



SIXTH SIX-MONTH PROGRESS REPORT FOR PROJECT

REPORT COVER PAGE

Participating UN Organization:

Food and Agriculture Organization of the
UN (FAO) – Lead Executing Agency
United Nations Industrial Development
Organization (UNIDO) – Collaborating
Agency

Cluster: A

Agriculture, Food Security,
Environment and Natural Resources
Management.

Project No. and Project Title:

A5-19
Rehabilitation of the Date Palm sector in Iraq

Report Number:

1

Reporting Period:

1 January to 30 June 2007

Project Budget:

UNDG-ITF: US\$ 8,011,117

List Implementing Partners:

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

Project Coverage/Scope:

Mid and southern governorates of
Iraq

Abbreviations and acronyms:

MoA- Ministry of Agriculture
MoT - Ministry of Trade

Project Duration/Closed Project:

18 months

1. Purpose

1.1 Main objectives, outcomes and outputs of the project:

This project aims to create productive employment, and improve food security through increased agricultural production and productivity by improving on farm and post harvest practices and building capacity of research and development institutes and entrepreneurs.

Immediate outcomes are:

- Rehabilitation and modernisation of the date production system.
- Introducing an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) aiming at controlling the main date palm pests and diseases on respect of local eco-systems.
- 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.
- Strengthening the capacities and capabilities of support institutions to become a date palm research and training centre (DPRTC) focusing on post harvest activities.

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.
- Strengthening the date marketing organisation.
- Date Palm Research Institute upgraded and equipped according to the new tasks.

1.2 Explain how the programme/project is relevant to the following benchmarks: UN Assistance Strategy for Iraq, UN Millennium Development Goals, Joint Needs Assessment, Iraqi National Development Strategy

The proposed project is designed as an integral part of the framework of the Joint UN Iraq Assistance Strategy 2006-2007 — Cluster A, Agriculture, Food Security, Environment and Natural Resource Management, with a special focus on the following goals:

- Support economic and human development and sustainable management of natural resources.
- Assist in the provision of basic services and promotion of community development participation.

The project is also in line with the National Development Strategy (NDS) 2005-2007: “Rehabilitating livelihoods that have been destroyed and helping people to develop sustainable livelihoods through a right-based approach to reduce poverty”. In accordance with these strategic priorities, the project will aim at providing strong complementarities between humanitarian assistance, post-conflict recovery and development for food security, poverty reduction, and the resettlement of war-affected communities.

Furthermore, the project will contribute towards attainment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in particular those related to poverty reduction through job creation and community building in rural areas and through development generated boosted by financial gains along the date value chain and its related businesses.

1.3 Indicate the main implementing partners, their roles and responsibilities, and their interaction with the Agency

Partners from the Government of Iraq for this project are Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Trade, Iraqi Date Processing and Marketing Company and Iraqi Date Palm Research Institute. Each Ministry has appointed the focal points for this project and is involved as follows:

Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) and more specifically, the General Board for the Date Palm, is the FAO’s main national counterpart for this project. By providing sites for implementation of the project activities and involving its existing technical and research staff, the MoA will play the vital role of the main coordinator and facilitator of this project. MoA will also be responsible, together with FAO and UNIDO, to identify required equipment for project facilities as well as training needs for each component of the project. Communication between MoA and FAO/UNIDO with regards to all the activities throughout the project implementation is on daily basis and the representatives of the Ministry participate in all Project Steering Committee meetings.

Date Palm Research Institute will be involved through a number of activities under this project from tissue culture and off shoot propagation to development of national Integrated Pest Management (IPM) program which will be adapted to Iraqi conditions. In additions, Research Institute is expected to participate in on-farm activities at the project sites, whether in research of the date palm propagation or new technologies and training of farmers.

Furthermore, in order to involve greater number of potential partners already existing in the agricultural production of the date palm sector in the area, FAO intends to

expand its partnership agreements with associations such as Arab Association for Plant Protection and various regional training institutions and research centres for the date palm. Furthermore, FAO also intends to avail itself of its existing regional Integrated Pest Management Program, currently based in Syria and Saudi Arabia, to assist the implementation of this project.

Ministry of Trade and Date Processing and Marketing Company are the main counterpart for UNIDO's part of the project and their main responsibility will be to assist rehabilitation of the existing processing capacities and storage facilities for date exports. MoT will also be responsible to facilitate planned training courses of small entrepreneurs and farmers in modern marketing and investment planning skills.

2 Resources

Financial Resources:

2.1 Provide total funds provided, disbursed and committed

Total funds provided: US \$ 4 886 663

Total funds disbursed up to 30 June 2007: US \$ 0

Total funds committed up to 30 June 2007: US \$ 8 084

2.2 Highlight any variation(s) in projected versus actual spending for the reporting period indicating the reason for such variation(s).

There are no any variations in projected versus actual spending.

2.3 Explain programme/project expenditures within the 10 budget categories, including security expenditures.

PERSONNEL	\$1,313
CONTRACTS	\$0
TRAINING OF COUNTERPART	\$0
TRANSPORT	\$0
SUPPLIES AND COMMODITIES	\$0
EQUIPMENT +TRANSPORT	\$0
TRAVEL	\$6,771
SECURITY	\$0
MISCELLANEOUS	\$0
INDIRECT SUPPORT COST	\$0
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$8,084

2.4 Indicate other funding sources, if applicable.

Not applicable.

2.5 Provide details on any budget revisions approved by the UNDG ITF Steering Committee, if applicable

Not applicable.

2.6 Project expenditures for the 1 July to 31 December 2007 period.

US\$ 400,000.

Human Resources:

2.7 National Staff: Provide details on the number and type (operation/programme)

Both FAO and UNIDO have employed National Project Coordinators for this project stationed in Baghdad, Iraq and who will be responsible to liaise with the respective government authorities on behalf of the agencies. Other FAO management and administrative staff are co shared with other UNDG ITF projects.

2.8 International Staff: Provide details on the number and type (operation/programme)

FAO has issued vacancy announcement for the post of the Chief Technical Adviser (CTA) for this project and is currently finalizing this recruitment. The CTA for this project is expected to take on his/her duties in October 2007. In the meantime a Consultant in the place of the CTA has been recruited to enable immediate start of the project implementation. Same applies to UNIDO.

3 Methods of Operating

3.1 Summarize the implementation mechanisms primarily utilized and how they are adapted to achieve maximum impact given the challenging operating context.

The project is jointly implemented by UNIDO and FAO, in order to provide their complimentary expertise to the attainment of the project objectives. The inter-agency joint implementation arrangement established for this project is the fifth of its kind in the UNDG- Iraq program under Cluster A. While FAO will concentrate on rehabilitating the agricultural production of the date palms, UNIDO will be responsible for developing date processing and assisting Iraq's institutions and entrepreneurs to develop its agro-industry.

The project is being implemented from the Project Management Unit FAO/Iraq project office, relocated in Amman where the Project Chief Technical Adviser (CTA) is based and from Baghdad through National Project Coordinators (NPCs). At the Headquarters of the two agencies, project managers and technical divisions are assigned to coordinate the overall planning and implementation of the project.

There are a number of mechanisms that are used in joint implementation of this project by FAO and UNIDO. These operating mechanisms have been adopted for remote management of the projects in the given security context.

The primarily implementing mechanism utilized is the Project Steering Committee (PSC) meetings held regularly in FAO office in Amman. These meetings serve to enable face to face encounters between the representatives of two implementing agencies and the government counterparts for this project. Given the complex operating context and challenges posed by security situation in Iraq, the PSC meetings are opportunities used to discuss the problems as well as the achievements of the project while ensuring full transparency and accountability of activities throughout the project implementation. The first PSC for this project was held on 4-5 July 2007 in Amman. The next PSC is scheduled to take place in December 2007.

The implementation of this project is also supported through FAO Project Task Force (PTF) meetings held regularly with the lead technical units who have prime responsibility to ensure that technical supervision is provided and maximum results are achieved during the project implementation notwithstanding the challenging operating context and remote supervision. To that end, for this project a number of activities such as IPM component inception workshops and study tours are planned to take place outside of Iraq to ensure the safe encounter between FAO technical officers and Iraqi experts involved in the project implementation.

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

3.2 Provide details on the procurement procedures utilized and explain variances in standard procedures.

The standard FAO/UNIDO procurement procedures are being followed for this project, which consist of tendering for procurement of all goods and services. However, prior to initiation of the procurement procedures, the endorsement from the Iraqi Ministries for FAO purchases of all equipment/services is obtained.

3.3 Provide details on the monitoring system(s) that are being used and how you identify and incorporate lessons learned into the ongoing programme/project.

The existing in-house financial and narrative progress reports are used on regularly basis for the purpose of assessing the progress of scheduled activities as per logical framework of the project. In this project, the assessment survey, conduct by both agencies, will be used as a baseline for monitoring of the outcomes - the impact of the scheduled outputs.

Monthly reports submitted by the collaborating agency in relation to detailed work plan agreed upon at the start of the project are also used as indicator of delivery achieved under the project. In the case of the projects such as this one, implementation is also based on the existing working experience between FAO and UNIDO in joint project implementation in Iraq and hence learning mechanisms and incorporation of lessons learned from other jointly implemented projects is taking place.

Furthermore, the FAO Project Task Force (PTF), formed by members from all advisory technical divisions participating in this project, has not only monitoring role but a responsibility to incorporate lessons learned from the relevant technical projects as well as their own field of expertise.

3.4 Report on any assessments, evaluations or studies undertaken.

Given that this project has been recently approved and its implementation has just started, no major assessment or evaluations have been conducted so far. However, assessment of the date palm sector including agricultural production as well as processing is planned and the result should be available in October. Assessment will also include gender perspective as per project document.

4 Results

4.1 Provide a summary of programme/project progress in relation to planned outcomes and outputs; explain any variance in achieved versus planned outputs during the six month reporting period.

Given that this project has been approved by UNDG ITF on 30 April 2007 and hence reporting period covered in this report is two months only, progress of the implementation of this project in relation to planned activities is considered good. All the start up activities scheduled during initial phase of the project such as CTA recruitment, PSC meeting and development of the detailed project work plan have been completed. It is expected that detailed report on achievement of some outputs will be given in the next six months progress report.

4.2 Report on progress made toward the achievement of specific medium-term outcomes of the programme/project as a result of the achieved short-term outputs during this reporting period.

Given the two month reporting period covered under this report, no short term outputs as defined in the project document have been achieved.

4.3 Report on the key outputs achieved in the six month period including # and nature of the activities (inputs), % of completion and beneficiaries.

A number of activities which relate to project's key outputs have been completed such as preparation of assessment survey, preparation of terms of reference for study tours and international training, etc. However, outputs have not been completed yet and no data is yet available for percentage of completion and beneficiaries targeted.

4.4 Explain, if relevant, delays in programme/project implementation, the nature of the constraints, lessons learned in the process and actions taken to mitigate future delays.

So far no delays have occurred in this project.

4.5 List the key partnerships and collaborations, and explain how such relationships impact on the achievement of results.

As mentioned earlier, the main collaboration is between FAO and UNIDO in joint implementation of this project. Complimentary technical expertise between the two agencies runs in parallel with commitment to improve administrative efficiency and lower operational costs of the project implementation, in view of ensuring that the

highest quality of project outputs is achieved. Collaboration with Ministry of Agriculture and Ministry of Trade and their national partners will also contribute to more efficient achievement of the project goals.

Currently under preparation is partnership agreement with Arab Society for Plant Protection for conduction of inception workshop for Integrated Pest Management (IPM) program to be held in October 2007 in Amman. A number of similar partnership agreements for training purposes are also planned for the near future.

4.6 Summarize achievements against planned results for cross cutting issues: security, gender, human rights, employment (including # of short and/or long-term jobs created), and environment.

Given the recent approval date of this project, no results are available with regards to cross cutting issues listed above. The next progress report will provide survey results and data on completed activities including the gender perspective, environment and income generating activities.

5 Future Work Plan

5.1 Summarize the projected activities up to the end of December 2007.

A number of activities are scheduled to take place by the end of December 2007. These are:

- 1 The results of assessment survey and complete analysis of the current situation of the date palm sector in Iraq received by October 2007
- 2 Ministry of Agriculture to submit detailed report on planned national strategy for rehabilitation of the date palm sector in Iraq by October 2007
- 3 FAO to endorse the project site selected by Ministry of Agriculture by September 2007
- 4 Tender to be issued for civil works for tissue culture laboratory by December 2007
- 5 International tissue culture study tour to be completed by November 2007
- 6 IPM Inception workshop to be completed by October 2007
- 7 Project selection for demonstration farms to be presented by MoA by October 2007
- 8 UNIDO study tour for officials of the MoA and MoT to be completed by December 2007
- 9 Requirements for both physical and human capacity building of the Date Palm Research Institute to be identified by December 2007
- 10 Second PTF meeting to be held in December 2007.