

Quarterly Activity Report: October 1st to December 31th 2005
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”

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Quarterly Activities:

As stated in the previous report, Jim Libbin and Rich Phillips traveled to Jordan and through the West Bank during the last two weeks of September where, in the company of 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 team spent a significant amount of time visiting and exchanging information with researchers from the Badia Research and Development Center (BRDC), which was identified as the most promising potential institutional partner for future work in that country. Other potential partners visited include the University of Jordan, the Jordan University of Science and Technology and Al Al-Bayt University. Meetings with various private processing and marketing agribusinesses representatives were also held. Libbin, Freitas and Phillips then met 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 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.

In October, Libbin and Phillips put together their trip report containing a detailed account of the meetings, findings, and opportunities identified during their first visit to Jordan and the West Bank/Gaza (WBG). Also in October the entire NMSU team (Octavio Ramirez –team coordinator, Jim Libbin, Richard Phillips, Bill Gorman, and Carlos Rosencrans) met at length to discuss this report and decide on a future course of action. After close consultation with Bob Freitas and Scott Christiansen, the team put together a preliminary Scope of Work (SOW) outlining possible applied research and outreach activities in Jordan through close bi-lateral cooperation with the BRDC as well as the involvement of researchers from the aforementioned Jordanian universities.

In late October, this preliminary SOW was circulated among all key potential project participants. After receiving positive feedback about the preliminary SOW from all potential participants, the NMSU team began planning for a second eight-day-long visit to Jordan involving Octavio Ramirez, Bill Gorman and Richard Phillips (five days only), as well as Bob Freitas and Scott Christiansen. The main objectives of that visit were: a) For Ramirez and Gorman to gain first-hand knowledge of the situation, particularly of the research/outreach projects proposed in the preliminary SOW; b) For Ramirez and Gorman to become acquainted with their potential future research collaborators; c) To hold a formal project planning workshop involving the three NMSU team members and all BRDC and Jordanian university researchers interested in participating in the project, and produce and systematize all of the information needed for a final SOW and a detailed project work plan; d) For Freitas and Ramirez to hold detailed conversations with Mohammad Shahbaz, the BRDC Director, about the administrative, funding, and operational aspects of the proposed cooperative project; and e) For Christiansen, Freitas, Ramirez and Shahbaz to visit with Ross Hagan (the recently appointed Deputy Director of USAID/Jordan’s Water Resources and Environment Office), present and discuss

with him an Executive Summary of the proposed project, and formally request match funding from the Mission for a Cooperative Agreement towards the project's implementation. The visit took place from November 29th through December 6th and all of the aforementioned objectives were duly accomplished. In particular, Hagan agreed to a Cooperative Agreement with IALC/NMSU with match funding of \$200,000/year and a minimum duration of two years towards the accomplishment of the proposed project.

Also, during October and the first part of November, Ramirez held e-mail and phone conversations with Michael Martin, Scott Christiansen and Bob Freitas in regard to possible IALC/NMSU work in the WBG. These led to a four-day (December 7th through December 10th) long follow up visit to the West Bank and the USAID/WBG Mission in Tel-Aviv, Israel, by Scott Christiansen, Bob Freitas, Octavio Ramirez and Bill Gorman. During the first two days, the group traveled through the West Bank meeting with key Palestinian Authority (PA) officials about possible cooperative projects, including the prospect of conducting a strategic planning session involving potential Palestinian partner organizations (including the PA) to identify needs, resources, and areas of interest for collaboration. The envisioned end result of the proposed strategic planning process is to identify and pre-plan a basin-wide project that would allow Arab, Israeli, and U.S. participation. Meetings with Michael Martin took place during the final two days of the visit. In these meetings, discussions were held on the specifics of the work that NMSU could carry out for USAID in WBG.

After returning to Las Cruces, based on the results from the project planning workshop and considering the feedback provided by Ross Hagan, Ramirez prepared and submitted a final SOW/Year I Work Plan for the Jordan Project. The SOW/Work Plan was first reviewed and approved by Christiansen, Freitas and Shahbaz as well as the NMSU and BRCD research implementation teams, before being submitted to Hagan in late December. After additional consultation with Melissa Brinkerhoff, Senior Vice-President of CARANA Corporation (Christiansen and Freitas attending in person and Ramirez by phone), Ramirez also worked on a refined SOW for the possible work in Gaza. This was based on a previous document prepared by Christiansen, and submitted to USAID (Christiansen) on December 13th.

Activities Planned for Next Quarter:

After confirmation of a MAARD from USAID/Jordan for the agreed amount of \$200,000/year, immediate action will be taken to get a sub-contract signed so that some of the resources needed for the project implementation can begin to be transferred from NMSU to BRDC.

The next quarter's activities will closely follow the implementation plan and schedule laid out in the SOW/Year I Work Plan. From the NMSU side these include identifying the data needs and designing the data collection framework (templates) for the four main project activities that will begin in spring 2006:

- (1) Economic feasibility analysis and business plan development for the A'naqeed Al-Kahir diversified crop and animal production and marketing cooperative;
- (2) Economic feasibility analysis and business plan development for the Tal-Rimah milk purchasing/cheese production and marketing cooperative;
- (3) Economic feasibility and socioeconomic impact analyses of a community based demonstration project of water harvesting techniques for range restoration and enhanced grazing capacity.

- (4) An assessment of the economic feasibility and sustainability of wadi farming systems based on a combined use of shallow-well and deep aquifer water sources for agricultural production.
- (5) A survey to characterize and analyze typologies of agricultural water users living within the boundaries of the Disi and Mafrq aquifers according to production and resource use patterns and socio-economic status.

From the BRDC side, next quarter activities will include conducting exhaustive literature reviews, organizing/systematizing the existing data and putting it into the templates provided by NMSU, and beginning the collection process of the additional data that will be needed for these analyses.

Three NMSU team members are scheduled to travel to Jordan during spring 2006 to work with their BRDC counterpart researchers on the previously described literature and data review, organization /systematization of existing data, and survey/data collection instrument design and testing.