

Quarterly Report

April 1- June 30, 2008

For

**Sustainable Development of Dry Lands in Asia and the Middle East
Funded by USAID in cooperation with the**

**International Arid Lands Consortium
Office of Arid Land Studies
College of Agriculture and Life Sciences
University of Arizona
Tucson, Arizona**

By

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Project Overview

Afghanistan:

With the strong continuous support of USAID and TAC of IALC the ongoing efforts toward the revitalize of agricultural education program in the higher education institutions in Afghanistan has achieved significant progress through the establishment of two Agriculture Electronic Libraries (AEL) in the Faculties of Agriculture at Kabul and Nangarhar Universities in 2004 and 2006 respectively. The foundation of distant teaching and learning has been established and in due time it could be expanded to link major US universities with these institutions for the advancement of science based education system in Afghanistan. The extension of these facilities to other colleges of agriculture will strengthen the higher education institutions in Afghanistan. A well-educated youth in practical aspects of agricultural production can serve the country and contribute to peace and security in the region. If we could increase agricultural production so that the people can feed themselves, we would have achieved a major success and would contribute to improvement in the livelihood of people in Afghanistan. The most important contribution with long lasting effect is to educate the people of Afghanistan which will lead to a stable and secure Afghanistan thus freeing resources for development and improving the lives of people.

Yemen:

Similar to Afghanistan, agriculture is a very important component of the Yemen economy. The agricultural sector in Yemen accounts for 20 percent of its GDP and is employing more than 58 % of the population.

<http://www.nationsencyclopedia.com/economies/Asia-and-the-Pacific/Yemen-AGRICULTURE.html>

This labor-intensive sector is largely underdeveloped, crop yields remain low relative and production is not enough to meet Yemen's domestic need. Yemen depends on imports for domestic demand. Therefore, the agricultural education and information system in Yemen requires similar attention. However the security and infrastructure situation of Yemen compared to Afghanistan is much better. The Yemeni universities have expressed interest in AEL. The USAID mission in Yemen has been very supportive of the initiatives to extend agricultural electronic library and distant learning technology. Thus facilitating the improvement in the education of the Yemen you in modern production technology. These educated leaders will in turn take the leadership role to serve the people of Yemen.

Project Name: Establishment of Technology Teaching and Learning Center for Nangarhar University, Faculty of Agriculture, Jalalabad, Nangarhar, Afghanistan.

Overall Project Goals:

Afghanistan:

The objective was to establish an information resource center for the development of modern agriculture in Eastern Afghanistan. Creating a fully equipped and operational Agriculture Electronic Library and technology teaching and learning center at Nangarhar University in Jalalabad, Afghanistan accomplished this. The center is housed and managed by the faculty of Agriculture.

Yemen:

Project Name: Establishment of Technology Teaching and Learning Centers in the Faculty of Agriculture in Aden and Ibb Universities, Yemen.

The goal is to open a teaching and learning technology center in two Colleges of Agriculture (Aden & Ibb) in Yemeni universities in 2008 to support faculty and students learning and teaching activities. We (NMSU and U of A) have established contact with these universities and are working on sorting the details of project implementation.

Current quarter (April 1- June 30, 2008)

Afghanistan:

The higher education system in Afghanistan is in need of continued support to train young Afghans and the farming community in market oriented agricultural production. The IALC Sustainable Development of Drylands in Asia and the Middle East has focused on extension and education in the agricultural sector in Afghanistan. The attention to this important sector will help a large proportion of the Afghan population who are directly involved in agriculture and the whole population that need food and food assistance from the international community.

Observations:

Another major concern is the lack of communication networking throughout the university. The computer facility still lacks Internet capabilities, inhibiting university staff access to online databases (AGORA, HENARI), e-mails, etc.

Currently the faculty is relying on this one AEL/TEEAL as their main resource center/library, and there are no other resources of any kind (primary, secondary or tertiary) available at this time. The students rely completely on verbal dictation and notes provided by faculty members. There is no way for determining the validity of information or possibilities for updating educational levels. Lack of such vital resources inhibits

freethinking capabilities, spirit of investigation and experimental studies. What we have achieved in a short period with a modest budget is very efficient and effective, but needs to be further expanded and provided with the necessary support for continuity. The 2006 models of computers will soon need to be replaced by newer models and equipped with Internet facilities to enable faculty and students access to information.

Achievements:

Afghanistan:

1. The training of faculty members in the college of agriculture has continued throughout this quarter. Students from the department of agronomy, horticulture, extension, animal science, and plant protection are using the facilities on regular basis.
2. Continued e-mail and telephone contacts with both the dean of the college of agriculture and the coordinator of the AEL/TEEAL.
3. Arranged for the continuous maintenance of the center through personal contacts.
4. With assistance from project director, wrote one concept proposal for the establishment of Agricultural Electronic Library (AEL) in six colleges of agriculture in Afghanistan as a part of a proposal, “Afghanistan Water, Agriculture and Technology Transfer (AWATT)” that Texas A&M presented to USAID on September 4th this year. This project was awarded to the consortium that is headed by New Mexico State University (NMSU). We contacted NMSU for possibility of working with them in Afghanistan and heard that this is not their priority at this time.
5. Faculty training and distance education would help the shortage of faculty in all colleges of agriculture in the country.

Training:

Afghanistan:

Training is continuing by AEL coordinator in the college of agriculture in Nangarhar University and each semester new students receive training in the use of TEEAL as indicated in Table 1. The names and departments of faculty members who received training are shown in Table 2. No new update was received from the field.

Table1. Number of students trained in the use of TEEAL in five departments of college of agriculture in Nangarhar University.

NO	Department	Number of students	remark
1	Animal science	20	
2	Agronomy	70	
3	Horticulture	100	

4	Plant protection	28	
5	Extension	52	

Table 2. Details of faculty members trained in the use of TEEAL.

No	Name	Department
1	Prof .M. Asif Bawary	Plant protection
2	Prof. M. Tahir Toraky	Agronomy
3	Prof Sayed Tayeeb	Extension
4	Prof Waziri	Extension
5	Prof Balach	Extension
6	Prof Arman	Plant protection
7	Prof Najmodin	Plant protection
8	Prof Neazi	Animal science
9	Lecture khushdil	Animal science
10	Lecture habib Rahim	Animal science
11	Lecture Masood	Extension
12	Lecture M Rahim	Extension
13	Lecture Reshad ahmad	Horticulture
14	Lecture Esmat	Agronomy
15	Lecture Mahboob	Agronomy
16	Lecture Rafeullah	Agronomy
17	Lecture Rasheed Ahmad	Plant protection

Yemen:

We are in contact with the USAID Yemen, USAID Washington D.C. and NMSU on the implementation of the project. The details of project implementation have been sorted out but await the transfer of funds to Yemen and University of Arizona before we can proceed with the project. Additionally, due to security concerns, guidance was requested from Yemen, but has not been received to date. Therefore the implementation of this project is awaiting clearance from the USAID mission in Yemen.

Following quarter: (July 1-September 30, 2008)**Recommendations:**

These suggestions holds true for the sustainability and continued upgrade of this initiative in both Afghanistan and Yemen.

1. Work with the faculty and administration to find funds for the rehabilitation of the teaching facilities and faculty offices.
2. Look for potential donors for the expansion of this center.
3. Work with other organizations to facilitate Internet in order to enable the faculty and students to access online information.
4. Gather data and information on distance learning and its application in the developing countries.
5. Arrange for trip to Yemen and Afghanistan in due time in light of security situation in both countries.