

# BE MORAL WITH THE CORAL EVENT CAMPAIGN

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#### 1. Section 1: Executive Summary

This business plan will show how an event involving local stakeholders and visitors will increase awareness about reef protection in areas where the coral reef is one of the main income generators for the local economy. The purpose of this plan is to show why an awareness event and other supporting activities are relevant in communities relying on fishing and reef-related tourism and how such an activity could bring the community together, working on a greater goal.

The Sustainable Guardians team has researched the state of the coral reefs at global level and decided to focus on the Florida Keys Reef in USA and on Jordan's side of the Red Sea Reef in the Gulf of Aqaba. According to the team's research, although efforts to protect and restore the coral have been organized in both destinations, much more needs to be done to promote the sustainable use of coral reefs as food source and touristic attraction. The bi-national team agreed that relevant change will be a systematic, long-term project, which needs legislative backing. However, raising awareness about the threats faced by the coral reefs and the negative impacts of human actions, as well as educating the crowds on actions they can take to contribute to the protection efforts is the first step. Through flyers, social media and events, local sponsorships and volunteering recruiting, the Sustainable Guardians team aims to create top of mind awareness that will engage a large array of stakeholders in the community. Once this goal is achieved, larger initiatives can be launched, including legislative change.

The Sustainable Guardians team's prototype is an awareness event titled **"Be Moral to the Coral"**, supporting coral reef protection, engaging stakeholders such as local businesses, local coral reef protection NGOs, local authorities, volunteers, locals and tourists. In an attempt to test the market's response, the team created a website, a flyer and organized a smaller scale event in Key West, Florida. The findings were integrated in developing the plan below for a larger scale event that can potentially be held anywhere in the world.

#### 2. Section 2: Business/Industry Overview

Among the most diverse marine ecosystems, coral reefs are shelter and source of food to approximately one quarter of the marine life (Ocean Portal, 2017). This is an impressive number, considering that coral reefs cover less than 1% of the planet's surface (idem). According to Ocean Portal "The value of coral reefs has been estimated at 30 billion U.S. dollars and perhaps as much as 172 billion U.S. dollars each year, providing food, protection of shorelines, jobs based on tourism, and even medicines" (idem). Millions of people around the world depend on coral reefs for food, coastal protection, building materials and income for tourism. Healthy coral reefs are among the most biologically diverse and economically valuable eco-system on the planet. Coral reefs are one of the world's most colorful and diverse eco-system.

In July of 2010 Washington State University conducted a research and recognized that the international law failed to protect coral reefs and tropical fish from being decimated by a growing collectors market (Coral Reef News, 2018). Coral reefs face threats such as pollution, global warming, shifting ocean chemistry, overfishing and destructive fishing practices, invasive species, coral mining, etc. (Ocean Portal, 2017). However, measures are taken at global level to protect coral reefs and improve practices that directly affect them. The United States is one of many nations working to stop the coral reefs crises (US Law, 2018).

#### The Florida Keys Reef

The only living coral barrier in the United States, the Florida Keys Reef stretches over 221 miles along Florida's southeast coast from Key Biscayne to the Dry Tortugas. (USA Today, 2018). The reef is protected as an underwater state park known as the John Pennekamp Coral Reef State Park, the first of its kind in North America (idem). The coral reef is extremely important to South Florida and especially to Monroe County's economy (the county where Florida Keys are located). According to Wikipedia, "in 2000-2001 artificial and natural reefs in South Florida and Monroe County had 28 million person-days of recreational use by residents and tourists, including scuba diving, fishing and viewing (as, for example, by snorkeling). These activities generated \$4.4 million in sales, generated almost \$2 million in local income and provided more than 70,000 full- and part-time jobs. The estimated asset value of the reefs was \$8.5 billion. About two-thirds of the activity was related to natural reefs. In Monroe County for the period of June 2000 to May 2001 almost 5.5 million person-days of reef related activities resulted in \$504 million in sales, which generated \$140 million in income for 10,000 full- and part-time jobs. Almost two-thirds of the activity was by residents, and about half the activity involved fishing, with one-third involving snorkeling and one-sixth scuba diving." (Wikipedia, 2018).

#### The Red Sea Coral Reef

The Red Sea Coral stretches along the coasts of Egypt, Israel, Saudi Arabia and Jordan. Out of the 1,200 species living in the area, ten percent can only be found in this region (idem). "According to a 2011 UNDP study for mainstreaming marine biodiversity conservation in the coastal management systems for the Aqaba Special Economic Zone (ASEZ), the economic benefits resulting from ecosystem services provided by Aqaba's coral reefs were estimated between 24.6 million US\$ to 49.2 million US\$ annually. The world's northernmost coral reef ecosystem is the most significant feature of the marine environment in Jordan. Home to around 127 species of hard coral and 300 kinds of soft coral, as well as 500 species of fish and thousands of plants and animals, the Jordanian reefs are an important reservoir for tropical reef species" (Revolve Magazine, 2014). Coral reefs are considered an important component of nature-based and sustainable tourism in the area ("Coral Reefs and Tourism in Egypt's Red Sea", Hilmi et. al, 2012).

#### Who benefits from coral reefs

Fisherman: Although trade can be conducted sustainably, wildlife populations can be overfished, leading to local extinctions, disrupted mating systems, and fewer fish on the reef (Coral Reef Fish, 2018).

Divers: Generally, divers have taken the time to be trained on the subject of coral reefs. Most choose to dive to learn and admire the bottom of the ocean. Having proper training becomes an asset for the caring of coral reefs.

Water Sport Businesses: Water Sport Businesses offer experiences such as snorkeling, diving, fishing, jet ski-ing, etc. Since the core of their business is related to the health of the coral reefs, these companies should emphasize techniques to protect the corals for years to come.

#### **Raising Awareness**

Reef protection awareness campaigns have been organized all throughout the world, with an emphasis on areas that depend environmentally and economically on coral reefs. Initiatives such as the Florida Reef Resilience Program, the largest coordinated coral condition monitoring program in the world, the creation of Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary or the plethora of events supporting Reef Relief, an NGO dedicated to improving and protecting the coral reef, with a focus on educating the public and policy makers, raise public awareness about the need for reef protection and support reef related initiatives in the Florida Keys.

In Jordan, the Royal Marine Conservation Society of Jordan (JREDS), an NGO dedicated to preserving and protecting the marine ecosystem at the Gulf of Aqaba, reduces pressure on national reefs from tourism, industry and shipping by organizing so-called Clean Up the World Campaigns (Revolve Magazine, 2014). During the clean-up events organized between 2008 and 2014, JREDS collected

4.5 tons of garbage and advocated for tougher legislation on banning litter, proper infrastructure for marine litter and awareness on the topic (idem).

#### 3. Section 3: Market Analysis and the Competition

With the coral reef subject to a variety of threats and the numbers of worldwide tourist numbers increasing, the need to conserve these ecosystems has never been more acute. However, in the past few years, the threats faced by the coral reefs worldwide have been more and more prevalent in the media, helping increase the level of awareness. From state governments, to corporations and small business owners, coral reef conservation efforts found supporters in all areas of the society. From major awareness campaigns organized by entities like Oceana International to small neighborhood events supported by local bars and restaurants, the market for an awareness event is very wide and the society's response to such events tends to be positive, as the Sustainable Guardians team learnt during their test event. Moreover, the competition is very fluid, since similar events supporting the cause of coral reef protection often times end up supporting each other. For example, the "Strawless Key West" initiative started with one bar in Key West not offering plastic straws to the customers anymore, in an attempt to minimize the number of plastic straws ending up in the ocean. More than 500,000,000 Plastic Straws are used in the United States Every Single Day (Strawless Key West, 2018). Lucy's started offering paper, biodegradable straws only upon request. More bars liked the initiative and joined in. The City of Key West liked the initiative and joined in. Soon, a Key West bar's small change turned into a major goal for the city: "Make Key West Strawless by 2019!" More than 35 bars and restaurants have joined in the past 3 months and more are joining every day. The "Green Drinks" event started being organized every month; an event bringing together participant businesses, city authorities, NGOs supporting reef protection, such as Reef Relief and volunteers. The monthly meeting addresses sustainability practices on the island and allows better communication between stakeholders.

The coral reef is an important resource for the local economies, supporting fishermen, water sports companies and overall the entire hospitality industry in an area. Therefore, it is in the interest of all local population, local governments, local businesses and visitors to care for and protect the main revenue generator of the area.

#### 4. Section 4: Sales and Marketing Plan

Coral reefs are not only important for the oceans and their biodiversity, but they serve as barriers that protect the coasts against the strong waves and extreme weather conditions. Campaigns to raise awareness about how members of the public can help conserve coral reefs are very important. The "Sustainable Guardians" campaign will include a short marathon event (the athletic activity can be chosen according to sports that are popular in the area), lasting approximately 4 hours, beginning at the beach or in the vicinity of water, if that is possible. Central areas of cities are also appropriate locations if the city does not have an opening to the water. The marketing strategy is aimed at promoting actions to protect and conserve coral reefs. Participants will be allowed to donate funds to NGOs supporting coral protection initiatives (i.e.: Reef Relief in the Florida Keys; the Royal Marine Conservation Society of Jordan (JREDS) in Jordan). Gift bags full of re-usable goods will be given to winners and runners-up of the athletic events. The gift bags will be provided by sponsors who would like their names associated with the coral reef protection initiatives. The sponsors will also be given the opportunity to set up small booths and promote their goods and services in exchange for their sponsorships.

Efforts will not just promote conservation of coral reefs and biodiversity in oceans but will also benefit the local tourism sector. Coral reefs attract divers from all over the world who come to the Florida Keys and Jordan to view corals, take pictures and film them in their natural settings (Al-Horani et al. 99). With pristine beaches and incredible marine life, both Florida Keys and Jordan rely significantly on tourism. Tourists bring in revenues for players in the hospitality industry, food, retail and transportation sectors (Gil et al. 101). Therefore, they are important for the local economy.

In order to attract participants, the campaign could hold rallies at educational institutions, churches, hotels, and neighborhoods around Florida where will be educated on the need to protect coral reefs and urged to participate. Affordable advertising methods such as posters, brochures and flyers will be handed out and used to raise awareness about the event. E-mail advertising will be used. The sponsored NGOs and the sponsors will be encouraged to disseminate information about the event to their customer databases. More information about the event will be relayed on websites such as National Geographic, Discovery Channel, and Animal Planet. The campaign could also communicate information on social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter, on the Sustainable Guardians official channels and those of business partners. Partner hotels will announce their guests at check-in and distribute flyers in the hotel rooms. Last but not least, news agencies will be invited to cover the event. This will provide the much-needed publicity for the conservation campaign.

Participants will have the option to purchase "Sustainable Guardians" hats and tshirts for the event. The event organizers will attempt to have the cost of the hats and t-shirts sponsored, so that the proceeds can go back into donations. The price of these accessories makes them both affordable and capable of covering all costs and expenses. Participants in the marathon event will be able to purchase tickets both at the event and online. Spectators do not have to pay a fee. They can watch the event or interact with the volunteers or with the NGOs and experts who will speak about ways to protect the reef. The campaign will raise funds through donations, enrollment fees and purchase of t-shirts and hats sold at the auction. Participants and spectators will also have the opportunity to sign up for reef protection volunteering activities.

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#### 5. Section 5: Operating Plan

#### Development

In order to achieve the goal of organizing a large scale event to benefit coral protection and raising awareness, the Sustainable Guardians team organized a small test event at the Key West campus of Florida Key Community College, as part of the campus wide "Reduce Reuse Recycle" event. In order to raise awareness, flyers were distributed and they were very well received by the participants in the event. Video material was set up on laptops at the Sustainable Guardians Booth and it was explained by the team members to the participants. The team members also encouraged the participants to volunteer in reef activities and guided them to the right NGOs. The response from the crowd was very good, with most of the booth visitors committing to more sustainable practices or stating that they were not aware how some of their small actions, such as using a plastic straw, had a significant negative impact on the oceans.

#### Facilities

Following the test event, the Sustainable Guardians team determined that a larger scale event could be organized in more expanded areas such as touristic areas in Key West and in Amman. In doing so, the event will raise awareness not only among the locals, but also among tourists. Regardless of the location, different permits will have to be obtained in order to organize the event, such as event permits, sporting event permit, food and beverage street vendors permits (if any), etc. Close collaboration with the City Authorities will be necessary. Involving City authorities can also result in a sponsorship or a local authority (such as the mayor) to be invited as a guest speaker, in order to show local support and stakeholder cooperation.

#### Staffing

The event will be staffed exclusively by volunteers. The "Sustainable Guardians" team would be the main organizer, while the local NGOs supported by the event and the sponsors can send more volunteers. Volunteers will be in charge of setting up and in cleaning up after the event, setting up cones and finishing lines for the sporting events, setting up the prize bags, selling t-shirts and hats, offering water

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and refreshments to participants and spectators as well as other necessary activities at the event.

Equipment

If the event contains an athletic component, the equipment associated with it will have to be obtained through sponsorships. Simple athletic activities such as running are encouraged, to minimize the need for complex equipment. Speakers, microphones will have to be rented if a speaker will be invited. Screens for videos will be set up for videos about protecting coral reef, informative slides. This equipment could be leased/rented by involving the sponsors. If the sponsors want to have booths to promote their products/services, they will have to bring all the necessary equipment.

Supplies

Fresh water will be provided to both the participants in the athletic event and the visitors. The water will be provided through water fountains to encourage the use of reusable water bottles. We would need to set up a fresh drink desk with some snacks for visitors. T-shirts and hats with "protect coral reef" messages and "Sustainable Guardians" logo will be sold.

#### 6. Section 6: Financial Plan

• Raising Funds and Events

The "Sustainable Guardians" team will cooperate with the local stakeholders and put all the available resources together to communicate an efficient message, consistent with the protection efforts promoted by the NGOs supported. The team's purpose is to promote awareness of the global threat to coral reefs and to encourage responsible behaviors, such as volunteering and minimizing plastic usage. The event will be funded exclusively through sponsorships and donations. After the event, the Sustainable Guardians team aims to continue the initiative of raising awareness through several other initiatives that can be found in the table below.

Events	Location	Intention	Expense
Exhibiting Photos,	Museums, libraries,	From these pieces	Cost of painting
videos, paintings	campus, hotels, etc.	pick up those real	frames.
and other types of		artistic works to sell.	Talk to operators for
art focus on coral		Tickets also	their support of free
reef and ocean.		contribute for the	exhibiting rooms.
Encouraging people		revenue.	
who work on the			
ocean to take site			
photos and videos.			
Concert with the	Churches, campus,	Generate income	Usually, churches
theme of global	small theaters	from tickets and	are willing to give
sustainability.		contribution of	their sources free of
		audiences.	charge.
			Talk to theaters for
			their free facilities
			and room.
Host a booth to Sell	Campus, tourist	Raise funds	Cost of merchandise.
T-shirts, Hats,	streets		Covered by
Reusable bottles at			sponsorships.
other festivals and			
fairs			
Organizing	Ocean and beach	Clean the water and	Necessary
volunteers to clear		beach	equipment.
the trash			Transportation, food
			and water for
			volunteers.
Raise money from	Our own media.	Raise funds to keep	Expense for
hospitality	Contracting with	the program going	establishing and
properties. In return,	properties.		maintaining our
we advertise their			

effort and dedication			social media
to promote			presence
sustainability			
Distributing Flyers	Public spaces	Raise awareness of	Printing fee.
	where tourists	coral reef	Water for volunteers
	gather, such as	protection.	
	hotels, docks,		
	cruise ship, tourist		
	streets.		

- Financials Operation and Supervision
- A financial operating committee with more than two members and odd number will be established to manage the funds. The event plan will be assessed and budgeted before performance and should have the agreement of half members.
- Each single fund (cash or checks) should be counted and recorded specifically in ledgers. The cashier and the accounting responsibilities should be done by different persons. They should double-count the cash and check separately. Both should sign their name on the record.
- The financial report (including the cash bank report and the account ledger) should be provided periodically to the financial operation committee for audit and evaluation.

#### **Section 7: Appendices and Exhibits**

Sustainability Guardians Website:

https://global-solution.wixsite.com/sustainableguardian

Sustainability Guardians Facebook page: <u>https://www.facebook.com/Sustainability-</u> guardians-Global-Solution-1715859785173240/

Attached to the submission: Flyer

#### Additional resources:

Giving dead reefs new life with fast-growing corals: <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GsOyX9bb34M">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GsOyX9bb34M</a>

A Global Plan to Save Coral Reefs: <u>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eFg7SCHQe0k</u>

Help Communities Protect Coral Reefs:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=et5qxOsFSvg

CoralWatch - how you can help reef conservation: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KK0UETMImGw

Artificial Reefs: http://myfwc.com/conservation/saltwater/artificial-reefs/

Saltwater Conservation Programs: http://myfwc.com/conservation/saltwater

Fish and Wildlife Research Institute: http://myfwc.com/research/habitat/coral/

The Royal Marine Conservation Society of Jordan: http://jreds.org/Default.aspx

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# THE GLOBAL SOLUTIONS SUSTAINABILITY CHALLENGE

# **PROTECTING CORAL REEFS**

JOIN THE SUSTAINABILITY GUARDIANS IN THE GLOBAL SOLUTIONS SUSTAINABILITY CHALLENGE

VOLUNTEER

**BE A MARINE DEBRIS CRUSADER** 

IF YOU DIVE OR SNORKEL, DON'T TOUCH

**CHOOSE SUSTAINABLE SEAFOOD** 

**CONSERVE WATER** 

DON'T SEND CHEMICALS INTO WATERWAYS

PRACTICE SAFE BOATING

**REDUCE GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS** 

EDUCATE YOURSELF ABOUT CORAL REEFS AND THE CREATURES THEY SUPPORT

LEARN MORE AT HTTPS://GLOBAL-SOLUTION.WIXSITE.COM/SUSTAINABLEGUARDIAN **KNOW YOUR CORAL REEFS:** 

A CORAL REEF ISN'T A "THING," IT'S ACTUALLY A COMMUNITY OF LIFE THAT LIVES AND THRIVES IN ONE LOCATION.

REEFS ARE VERY IMPORTANT TO THE FISHING INDUSTRY BECAUSE THEY ARE THE NATURAL HABITAT OF THE BAIT FISH WHICH IS USED TO FISH FOR TUNA AND OTHER LARGE SPECIES.

REEFS ARE WHERE MANY FISH AND SEA CREATURES CHOOSE TO SPAWN. THE PROTECTED ENVIRONMENT OF THE REEF MEANS THEIR EGGS WILL BE SAFE FROM PREDATORS.

CORAL REEFS ALSO PLAY AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN HELPING TO MANAGE CARBON MONOXIDE LEVELS. THIS MAKES THEM OF GREAT BENEFIT TO THE WORLD'S POPULATION.

THERE ARE MORE TYPES OF FISH LIVING IN A TWO ACRE AREA OF CORAL REEF THAN THERE ARE KINDS OF BIRDS IN ALL OF NORTH AMERICA.

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