages: SBR / sight seeing tour in Shouf Area

3A: Maaser esh-Shouf entrance + Cultural tour in Shouf area

3A': Ain Zhalta entrance + Cultural tour in Shouf area

3B: Ammiq entrance + Ammiq wetlands+ Wine tour in West Beqaa area

**Accommodation is possible in Barouk Palace Hotel and in Chtaura or Zahle at Masabky, Central Park Hotel, Grand Hotel Qadiri, Traboulsi, Akl hotels and in the West Beqaa at Beqaa Country Club, or ed-Daiyaa ecolodge in Taanyel .

Entrances	Cultural tour in Shouf	Cultural tour in West Beqaa	Duration / days	Summer package	Winter package	Accommodation facility*
Maaser el-Shouf	Beiteddine; DeirelQamar; Qasr Moussa		2	yes	no	Yes
Ain Zhalta	Beiteddine; DeirelQamar; Qasr Moussa		2	yes	yes	yes
Ammiq**		3 wineries	2	yes	no	yes

*Accommodation facility in the el-Shouf area is available either in classical hotels (Hotel Mir Amin Palace, Auberge La Bastide, Barouk Palace Hotel) or at guesthouses in the villages (el-Barouk, el-Khreybe, Baadarane, Maasser el-Shouf, Niha el-Shouf)

Standard SBR /Sight seeing tour in Shouf area

- Ain Zhalta / Beiteddine & Deir el-Qamar – 2days / 1 night
- First day hiking commencing at the Ain Zhalta entrance to the SBR and ending at Bmoharay village
- Overnight at Barouk Palace hotel in Barouk village with dinner and breakfast.
- Second day cultural tour visit to Beiteddine historical palace, lunch at a restaurant in Deir el-Qamar; cultural tour of Deir el-Qamar.
- This is a “Cultural Tourism” designed package
- Feasible all year long
- Cost to be determined by the SBR management team
- The activities of this package can be replicated in the locations and sites mentioned in the above table



Fourth Group of packages: SBR / regional festivals*

- 4A: Beiteddine festival + Maaser el-Shouf entrance + Maaser el-Shouf village**
4B: Deir el-Qamar 'Les Estivals' festival + Maaser el-Shouf entrance + Maaser el-Shouf village
4C: West Beqaa regional festival + Ammiq wetlands
4D: West Beqaa regional festival + Aitanit entrance

* Need for additional efforts in contacting all the festivals organizers in both areas of el-Shouf (Deir el-Qamar "Les Estivals" festival which lasts for 2 months) and in West Beqaa area (Saghbine, Aitanit, grapes harvesting)

** Same facilities as Third Group type packages
 - Need to promote the SBR along with the International festivals on the international scene.

Entrances	Festivals in Shouf area	Duration / days	Summer package	Winter package	Accommodation facility**
Maaser el-Shouf	Beiteddine; Deir el-Qamar; Qasr Moussa	2	yes	no	Yes



Standard SBR / regional festivals

- Beiteddine Intl. Festival / Maaser elshouf entrance and village – 2days / 1 night
- First day night show at Beiteddine international festival.
- Overnight at Beiteddine Palace hotel or a local guesthouse with dinner and breakfast.
- Second day short hiking commencing at Maaser el-Shouf entrance to the SBR, with lunch at Maaser el-Shouf village.
- This is a "Cultural Tourism" designed package
- Feasible in summer along with the local festivals
- Cost to be determined by the SBR management team
- The activities of this package can be replicated in the locations mentioned in the above table

4.3 LMT package

The Lebanon Mountain Trail package (LMT pack), which extends up to 5 days, is exclusively a hiking style package and targets a specialized hiking and trekking clientele both in summer and winter. The LMT crosses the SBR in a North/South direction and supports both conservation and local communities.

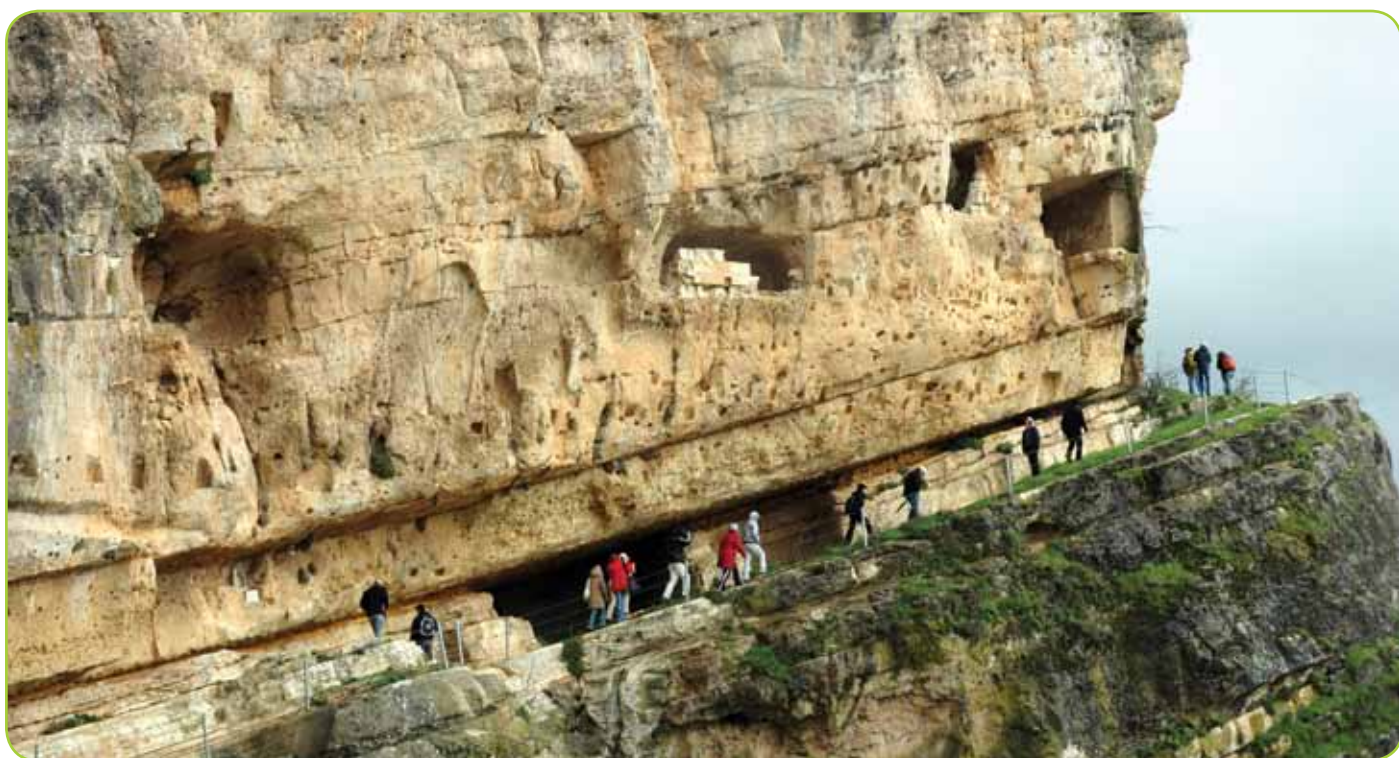
Day 1: Jezzine – Niha el-Shouf
 Day 2: Niha el-Shouf – Baadarane
 Day 3: Baadarane – Maaser el-Shouf
 Day 4: Maaser el-Shouf – El-Barouk

Day 5: El-Barouk – Ain Zhalta – end of hike.

*Snow Trails in winter should be identified because they may not follow the summer trail

**The five day package is feasible in winter by using snowshoes in the sections 21: Jezzine / Niha el-Shouf, section 19: Maasser el-Shouf / el-Barouk, and section 18: El-Barouk / Ain Zhalta

***Accommodation facilities used in the LMT packages are orientated towards guesthouses



Entrances	LMT section*	Duration / days	Summer package	Winter package**	Accommodation facility***
Niha el-Shouf	21	1	yes	Yes	Mershed guesthouse
	20	1	yes	yes	Baz guesthouse or el-Ashqar guesthouse
	19 and 20	1	yes	yes	Auberge St Michel
Maasser el-Shouf	19	1	yes	Yes	Boustani guesthouse
El-Barouk	18	1	yes	Yes	Ain Zhalta Victoria if needed

Part 5: New Developments



Three new sites are suggested for new ecotourism activities development in the SBR, these are:

- The Niha el-Shouf Geology theme hub
- The Ain Zhalta Cross Country Skiing hub
- The Educational Trail for schools

5.1 - Niha el-Shouf Geology theme hub

Compared to other regions within the area of the SBR, the region of Niha el-Shouf (Niha) is very rich in tourism potential. With more time and financing it could become the hub of ecotourism in the southern portion of the SBR. Three main factors support the development of the Niha Entrance:

- 1- the wealth of natural, historical and geological attractions in the Niha area
- 2- the determination of the SBR management team to develop all the major park entrances
- 3- the positive attitude of the president of the municipality of Niha el-Shouf and his desire to see close coordination between the park and the village.

List of attractions

A - Main attractions:

- Nabi Ayyoub Mausoleum (NAM)
- Shqif Tayroon Fort (STF)
- The Lebanon Mountain Trail (LMT) sections 19, 20 and 21
- The LMT / DHIAFEE Mershed Guesthouse

B – Secondary attractions:

- Natural geological landscape
- Picturesque villages (Bater and Niha) with traditional houses
- Wadih el-Safi (Niha is the native village of this famous Lebanese singer)

Points of Strength

- Diversity of traditional trails
- A wide network of agricultural trails
- Information center in the village
- Cooperative municipality
- Strategic location between the south (Jezzine) and the high Shouf region
- Easy access roads
- Good transport connection between Niha and Beirut
- The Mershed guesthouse
- Series of events that take place in the High Shouf region

Limiting factors

- No family house exists for the national singer Wadih el-Safi because the family house was sold and it is not easily recoverable in the short term
- The NAM site has already reached its limits in visitations (here the need is to attract some interested visitors to extend their visit by establishing a youth hostel style accommodation facility)
- The STF needs more exposure in order to attract more visitors (need for interpretation signs that explains the history of Emir Fakhreddine; the geological aspect of the Fort ; ...)

Visitors to Niha

- Families or pilgrims who visit the NAM site mainly from the region and from the Druze religious community.
- Some younger groups arrange visits to the STF
- Summer residents (from Beirut or from abroad) who spend their summer vacations with their parents or relatives in the village
- Hikers who use the Lebanon Mountain Trail

How can we extend the stay of these groups? How can we reach other groups by developing corresponding activities? How can we build the link between the summer residents and the SBR?

Recommended activities

- Create link between the SBR, the LMT and the village of Niha by means of a hiking trail
- Create link between the NAM and the STF and the village (it can be the same LMT trail)
- A cultural trail in and around the village with link to the LMT
- A “Donkey Ride Tour” in the outskirts of the village
- Encourage other activities that highlight the specificity of the region without compromising the natural or cultural heritage

Geology as the backbone of the Niha area

- Geology is a main component in the conservation program of the SBR
- An educational geology trail can be established and marketed as the “Niha Geology Trail”
- Geology helped the historical leader Emir Fakhreddine to hide in STF
- Geology is a good subject for any nature lover to meditate and paint landscapes
- Geology is a good basis for adventure and rope activities

The components of the project

- A geology museum in the village
- Adventure park near the village (it can be a geology theme too, with rope activities)
- A donkey riding trail
- Part of the geology trail can show the traces of the historical earth quake of the 1950's, winding down from NAM, in the valley (tariq el-wady), down to Bater.
- Bicycle paths using the road link between Jezzine and el-Barouk on one side of the mountain, and Aitanit to Ammiq on the other side.
- Rope activities site to be installed carefully at the northern part of STF.

5.2 – Ain Zhalta Cross Country Skiing hub

Introduction:

The Barouk mountain range reaches 2000 meters above sea level and is covered by snow for at least 4 months a year (mid December to end of March), and its topography is good for cross country skiing and snowshoeing, with a set of level loops.

NB: Another kind of skiing is the Nordic Skiing (Ski de randonnée) which is possible in the Barouk range, but it is not included in this study because it is not popular in Lebanon. It could also disturb the winter peace of the reserve. The "Ski de fond activity" or Cross country skiing, proposed, will be limited to Ain Zhalta area, and only on the delineated track for the purpose.

The following is a quick study for Cross country skiing activity, as a new tourism product, that has to be discussed with the SBR team and the local communities in order to find out if it can be introduced in the Shouf area (Barouk mountain range).

Planning:

Elements of the cross country skiing activity include:

- Ski equipment rental in Ain Zhalta village (1 job opportunity)
- Mankoushe snack shop at Ain Zhalta (1 job opportunity)
- Payable parking lot at Ain Zhalta Entrance (1 job opportunity)
- Nabaa Jeitee (3) Track Road clearing from snow (1 job opportunity), from the entrance to cross section point with track (2). Only the SBR shuttle is allowed to circulate on this part of the track (1 job opportunity), carrying the visitors from the parking lot to the cross section point with track (2).

- Cross country activity starts here, near Nabaa Jeitee
- Trail 14 and the nearby zone between the main entrance and the north direction, can be the learning zone for beginners. (2 job opportunities)
- Trail tracing on snow with the small trail machine (2 job opportunities)
- Local guides must be available for those who need

Activity	Job opportunity	Location
Ski equipment rental	1	Ain Zhalta
Man'oushe snack shop	1	Ain Zhalta
Payable Parking lot	1	Ain Zhalta
Track road clearing	1	Inside ACR (Nabaa Jeitee)
Biosphere shuttle	1	From parking to ski starting point
Ski instructors and local guides	2 (or more)	On the ski trail
Total	7	

them (3 job opportunities)

- Trail signage is needed; it can be done with a low budget, in the form of wooden poles
- Loop A = Easy: trail 13 – 5 – 2
- Loop B = Moderate: trail 13 – 5 – 9 – 7 – 2
- Loop C = Advanced: trail 2 – 7 – 11 – 8 – 9 – 5 – 13 – 4 – 15 – 17 – 14
- Number of persons per group is limited to 16 including the tour leader
- Number of school groups is limited to 35 including tour leaders, but the activity is limited at one location. Example at trail 14 or trail
- Number of groups per week are estimated at 5 maximum: 1 per weekdays, and 4 during weekends (2 on Saturdays and 2 on Sundays)
- The season opens in December and stretches to mid March
- Total estimated number of activity days is 80 (best scenario) and 50 (worst scenario) taking into consideration the seasonal snow coverage and the stormy days
- Total of estimated number of groups is 50 % occupancy, and it equals 400 to 640 visitors
- Total estimated turnover with ski rental equipment is between \$2666 and \$4260, at 10,000LL per rental
- Parking lot estimated turnover is between \$300 and \$500

Preliminary Budget for Cross country Skiing activity:

- 20 sets of ski equipment (ski + poles + bindings + boots): 13 300US\$ (increased over 5 years = 2660US\$)
- Boots dryer machine: 2 000US\$ (increased over 10 years = 200US\$)
- Training local ski instructors and guides: 3 500US\$ (increased over 3 years = 1166US\$)
- Bobcat snow clearing machine – (daily location): 2 000US\$
- Trail delineator, maintenance of ski equipment: 2 500US\$
- Insurance coverage for all participants: 3 000US\$
- Other cost (fuel, food, communication: 2 000US\$

Total budget: 28 300US\$ (increase yearly budget = 13 526US\$)

We shall need to attract 2000 participants each season to cover our expenses.

5.3 - Educational Trail for schools

Introduction:

This is a most significant product because it embraces ecotourism principles and is a great opportunity for park managers to create educational activities inside protected areas that serve as living earth museums!

With the emergence of the practice of nature conservation and sustainable development worldwide there is a genuine interest to introduce these practices to schools and universities. In Lebanon most of the visits to protected areas have been organized by the SBR in the form of recreational outings. However, there is a need for more serious educational activities and for this to be implemented the following steps should be considered:

- ✓ Identify the educational activities related to the environment and nature conservation that are represented by the SBR
- ✓ Identify a list of equipment needed for conducting such activities (binoculars, clay, pencils, papers, pictures, containers, pliers, magnifying glass)

- ✓ Identify the appropriate zones in the SBR for such activities
- ✓ Create packages of educational activities
- ✓ Train local guides and park rangers
- ✓ Market and promote the educational opportunities in the SBR at schools and universities

Educational trail: (need to develop map)

It is a trail that crosses all the main natural features (flora, fauna, geology, relief, Microsystems, levels of vegetations) of the park and lends itself to educational activities.

Proposed trail:

- ✓ Starting point: the botanical trail at Maasser el-Shouf entrance
- ✓ Continue on trail 1: learn about the Cedar tree at the location of the giant tree
- ✓ Continue on the trail: learn about the Cedar forest and the species specific to its undergrowth.
- ✓ Continue on the trail and reach the spot just before La Martine Cedar tree, here, we can organize the biodiversity activity, collecting natural items??
- ✓ Have a look, and some rest, at the panoramic spot of La Martine Cedar tree
- ✓ Proceed north, and have scientific interpretation about the natural propagation of cedars in the wild (parent tree with young cedars surrounding it)
- ✓ A little bit more north towards Marj el-Tawil and find a spot where we can organize activity related to insects and butterflies.
- ✓ Continue on trail 8 and out of the forests, where we can have interpretation about the levels of vegetation (compare the Alpine model and to the Lebanese model found in other mountains such as Jabal el-Makmel)
- ✓ Proceed on trail 9 towards the eastern part of the mountain and organize molding tree trunk activity, related to the difference between the oak and the cedar tree found on the western slope
- ✓ Find a spot where we can plant cedar or oak trees, according to the reforestation program
- ✓ Find another spot near water source where we can work on animal traces activity
- ✓ Find another place adequate for lichens, fungus and mushrooms interpretation activity
- ✓ Use this educational trail according to the needs of each class and theme learned at school.



Activity	Spot	description	equipment	Class/level	Season
Trunk molding	Trail 9	Stick clay to the tree trunk then mould it with plaster.	Plaster powder; clay; water; aluminum container; bucket; marker.	8 to 12	All seasons
Butterfly netting	Marj et-Tawil	Catch butterflies with a net, then identify them in the book.	Net; insect container; book.	8 to 14	Spring and summer
Levels of vegetation	Trail 8	Observe levels of vegetation, from deciduous trees in middle slopes to conifers in higher levels and limits of the forest in high plateaus.	Table of the Alpes level of vegetation; binoculars; paper and color pencils.	8 to 16	All seasons
Biodiversity	La Martine Cedar	Collect different biological elements in a determined surface, then select groups.	White sheet cloth; plastic bags; marker.	8 to 16	All seasons
Animal traces	Near water spots	Search for animal traces near water spots and try to identify them in books, and then mould them with plaster.	Plaster powder; clay; water; bucket; marker.	8 to 16	All seasons
other					

Educational Activities at SBR

Part 6: Marketing and Promotion



6.1 - The role of marketing

The marketing process is shaped by clients' needs as well as the needs of the producer of goods and services. In this context, the management of the SBR is the producer, and visitors are the clients. It is important to remember that marketing needs to meet the goals of biodiversity conservation, protection of cultural heritage, and support of local communities - without neglecting the clients' needs.

SBR's clients are divided to three groups:

- (a) stakeholders (SBR visitors, local communities, tour operators, individuals or groups who benefit from the existence of the SBR, and the SBR staff)
- (b) consumers (an individual or a group that is the end-user of the SBR's product or service).
- (c) customers (an individual or a group that purchases a SBR related product or service, either directly or via an intermediary).

SBR managers must strive to meet the needs of all three groups.

6.2 - SBR's marketing goals

One of the first tasks of the SBR management team is to establish the goals for its marketing strategy which includes:

- strengthen the brand identity and increase awareness of the Shouf Biosphere Reserve
- increase both day visitors and overnight visitors with extension stay in villages, thereby increasing revenues
- meet visitor expectation in the areas of quality and customer service

6.3 - Market research

Market research is an important part of the marketing plan because it helps the SBR team understand the needs of current and potential visitors. This will allow the SBR team to anticipate visitor behavior, and improve visitor services by focusing on the most popular features of the cultural and natural heritage of the area.

6.4 - Target Marketing

Target marketing is a strategy associated with promotion that identifies niche markets and develops products for each market segment. This is in contrast to mass marketing, in which an organization develops one product and attempts to get every possible person to use it.

SBR is encouraged to make a shift from "mass marketing" to "target marketing" where a product will be developed to suit each selected niche market. Target marketing involves several important steps:

- 1 – Decide how many niche markets the SBR wishes to serve
- 2 – Build a market profile for each niche
- 3 – Develop a marketing strategy for each niche

As a first step SBR should avoid serving many different stakeholders, in order to make the niche market selection easy. The niche market groups proposed in the package development section are described as follows:

GROUP	ACTIVITY
Schools	Educational activities
Nature discovery lovers	Hiking, biodiversity, animal watch
Adventure and sports activity lovers	Mountain biking, rope activity, snowshoeing, cross country skiing
Young couples preparing their "Zen" wedding ceremony	Zen wedding events
Silence and meditation practitioners	Meditation, book reading, drawing, yoga

6.5 - Product development

The SBR offers great experiences and services to the visitor, but the product is still missing. Based on the customer comments, feedback and market research data - services and products can be expanded such as: new picnic areas, recreational areas (Niha), new campsites, interpretation programs, animal watch towers, new equipment rental, and an accommodation facility in the Beqaa region of the SBR. This will benefit the SBR through higher visitation in spring and autumn shoulder seasons, as well as in winter, thereby increasing the number of visitors.

Product line to be provided at the SBR

Activity	Description	Season	Duration	# of pers	Location	Combination	Price range
Meditation	Meditate in the heart of nature, while reading your own book or drawing your own sketch. No other equipment is allowed, no photography, no cell phone, no music even with ear phones, no smoking, no fire, no pets, limited food	all year long	4 hours to 1 day max, no sleeping in the reserve	max 2	Barouk Cedar forest or Arz el-Obhol or other sites	With Baz guesthouse - Baadarane village	***
Hiking	Enjoying nature while hiking and discovering the natural heritage of the Barouk Mountain range	April to Nov.	1 day		Hiking on delineated trails	With all guesthouses and visits in described in the packages section	*
Snowshoeing	Enjoying winter scenery while walking on snow, on limited trails	Dec. to March	1 day	max 16 including tour leaders	On limited trails)	With all guesthouses and visits described in the packages section	**
Cross Country Skiing	Enjoying winter while skiing on pre-traced trails	Dec. to March	1 day	max 16 including tour leaders	On limited trails (to be selected)	With all guesthouses and visits in all villages described in the packages section	**
Nature watch	This activity is primarily for adults and involves some additional equipment, such as binoculars, books... and the intervention of an expert in nature science	all year long	1 day	max 12	to be defined	With all guesthouses and visits described in the packages section	***
Educational	For school activities, learning about nature and its richness, while looking at man's influence and destructive practices	all year long	1 day	max 35	On the educational trail)	With villages adjacent to the Biosphere reserve, and accommodation at youth hostels, such St Micheal at Maasser	*
Adventure	This activity is limited to rope sports and mountain biking in a closed park. No motorized activity is allowed inside the SBR	all year long	1 day	max 16 incl. tour leaders	In the region of Jbaa or Bater el-Shouf	With the guesthouses in Niha and the youth hostel in Maasser	**
Events and Festivals (Wedding)	Add a cedar scent to your wedding by celebrating it in the heart of a cedar forest on top of Mount Lebanon.	Summer time	a few hours		to be defined	With Mir Amin Palace and Beiteddine festival	*****

6.6 - Branding

In the context of product planning, branding is used to identify a service provided by the SBR. A brand can be a name, a symbol, a design, or a combination of these reflecting the essence of the spirit of the SBR, and influencing the purchasing choice of the customer.

Considering the visual identity of the Shouf Cedars Nature Reserve represented by the logo, the cedar cone reflects well the essence of the protected area – cedar trees. But the product doesn't follow the branding?? An example would be to develop a product where an "interpretation trail" tells the story of the cedars.

Another example proposed in this study are the weekend packages developed with a link between the SBR and the villages and having a slogan "Cedars and Faces".

6.7 - Promotion

Promotion is part of the communication with the customer; it can be used by the SBR management team to inform and educate current and potential visitors regarding the relationship that exist between them and the SBR. The main purpose of promotion is to increase demand.

One of the currently used promotional materials by the SBR is the 2008 booklet "**AL-SHOUF CEDAR NATURE RESERVE [ECO GUIDE] Western Side**". It provides visitors with some information about the SBR, and a general overview of the main attractions found in the villages near the SBR. The most important part is the proposed package for an extended stay, with all the facilities of lodging, food, local guides and tour operators. This is a valuable tool, but it needs to be complemented with more interpretation about the SBR, and to develop activities related to biodiversity at the SBR.

Promotional efforts include other strategies such as:

- Maintaining regular contact with media, tour operators, Ministry of Tourism and other organizations. Host travel media and ask them to write about the new activities at SBR
- Market research identified water as a primary influence for tourists when making travel decisions. Include some water element (near the artificial lake) in the pictures used in future promotional material
- An interactive website for educational and learning activities for schools and teachers would be a very useful tool for schools. It helps spread the right information.



6.8 - Communication and Awareness

Many potential visitors today use the internet to decide where to go on Sundays in Lebanon. Most of them have internet connection at home or at work, and it is an easy way to get information about day trips or weekends. It is important that the SBR management team conduct a visitor survey before they leave the SBR. This will help identify their needs, tastes, addresses, and preferred means of communication.

With e-mail a visitor's request can be answered on the spot or directed to the FAQ sections on the SBR website. Communicating with SBR's current and potential visitors can also be provided by newsletters and regular mailings about events and products at the SBR.

6.9 - Advertizing

SBR does not advertize extensively because of the high cost. Nevertheless, a series of printed material have been developed. A proposition would be to include advertisement in the Eco-guide booklet, and use these funds for advertising the SBR on other levels.



6.10 - Direct marketing

Direct marketing is an opportunity for the SBR to orient its message directly to a targeted group of visitors, and is therefore more cost-effective than general advertising. Examples of this would be:

- promoting festivals such as the Khreibeh or Maasser festivals
- sending direct mail for special events to regular clients or tour operators
- developing programs for corporate partners that involve team building activities

6.11 - Pricing

In setting prices for services and products offered, the following factors need to be taken into consideration:

- Cost of production - of a product or a service at SBR includes the time the staff spend for development or operation of a package, or the operation of a guesthouse, or production of rural / agricultural products
- Competitor price - is the price other protected areas in Lebanon charge for similar packages or the accommodation prices charged at guesthouses outside the SBR
- Prices the customer is willing to pay - the SBR team is encouraged to conduct a survey to understand what each type of visitor would be ready to pay for a determined product or service
- Goals of the SBR team - the main goal should always be to conserve biodiversity in the SBR

6.12 - Distribution

Distribution is dependent on the availability of products and services, their location and accessibility, and the intermediaries who sell SBR products and services to customers (such as tour operators). The success of distribution depends on providing good presentation and service consistently.

The distribution channels are routes through which goods and services are delivered to the SBR visitors and stakeholders. SBR partners may assist in the distribution of the goods and services, as has been recommended in ECODIT's SBR Marketing Plan.

The SBR staff and management team are in need of an effective central reservation system. Such a system will relieve them of having to spend too much time responding to the requests of visitors and answering phone calls of clients wishing to spend a weekend in the region without prior notice. Initially this unit should remain under the control of the SBR management team. At a later stage this system can be brought online thereby adding a positive change to the way visitors interact with the SBR (such as preparing their visit well in advance).

Part 7: Action Plan



Issue	Action	Time frame	Implementing Body
Financial support	- Raise awareness on biodiversity and protected areas values	2010-2015	MT
	- Develop efficient fee collection	2011-2012	APAC
	- Identify an equitable tariffs policy and determine what activity should be subject to a fee	2011-2012	APAC
	- Install park-based tourism, building solid partnerships with the private sector	2010-2011	MT
Local stakeholders	- Build bridges with local stakeholders to achieve positive changes in attitude towards the SBR.	2010-2013	MT
	- Establish a local tour operating business that performs exclusively with the SBR	2010-2011	MT/Local Communities
Minimizing threats	- Develop "Green packages" for tourism that reach all types of tourists thereby enlarging the market demand for this type of tourism	2010-2012	MT/Experts
	- Consider the closure of access roads inside and near the Core Area	2012-2014	APAC
	- Limit car parking spaces and introduce pay parking in the villages	2012-2013	APAC
	- Incorporate an environmentally clean shuttle transport (purchase Hybrid Toyota Coaster buses)	2012-2013	MT
	- Introduce an entrance fee for more sensitive sites	2011-2012	MT/APAC
Linking practice to guidelines	- Adopting and implement strict international standards with no compromises to reach a balance between tourism business and protection of nature	2010-2011	APAC
The Internet	- Include more information on the SBR website, about the recreational activities and other facilities	2010-2011	MT
	- Transform the SBR website from static to interactive	2010-2011	MT
	- Create a group of SBR activist supporters	2010-2011	MT
Printed material	- Create more friendly user maps for the SBR showing clear trails	2010-2011	MT
	- Add beautiful and quality pictures to the leaflets, and make sure to include people in the photos	2010-2011	MT
	- Adjust the length of stay in SBR package because the tourist won't spend 5 days in one region	2010	MT
	- Link the SBR with the villages	2010-2011	MT
	- Include prices along with packages	2010-2015	MT
	- Conduct educational tours for tour operators inside and outside the reserve	2010-2015	MT
	- Take pictures with people enjoying a real activity	2010-2015	MT
	- Develop a promotional tool such as, a yearly guide about the park, providing a broad spectrum of info	2010-2015	MT
	- Develop a promotional educational guide for schools, describing in detail all the possible activities	2010-2012	MT

Television	- Build contacts with all televisions in Lebanon and neighbouring Arab countries	2010-2015	MT
	- Stress the desire of viewers to see more about nature reserves and protected areas in the region	2010-2015	MT
Booking and reservations	- Enhance all the stages of communication and reservation at the SBR: the website, the brochures and booklets, the phone answering, the welcoming and information given at the park's entrances	2010-2011	MT
Arrival and welcome	- Improve the quality of service at the Maasser El-Shouf entrance with toilets facilities and a larger parking lot	2010	MT
	- Add an exhibit of interpretative posters similar to the one at El-Barouk entrance	2010	MT
Experience	- Develop a customer-focused work ethic	2010-2015	MT
	- Conduct continuous improvement training Make service a philosophy of the park	2010-2015	MT
	- Strive to understand customer needs and expectations	2010-2015	MT
	- Monitor customer satisfaction	2010-2015	MT
	- Develop management systems focused on customer	2010-2011	MT
Attractions and activities	- Chose a location in the cedar forest with a breathtaking panorama for meditation	2010-2011	MT
	- Delineate hiking, snow shoeing, and cross country skiing trails with combinations and loops	2011-2012	MT/Expert
	- Establish trails crossing different micro-systems, bird/animal watching, and storm watching	2010-2011	MT
	- Chose locations in the buffer zone, or in the villages surrounding the SBR for adventure activities	2011-2012	MT/Municipalities
	- Introduce events and festivals at the various entrances of the SBR	2010-2011	MT
	- Link the SBR villages with footpaths and organize a cultural walking tour inside each village	2010-2011	MT/Municipalities/ Local groups
	- Mark/map all important cultural sites in each village with a focus on the identity of each village	2010	MT/GIS Expert
	- Find and encourage all the craftsmen in the villages to revive traditional crafts, and allow the visitor to watch	2010-2011	MT/Municipalities
	- Chose/prepare one location in the buffer zone, or in the SBR villages, for special events that attract visitors	2010	MT/Municipalities
Infra-structure & environment	- Incorporate Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) in the development of sensitive tourism areas	2012-2013	MT/EIA Experts
	- Adopt and implement strict international standards for the management of the SBR	2010-2015	MT/ Experts

Departure and follow up	- Aim at leaving a positive impression and collect feedback re the visitor's level of satisfaction	2010-2015	MT
	- Give the visitor a short "comment sheet" to fill out	2010-2015	MT
	- Review the visitor's comment sheet seriously and responded to it accordingly	2010-2015	MT
	- Maintain a continuous relation with the customer and send special invitations, newsletters, cards, etc.	2010-2015	MT
2 days / 1 night Discovery Package design	- Calculate the cost of each package and their price	2010-2011	MT/Eco-tourism Expert
	- Contact service providers in villages and make sure they are properly trained	2010-2011	MT
	- Secure accommodation and lunch facilities in the villages for each package	2010-2012	MT
	- Provide added value to the tourism experience by organizing leisure and educational activities along the hiking trails and in the villages	2010-2011	MT/Eco-tourism Expert
	- Feature some of the packages in brochures with appropriate pictures	2010-2011	MT/Designer
	- Post the packages and their prices on the SBR website	2010-2015	MT/Website developer
Developing the Niha Entrance	- Create a link between the SBR, the LMT and the village of Niha by means of a hiking trail	2010-2011	MT/Niha Municipality /Local groups
	- Establish a cultural trail in and around the village with link to the LMT	2010-2012	MT/Geologist
	- Introduce a "Donkey Ride Tour" outside the village	2011-2012	MT/Local groups
	- Encourage other activities that highlight the specificity of the region	2010-2015	MT/Local groups
	- Install interpretation signs that explains the history of Emir Fakhreddine; the geology of the Fort ; etc)	2010-2011	MT/Geologist
Marketing and promotion	- Conduct a survey among the visitors to SBR by filling a questionnaire before they leave the SBR	2010-2015	MT
	- Establish goals for a marketing strategy which includes brand identity, awareness of the SBR, etc.	2010-2015	MT/Marketing expert
	- Shift from "mass marketing" to "target marketing"	2010-2015	Marketing Expert
	- Develop new products such as: new picnic areas, recreational areas (Niha), new campsites, etc.	2012-2013	MT/Municipalities
	- Maintain regular contact with media, Tour Operators, Ministry of Tourism and other organizations	2010-2015	MT
	- Include a water element (artificial lake) in the pictures used in future promotional material	2010-2015	MT
	- Use the internet, in particular e-mail, to communicate quickly and efficiently with clients	2010-2015	MT
	- Employ direct marketing to reach a targeted group of visitors to promote festivals such as the Khreibeh	2010-2015	APAC
	- Allow SBR partners to assist in distribution of goods and services (see ECODIT's SBR Marketing Plan)	2010-2015	APAC/MT
	- Install an effective central reservation system	2010-2015	APAC/MT

