



**IRFFI/UNDG IRAQ TRUST FUND (UNDG ITF)
ANNUAL PROGRAMME NARRATIVE PROGRESS REPORT
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Submitted by:

FAO – Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

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Country and Thematic Area

Iraq, Agriculture and Food Security Sector

Programme No: A5-19

Programme Title:

Rehabilitation of the Date Palm sector in Iraq

Participating Organization(s):

Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO) – Lead Executing Agency

United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) – Collaborating Agency

Implementing Partners:

MoA- Ministry of Agriculture
MoT - Ministry of Trade
Iraqi Date Processing and Marketing

Programme Budget (from the Fund):

FAO:	USD 4,886,663
UNIDO:	USD 3,124, 454
Total :	USD 8,011,117

Programme Duration (in months):

Start date: 10 May 2007

End date: 10 Nov 2008

1st Extension: 10 May 2009

2nd Extension: 31 December 2009

3rd Extension: 30 June 2010

4th Extension: 31 December 2010

5th Extension: 28 February 2011

I. Purpose

The development goal of this project is to create productive employment and improve food security through increased agricultural production and productivity. The immediate outcomes are:

- rehabilitation and modernization of the date production system;
- introduction of Integrated Pest Management (IPM) aiming to control the main date palm pests and diseases in respect of local eco-systems;
- improvement of the date value chain from harvest to market in order to meet the local demand and international requirements. This will result in better access to markets and higher farm income; and
- strengthened capacities and capabilities of support institutions to create a date palm research and training centre (DPRTC) focusing on post harvest activities.

The expected outputs are:

- date palm tissue culture laboratory set up;
- modern date plantations established;
- IPM programme identified and developed;
- capability of entrepreneurs and staff in the date processing sector enhanced;
- selected date storage, packaging and processing facilities improved and enabled to act as models for the specific region;
- products of selected pilot enterprises meet international requirements;
- new forms of cooperation along the value chain started;
- Date marketing organization supported in promoting Iraq dates in international markets; and
- Date Palm Research Institute upgraded and equipped according to the new tasks.

The project was designed within the framework of the Joint UN Iraq Assistance Strategy 2006-2007. Specifically, this project is housed within Cluster A of the framework, Agriculture, Food Security, Environment and Natural Resource Management, with special focus on the following goals: (i) support economic and human development and sustainable management of natural resources; and (ii) assist in the provision of basic services and promotion of community development participation.

Furthermore, the project contributes towards the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), in particular those related to poverty reduction. This is being achieved through job creation, community building and development in rural areas as a result of the financial gains generated along the date value chain and its related businesses.

II. Resources

Financial Resources:

Provide information on other funding resources available to the project if applicable.

Not applicable.

Provide details on any budget revisions approved by the appropriate decision-making body, if applicable.

A budget revision with movement of funds between project budget components was approved by the Steering Committee Support Office (SCSO) to cover the approved Second project extension until 30 July 2010.

Third project extension approved until 31 December 2010. With no additional fund requested or movement between budget line.

Fourth project extension approved until 28 February 2011. With no additional fund requested or movement between budget line.

The collaboration between FAO-UNIDO and the counterpart ministries offers the opportunity for all the partners to pool their complementary expertise for efficient utilization of the financial resources. Complementary technical expertise between the two agencies is parallel with their commitment to improve administrative efficiency and lower operational costs of project implementation. So far there has been no constraint to the financial process.

Human Resources

National Staff:

UNIDO has one National Project Coordinator (NPC) stationed in Baghdad to liaise with the respective government authorities especially with Ministry of Trade (MOT) and the Date Palm Processing and Marketing Corporation (DPMC). FAO is liaising closely with General Board for Date Palm (GBDP) and is holding regular technical meetings in Amman. Other FAO management and administrative staff relocated to Amman are co-shared with other UNDG ITF projects.

During the reporting period the local staff recruited in Amman office to assist the project in 2008 continued to provide their services till June 2009. In addition, a resident engineer has been appointed to supervise construction works for the tissue culture laboratory. On UNIDO side, an expert in date quality control and Hazard Analysis & Critical Control Point (HACCP) has been recruited by UNIDO in 2009 to support the international area who was recruited for same activity.

International Staff:

A Program Manager, recruited through a web published vacancy, joined FAO-Iraq team based in Amman, Jordan in March 2009. In addition, during the reporting period, an international date palm specialist was temporarily employed by FAO to work with MoA representative to finalize the training manuals on Good Agricultural Practices for the cultivation of date palm which will be used during national training of farmers as well as extension workers. UNIDO has recruited two international consultants for the second phase of the training in HACCP and International Standardization Organization-22000 (ISO-22000).

III. Implementation and Monitoring Arrangements

The project is jointly implemented by UNIDO and FAO, in order to utilize their complementary expertise for the benefit of the project. While FAO concentrates on rehabilitating the agricultural production of the date palms, UNIDO is responsible for developing date processing, marketing and assisting Iraq's institutions and entrepreneurs to develop the date palm industry.

The project is being implemented from the FAO and UNIDO Project Management Units for Iraq in Amman where the Program Manager is based and from Baghdad through NPCs. In addition, at the headquarters of the two agencies (Rome and Vienna), operations officers and technical experts are assigned to coordinate the overall planning and implementation of the project. UNIDO has also recruited a Technical Advisor in Amman and a National Project Coordinator based in Baghdad.

The primary implementing mechanism adopted to maximize projects inputs is the Project Steering Committee (PSC) which meets regularly in the FAO office, Amman. These meetings serve to enable face to face encounters between the representatives of the two implementing agencies and the government counterparts.

UNIDO conducts technical consultation meetings with counterparts (Ministry of Trade and Iraqi Date Palm processing and marketing company) to discuss the technical problems and discuss the constraints and solutions as they arise, which has contributed to successful implementation of the project activities.

In order to deal with unpredictability of the security and political situation which could impact implementation of the project, ad hoc meetings between agencies and the project staff in Amman are also taking place and will be used to respond to challenges that may arise.

The standard FAO/UNIDO procurement procedures were followed for this project. The procurement is done through a process that follows the sequence:

- identification of inputs or services required, undertaken jointly by FAO/Iraqi Line Ministry;
- preparation of detailed specifications, BoQ, drawings, delivery time and destination undertaken by FAO and the Iraqi Line Ministry and endorsed by the latter;
- list of local potential suppliers provided by the Iraqi Line Ministry to be included by FAO in its invitations to bid;
- tenders launched by FAO inviting local and international potential suppliers;
- technical review of the offers received and preparation of recommendation carried out jointly by FAO/Iraqi Line Ministry and endorsed by the latter; and
- Purchase orders or contracts issued by FAO.

In order to assess the progress of project activities, in-house financial and narrative progress reports are used on a regular basis. One such report is a monthly field activity report to follow-up on the project activities in relation to the work plan. Another report is a monthly report provided by the financial department of the Iraq offices of both UN agencies detailing the expenditure of project funds. A Project Management Unit (PMU) with offices in Amman, Jordan and Anbar evaluate these reports along with other reports to monitor and assess the progress of projects.

The implementation of this project is also supported by the FAO Project Task Force (PTF) meetings held with the lead technical units. These units have the prime responsibility of ensuring that technical supervision is provided and maximum results achieved during the project implementation, notwithstanding the challenging operating context and remote management. A number of project activities such as trainings and study tours have been carried out outside of Iraq to ensure the safe encounter between FAO technical officers and Iraqi experts involved in the project implementation.

In addition, there are Project Steering Committee (PSC) meetings. The PSC meetings happen regularly (at least once every six months) in the FAO-Iraq, Amman office. Given the complex operating context and challenges posed by the security situation in Iraq, the PSC meetings are opportunities used to discuss problems as well as achievements while ensuring full transparency and accountability of activities throughout project implementation.

The above meetings provide the forum for lessons learnt to be discussed and applied to the continuation of the project.

Back in 2008 an assessment survey was conducted by FAO on the state of date palm production in the country, including the state of date trees and existing varieties. The survey covered thirteen governorates of mid and southern Iraq. The survey includes information on methods of orchard management, ownership of resources, gender perspective on division of labor and requirements for primary training.

In addition, UNIDO also conducted a detailed technological, management and marketing assessment of the date palm industries in Iraq. The assessment was used to design the interventions of the project, identify the model industry and the extent of support that could be provided to improve the quality of the dates produced.

IV. Results

- 1- A meeting between the project CTA and Desk Officer from HQ was held in Amman on 12 January to review the project activities. During the meeting it was decided to hold National GAP Trainings through a joint FAO-UNIDO activity to train the farmers/date growers. This meeting followed by meeting of the project CTA with his counterpart UNIDO counterpart for implementation of this activity. The CTA prepared the TORs for the National GAP trainings and prepared an implementation plan in consultation with the GBDP staff in Baghdad, UNIDO NPC Baghdad and FAO National Agricultural Coordinator in Baghdad.
- 2- Technical Meeting held on 18 February reviewed progress of the project along with the challenges. Objective of the meeting was to brief the new DG GBDP on the project activities. The meeting also focused on the IPM component to pursue the GBDP for installation of the equipment delivered under this component. The new DG committed to make use of the IPM equipment in coordination with mass rearing laboratories at Abu Ghraib and Basra University.

- 3- FAO together with the GBDP and UNIDO executed additional training for 350 farmers at seven locations on GAP practices and post-harvest handling. During the training, 50 of the trained farmers who are interested to supply dates to Date Company directly have received dedicated UNIDO training on date processing that were held in the date company in Baghdad. These training were carried out in April, May and June 2010.
- 4- The Fourth PSC meeting held on 14 April reviewed progress of the project along with the challenges, the meeting focused on the review of the last PSC meeting minutes progress report, Budget availability and Activities Priorities and update the work plan.
- 5- Fifteen manuals on Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) for date palm production have been finalized, printed and delivered.
- 6- Construction of tissue culture laboratory was completely done.
- 7- National trainings on propagation of date palm through tissue culture, good agricultural practices, and IPM has been completed. Through these three national trainings 94 GBDP extension workers have been trained.
- 8- Procurement of Glassware's and chemicals which the tender was launched already and we are in delivery process.
- 9- Glasshouse P.O was issued and delivery and installation in progress.
- 10- The training for tissue culture laboratory experts in UAE was successful conducted, in order to update knowledge of participants in recent advances in building up date palm research and development program.

V. Future Work Plan

With regards to civil works, the main activities will be:

All activities including, Assessments, Civil works, Training and procurement under this project have been finished completely EXCEPT;

The procurement where the delivery of equipment will take place during the extension period, the main activities related to equipment:

- Delivery and installation of the purchased Glass houses.
- Delivery of Glass wares and chemicals to MoA laboratories.

VI. Performance Indicators

	Performance Indicators	Indicator Baselines	Planned Indicator Targets	Achieved Indicator Targets	Means of Verification	Comments (if any)
IP Outcome 1 Rehabilitation and modernisation of the date production system						
IP Output 1.1 Assessments made and site selected	To assist the Iraqi Government to collect latest information on date palm sector to be used for priority planning for rehabilitation of date palm sector.	To cover various date sector areas such as production, processing, marketing, etc.	To make available a comprehensive report on the current state of the date sector in Iraq and main requirements for its rehabilitation.	Three assessment reports produced covering various areas of this sector. 100%	Assessment Reports	Three assessment reports completed. Looking into producing comprehensive report to be used by MoA when planning future rehabilitation activities in this sector.
IP Output 1.2 Date palm tissue culture laboratory set up	To assist General Board for Date Palm (GBDP) to speed up mass propagation of date trees needed to increase current rates of date production.	Building capacities of GBDP to undertake research and provide assistance to farmers through extension services.	To construct a modern tissue culture laboratory, equipped with needed equipment and complimentary facilities (greenhouses, shade houses).	Identified equipment has been purchased and delivered 100%.	Fully equipped tissue culture laboratory and side facilities (greenhouse and shade houses)	This objective has changed from rehabilitation of an existing lab to construction of a new laboratory.
IP Output 1.3 Modern date plantations established	To provide technical assistance to GBDP to upgrade date plantations to be used for research and training.	Three state owned date plantations selected for this project by the GBDP.	To provide basic equipment and machinery.	100%	The list and adequacy of equipment delivered to the sites.	More national trainings to be conducted in 2010. GAP Manuals will be ready for printing by end of first quarter of next year.
			To conduct national and international trainings.	100%	Training schedules, attendance lists.	
			To assist GBDP to develop adequate training material for agricultural practices.	100%	Number of manuals printed and distributed.	
IP Outcome 2 Introducing an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) aiming at controlling the main date palm pests and diseases in respect of local eco-systems						
IP Output 2.1 IPM programme identified and developed	Assist the MoA to develop IPM program suitable for Iraqi conditions.	Current government practices and capacities of extension services.	To assess and agree on strategy to implement IPM program in Iraq.	100%	Minutes of the meetings and workshops.	

IP Output 2.2 Training material developed for local trainees and trainers with assistance of int. experts	Providing technical assistance to the MoA for human capacity building.	Current trainings provided by GBDP.	To develop training material to be used during the field exercises.	100%	A number of training materials distributed.	
IP Output 2.3 IPM program suitable for Iraqi conditions designed.	Same as above.					
IP Output 2.4 TOT for IPM/FFS potential facilitators carried out	Capacity building of extension workers to promote IPM/FFS.	Extension services.	To provide training on dissemination tactics of the IPM/FFS.	100%	International and national trainings, number of participants and relevance of training programs.	
IP Output 2.5 Pilot IPM/FFS programme to disseminate IPM tactics to farmers designed	Assist GBDP to incorporate FFS concept into IPM program.	Extension works activities in date sector.		0%	A number of Pilot Programmes carried out in the field.	Equipment needed to carry out field activities has been delivered.
IP Outcome 3 Improving the date value chain from harvest to market in order to meet local demand and international requirements thus enhancing the access to markets and resulting in higher farm income						
IP Output 3.1 Capability of entrepreneurs and staff in the date processing sector enhanced	Technical and managerial staff of the selected date palm processing and marketing companies trained to improve the performance of the dates industry	No qualified staff in dates processing, QC and HACCP and GMP	All the staff in Model industry and others trained in hygiene GMP, HACCP and certified	20 Trainers trained to train the technical staff in the factories s 100%	Training reports Report of the quality of the products	The second round of training of trainers planned for July August , The training of the technicians by trainers will start in June
IP Output 3.2 Selected date storage, packaging and processing facilities improved and enabled to act as models for the specific region	Model industry with the highest technology and quality standard established	Very old, industry with low quality products	Model industry with quality, packaging and safe product	Building rehab underway, modern equipment procured 100%	Reports from industries Means of Verification	DPMC is contributing in the construction of the building UNIDO is procuring extra equipment
IP Output 3.3 Products of selected pilot enterprises meet international standards	The technology and manpower to produce high quality dates products are made available	No quality assurance system	Products that meet the national quality standards produced I model industries	The technology and training for high quality products being provided 100%	The rehabilitation reports	

IP Output 3.4 New forms of cooperation along the value chain started	The value chain actors are cooperating to improve the quality dates supply	No or little cooperation between the farmers and the industries	Farmers are trained to improve the quality and quantity of the date supply to the industries	Pilot plan for the training of farmers being provided	Report of the training farmers	
IP Output 3.5 Strengthening the date marketing organisation	The MOT staff participate in international dates trade fair	Very little international contact for the date marketing specially the packed dates	DPMC and MOT establish international marketing channels through participation in trade fairs	The DPMC and MOT participated in two international exhibitions on dates and established international marketing channels	Report of exhibitions participation and the increase in international value trade of the dates from Iraq	The marketing board for dates has been abolished. Instead, the support is being provided to DPMC and MOT

VII. Abbreviations and Acronyms

BoQ	Bill of Quantities
DPRTC	Date Palm Research and Training Centre
GAP	Good Agricultural Practices
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
HACCP	Hazard Analysis & Critical Control Points
IPM	Integrated Pest Management
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MoA	Ministry of Agriculture
MoT	Ministry of Trade
PSC	Project Steering Committee
NPC	National Project Coordinators
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
DPMC	Date Palm Processing and Marketing Corporation
GBDP	General Board for Date Palm
PMU	Project Management Unit
PTF	Project Task Force
ACSAD	Arab Centre for Studies on Arid Zones and Dry Land
FFS	Farmer Field Schools
GCC	Global Net Certification Committee
NCARTT	National Centre for Agricultural Research and Technology Transfer
ICARDA	International Centre for Agricultural Research in Dry Area