

Fanyan Eco-Lodge In Jordan Case Study

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Introduction

In the contemporary era, environmental concerns and sustainable procedures are the prime focus for hotels and lodges. With the growing world population, waste materials and pollution are also increasing rapidly. Therefore, event planners, hotels, and lodges should adopt eco-friendly and sustainable practices. The hotel management and event planners should work on their sustainability practices to exhibit an eco-friendly environment. In the past few years, eco-friendly and sustainability principles have been the prime focus of hotels, restaurants, and lodges. Tourism is one of the major contributing parts of hospitality and management. Therefore, tourism requires the implication of sustainability principles and eco-friendly ethics. Sustainable tourism entails a complex balance of social, economic, and environmental efforts to maintain positive change from the local community level to a global community level. This case study elucidates the sustainable practices of Fanyan Eco-lodge in Jordan and the benefits of implementing such practices on the environmental, economic, and societal levels.

Principles Of Sustainability: General Overview

Sustainable and eco-friendly tourism requires stability and maintenance of social, environmental, and economic components to support a constructive variation from a local to international viewpoint (Spring, 2013). Hotels and lodges are working on eco-friendly and go-green hotel initiatives to implement sustainable principles. Luxurious and budget-friendly hotels of all scales are taking radical steps to inculcate sustainability principles within their hotel management. The hospitality business should analyze the economic and environmental impact of its practices to work on its modified sustainable projects to meet their specific social and economic needs. These sustainable projects should employ eco-friendly policies to serve their customers/ visitors.

The main motto of any sustainable hotel business is to support and get support from the local community and businesses. According to the generally defined principles by ECO RESORTS (2010), the Eco-lodge should follow standardized and effective criteria to label itself as an Eco-lodge, and it should be developed based on specified characteristics, as given below. An eco-lodge should offer comfortable rooms and common areas/ spaces that reveal the native design and cultural heritage of that area. It should provide a natural setting (close to nature). While constructing an Eco-lodge, the original landscape should be cautiously preserved to reflect the pure nature and cultural heritage of the specific area.

The local business should be used and promoted by the Eco-lodge to positively impact the local

economy. Local sellers should use sustainable and recycled building materials to boost their local economy. The grocery, foodstuffs, and fresh products should be purchased from local vendors, farmers, fishermen, and ranchers. Sustainable and eco-friendly water disposal systems should be incorporated. The electricity should be utilized and made from renewable energy systems ([solar panel systems](#)). The local workers should be employed and trained in Eco-lodge management to provide local job opportunities. A sustainable Eco-lodge should work on different types of excursions and educational materials for their cultural and natural sites (ECO-RESORTS, 2010).

Case Study: Feynan Eco-Lodge

Overview

Country:	Jordan
Type of Product	Ecolodge
Landscape:	Mountainous and Desert
Covered Area:	Dana Biosphere Reserve
Area Size:	308 square kilometres
Population of Local Community:	3,000 people
Year of Establishment:	2005
Annual Visitors:	4,000 – 6,000
Website:	https://ecohotels.me/

Recent Awards or Accolades:	• One of the best 25 Eco-lodges in the world in 2013 by National Geographic Traveler Magazine • TripAdvisor's Certificate of Excellence (2011 – 2017) • TripAdvisor's "Hall of Fame" has been recognized with "Certificates of Excellence for five consecutive years (2011 – 2015)" and is presently rated as "The Top Hotel in the Dana area" by TripAdvisor users. • Tourism for Tomorrow Awards 2015 – Finalist Community Award category National Geographic World Legacy Awards 2015 – Finalist 'Engaging Communities' category
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(Feynan Eco-lodge 2019)

Feynan Eco-lodge is known as a commendable model of sustainable lodging situated in Dana Biosphere Reserve in Jordan. The Feynan Eco-lodge is known as a candle-lit eco-lodge located in "Wadi Feynan" along the Great Rift Valley. Dana Biosphere Reserve is known as the second-biggest nature reserve in Jordan. It is also known for the most eminent level of biodiversity in Jordan. Ammar Khammash designed the Feynan Lodge. The visitors of this lodge can be seen interacting with the local Bedouin community, enjoying nature, and exploring the cultural heritage of the area. Feynan is famous for its natural sites, cultural heritage, and sustainable practices for tourists all over the world. The lodge consists of 26 rooms. This lodge has a dining room that serves vegetarian food to the guests. It also has a cosy common area, which is perfect for relaxing or reading a book. It also has private balconies for every room, a gift shop, a coffee shop, a rooftop terrace with a telescope, an inner patio, and numerous open-air seating areas.

Feynan Eco-Lodge's Facilities And Services

- Provision of a private balcony in every room
- Non-smoking rooms
- Private rooms and Family rooms
- Free parking service
- Availability of free internet service
- Free breakfast
- Availability of shuttle bus service
- Accessibility of meeting rooms
- Rooftop terrace
- Gift Shop
- Availability of the Cafe
- The facility's Breakfast buffet
- Availability of hot showers in the washrooms

Feynan Eco-Lodge: Establishment History

The Feynan Eco-lodge was established in 2005. It was constructed by “Jordan’s Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature” (RSCN). This society is an independent welfare NGO that is dedicated to the fortification of Jordan’s natural landscapes and resources. The mission of this organization is to guard and manage the natural resources, wildlife, and landscapes of Jordan. This organization is considered to be one of the rare organizations with such community amenity obligations in the world (RSCN 2015). In 2009, the RSCN had an agreement with EcoHotels (a local Jordanian Company). After 2009, Feynan was run by RSCN and EcoHotels in collaboration. The Dana Biosphere Reserve is known as the first area where RSCN applied the “Ecotourism and Sustainable Development Model” on the construction of the Feynan Eco-lodge (RSCN 2015).

Sustainability Practices In Feynan Eco-Lodge

The Feynan Eco-lodge has been operating under the management of EcoHotels. Feynan practises the five basic pillars that contribute to an eco-friendly environment and sustainability in the Dana Biosphere. These five ethical pillars are the following:

1. The lodge will offer unique and authentic experiences to its guests to reflect their cultural heritage.
2. It will provide support in the conservation and maintenance work of Dana Biosphere Reserve.
3. It will take radical steps to help and invest in the empowerment of the local community.
4. The lodge will primarily focus on reducing the environmental imprint of its practices and operations.
5. It will facilitate ecological awareness sessions and education camps for their guests, employees, and the local community.

Figure 1: Feynan Eco-lodge and its Sustainable Practices

Environmental Impact

The priority of Feynan Eco-lodge is to make their practices sustainable to preserve and maintain their natural environment. The ethos and practices of Feynan have received many international awards. Their main achievement is being selected as one of the top 25 Eco-lodges in the world by National Geographic Traveler. It reflects their cultural heritage and offers authentic Bedouin hospitality and the natural beauty of the glorious landscape of the Dana biosphere. This lodge utilizes the energy generated from its solar panel system. It offers a profound ecological experience in Jordan. The major part of the lodge does not have electricity to reflect a sustainable and eco-friendly environment. However, the solar panelling system located on the rooftop generates enough electricity to provide light to bathrooms, kitchens, offices, and some common areas of the lodge. Candles are used to light

up the rooms and terraces of the lodge. The water supply in the lodge comes from a local spring. Fenyan Eco-lodge consists of 26 rooms. The natural beauty and archaeological sites of the landscape are untouched. The terraces have candles lit to give Jordan a serene and natural experience. The management of Fenyan makes sure that Dana's tourism industry is socially and environmentally accountable for preserving and maintaining its culture and environment. The Fenyan Eco-lodge provides a unique experience that is different from traditional hotels. It does not use unnecessary fans and liquor. However, they have designed the most comfortable, clean, and air-conditioned rooms, which get automatically cooler at night.

Benefits Of Implementing Sustainable Practices: Business Setting/ Economic Effect

Fenyan's sustainable practices have elevated their local business profits. All the staff employed in the lodge are from Dana Biosphere Reserve. This step increases the job opportunities for the local people. The second priority of this lodge is to protect and maintain the local economy. The gift shop in the lodge sells handmade products by the local women of that area. The candles used in the lodge are also made by the locals. The leather furniture used for the interior of the lodge is also maintained and purchased by local vendors. The use of clay water containers rather than plastic [water bottles](#) in the lodge reflects an eco-friendly environment. These container jars are bought from local ladies who make ceramics/ pottery items to generate income. The drivers appointed to take the guests for travelling purposes and sightseeing are also locals and keep their hundred per cent income. There is a small cafe service provided in Fenyan, which offers fresh salads, grilled sandwiches, juices, desserts, and hot drinks all day. The food used in the lodge's kitchen and cafe is produced by the local farmers.

Around 400 people belonging to 80 families have achieved job benefits from direct/ indirect employment from this lodge. The usage of local products and services has propelled more than fifty per cent of income within the local community. According to the report by EcoHotels, more than fifty per cent of the income produced from the lodge goes to the local community. The tourism in this lodge has elevated the economy of the area by introducing the 4000-year-old copper mines. It provides a sustainable platform for cast comforter mining, which can significantly elevate Jordan's economy. Further, the lodge introduces cultural activities such as "Bedouin Experience" and "Day with a Shepherd", which reflect their true cultural heritage. The income generated from these cultural activities goes directly to the local families who participate in providing these cultural experiences (Fenyan Eco-lodge 2019).

Benefits Of Implementing Sustainable Practices:

Societal Level

The Fenyan Eco-lodge is working immensely on sustainable practices that are helping and promoting the entire society of Dana Biosphere Reserve. According to Fenyan's agreement with Eco-Hotels, an assigned percentage of income (does not peril the RSCN) generated from it goes to the maintenance and conservation activities of the social system of Dana. The management of Fenyan collects a maintenance fee of 2 to 4 Jordanian dinars per person on behalf of RSCN from the guests coming to the lodge. The major aim of RSCN is to stabilize the demand for environmental protection with the demands of the local community in and around the Dana Biosphere Reserve. The RSCN is working on research to analyze population trends and societal and economic needs to minimize its environmental footprint and boost its local economy.

The Fenyan Eco-lodge, with the collaboration of RSCN, has guarding facilities to reduce dangers to species and habitats. The concession agreement of RSCN with EcoHotels in 2009 ensured the societal benefits of the local community and its economy. This agreement is renewed up to 2026. Since this concession agreement, EcoHotels has attempted to work on an exemplary model envisaging environmental sustainability, socially responsible strategies, and lucrative business designs. Fenyan has been converted from a traditional hotel to an eco-lodge, which provides an authentic cultural experience with its sustainable strategies. In recent years, its ecological footprint has decreased, and the number of employed staff has increased, which is benefiting even more poor families belonging to Dana.

Conclusion

In a nutshell, Fenyan Eco-lodge is considered an exemplary model of sustainable tourism and eco-friendly practices on a business and societal level in Jordan. It is considered one of the best 25 eco-lodges in the world because of its ecological and sustainable practices in the Dana Biosphere. This lodge offers the most sustainable and eco-friendly experiences in Jordan because of its partnership with the Jordanian NGO "Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature" and "Eco-Hotels". The major aim of this lodge is to inculcate sustainability and ecotourism to generate income for maintaining/preserving the natural resources and cultural heritage of the local Bedouin community. Furthermore, it provides income sources for the poor and rural Bedouin community of Dana Biosphere Reserve. Feynan is known as a forerunner for introducing ecotourism in Jordan because of its sustainable and eco-friendly practices.

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