



Chouf Reserve, Lebanon

Protection of the Environment & The Biodiversity

The Italian Cooperation is a partner of Lebanon's Ministry of Environment since 2009. In 2017 the European Union named Italy as the leading environmental donor within the European Joint Programming in Lebanon.

Between 2009 and 2018 the Italian Agency for Development funded several key environmental projects in the Shouf Cedar Nature Reserve:

Securing and managing the Shouf Cedar Nature Reserve (2009-2011). The € 817,000 project aims at strengthening the capacity of the rangers and staff of the Cedar Reserve to prevent and fight forest fires, and at improving the capacity of the Shouf Cedar Reserve Association to generate income through eco-tourism activities and environmental

services. The project contributed to a significant increase of visitors (+40%) and annual revenues (+20%).

Sustainable development of the buffer zone of the Shouf Cedar Nature Reserve (2016-2018). AICS funded a € 500,000 project providing the Cedar Reserve with two vehicles for biodiversity monitoring and two feasibility studies to re-introduce the extinct species "Nubian Ibex" (Nubian ibex) in the park. Plans have been made for the conservation of biodiversity and for training the farmers of local cooperatives. A campaign has been launched for the use of wood biomass for energy purposes, involving approximately 80,000 inhabitants of the 22 Municipalities of the Shouf Reserve area.

In the next three years AICS committed € 1.7 million to restore and improve traditional agricultural techniques in Lebanon and will fund a € 3 million project for Lebanon's natural reserves, in collaboration with UNDP, the Ministry of Environment and Lebanese natural reserves throughout the country.

The Italian Cooperation has also worked with other natural reserves in the country, in particular with the Jabal Moussa Biosphere Reserve. The activities, supported with a grant of € 100,000, aimed at promoting the biological, cultural and historical value of the area and establishing basic infrastructure and institutional systems to promote ecotourism and recreational activities.

Among the different further successful initiatives in the sector, it is worth mentioning "New technologies (ICT) for a sustainable and integrated management of natural resources". The project, funded with € 850,000 and implemented in collaboration with the Ministry of Energy and Water and several Italian research centers, focused on the management of the transboundary river of Al-Assi (Orontes), and contributed to the creation of potential for hydro-diplomacy initiatives.

