

**Red Sea - Dead Sea Water Conveyance Study Program
Matrix of Comments and Responses
July 2008 Public Meetings, in Amman, Ramallah, Herzeliyah,
Including Comments Submitted in Writing After the Meetings
November 2008**

Question or Issue Raised or Suggestion Made	Response
Theme I. The Public Meeting and the Consultations Process	
1. The location of the meeting in Israel was too far from the affected communities, required vehicular access and was held mostly in English rather than Hebrew. Better opportunities for consultations with the potentially affected communities need to be made.	Consultations will be held with potentially affected parties in the study area, at appropriate locations and in the local languages, during the study program. The first phase of local consultations began in October/November 2008. A Public Consultations and Communications Plan for the study was submitted by the consultants in September 2008.
2. Travel to the meeting in Ramallah was difficult because of the checkpoints throughout the West Bank.	This is outside the control of the World Bank, the consultants or the study process.
3. There was insufficient public participation and press participation at the meetings in Jordan and the Palestinian Authority. People need more than an invitation to a meeting – they need to be encouraged to attend, and be informed on the benefits and risks of the project.	The meeting was advertised in local newspapers in English, Arabic and Hebrew, as appropriate, and well in advance of the meeting dates. Local and international media were also advised of the three meetings. A number of other institutions in Jordan and the Palestinian Authority received direct invitations.
4. The Jordanian Ministry of Environment should be more involved and should have a higher profile in the study, and a formal submission should be made to the Ministry under the Jordanian EIA Regulation.	The Secretary General of the Ministry of Environment is a member of the Technical Steering Committee (TSC), and thus is directly involved in the Study Program. The Jordanian Government is free to submit the current Environmental and Social Assessment Study to the Ministry of the Environment.
5. Even if hundreds of people and organisations have participated in the stakeholder process, there is a concern over the quality of participation afforded to stakeholders. The stakeholder participation methodology should be shared broadly, with an emphasis on “how the substantive issues will be discussed in a two-way manner with stakeholders...”. Stakeholder participation must be broader than mere ‘consultation’. The social, economic and ecological dimensions of the project must be made available to public scrutiny and deliberation, as an important part of the process itself. The Bank and consultants should create public feedback loops at strategic moments in the process, so the knowledge that is	Consultations will be held with potentially affected parties in the study area, at appropriate locations and in the local languages, during the study program. The first phase of local consultations began in October/November 2008. A Public Consultations and Communications Plan (PCCP) for the study was submitted by the consultants in September 2008. The overall purpose of this plan is to ensure a consistent, comprehensive and coordinated approach to consultation and disclosure; and to demonstrate a ‘good practice’ approach to public engagement. In line with current guidance from the World Bank, this PCCP aims to ensure effective consultation with potentially affected communities and to be inclusive and culturally appropriate. Engagement activities will be early, ongoing and

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<p>generated meaningfully reflects the engaged participation of stakeholders. According to the ToR (14.2.2), specific provisions would be made for the disclosure of information to local communities before the appraisal and construction phases of the Project. The Bank should provide a clear participatory methodology as a component of a forthcoming Environmental and Social Management Plan</p>	<p>iterative, throughout the life of the Study Program.</p>
Theme II. The Study Process	
<p>1. There is still no International Panel of Experts. It is this panel which should judge the adequacy of the Terms of Reference and the scientific analysis. This Panel must be created. UNEP and UNESCO should make recommendations for the Panel of Experts, not just the TSC, since this is open to conflict of interest.</p>	<p>The International Panel of Experts is in the process of being established and an announcement should be soon made on its membership. UNEP and UNESCO will be consulted during the course of the Study Program.</p>
<p>2. How will the allocation of freshwater be decided? The distribution of any freshwater provided by the project should be determined by independent parties, not the 3 Beneficiary Parties</p>	<p>As the Beneficiary Parties are the owners of the Study Program, and will likely be the owners of any potential water conveyance and desalination infrastructure, it is the responsibility of the three Beneficiary Parties to reach a joint agreement on how any potable water will be allocated.</p>
<p>3. There is a major risk that the key impacts will only be properly understood after the project has been completed. Who will take responsibility for the actual environmental impacts of the project, if it goes ahead?</p>	<p>The objective of the Feasibility Study and the Environmental and Social Assessment, including the Analysis of Alternatives, is to inform decision making concerning the proposed project and alternatives. The studies are intended to support discussion of potential impacts by the Beneficiary Parties, the public and other interested groups.</p>
<p>4. The RSDSC proposal should be coordinated with other master plans in Israel.</p>	<p>The comment is noted – the Terms of Reference for the Study Program require a regional and project specific description of baseline environmental and social conditions including master plans prepared by the Beneficiary Parties.</p>
<p>5. The study program unnecessarily delays the reporting of negative conclusions, possibly in order to extend the work of the consultants. The 2 key questions to be addressed relate to the impacts to the Red Sea and the Dead Sea. Previous studies on the mixing of the Red Sea and Dead Sea waters - which have been rejected 7 times - could be reviewed and conclusions drawn within a short period (1 month) without the need for the extended study program.</p>	<p>The Terms of Reference for the studies were drafted and agreed by all three Beneficiary Parties. The consultants' work program must follow the Terms of Reference.</p>

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6. There are not enough resources - time or money - to do the research adequately.	The Terms of Reference were drafted and agreed by the three Beneficiary Parties and careful consideration was given to the time required to carry out the tasks described therein. The Study Program is not designed as a means to carry out primary research.
7. The GOI should be involved in the project as it is a GOI sponsored idea.	The Government of Israel (GOI) is one of the three Beneficiary Parties and is directly involved with the Study Program. The TSC for the study includes four representatives of the GOI.
8. The World Bank should provide full disclosure of the details of the research and scientific analysis being done, and all documentation between the Bank and the consulting teams, for purposes of transparency, and to allow comments to be made, and ensure that nothing is left out.	The Terms of Reference for the Study Program have been made publicly available. All consultant reports (except for periodic progress reports) as they are finalized and approved will be also be available for public consultation and comment. There are no agreements other than the contracts with the World Bank, which are confidential and cover only business and financial topics, between the World Bank and the consultants. All details on research and scientific analysis will be in the consultant reports. The World Bank has no agreements of any kind with research institutes.
9. The goals of saving the Dead Sea, producing additional water, and developing the Arava/Araba Valley are too broad. The project should be more focused.	The comment is noted.
10. Who will decide on the recommendations from the studies?	The three Beneficiary Parties will each review the study recommendations and make decisions on how to proceed.
11. The EQA (Palestinian Authority) did not yet receive a copy of the Inception Report. EQA should be given hard copies of the documents for review, since it is a TSC member.	All consultant reports are delivered to the Study Management Unit and members of the TSC. It is the responsibility of the relevant members of the TSC to further distribute reports.
12. Two non-governmental people should be appointed to the TSC, one from UNEP, and one from UNESCO. Consultation with UNEP and UNESCO is insufficient.	It is not planned to expand the membership of the TSC; however, representatives of UNEP and UNESCO will be consulted during the undertaking of the Study Program.
13. The Bank is asked to ensure that a transparent consultations process is conducted to take into account all stakeholders; views, and make all information available to the public.	Consultations will be held with potentially affected parties in the study area, at appropriate locations and in the local languages, during the Study Program. The first phase of local consultations began in October/November 2008. The PCCP for the study was submitted by the consultants in September 2008.
Theme III. The Political Situation, Water Rights and their Bearing on the Project	

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1. Under International Law, the 3 rd Beneficiary should be known as the 'Occupied Palestinian Territories'.	The World Bank has an established practice of referring to the 3 rd Beneficiary Party as the Palestinian Authority, which predates this Study Program. As the Study Program is managed by the World Bank, the Consultants are obligated to use this naming convention.
2. Palestinians do not currently have access to the Jordan River or the Dead Sea. The water delivered to Palestinians from Mekerot is from the aquifers not the Jordan River. Should Palestinians support a project which benefits assets to which they have no access? Will the project affect their rights to the aquifers or the Jordan River?	Questions concerning access by the Palestinian Authority to the Dead Sea, Jordan River and regional aquifers are not within the scope of the Study Program.
3. The project has significant implications over Palestinians' water rights, and will therefore impact the final status negotiations – both bi-lateral and multi-lateral.	The water rights of the Palestinian Authority are not within the scope of the Study Program.
4. There is a difference between Palestinian and Israeli calculations on the sustainable yield of the aquifers. Palestinian expert involvement in the studies is important to ensure that the conclusions are accepted.	It is the responsibility of the Feasibility Study consultants to determine technical findings. In this context, we believe that the consultants will consult with all relevant experts in order to ensure that the best possible technical findings are presented in their reports.
5. There is a perception that the Palestinians are the weaker party in the TSC and in the study. The initial proposal was from Jordan and Israel only, and the Palestinians had to fight for involvement. If the Palestinian Authority refuses to support the project, can it still go ahead?	The Palestinian Authority is a full member of the TSC and an equal partner in the Study Program. If the Palestinian Authority withdraws from the Study Program, then a decision would need to be made between the remaining Beneficiary Parties and the World Bank concerning the continuation or suspension of the Study Program.
6. The RSDSC is a political intervention in a conflict region which will impact the socio-political dynamics of the conflict parties, but the RSDSC study process does not adequately recognise this. The Bank should develop the study and evaluation process as a political intervention tailored to a conflictual and dynamic region, as suggested in the ToR 8.2.2.	The Study Program is a technical initiative, not a political initiative. Terms of Reference, section 8.2.2, "Intangible Benefits," sets out the technical, not political, basis for analysing and quantifying the various intangible benefits of any planned water related infrastructure.
7. Has Hamas been engaged in the study, to prevent their future obfuscation of the process?	It is the responsibility of the Beneficiary Parties to fill their four positions on the TSC.
8. Public statements from the RSDSC authorities state that Jordan is the likely primary beneficiary of any water provided. Jordan is a terribly	As the Beneficiary Parties are the owners of the Study Program, and will likely be the owners of any potential water conveyance and desalination infrastructure, its is

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<p>water stressed country, but the Palestinians of the West Bank (and Gaza Strip) are even more so. The human needs and rights to water of all Beneficiary Parties, but particularly the Palestinians, should be recognised and addressed. It is inconceivable that they should not benefit from the additional waters generated. The Palestinians should be involved in decisions to allocate water from the project.</p>	<p>the responsibility of the three Governments to reach a joint agreement on how any potable water will be allocated.</p>
Theme IV. The Study of Alternatives	
<p>1. A comparative analysis of all alternatives to the RSDSC proposal is crucial. The options to be studied should include i) a conveyance from the Mediterranean Sea, ii) a regional policy for more efficient management of water in Israel and Jordan including wastewater and greywater reuse, iii) use of the Yarmouk and Litani Rivers, iv) the restoration of the Dead Sea via a rehabilitated Jordan River Valley, v) impacts of each alternative on final status negotiations, vi) desalinating water at Aqaba for direct transfer to users, vii) reducing the impacts of the Dead Sea industries on the Dead Sea, viii) construction of additional desalination plants in Israel to provide additional water to the Jordan River system. Water quality and electricity generation should be addressed.</p>	<p>The Study of Alternatives provides for the examination of both the no action alternative and other reasonable alternatives to the proposed project. The analysis of the potential impacts of each alternative on final status negotiations is outside the scope of the Study Program.</p>
<p>2. Many parties suggest that options other than the RSDSC will be more economically or financially justifiable.</p>	<p>See response above.</p>
<p>3. WAI is promoting this project because of their failure to regulate water management properly. The alternative of better water management should be looked at.</p>	<p>See response above.</p>
<p>4. The Study of Alternatives is a crucial component of these studies, but neither the TOR, nor the budget, nor details of who will conduct it, nor the methodology and timescale, nor who will decide on its recommendations have been released. This information should be disclosed.</p>	<p>The detailed Terms of Reference for the Study of Alternatives will be publicly disclosed and there will be an opportunity for the public to provide comments and request clarifications. A description of the Study of Alternatives, including the method to staff the team, was described in the “Clarifications, Task and Guidance for the Study Program,” dated December 3, 2007. This is available on the RDS Study Program website. The budget for the Study of Alternatives is being finalized. It is expected that the Study of Alternatives will take up to a year to complete. As with all reports under the Study Program, the Beneficiary Parties,</p>

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	with input from interested stakeholders, will decide on the recommendations from the Study of Alternatives.
5. A team of 3 persons being nominated by the BPs will not be i) independent or ii) comprehensive, and contravenes the operational guidelines of the World Bank. It is recommended that the World Bank i) appoints professional and independent companies, for example C&B and ERM to carry out the Study of Alternatives, ii) better integrates the Study into the ESA and FS, and iii) involves the UN and UNESCO in the study.	As described in the “Clarifications, Task and Guidance for the Study Program,” the Beneficiary Parties each nominate three experts for the Study of Alternatives. From this pool of nine experts, the World Bank will select one person from the three proposed by each Beneficiary Party, for a total of three experts. Thus, it is the World Bank that selects the team to carry out the Study of Alternatives, based on nominations from the Beneficiary Parties but also based on its review of the individual experts proposed to serve on the study team. Provided that these persons are independent, professionally qualified to carry out the work and have expertise or access to expertise needed to fulfil the Terms of Reference, there is no requirement that to be independent, an entity undertaking the study must be a firm. The Study of Alternatives will be integrated into the overall Environmental and Social Assessment. Both UNEP and UNESCO will be consulted in the preparation of the Feasibility Study and Environmental and Social Assessment, including the Analysis of Alternatives.
6. To spend 2 years on a FS and ESA of only 1 option without looking at the other options first risks a different option being recommended, and a new FS and ESA being required. It is recommended to appoint C&B and ERM to carry out this alternatives study as well their current assignments.	After the Study Program is complete, including the Study of Alternatives, it is up to the Beneficiary Parties to determine which alternative should be taken further, including the no action alternative. See also response immediately above with regard to the Study of Alternatives.
7. Despite the clarification/correction made to the original study TOR, regarding the Study of Alternatives, the Bank remains in breach of established World Bank policies and guidelines.	The World Bank believes that the methodology for carrying out the Study of Alternatives does meet the requirements of its operational policy on Environmental Assessment.
8. The natural and historical inflow to the Dead Sea was from the Jordan River. It should therefore be restored by the same means – i.e., via a conveyance of freshwater from the Mediterranean Sea. A combined Mediterranean-Jordan River-Dead Sea restoration project should easily attract funding based on the biblical and historic heritage links.	See response to No. IV 1.
9. The no-option is not a realistic option, since positive action is needed to solve the Dead Sea problem.	The comment is noted; see also response to No. IV 1.
10. The funds should either be devoted to examining all the alternatives	The Study Program Terms of Reference require an examination of a series of

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seriously, or examining this one option in depth.	reasonable alternatives. Further, World Bank policy guidelines require that more than just one alternative be examined, including the no action alternative.
Theme V. Terms of Reference (TOR) for the FS and ESA Studies	
1. The TOR has improved since last year, but still has flaws. Many points (similar to those made at these meetings) were raised in the public meetings in 2007, but since the TOR took over 3 years to negotiate, it will be difficult to amend it at this stage.	The observation concerning the difficulty to amend the Terms of Reference is correct.
2. The TOR should address various additional issues, such as i) the problem of sewage in the Jordan River, ii) the wider issues of water management in the region, iii) impacts on the tourism industry north of the Dead Sea, iv) the root causes of the decline of the Dead Sea – poor water resource management and industrial activity on both sides of the border, vi) climate change impacts, vii) impacts of the waters mixing.	The Study Program Terms of Reference require a serious examination of a series of reasonable alternatives, including water use management. An examination of climate change impacts was added to the Study Program Terms of Reference with the “Clarifications, Task and Guidance for the Study Program,” dated December 3, 2007. An analysis of the mixing of the Red Sea and Dead Sea water is included in Terms of Reference, section 6.2. The issue of sewage in the Jordan River is outside the scope of the Study Program.
3. Given the lack of scientific knowledge, and the gaps in understanding of some key issues related to the impacts of the project, 12 – 18 months is insufficient time to allow sufficient in-depth, scientific investigation of the environmental issues. The consultants’ budget is also too low to answer the questions adequately. Large scale physical testing of water mixing is also required. The study will therefore be superficial.	The Terms of Reference were drafted and agreed by the three Beneficiary Parties and careful consideration was given to the time required to carry out the tasks described therein. The Study Program is not designed as a means to carry out primary research.
4. The political dimensions of i) the study process, and ii) the project itself should be specifically addressed in the study. For example, is peace a pre-condition for the project to go ahead?	See response to No. III 6. above.
5. Local expertise should be used as much as possible in the study. None of the BPs should be allowed to ‘control’ the studies. Involvement from all 3 political entities is necessary to strengthen the perception of fairness and increase the chances of public consensus.	The Study Program is a technical undertaking and the highest evaluated consultants in an international and open procurement process were selected to execute the Terms of Reference. As drafted by the Beneficiary Parties, there is no provision in the Terms of Reference that requires the consultants to sub-contract to firms in any particular political entity. The World Bank has the responsibility to execute the Study Program; therefore, the Beneficiary Parties cannot alone control the studies.
6. The TOR fails to deal with the institutional issues associated with	The institutional issues surrounding sustainable development in the project area is

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promoting sustainable development in the project area.	outside the scope of the Study Program Terms of Reference.
Theme VI. Environmental and Social Impacts at the Dead Sea	
1. The no project scenario has significant impacts - Dead Sea levels dropping, access to the shore is difficult, 2,500 sinkholes have opened on the western shore, infrastructure damages, tourism businesses closing down.	This observation is correct and the Terms of Reference require the ‘no action’ scenario to be examined.
2. The effects on the sinkholes, geology, aquifers of the no-project scenario, and the project, include risks and effects of leakage should be looked at. A detailed hydrological study is needed, noting that 250 MCM has been removed from water sources available to the Palestinians, and that wells used by farmers in the Jordan Valley are becoming saline. Strategies should be developed to address future impact of the project on the aquifers.	These impacts are noted – the Terms of Reference for the Study Program require all environmental and social impacts of the project to be examined.
3. Dead Sea tourism will at risk if Red Sea water ‘covers’ the Dead Sea.	These impacts are noted – the Terms of Reference for the Study Program require all environmental and social impacts of the project to be examined.
4. Project risks include i) impacts on Dead Sea tourism from mixing of Dead Sea with Red Sea water, ii) impacts on the industries from dilution and mixing, iii) impacts on the industries relating to the position/location of the outfall.	These impacts are noted – the Terms of Reference for the Study Program require all environmental and social impacts of the project to be examined.
5. The Arab Potash Company, and other Dead Sea industries on both sides, provide significant positive economic benefit to the region, and are concerned about the final level - a proposed level of -395 m would cause major problems to APC, and the location of the outfall – requesting this to be in the north of the Sea.	These impacts are noted – the Terms of Reference for the Study Program require all environmental and social impacts of the project to be examined.
6. The mineral composition of the Dead Sea and the impacts on it from influx of Red Sea or Mediterranean Sea water should be studied, as well as the current losses of potash from the industrial works, and the impacts on this from influx of additional water.	These impacts are noted – the Terms of Reference for the Study Program require all environmental and social impacts of the project to be examined.
7. Impacts on tourism, and on the future potential of the Dead Sea being considered as a World Heritage Site, from changes to the characteristics of Dead Sea water as a result of the RSDSC, should be explicitly	An examination of the effect on tourism is included in the Terms of Reference, section 8.2.3. Representatives of UNEP and UNESCO will be consulted during the undertaking of the Study Program. Terms of Reference, section 1.3 acknowledges

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included in the study. An opinion from UNESCO should be sought on this. The listing of the Dead Sea as a World Heritage Site should be listed in the TOR as a prerequisite outcome of the project.	that the Dead Sea is a unique region of the world with cultural, religious and political significance. The nomination and designation of World Heritage Sites is a matter to be addressed by individual governments in conjunction with the World Heritage Commission of UNESCO.
Theme VII. Environmental and Social Impacts on the Gulf of Aqaba/Eilat	
1. The Gulf of Aqaba is a delicate ecosystem, with unique and important coral reefs, which will be affected by the project. There should be no trade off between impacts to the Gulf of Aqaba and the Dead Sea.	These impacts are noted – the Terms of Reference for the Study Program require all environmental and social impacts of the project to be examined.
2. Potential impacts on the Gulf of Aqaba include i) warming of the Red Sea causing bleaching of coral reefs, ii) effects on the coral reefs of the removal of large quantities of water from the Red Sea, iii) pumping close to marine habitats, iv) impacts on tourism in Eilat and Aqaba.	These impacts are noted – the Terms of Reference for the Study Program require all environmental and social impacts of the project to be examined.
Theme VIII. Environmental and Social Impacts in the Wadi Araba/Arava	
1. Some major problems in the region are not addressed by the Study Program, e.g., the need to irrigate the Arava to reduce/prevent groundwater salinization, and ensure reliable water supplies. The benefits from the RSDSC will come at a disadvantage to water resources and socioeconomics in the Arava, and benefit the northern areas - Jordan River, Galilee and the Dead Sea. The needs of all areas must be balanced.	These impacts are noted – the Terms of Reference for the Study Program require all environmental and social impacts of the project to be examined. See also response to No. III 8 above.
2. Given that both the Israeli Government and the private sector have stated their desire/intent to develop the Arava (including recently published plans for residential and resort development to include hotels and lakes), there is suspicion that Israel's interest in the RSDSC is in providing freshwater for the Arava, rather than the restoration of the Dead Sea. Although not explicit in the TOR, the risks of the RSDSC project facilitating the development of the Arava are significant, and must be studied alongside the other environmental and social risks.	The comment is noted – the Terms of Reference for the Study Program require all environmental and social impacts of the project to be examined. See also response to No. III 8 above.
3. Potential impacts on the Araba/Arava include i) impacts on ecological value and connectivity, ii) impacts on Jordan's proposed protected areas along the conveyance route, iii) impacts related to land appropriation,	These impacts are noted – the Terms of Reference for the Study Program require all environmental and social impacts of the project to be examined.

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acquisition and resettlement, iv) impact on nomads in the Wadi Araba, v) impacts on the agricultural enterprises in the Arava.	
4. There has been a national study on developing protected areas in Jordan, and some potential areas for protection have been identified close to the conveyance route. The GOJ requested a delay in the creation of these protected areas until after the RSDSC study was complete, implying that it was willing to risk the areas for the pipeline route.	The comment is noted – the Terms of Reference for the Study Program require all environmental and social impacts of the project to be examined.
Theme IX. Other Environmental and Social Impacts	
1. Other environmental impacts to examined include i) impacts on flora and fauna, irreversible effects, ii) the significant energy requirements of pumping and the GHG/global warming/climate change effects, iii) a disproportional impact on Jordan, since the intake and conveyance will likely be on Jordanian territory, iv) impacts on the water resource management systems in the region	These impacts are noted – the Terms of Reference for the Study Program require all environmental and social impacts of the project to be examined.
2. Overall/wholistically, the study needs to take a comprehensive and regional view, and look at i) the numerous irreversible effects from the project, ii) ensuring that solving one set of environmental problems (ie the Dead Sea), does not cause other problems elsewhere, iii) long term effects, iv) solving a minor water shortage issue at the expense of a larger environmental impact,	We believe that the Terms of Reference are comprehensive and as such encompass this concern.
3. The political impacts of the project should be included as social impacts, including i) impact on Palestinians’ rights to the mountain aquifers, ii) impacts on final status negotiations.	See response to No. III 6 above.
X. Other Comments	
1. Overall, the RSDSC project is an environmentally sensible proposal. Desalination uses proven technology and the environmental damages are understood.	The comment is noted.
2. The entire RSDSC initiative should be abandoned.	The comment is noted.
3. Although Israel has its own water shortage, it contributes to Jordan through the Peace Treaty.	The comment is noted.

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4. Israel has revolutionised its industrial and urban water management, so should Jordan and Palestine.	The comment is noted.
5. What type of conveyance is being proposed – a canal, or something else?	The Environmental and Social Assessment and Feasibility Study will make recommendations on the engineering design.
6. The RSDSC project should be coordinated with UN as an environmental project, and the Syrian African Rift Valley should be declared a World Heritage Site, or a UNESCO reserve. This would help protect the Dead Sea with the help of local communities and international investors.	See response to No. VI 7 above.
6. The risks do not mean that the project should be stopped, only that they should be carefully examined.	The comment is noted. It is the purpose of the Environmental and Social Assessment and Feasibility Study to carefully examine the project risks and make recommendations.
7. Israel is not interested in water conservation from the RSDSC initiative.	The comment is noted.
8. Given that water shortages in Jordan affect the entire region, it should be respected that Jordan does not want to depend on Israel for its water supply.	The comment is noted.
9. The RSDSC initiative is driven by political rather than economic or environmental factors.	See response to No. III 6 above.
10. Palestinians have more immediate goals than saving the Dead Sea – i.e., a basic domestic water supply adequate for their lives. The RSDSC project will not solve the severe water shortages in Bethlehem.	The comment is noted. However, it is too early to determine what effect the proposed project would have on the water problems of Bethlehem. See No. III 8 above.
11. Jordan is not interested in saving the Dead Sea, only in receiving freshwater from the project.	The comment is noted.
12. The project is simply a money-generating plan to get donors to pay more money into the region.	The comment is noted.
13. If the proposed development of the Arava goes ahead, this will likely be at the cost of water resources in Kinnaret and the Jordan River	The comment is noted – the Terms of Reference for the Study Program require all environmental and social impacts of the project to be examined.
14. The project will neglect the needs of the northern regions – Kinnaret and the Jordan River.	The comment is noted – the Terms of Reference for the Study Program require all environmental and social impacts of the project to be examined.

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15. The proposed desalination plant will be at Ghor Safi – an area which uses 100 m ³ /day for farming and doesn't need more freshwater. Also, Israel is settling the Negev and creating an additional water demand, while Hebron is in dire need of fresh water.	The comment is noted.
16. Water from the RSDSC will be very expensive.	As the studies are not yet completed, it is too early to determine the cost of water from any future project. There is no basis at this time for knowing if it will be “expensive” or not.
17. The term ‘beneficiary parties’ should be replaced by ‘owners’ or ‘partners’.	The comment is noted.
18. Because of the importance of the study, an in depth assessment is required, not simply a marketing exercise.	The comment is noted.
19. Al-Najah University has experience in seismic and earth sciences, but would have difficulty in taking seismic measurements in Jordan or the Arava because of travel restrictions. Other Palestinian SIs will need access to the Dead Sea and Eastern Aquifer, if they are to take measurements.	The Environmental and Social Assessment and Feasibility Study teams will identify what data is required for their studies, and how to acquire that data.
20. Since the study is still short of funds, what will happen if the full funding is not found? What will the priority areas be for the study?	The World Bank is reasonably sure all the required funding will be secured in the very near future.
21. Is anything being done about mis-information on the project spreading in the public domain? Is anyone monitoring the press?	The World Bank monitors the press every day on the Study Program. The media's coverage of the Study Program in some cases has been misleading or incorrect. It is the responsibility of the Beneficiary Parties to lead the contacts with the media. This is partly to emphasize that this is not a World Bank led Study Program, but one led by the Beneficiary Parties. However, the World Bank has also initiated an outreach strategy to key journalists and newspapers in the region that have been following the story.
22. The study focuses on the technical aspects. When will the institutional aspects be studied?	It is the responsibility of the Feasibility Study team to make proposals about the governance structure to be applied if the project were to go ahead. However, this will take place towards the end of the Study Program. In the meantime, any ideas or suggestions will be welcome.
23. Despite being an important stakeholder, the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature (RSCN) did not attend the meetings in 2007 and	The comment is noted.

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feels that they have come late to the study, although the ESA team held a bilateral meeting with them recently.	
24. There is a concern that this initiative is the last chance to save the Dead Sea, and that for this reason, it may be adopted, despite maybe not being the best option.	It is up to the Beneficiary Parties to decide if no action is to be taken, the proposed project is to proceed, or if other alternatives should be considered, based on the results and recommendations from the Study Program.
25. Friends of the Earth Middle East (FoEME) is not against the project, but wants to see a thorough study and a transparent process.	The comment is noted and FoEME's constructive contribution to the Study Program as an interested stakeholder is welcome.
26. The World Bank can be a balance between competing interests in the region, if they decide to take this role. The name and prestige of the Bank could help the project and the study.	The comment is noted.
27. If the Dead Sea water simulations are wrong, the results and analysis may be wrong. The precautionary principle should be applied.	The comment is noted.