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Note: This document is undated, and does not seem to have been revised since the original posting. (See the final line of 'Planning')

INITIATION

KEY ISSUES

Because a phosphate processing plant known as NPK existed for over 30 years, discharging all of its liquid and solid by-products into the sea, and because of the presence of the industrial zone called the Poudriere or "powder keg" along the same coast which, in turn, has been discharging its waste (all types) into the sea over a long period, the water and substratum along the coast and in the sea have been badly polluted. The quality of the seawater and the soil have also been degraded, the Posidonia meadows have disappeared, there is no recreational activity, no bathing area, and bathing has in actual fact been banned in the area around the project site.

On the other hand, the coast in question is well suited for organised urbanisation, given its proximity to the town centre, which to the detriment of the former Sfax coast was formed entirely through a fill-in process during the French occupation of the country.

PROJECT AREA - geographic characteristics

The project area currently comprises a coastline in the shape of a gulf (Sidi Mansour gulf) which begins to the south at the commercial port of Sfax, and stretches to the North as far as the 5th km on the Sidi Mansour road near Sfax's recently constructed summer theatre. The site can be broken down in a South-Northerly direction as follows:

- Former location of the NPK factory (closed for almost 10 years), where some 5 million m³ of phospho-gypsum have been dumped, forming an 8 m high embankment, with a further 3 million m³ buried in a ring around it. The embankment and the ring are located on the marine side of the coast in Sfax's trading port.
- The coast continues to the North, running alongside the public marine domain which separates the sea from the Poudriere I industrial zone (the oldest industrial zone in Sfax) for almost 2 km.
- Land use then changes, becoming urban to the far end of the project site, near the El Khlaj school and Sfax's recently built summer theatre.

All of these stretches of coast feature a remarkable tidal range (the widest for the whole Mediterranean), in the region of 1.8 m. The area has an extensive pelagian shelf, which means that during spring tides the sea can fall by more than 300 m (in places even 500 m). Moreover, the sea is very calm, giving for a greyish-blackish muddy seabed (rich in organic matter).

- socio-economic characteristics

The NPK factory worked for over thirty years, extracting phosphate from the centre of the country (Gafsa) and dumping the by-products (phospho-gypsum) into the sea and along the Sfax coast. Work on the NPK first began at a time when the beach in Sfax was still suitable for swimming. "Variou" beach, "Sfax Swimming Club" and "Sfax Casino" were all in the immediate vicinity of the factory; they had all disappeared by the time the factory went into production, making way for the town's oil deposit and for the extension of the commercial port.

So the town had an outstanding beach, which was the only one not affected by a visible tidal range since it was producing by filling in the former coastline.

It becomes clear from all of this that the coast was sacrificed, making way for leading public economic activities: phosphate processing and port activity. Poudriere I industrial zone is also located at a strategic point for the town - the northwards geographical extension of the "NPK coast". Here once again, private industrial plants were to use Sfax's northern coast to dump various types of liquid and solid waste for over 40 years. Solid waste is still in fact being illicitly dumped at certain points in the public maritime domain, whilst the dumping of liquid waste has virtually come to a halt.

ORGANISATION - initiating

The Tunisian government- Ministry of Amenities and Housing

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- implementing Study and Planning Company for the northern coasts of Sfax town (SEACNVS)

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- participating

PLANNING

MAIN GOALS & OBJECTIVES

The aim of the project is to decontaminate the site of the former NPK factory, its phospo-gypsum dump and the coast where the Poudriere industrial zone is located, in order to develop the area in question. This will reestablish the link between the people living in Sfax and the sea.

The project has two main objectives:

1. To clean up Sfax's northern coast
2. To reclaim land from the sea and extend Sfax north-eastwards from the town centre.

The project has still not been conducted.

PROJECT STRUCTURE

The project was entrusted to a public company, whose work was supervised by the Ministry for Amenities, Housing and Land-use Planning. The company is financially and technically autonomous, which means that it is able to act at local level without calling on national bodies. The same company also works alongside the regional authorities, mainly the Sfax Governorate. However, since the programme came into being in the late 80s (1987), activities have consisted of a set of studies: feasibility studies, environmental impact studies, and technical studies in the broadest sense of the term, i.e., geotechnical, geological, currentological, etc. All these studies were only completed and approved in 2002.

There is no doubt that, without the assistance of the various national and sub-national actors, particularly the Ministry for the Environment and Land-use Planning and the bodies under its aegis (the ANPE and the APAL), these studies would not have provided positive results favourable to the ensuing actions undertaken.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The public did not participate directly in the activities which have already been run (various studies), but it was able to take part through information meetings and seminars, and was able in particular to receive up-to-date information on how the project was progressing. It should be pointed out that although administratively speaking the project got underway in 1987 work in the field has still not begun.

CAPACITY BUILDING & AWARENESS RAISING

The company heading up the project, the SEACNVS, as well as the competent Ministry, have organised several information seminars about the project. They have also published various leaflets and information packs which are on show at the company's headquarters and also at national and local events.

POLICIES & STRATEGIES

All the activities within the project centred on the theme of "environmental protection and land-use planning", but more specifically on the integrated management of the Sfax North coastal area. This management strategy meant that those involved needed to be perfectly familiar with the area if they were to diagnose the current situation in order to propose solutions for the future.

All these policies and strategies were implemented by the Tunisian government.

ACTIVITIES

Land use and planning both on dry land and in the sea. Proposals will be put forward for creating areas with an urban or tourist vocation and others, which if need be will be kept for commercial and industrial activities.

No, the Taparura project as such has still not got underway.

IMPLEMENTATION

LEGAL & INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

Studies: 2,600,000 TD, i.e. almost US\$ 2,000,000.

Work: 80,000,000 TD, i.e. almost US\$ 60,000,000

The studies have been conducted and their budget released by the Tunisian government. The works funding will come in the form of foreign loans, currently under discussion.

FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS The Coastal Zone Management (CZM) Plan for the whole Albanian coastal area was implemented in co-operation with the Government of Albania and the European Union (EU), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the World Bank (WB) and the European Investment Bank (EIB) through the Mediterranean Technical Assistance Programme (METAP) for the North and South Albanian coastal area. The total amount of funding the project was 400,000 USD.

TOOLS & TECHNIQUES

TOOLS & TECHNIQUES Tools and techniques used in the project were:

- Systemic and Prospective Sustainability Analysis (SPSA), development/environment scenarios
- Geographic Information Systems (GIS)
- Carrying Capacity Assessment (CCA) for tourist activities
- Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)
- Activities of the Environment Remote Sensing Regional Activity Centre (ERS/RAC): monitoring of coastal stability
- scenarios development, etc.

DATA & INFO MANAGEMENT The data and information available at the start of the project was nowhere near sufficient to decide whether or not this was an appropriate project, particularly from the clean-up point of view (phospho-gypsum). Sampling campaigns, as well as geotechnical and analytical studies, and environmental impact assessments amongst others needed to be conducted, the total cost of which amounted to around 2.6 million TD (almost 2 million US\$). They ran over a period of 10 years, including both work in the field and the preparation of the actual studies themselves.

MONITORING & EVALUATION

MONITORING The SEACNVS has a management board which monitors the project's progress. However, besides having an inter-departmental committee which tracks the project's technical progress, the ANPE (National Environment Protection Agency) also assessed the EIA drawn up for this purpose, and could only issue a favourable opinion once it had conducted surveys of the polluted area, and site decontamination studies.

Since the site has no access of its own, work was also undertaken outside in order to build access routes and to clear vast amounts of old industrial waste. For a short time it was this work which acted as an indicator of progress for the project. However, at the current time, and given that the studies have been completed, progress is mainly indicated by fund acquisition and then actually reaching the objectives.

EVALUATION No evaluation has been performed as yet.

LESSONS LEARNED

STRENGTHS The project is not the first of its kind (reclaiming land from the sea) in Tunisia, nor in the Sfax region for that matter, but it will be one of the first projects on the decontamination of formerly polluted sites. This feature means that it is of particular importance in terms of rehabilitating and preserving the quality of the environment.

One further positive aspect is that the relationship between the people of Sfax and the sea will be reestablished. Sfax currently has no bathing beaches, but will be reprovided with one thanks to the project.

WEAKNESSES The project kicked off on paper in 1987, but has still not been started in the field. The people of Sfax are anxiously awaiting it, and some of them have lost faith. The on-going delay is unfortunately giving rise to a sort of despair in the population, but more particularly is driving the cost ever upward.

PUBLICATIONS

Those reports which are available are in particular technical reports on soil quality and technical proposals for decontamination and development. There is also the ANPE-approved EIA for the project. However, all these reports will remain confidential until project completion, and may not be either published or quoted.