



Centre of Information and Safeguarding

With regard to this it seems important to bring these new ideas to the minds of the local people - especially the coming generation - as well as to foreign visitors. So the idea of a local museum at Dakhla oasis, that has started from discussions with Egyptian colleagues, is planned to be realised now as an education and information centre raising awareness of the rich history, present problems and future opportunities of the area. At the same time it could work as a centre for safeguarding the cultural and natural heritage of the desert. This could for instance be developed by disseminating information to desert travellers, by providing a base for controlling staff and training the personnel.

Prerequisites

Concerning the practical requirements for realising such a plan the situation at Dakhla seems to be ideal. With the Canadian multidisciplinary Dakhla Oasis Project (DOP), the French long-term excavations at Balat (IFAQ) and the desert research by the German project ACACIA, three major research groups have already their base there. Their experts from different scientific fields (including Egyptology, Prehistoric Archaeology, Geology, Geography, Climatology, Botany, Zoology, Ethnography, Oriental Studies) and different nations (France, England, Canada, Germany, Belgium, Netherlands, Poland, USA) will be willing to contribute to such a common project.

Since H.E. the Governor of the New Valley has yet appointed a suitable piece of land in the centre of Mut, the next step will be to design a first concept for the building and its internal structure and to raise necessary financial support inside and outside of Egypt.

Basic Concept

The building, following the intentions of the Governor to encourage a wider use of traditional construction techniques, shall be carried out mainly in mud brick with domes shaping its general appearance. The exhibition concept should perhaps follow the idea of *water as a limiting factor throughout history*, and stimulate the awareness that water, oil and other resources are sensitive and exhaustible in the same way as environment and archaeology. It should bring about that the desert is not a dead land, but of value for the future. Generally scientific perceptions should be detectable, but sequence must not necessarily be chronological and the concept is still open for any idea.

The building should comprise – dependent on funds and in an adequate scale – the following:

- 1) Reception hall / Central court
- 2) Exhibition rooms (e.g.)
  - The shaping of the landscape (Geology, Geomorphology)
  - Climate and Palaeo-environment
  - Early human adaptation
  - The Sahara savannah
  - From prehistory to history
  - The Pharaohs' Far West
  - Persians and Romans
  - Early Christians
  - From Islam to 19<sup>th</sup> century
  - Invaders and visitors
  - The New Valley
  - Environment and future
- 3) Room for special exhibitions
- 4) Lecture and cinema hall
- 5) Gift shop
- 6) Children's work room
- 7) Seminar room
- 8) Study room / Library
- 9) Administration offices
- 10) Staff rooms
- 11) Store rooms
- 12) Laboratories
- 13) Cafeteria
- 14) Lavatories
- 15) Garden (Rock art exhibition)
- 16) Parking area