

**Lebanon Country Report**  
**Regional Workshop for**  
**Strengthening National Information Communication Management**  
**Focal Units in Near East and North Africa Region”**  
**AARINENA in collaboration with GFAR, FAO and the Ministry of Agriculture of**  
**Oman**  
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**National Agricultural Information System Status in Lebanon**

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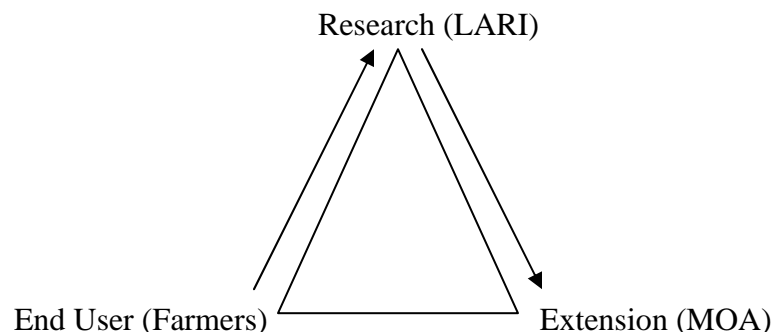
**1- Steps recently taken in establishing focal units and current activities in:**

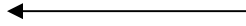
**Capacity Building Activities:**

- Lebanese Government since the year 2005 started building the personnel capacities in the field of ICT at different levels. In the agricultural sector the training covered around 75% of the personnel. This operation was administered by OMSAR (Office of Minister of State for Administrative Reform).
- The attendance of many workshops & trainings at the institutional, national, regional, and international level also gave an excellent push towards building a good NAIS.

**Governance Structure of ICM with linkages to the NFU:**

- The Ministry of Telecommunication [www.mot.gov.lb](http://www.mot.gov.lb) is in charge of promoting ICT use within public sector.
- The Ministry of State for Administrative Reform is in charge of implementing the E-government for the whole ministries and other public sector through supporting hardware and a variety of applications (Document Management Systems, GIS systems...)
- The Ministry of Agriculture is responsible of supporting extension services, on the other hand LARI is supporting Agricultural Research:





**Steps taken to integrate agriculture and agricultural research information in their NARS:**

- At the national level: providing applications (DMS: Document Management Systems/GIS) to centralize Agricultural Information in common database formats, and to simplify access to this information.
- At the International level: participation in many Networks which provides information sharing, such as: PGRFA project which was coordinated by FAO (LARI was the national focal point for this project) [www.pgrfa.org](http://www.pgrfa.org).

**2- Current status and strategies in building information:**

- At the institutional level: most of information is stored on central or distributed database servers, with fast access to all personnel.
- At the national level: too much obstacles are facing its communication due to many problems (lack of sufficient number of specialized personnel, high costs of internet connections, political situation,). Even though, some networks are available and working properly.
- Scientific and technical information are also published at the international level (websites, journals, CD-ROM)
- Some universities started to educate their students on the importance of ICT, and few of them are going through e-learning technologies.
- The EU is supporting Lebanon – MOA the ADP project (Agricultural Development Project).

**AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECT**  
(Fruits & Vegetables)  
(ADP) MED/2003/7515

European Union  
Ministry Of Agriculture

**PROJECT DEFINITION**

A European-Lebanese project that it is implemented from 2005 through 2007. Ministry of Agriculture is executing the project with a British consultancy services.

**PROJECT OBJECTIVES**

1. Developing fruit & vegetable production & marketing techniques, adopting marketing orientation.
2. Supporting a pilot set of farmer groups, to enable them initiate & establish viable collaborative marketing business projects.

**PROJECT COMPONENTS**

**1. Supporting Production Services**

- Enhancing produce quality
- Supporting agricultural practices extension
- Pest and diseases early warning system

**2. Supporting Marketing Services**

- Disseminating market & export information.
- Developing of farmer groups' commercial contracts and partnerships with local & foreign market outlets.
- Supporting some regional farmers' markets.
- Supporting produce promotion, through several marketing interventions.
- Supporting special products and trade associations.
- Market studies and marketing training.

**3. Supporting Farmer Groups**

- Helping new farmer groups to establish good governance systems.
- Assisting current farmer groups to adopt commercial business practices and accounting.
- Supporting establishment of regional management & accounting centers.
- Business & technical training.
- Providing production and marketing services.
- Co-financing farmer groups' viable collaborative marketing business projects with 40% of investment budgets with ceiling 80,000 euro grant per group.

**NEXT STEPS**

- ADP team launched a promotional campaign in different locations for farmer groups.
- Ads in local press with the procedures of applications to get ADP co-finance grants.
- The selected farmer groups according to the viability of their business plans will receive ADP support.

**PROJECT CONTACT**

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**REGIONAL CONTACTS**

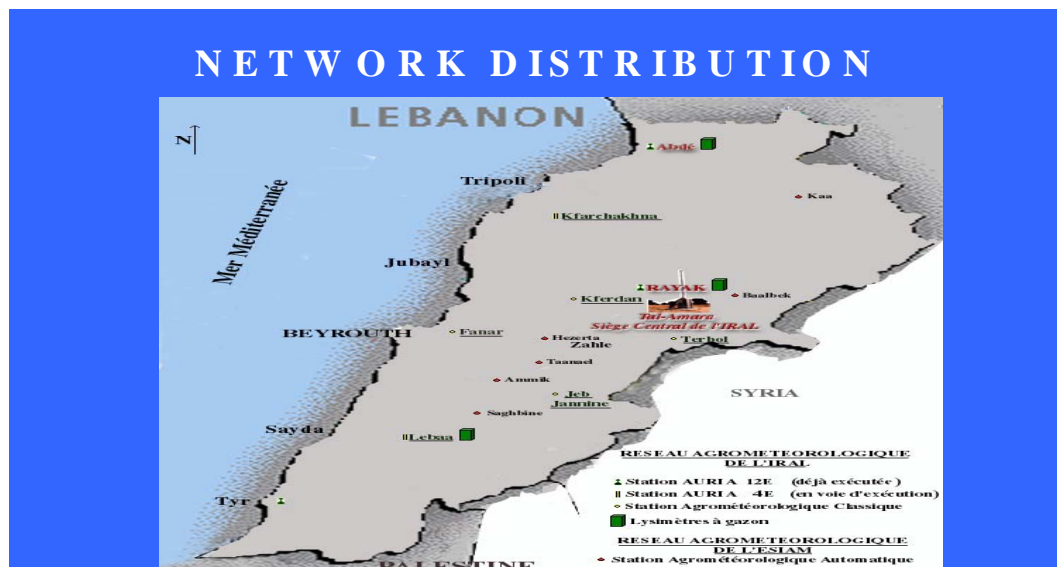
- Ag. Extension - Mount Lebanon ..... 01 - 283915
- Ag. Extension - Bekaa ..... 08 - 822856
- Ag. Extension - South ..... 07 - 720027
- Ag. Extension - North ..... 06 - 625578
- Ag. Extension - Nabatieh ..... 07 - 765018

### 3- Available human resource capacities in ICT/M:

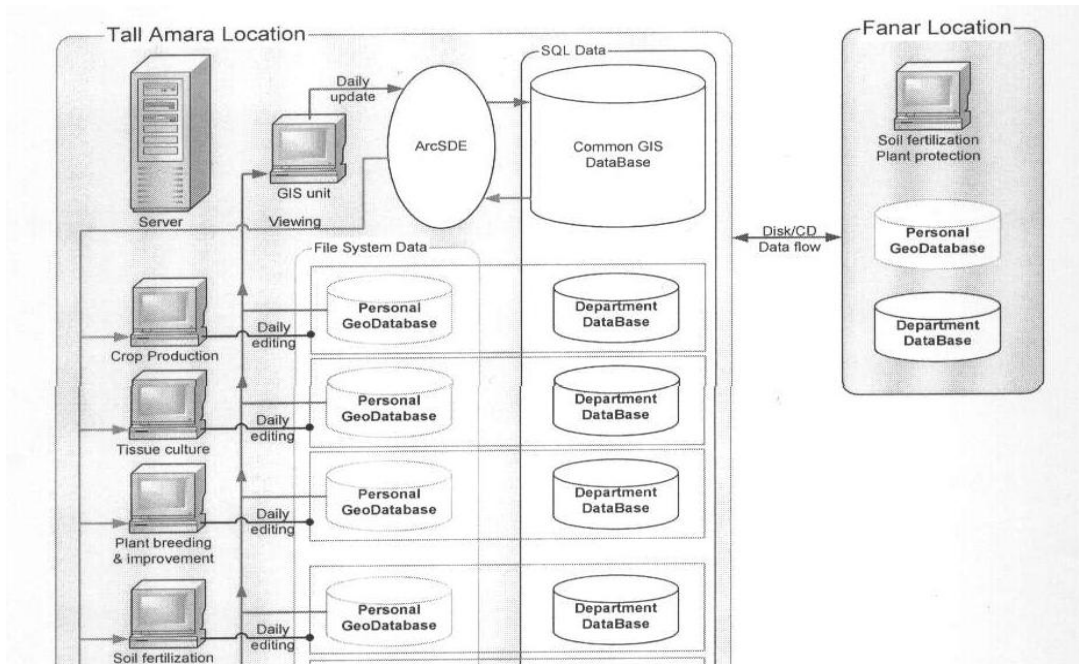
One of the main constraints is the lack of sufficient number specialized ICT/M personnel. This factor is slowing down the overall process. Even though, the available human resources are accomplishing many important operations.

### 4- Existing mechanisms of accessing and exchanging information.

- Agro-Meteo-Network: LARI is a sub-network of the IAB network (International Airport of Beirut) which contains 40 weather stations that are connected online. LARI's sub network contains 5 connected weather stations (data and weather forecasts are available on the website [www.lari.gov.lb](http://www.lari.gov.lb)).



- GIS data distribution:



- DMS: document management system web application. Used to archive documents offering free text search and easy access to documents.



Detailed description of the data collection activity that is being supported by ADP project:

- a. Meteorological data collection is being enhanced in all Lebanon through three major classes of meteorological stations:
  - o **Class A stations** collecting continuously around 11 to 20 parameters (including at least air temperatures, humidity, rainfall, wind, solar rays, atmospheric pressure, humidification) transferred directly to the central

laboratory. These stations are installed in LARI main center offices.

- **Class B stations** collecting continuously around 6 to 8 parameters (including at least air temperatures, humidity, rainfall, wind, solar rays, humidification), daily transferred to the central laboratory. These stations are mainly installed in agricultural technical schools of the MOA and agricultural research sub-stations.
- **Class C stations** located at some farmer groups premises and collecting at least 4 parameters (including temperature, rainfall, humidity and humidification) to be daily transferred to the central laboratory.
- The agro-meteo concentrator is located in a central office at LARI.
- Development of reliable modem connection to collect daily meteorological data is essential.
- The involvement of agricultural technical schools as well as farmer groups supported by the project will be established through memorandum of agreement between LARI and all the partners. This will strengthen the development of an agro-meteorological and integrated pest management culture.
- An agro-meteorological department within LARI must become sustainable in a close future as the information collected and analyses are extremely valuable for economic indicators. However during an initial phase of three years it is necessary to support the establishment of this new LARI department especially regarding Human Resources in order to make this department fully efficient and able to commercialize its output.

**b. Pest and diseases data collection:**

Each decentralized LARI lab will be assigned to collect in their region the information related to the following pest and diseases. The recognition of pest and disease will be done through traps and visual symptoms observations at the decentralized research stations and at each farmer group.

**c. Human resources, training and other support:**

Either for meteorological data or recognition of pest and diseases at the farmer group level training will be provided to the agronomists attached to the farmer groups as well as to some staff in the decentralized research stations in order to collect the information. In case of difficulties to identify the insect or the disease at the field, digital pictures will be transferred to the laboratory in charge of the crop and to be able to identify the pest or disease. Regional LARI centers will be equipped to facilitate the collection of data and their transfer to the department in charge at LARI main regional centers.

**5- Available infrastructural and financial facilities.**

- The main financial sources are:
- Ministry of Finance.
- Projects financed by the EU.
- Projects financed by European countries (Italy, Spain,)

**6- Important constraints affecting the building of NAIS:**

- Many strategies are available, but there is a lack of one reliable ICT strategy in the field of agriculture at the national level.
- Lack of sufficient number specialized ICT/M personnel. The big part of IT experts is working in the private sectors which offer higher salaries.
- The little amount of knowledge in how ICT can be useful in Agricultural Research Management Systems.
- The high costs required to build such systems.
- The complicated political situation in the country.

**7- Required support at national, regional, and international:**

At the National level:

- More importance must be given to the ICT in Agriculture. Everyone must know that ICT can be useful in Agricultural Research Management Systems. Not only sectors such as telecommunication, finance, needs ICT but also, the budgets allocated to ICT in Agriculture must be increased offering to increase the number of specialized personnel in this sector. *A more reliable & unified ICT strategy in the field of agriculture must be done.*

At the regional and international level:

- Capacity building and staff training in information systems' development must continue.
- Exchange of experience between countries.
- Continuing efforts in the field of supporting a unified RAIS to be used by all countries at the national level.