

*8th IMP-MED Project Technical Regional Workshop
(Brussels, 21 October 2014)*

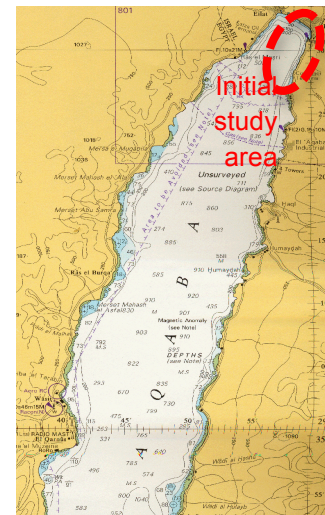
*7th Meeting of the Working Group on IMP in the Mediterranean
(Brussels, 21-22 October 2014)*

**Case Study 2:
Pre-feasibility study of a Traffic Separation Scheme (TSS) in the Jordan
maritime area of the Gulf of Aqaba ¹**

Context

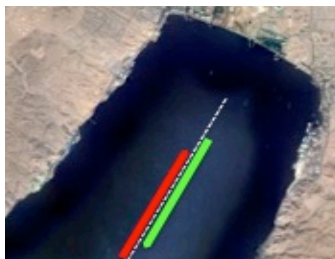
The northern end of the Gulf of Aqaba is a very busy maritime area, with many maritime activities: harbors, tourism and diving, fishing, passengers traffic. In Jordanian waters, there is intense maritime traffic between the Strait of Tiran and the Aqaba harbors; a part of this traffic is related to oil or other dangerous cargoes, with large ships (up to 400 000 tons) sailing very close to sensitive environment and to socio-economic activities.

Presently, the navigation is not regulated except in harbors areas. Due to deep waters, anchoring areas are very limited and very close to the coast, and many ships wait adrift until they can berth for loading or unloading in one of the Al Aqaba ports.



Study area

Scope of the technical assistance required



TSS straddling median line

Jordan requested support from the IMP-MED project for a pre-feasibility study of the way a traffic regulation scheme could be developed in this area in order to improve maritime safety and more generally lead to better regulation of the maritime activities in the area. The work has been prepared by preliminary studies of the Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority (ASEZA) in charge of regulating maritime activities.

¹ This document has been prepared as part of the EU-funded Project - Integrated Maritime Policy for the Mediterranean (IMP-MED), led by WS Atkins International Limited and cannot be taken to reflect the views of the European Union.

Outcomes

The IMP-MED Project team studied four different scenarios for traffic regulation in this area.

- « *National only* » scenario: setting up a TSS with two lanes within Jordanian territorial waters. Such a TSS, coupled with the identification of deep mooring areas needed to manage ships waiting to berth, would essentially allocated a large part of Jordanian waters to large vessels;
- « *Joint scenario* », setting a TSS (including deep moorings) straddling both Jordan and Israel maritime areas would optimize the use of scarce maritime space, managing efficiently the maritime traffic in the areas and moving it away from the coast, as well as allowing more effective maritime governance including more efficient surveillance, SAR operations and management of maritime pollution incidents;
- « *Regional scenario* », a TSS consistently implemented by the four countries in the Gulf (Jordan, Israel, Egypt and Saudi Arabia), would improve safety, allowing better anticipation of potential problems (SAR operations, Oil Spill Response etc.);
- « *Maritime highway in the Gulf of Aqaba* », setting up a continuous TSS in the Gulf of Aqaba (namely between the existing TSS of the Strait of Tiran and the future TSS to be established by Jordan) would be the most efficient and less expensive way of promoting maritime governance and managing the traffic in this area: best use of limited space, optimization of regulation, surveillance and SAR, better protection and monitoring of environment, pooling of resources, etc.



Maritime Highway in the Gulf of Aqaba

Conclusions

The establishment of a network of TSS and ‘maritime highways’ is the best solution but also the most difficult to implement.

Applying the basic principles of integrated maritime policy (build a common vision for the region, setup maritime governance forum in the Gulf in order to discuss technical setups, define shared operational objectives, pool resources, share information,



periodically evaluate and revise the scheme), the neighboring countries could initiate maritime cooperation working on a common, concrete and urgent problem. This could be done.

The neighboring countries could initiate maritime cooperation by applying the basic principles of integrated maritime policy and undertaking concrete actions as a response to a shared and urgent vessels traffic problem. Starting from addressing only maritime regulation and environmental issues related to vessels traffic, more ambitious goals can be reached using a step-by-step approach : build a common vision for the region, setup maritime governance forum in the Gulf in order to discuss technical specificities, define shared operational objectives, pool resources, share information, periodically evaluate and revise the scheme.