



The Jordanian 'Jordan River' basin (JRB) represents the eastern bank of the lower Jordan River watershed extending from Tiberias Lake in the north to the Dead Sea in the south. JRB is part of the Great Rift Valley that extends from the Horn of Africa to as far to north western Syria. The Jordan River basin has a total area of 18300 Km<sup>2</sup> in area, is shared by 5 different countries: Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Palestine and Israel. The area of the Basin within Jordan is 7,627 Km<sup>2</sup>.

### *Description in brief*

The Jordan River basin consists of three sub-basins, namely: the upper Jordan River, the Yarmouk River and the lower Jordan catchments, inhabited by about 90% of the total population of Jordan. Jordan Valley has a length of 105 km with changing elevation from 207 m below the sea level at Lake Tiberias to 418 m below the sea level at the shores of the Dead Sea. It is characterized by an important climatic variability from the north to the south and from the east to the west. The average of temperature in the valley rises between 15° and 22° C from November to March and between 30° and 33° C in summer. Due to its low level the climate in the Jordan valley is warmer than in the highlands (temperature in the valley is 6 to 9° C more than in the highlands). The amount of precipitation varies from the north to the south of the valley, it is about 400 mm in the northern part and it goes to less than 100 mm in the southern areas. The rainy season extends from October to April. The amount of available water in the JR aquifer is about 21 MCM/year. In the northern part of the valley, water quality is good and suitable for agricultural purposes. In the southern part water becomes brackish because of the saline formation in the area and the infiltration of agriculture return flows. Groundwater salinity is also more relevant in the areas closed to Jordan River. It becomes less and less important in areas closed to the mountains and the side wadis. Agricultural activity is concentrated in the Jordan River basin and consumes more than 70% of the total water resources in Jordan. The Jordan Valley area exhibits a unique climate due to its location below the elevation of the sea level and therefore is considered as Jordan's premier agricultural production area. Due to the warm climate in the winter, off-season crops can be produced, creating an added value to the Jordanian produce. The main crops irrigated in the area are citrus in the north, palm trees in the south and vegetables in the entire valley.

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