

Quarterly Activity Report: July 1st to September 30th 2006
IALC Sustainable Development of Drylands in Asia and the Middle East Project
Jordan Component: “Business and Socioeconomic Assessment of Water and
Products for Community-Based Projects in the Badia Region”

Principal Contact: Octavio A. Ramirez, New Mexico State University
E-mail: oramirez@nmsu.edu, Phone (505) 646-3215

Quarterly Activities:

Administrative work took place this quarter to follow up and ensure the transfer of the second \$15,000 of the \$100,000 sub-contract to BRDC.

In general, technical activities from the NMSU side included supervising and supporting the processes of organizing and analyzing the data for the four main on-going project activities:

- (1) Economic feasibility analysis and business plan development for the A’naqeed Al-Kahir diversified (crop and animal) and the Tal-Rimah milk purchasing/cheese production and marketing cooperatives;
- (2) Economic feasibility and socioeconomic impact analyses of a community based demonstration project of water harvesting techniques for range restoration and enhanced grazing capacity.
- (3) An assessment of the economic feasibility and sustainability of Wadi farming systems in the Al-Shamia/Ma’an area, based on a combined use of shallow-well and deep aquifer water sources for agricultural production.
- (4) A survey to characterize and analyze typologies of agricultural water users living within the boundaries of the Disi and Mafraq aquifers according to production and resource use patterns and socio-economic status.

The NMSU and the BRDC team members responsible for each of these project activities were in frequent long-distance communication coordinating and exchanging of information through Skype phone, e-mail and e-mail document attachments.

In general, from the BRDC side, this quarter’s activities focused on systematizing additional data for use in these analyses. Substantial efforts were devoted to finishing the extensive field survey of agricultural water users in the Disi and Mafraq basins. More than 250 farmers (over 50% of the total) were finally surveyed. Each survey was conducted by at least two BRDC team members and took an average of 90 minutes to complete.

NMSU team members Jim Libbin and Octavio Ramirez traveled to Jordan from June 28 to July 7 to work with BRDC counterpart researchers on the agricultural water use survey and the water harvesting for range restoration project. The general purposes of their visit were:

1. To participate in, observe and assess the BRDC survey teams' data collection visits to farmers in both the Disi and Mafraq basins, and to provide feedback to the teams on surveying issues.
2. To work with the BRDC staff person in charge of the survey data entry to develop the Excel template that will be used for this purpose, and to train him on the proper entry of the survey data.
3. To review a sample of the surveys that have been conducted to date.
4. To meet with representatives of Jordanian entities related to agricultural water use, including the General Manager of the Aqaba water company, the Land and Irrigation Director of the Ministry of Agriculture, and the Water Resources and Planning Director of the Ministry of Water and Irrigation; and secure information necessary for a proper understanding and analysis of the agricultural water situation in this country.
5. To review and complete the data base necessary for the economic feasibility analysis of the water harvesting for range restoration project.
6. To deliver a seminar on the development and use of crop budgets for research and extension purposes.

All objectives were fully accomplished. The BRDC survey teams are very well-trained and highly motivated, and the quality and reliability of the data being collected is excellent. One question was added to the survey that will allow for a more precise estimation of the economic value of water from the farmers' perspective. The survey instrument was also modified to begin the data collection process for the Wadi farming systems analysis in the Al-Shamia/Ma'an area. A wealth of information was collected from the Jordanian entity representatives, and all data needed for the economic feasibility analysis of the water harvesting for range restoration project is now available.

On the afternoon of July 7, Ramirez traveled to Tel-Aviv, Israel, to meet with Michael Martin, the USAID/West Bank-Gaza Mission officer in charge of agricultural programs. The two-hour meeting took place in the afternoon of July 8th. Martin indicated that he would still like to be able to count on NMSU and the IALC expertise in agribusiness to support and advance some of the Mission's programs and objectives in the West Bank and Gaza (WBG). However, the fact remains that all USAID/WBG programs are on hold. Martin indicated that the Mission Director is seeking approval from the State Department to resume funding for some of the ongoing activities that were not in support of or implemented through the Palestinian Authority Government. It is uncertain if any of the items in this request will be approved and whether there is a potential role for NMSU and the IALC in any of them, particularly after the recent upsurge of hostilities in the region. Ramirez reiterated NMSU and IALC interest on working in WBG and Martin indicated that he will continue to seek an opportunity for this to happen.

Substantial efforts to organize an 18-day-long working visit of BRDC collaborators Dr. Raed Al-Tabini and MSc. Ishmael Abuamoud to NMSU are also reported during this quarter. The visit, which took place from September 4th to the 21st, included multiple work sessions to advance the analyses of the four main project activities (see attached schedule). Intensive, short-term training sessions on agribusiness principles, statistical analysis, grants writing and technical editing were also organized and conducted for the BRDC visitors. A one-day working meeting of the NMSU and BRDC project personnel with the IALC Sustainable Development of Drylands in Asia and

the Middle East Project Director Bob Freitas also took place on September 15. This meeting focused on the planning of the activities to be undertaken during the second year of the project as well as on exploring possibilities for expanding our current work in Jordan into a mission-driven program. The potential venues for additional engagement in other areas of the Middle East, such as the West Bank and Gaza were also discussed.

Activities Planned for Next Quarter:

As planned, fourth quarter activities will focus on:

- ✓ Finalizing the preliminary, basic analysis of the agricultural water use survey data.
- ✓ Completing the Excel spreadsheets that allow for a detailed financial accounting and economic analysis of the A'naqeed Al-Kahir the Tal-Rimah cooperatives.
- ✓ Finalizing the economic analysis of the community based water harvesting and range restoration activity.
- ✓ Initiating the economic feasibility and sustainability analyses of the Wadi farming systems in the Al-Shamia/Ma'an area.

As in the previous quarter, the NMSU team members responsible for the different activities will be in frequent long-distance communication with their BRDC counterparts, coordinating and exchanging of information through Skype phone, e-mail and e-mail document attachments. In addition, BDRC's Ishmael Abuamoud will travel for a second one-week-long visit to Las Cruces to work with Drs. Gorman and Grassberger on completing the financial accounting analyses of the A'naqeed Al-Kahir the Tal-Rimah cooperatives. Dr. Jim Libbin will travel to Jordan in early November to: a) finalize the economic analysis of the community based water harvesting and range restoration activity, and b) meet with and update USAID's Ross Hagan on the project's progress, discuss the plans for next year and continue exploring the possibilities of additional mission-driven IALC-NMSU work in Jordan.

