

Quarterly Activity Report: July 1st to September 30th 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, Phone (505) 646-3215

Quarterly Activities/Events:

- 1) After detailed phone and e-mail consultations with and approvals from Drs. Bob Freitas and Scott Christiansen, a final decision was made not to persist attempting to reach an agreement with the USAID/Yemen mission that would allow for the continuation of the planned activities in that country. This decision was based on the very discouraging results from the personal meetings held with Mrs. Dorvin Stockdale and Wadea Al-Sattar (discussed in the previous quarterly report) while attending the IAMA conference in Chicago, Illinois. E-mail communications were sent to USAID/Yemen during the first week of August requesting feedback on proposals to spend the \$80,000 of mission funds remaining in the agreement. No response was ever received from the mission. It is our understanding that Dr. Christiansen was also unable to elicit a response from the mission in this regard.

- 2) Discussions about a transition to work in another country, including Jordan, Egypt and Morocco, were also held with Drs. Freitas and Christiansen by phone and e-mail, and at NSMU team meetings during mid and late July. A decision was made to take advantage of an IALC Board meeting in the region to organize and exploratory visit to Jordan and Palestine's West Bank. Planning for this visit took place during the month of August and the first part of September, including NMSU team meetings and detailed phone and e-mail consultations with Dr. Freitas and the preparation of a "statement of qualifications" for the USAID/Jordan mission.

- 3) Drs. Jim Libbin and Mr. Rich Phillips traveled to Jordan and through the West Bank during the last two weeks of September where, in the company of Dr. Bob Freitas, visited with various authorities and potential institutional partners for future work in that country, as well as with USAID/Jordan mission officials. The more promising potential institutional partners identified include the University of Jordan, the Jordan University of Science and Technology, Al Al-Bayt University, and the Badia Research and Development Center (BRDC). Meetings with various private processing and marketing agribusinesses representatives were also held. Drs. Libbin, Freitas and Phillips then visited with USAID/Jordan mission, BRDC, and Kafa'a project representatives Jim Franckiewicz, Setta Tutundjian, Mohammad Shabahz, Bob Hudgens and German Sabillon to discuss their findings, particularly the main areas of unmet needs which the NMSU team could help address in cooperation with Jordanian partners. Meetings with Mr. Michael Martin, the private enterprise officer of the USAID West Bank-Gaza mission, were also held to explore the possibility of future NMSU team involvement in that region. A detailed account of the meetings, findings and accomplishments of this visit is provided in the corresponding trip report filed by Drs. Libbin and Phillips in mid October.

Activities Planned for Next Quarter:

Given the very promising results from the previously summarized visit to Jordan and West Bank/Gaza, the next quarter activities will focus on:

- a) Preparing a detailed trip report discussing the substance of the meetings, findings, and opportunities identified during that visit, and discussing this report with Dr. Freitas and the rest of the NMSU team.
- b) Preparing a proposed general scope of activities on the basis of the information and linkages established during the visit.
- c) Coordinating with Dr. Freitas to explore the possibility of securing a buy-in from the USAID/Jordan mission that would partially fund the proposed general scope of work.
- d) Planning and executing a follow up visit to Jordan and the West Bank by Drs. Ramirez and Freitas to consolidate and foster the network of local contacts and potential cooperators and to discuss general scope of work and funding issues with USAID/Jordan officials. A follow up meeting with Mr. Michael Martin of USAID/West Bank-Gaza will be conducted to continue conversations about future potential NMSU team involvement in that region.
- e) Under the leadership of Richard Phillips, the team will discuss, prepare and plan for the implementation of a proposal to conduct a strategic planning session with Palestinian Authority that will identify an area in which they need technical assistance and in which IALC multi-national partners could assist. The process will evaluate the PA needs, resources, and areas of interest in collaboration. The end result of the strategic planning process will be to identify a basin-wide project that will allow Arab, Israeli, and U.S. participation. This will include development of a project proposal plan and budget for achieving this goal and a team effort to secure funding.