

**Quarterly Activity Report: April 1<sup>st</sup> to June 30<sup>th</sup> 2005**  
**IALC Sustainable Development of Drylands in Asia and the Middle East Project Yemen**  
**Component – Human Resource Development**

Principal Contact: Octavio A. Ramirez, New Mexico State University

E-mail: [oramirez@nmsu.edu](mailto:oramirez@nmsu.edu), Phone (505) 646-3215

Quarterly Activities/Events:

- a) Rich Phillips' mission scheduled for April 1<sup>st</sup> to April 21<sup>st</sup> was formally postponed on March 30<sup>th</sup> following a recommendation from Dr. Scott Christiansen. Dr. Christiansen recommendation was based on personal consultations with USAID/Yemen's Mr. Dorvin Stockdale a few days after Mr. Stockdale had denied the IALC/NMSU team country clearance to travel to Yemen.
- b) Frequent e-mail and phone communications between Dr. Octavio Ramirez, and Drs. Bob Freitas and Scott Christiansen were maintained during the first two weeks of April, in an attempt to reach a compromise with USAID/Yemen that would allow for a continuation of the Cooperative Agreement, three-year Scope of Work and one-year Implementation Plan which were mutually agreed upon by USAID/Yemen-ANE and IALC-MNSU on September 6<sup>th</sup> 2004. Our understanding of the reason for USAID/Yemen's decision to halt implementation of the Cooperative Agreement is a lack of satisfaction with the Yemeni Universities' progress in the development of their field projects and with their overall commitment to take full advantage of the NMSU training and technical assistance resources being made available to them through the Agreement. We have made it clear that we do not concur with this assessment. Although progress is being made at a pace short of the standards that one would apply to Western (developed country) universities, a lot has been accomplished in only six months of work under very difficult conditions.
- c) In response to a request from Dr. Christiansen, Dr. Ramirez also developed a detailed chronology of key events during the elapsed timeframe of the Cooperative Agreement, a summary of the progress to date, and a proposal outlining which of the original activities in the Scope of Work the NMSU team would like to continue with given USAID/Yemen's decision not to add anymore resources into the Agreement. This was to be used in a conference call between USAID/ANE and USAID/Yemen to negotiate the future of the Agreement. The conference call was originally scheduled for April 5<sup>th</sup>. It was postponed twice due to personal reasons involving USAID/ Yemen officials (first Dr. Doug Heisler and then Mr. Dorvin Stockdale) and, on April 11<sup>th</sup>, delayed again because of security concerns in the country. The planned conference call never did take place.
- d) On May 5<sup>th</sup> 2005, a message from Dr. Scott Christiansen indicating that "Jennifer Ragland, Desk Officer for USAID/Yemen, forwarded a message to me from Doug Heisler. He states that the Mission plans to work together with NSMU to develop a program that best meets the needs of Yemen. Doug will attend the Mission Director's conference in Washington on 16-17 May 2005 and reprogramming decisions will evolve after we meet face-to-face to discuss the options." Dr. Ramirez offered to travel to Washington D.C. to meet with Dr. Heisler. This offer was declined by USAID/Yemen.

- e) On May 17<sup>th</sup> 2005, a message was relayed to NMSU from Dr. Bob Freitas indicating that Dr. John Wilson had been able to briefly meet with Dr. Doug Heisler during his visit to Washington D.C. and received the following guidance in regard to the IALC/NMSU project:
1. Some activities will be allowed to continue.
  2. Extension related activities are to be terminated.
  3. No TEEAL will be purchased.
  4. New and/or current activities should be strongly related to water problems in Yemen; especially rural water.
  5. Country clearance will not be required, but USAID/Yemen mission will be informed of IALC/NMSU team Yemen travel plans.
  6. Further definition of 1 and 4 above should await until Mr. Dorvin Stockdale and Wadea Al-Sattar can hold working meetings with the IALC/NMSU team.
- f) In response to an e-mail request from Dr. Christiansen, Dr. Ramirez prepared a second modified summary proposal on how the IALC/NMSU would like to proceed with the project taking into close consideration the general guidance provided by Dr. Heisler to Dr. Wilson. This proposal was e-mailed to Drs. Christiansen and Freitas on May 25<sup>th</sup>.
- g) After some revisions, Dr. Christiansen forwarded the proposal to Mr. Dorvin Stockdale. His June 9<sup>th</sup> reaction to the IALC/MNSU proposal is cited below:
- “Wadea and I will be attending the IAMA conf. in Chicago. I suggest we make time at the IAMA with NMSU, IALC and yourself to discuss the issues. We agree with Dr. Heisler regarding water issues in rural areas, an extremely important area that needs to be addressed. Under section a) in the below email it would appear that NMSU wants to continue with their existing program. Section b) also to much of the same, the ”status quo” of giving funds to the 4 universities for research projects. A and B options are not suitable to the mission. We need to discuss when we meet so that we do not have activities and projects that are much the same as now. Wadea and I have reviewed the NMSU outline/proposed activities as stated in the email below and do not agree with nor approve the outline as stated below.”
- h) In mid May, Drs. Freitas, Christiansen and Ramirez agreed to an active participation of the IALC/NMSU team on the Post-IAMA Workshop on “Building New Partnerships in the Global Food Chain: Experiences from Asia, Middle East and Africa.” During the month of June, Drs. Jim Libbin, Bill Gorman and Rich Phillips worked on the preparation of poster presentations on “Keys to Successful Agricultural Projects: NMSU Experiences in the U.S. and Developing Countries” and “Linking Producers to Markets: A Proposed Project for the Sustainable Productions and Marketing of Strawberries in Yemen.
- i) During the last week of June the IALC/NMSU team (Drs. Ramirez, Libbin and Phillips) traveled to Chicago to participate in and make poster presentations at the Post-IAMA Workshop, and to meet with USAID/Yemen’s Mrs. Stockdale and Al-Sattar in hopes of reaching a compromise that would allow for continuation of the Cooperative Agreement. The first meeting (with Stockdale, Al-Sattar, Freitas, Libbin, Phillips and Ramirez in attendance) took place in the morning of June 29<sup>th</sup>. This meeting focused on a discussion of USAID/Yemen’s position in regards to reprogramming the focus of the Cooperative Agreement. The

IALC/NMSU team leader was surprised to learn that USAID/Yemen only had two minor adjustments to suggest:

1. That the extension-oriented projects be formally awarded to the individual teams of faculty members that prepared them, not to the universities per-se.
2. That the extension-oriented projects be implemented outside of the university research farms, on private farm land.

A second meeting took place during the morning on June 30<sup>th</sup>, with the added participation of Dr. Christiansen and in the absence of Mr. Al-Sattar. That meeting focused on procedural aspects related to the continuation of the agreement. The IALC/NMSU team emphasized the need to be treated as partners in the agreement and to expeditiously resolve any implementation issues (such as the two listed above) through direct dialogue between the USAID/Yemen CTO and the IALC/NMSU team leader and without recurring to a prolonged interruption of activities. Mr. Stockdale indicated that there was to need to discuss these issues and that the ongoing four-month impasse was needed because his USAID Mission Director and Ambassador were “Pissed off at this project.” Dr. Ramirez reiterated the need to reach an agreement on this regard, citing the fact that the current impasse could have been avoided through timely communication between him and Mr. Stockdale. At that point, Mr. Stockdale became visibly agitated threatened to “pin -Dr. Ramirez- to the wall.” Dr. Ramirez then indicated that he felt that cooperative work with the Mission could not be continued under those conditions. Dr. Christiansen intervened and called for a break in the discussion. No further meetings with USAID/Yemen were scheduled after this incident.

#### Activities Planned for Next Quarter:

At this point, it appears that most of next quarter will be dedicated to an orderly close out of the project activities. The details of the close out are currently being worked out between Drs. Freitas and Ramirez and Drs. Christiansen, Wilson and Heisler.