



## SUCCESS STORY

# Protecting Egypt's Coral Reefs

**Local businesses embrace guidelines to safeguard coral reefs along the Red Sea coast**



Photo: Mahmoud Habeeb

Eco-tourism companies in the Southern Red Sea region report success with implementing the USAID-developed strategy to protect the coral reefs.

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Egypt’s world-class coral reefs are both an ecological treasure and a major tourist attraction, but the reefs are threatened by heavy tourist traffic and lack of environmental protection. USAID developed and helped implement an environmental management system in order to help the Red Sea region protect the reefs.

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The reefs are one of nature’s gifts to the Southern Red Sea coast. They harbor extensive marine life and are a major attraction for snorkelers and SCUBA divers. Due to the influx of tourists visiting the region, the reefs are a primary source of jobs and income throughout Egypt and are a major impetus for international investment. The entire region depends on the health of the reefs, as well as the marine life living in the reefs.

Resorts, dive centers, and other tourist-centered companies in the Southern Red Sea Region are using the USAID-developed Manual for Best Environmental Practices for House Reefs on the Egyptian Red Sea. As a result of introducing measures of environmental protection to local organizations, guests are being informed of regional guidelines to protect the environment and systems are being put into place to ensure that staff at resorts and tourist attractions understand and promote these practices.

Because of the spread of information about reef protection, results, such as those seen by Mahmoud Azizz, are being measured and the reefs are thriving. The USAID program also includes monitoring routines that help each resort or business understand exactly which system works best and why. Business managers can then make adjustments to the program that will increase its effectiveness in not only protecting this valuable resource but also in ensuring the reefs’ benefits to Egyptians.