

# Don't Mess with Nature Waste Reduction Initiative



الجمعية الملكية  
لحماية الطبيعة  
RSCN



The Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature  
helping nature... helping people



# Challenges

## Contextual

- Tourism is a significant contributor to Jordanian economy, providing income and jobs
- Littering is prevalent but the garbage collection/recycling infrastructure is weak
- Discarded plastic bottles and bags harm wildlife and blight the natural landscape
- An increase in tourism will lead to an increase in waste
- Sales of bottled drinks provide revenue for vendors in tourist sites
- Carrying water bottles is a sign of status
- Perception that tap water is unsafe

## Organizational

- Capacity constraints – small staff, unstable funding, disagreements between board members
- Mission constraints – is purpose to advocate to strengthen the tourism sector as a whole, not advance individual member's interests
- Several other competitor institutions doing similar work

**1.5 million barrels of oil, enough to run 100,000 cars, are used to make plastic water bottles each year. It requires seven times as much water to make the bottle as it does to fill it. Massive amounts of greenhouse gases are produced from manufacturing plastic bottles, and 60 million plastic water bottles are disposed of in the United States alone every day – Pura Vida H2O filtration company**



# Stakeholders

- JITOA and its member businesses - Strives to influence and strengthen the tourism sector to benefit tour operator businesses
- Vendors within tourist sites - Strive to earn an income selling goods and services to visitors to tourist sites
- Local communities surrounding tourist sites - Strive to earn an income selling goods and services to visitors to tourist sites
- Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities Develops the country's strategic plan for tourism, licenses vendors in heritage sites, collects entry fees, employees tourism police, rehabilitates historical sites
- Ministry of Environment – protect and preserve the natural environment for Jordanians to enjoy for generations
- Tourists – seek an safe and authentic experience at a value
- Jordanians – seek a stable income and ability to enjoy their historical and natural gifts

# Issues

1. Plastic litters sites
2. Water quality is not perceived as being safe or inconsistent
3. Few alternatives to buying drinks in bottles
4. Bottle sales are substantial income for vendors
5. Drinking out of individual plastic bottles is a sign of status, especially depending on the brand you're drinking

# Issues Analysis

1. Only 17% of plastic is recycled, below the world average of 20%. Plastic litter kills wildlife, including shepherds' livestock, and blights the landscape
2. Water quality is not perceived as being safe or consistent – water from the tap is safe to drink, but hotels, restaurants, and tour guides provide bottled water to visitors, giving the perception that water isn't safe
3. Few alternatives to buying drinks in bottles – when visitors are thirsty, there are few alternatives to buying drinks in disposable bottles or containers. There are few options for refilling personal bottles. Vendors dissuade visitors from drinking from the tap.
4. Bottle sales are substantial income for vendors – Will selling reusable bottles replace this income?
5. Drinking out of individual plastic bottles is a sign of status, especially depending on the brand you're drinking – higher status water (such as Pellegrino) comes in glass bottles which are more expensive to recycle.

# Information holes

## Tourist

Would tourists drink from the tap if it were easier?

Are tourists more likely to recycle if it is an option

## Vendors and income

Can income from water filtration stations and selling reusable bottles replace the income from selling plastic bottles

Who will provide alternatives to bottled water: Petra company - <http://www.petrawts.com/> -

Can water filtration system be profitable - [http://www.ct.gov/deep/lib/deep/p2/business\\_industry/hospitality/water\\_dispensing\\_and\\_purification\\_systems.pdf](http://www.ct.gov/deep/lib/deep/p2/business_industry/hospitality/water_dispensing_and_purification_systems.pdf)

Can recycling be a profitable option? – can Be Enviro collect fees and process recycling at a profit?

# Best Practices

Recycling plastic is a normative need. There are international standards around littering and recycling that are not in place in Jordan and this has consequences for wild life and protecting the natural environment.

In countries and states with higher rates of recycling, there is legislation mandating bottling fees and refunds.

Where bottles have been virtually eliminated in Jordan, there are no vendors selling bottled drinks, refilling stations are easily available, and community artisans provide drink containers (Feynan).

JITOA is an association of businesses, so all of its efforts must advance business interests and raise the standards in the tourism industry.

# Recommendations

1. Focus on recycling – strengthening infrastructure, strengthening businesses, informing visitors of value. Recycling is an internationally accepted method for dealing with plastic waste and can be profitable if priced properly. Many tourists are already in the habit of recycling and support 3R approaches.
2. Focus on providing profitable alternatives including alternatives identified by/provided by local vendors and community artisans
3. Focus on informing visitors about efforts and long-term sustainability/behavior change
4. Do not declare heavy handed approaches such as banning bottles or levying a tax. This will harm vendor interests and they will undermine efforts.
5. Build water quality info. campaign into project but work with on-going projects. Do not duplicate efforts.



# Implications

When I speak with friends and colleagues, they are always supportive of reducing plastic waste, and also do not believe it is possible to do. Everyone wishes there was less plastic littering the natural environment, but few people see it happening. Their individual drink bottle, or plastic bag isn't the problem, but all the bottles and bags are.

Tourists want to see a pristine environment and connect to local communities, especially independent travelers and groups on eco-tours. They also do not want to drink contaminated water and be ill for the duration of their trip.

Vendors would switch from selling bottled drinks if there was a viable alternative to earning income. The alternative needs to provide profit and convey a perception of status.