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## EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE TO VULNERABLE FRUIT TREES FARMERS AFFECTED BY THE FOREST FIRES IN LATTAKIA

November 2019

SDGs:



Countries:

The Syrian Arab Republic

Project Codes:

TCP/SYR/3604

FAO Contribution

USD 422 000

Duration:

4 May 2017 – 31 March 2019

Contact Info:

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### Implementing Partner

The Ministry of Agriculture and Agrarian Reform (MAAR).

### Beneficiaries

Farming households (HHs).

### Country Programming Framework (CPF) Outputs

Focus Area 3: Improving socio-economic resilience of the Syrian people; Outcome 3: Households and communities benefit from sustainable livelihood opportunities, including economic recovery and social inclusion; Output 3.1: Income, sustainable livelihoods opportunities and inclusive local economic development are restored and maintained; Output 3.3: Environmental and natural resources are restored and sustainably managed (Strategic Framework for Cooperation between the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic and the United Nations).



### BACKGROUND

The Lattakia governorate is a vital area for fruit farming (citrus fruits, apples and olives) in the Syrian Arab Republic. In the period from October to December 2016, devastating forest fires spread into agricultural areas, damaging 1 377 hectares of farmland. The MAAR initially indicated their willingness to support affected farmers through the provision of tree saplings and cash so that farming activities could be resumed during the ensuing season. However, because of other priorities that required urgent attention in the country, it was later recognized that the MAAR could not provide the necessary support to help restore the livelihoods of these fruit farming HHs. Accordingly, FAO received a request for assistance and, in February 2017, conducted a rapid assessment in the disaster area of Lattakia. It was concluded that the forest fires adversely affected the food security and livelihoods of approximately 4 000 fruit producing HHs, who required external support in the form of essential agricultural inputs. The FAO assessment advised that the affected farmers urgently required winter vegetable farming packages and olive saplings for the upcoming season, as well as training that targeted the development of agricultural methods.

### IMPACT

The project enhanced the food security and livelihoods of vulnerable farmers that were affected by forest fires in the Lattakia governorate. Agricultural production capacity was restored at the HH level and resilience was strengthened through the development of farming capacity.

### ACHIEVEMENT OF RESULTS

#### Output 1: Vegetable seed packages and olive saplings distributed to 2 700 households for immediate production

The project greatly exceeded its target of distributing packages of winter vegetable seeds and olive saplings to 2 700 farming HHs. A total of 3 289 HHs received crop seeds for fava beans, onions, garlic, peas, cabbage, chard and spinach, and 25 354 olive saplings were also distributed among these HHs. Additionally, vegetable farming tools were delivered to 2 700 HHs. The identification of beneficiary HHs was performed by FAO in consultation with the MAAR, community leaders and community-based organizations. This allowed for targeting of the most vulnerable small-scale fruit farming HHs, which lost 50-90 percent of their fruit trees/production during the forest fires.

#### Output 2: Low-cost, water-efficient systems established

The project also exceeded its target of establishing 42 modern irrigation systems in selected fruit orchards to cover an area of approximately two hectares. A total of 55 low-cost, water-efficient systems were put into effect, supporting irrigation for 2.8 hectares of farmland. The targeted farmers were chosen based on their proximity to a suitable water supply and the extent of damage to their irrigation networks caused by the fires.

#### Output 3: Sustainable natural resource management practices promoted in vegetable and olive production

Training of Trainers (ToTs) was provided for 23 extension officers under the project. These trainers subsequently delivered sessions to 229 representative farmers on a broad range of topics related to sustainable agriculture, including Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs), olive pest and disease management, vegetable pest and disease management, compost production and management, Integrated Forest Fire Management (IFFM), low-cost water-efficient systems and water harvesting infrastructure. The project again exceeded its original targets of training 15 extension officers and reaching 165 farmers. Finally, three Farmer Field Schools (FFSs) were established with a total of 79 trainees, of which 49 percent were women.

## IMPLEMENTATION OF WORK PLAN

All project activities were carried out within the allocated budget, with two no-cost extensions being approved. Importantly, a qualified, reliable and well-structured implementing partner was identified and contracted to manage the distribution of resources. The procurement and administrative team were highly dedicated and supportive, facilitating the timely implementation of project activities that carefully considered the seasonality of agricultural production. Efficient planning and procurement under the project resulted in savings, allowing the project to reach a larger number of vulnerable farming HHs than originally anticipated.

## FOLLOW-UP FOR GOVERNMENT ATTENTION

The immediate restoration of farming capacity was achieved to a level beyond that originally envisioned by the project. The full extent of this farming capacity, however, will only be completely determined four to five years after the planting of saplings, when they start to produce olives. It will be important to monitor the impact of increased farming productivity on the food and livelihood security of fire-affected HHs in the Lattakia governorate.

## SUSTAINABILITY

### 1. Capacity development

The skills and knowledge developed by farming HHs under the project better prepare them for agricultural production and enhance their resilience to livelihood threats in the future. The utilization of organic fertilizers, the improved management of water resources and the partnerships established between local community members will all contribute to the sustainability of the project's results.

### 2. Gender equality

The project was designed to be gender sensitive and considered women's access to both inputs and training. Since women contribute significantly to agricultural production in the country, the support provided to fire-affected HHs has provided women with access to high quality seeds.

### 3. Environmental sustainability

The focus on environmental sustainability is reflected by the selection of crop varieties that are suited to local conditions, the restoration of olive orchards affected by fires, the promotion of organic fertilizers, the establishment of modern irrigation techniques and the training that covered critical topics such as GAPs, IFFM and water management.

### 4. Human Rights-based Approach (HRBA) – in particular Right to Food and Decent Work

The project supported the re-establishment of agricultural activities in targeted HHs that were devastated by forest fires. This will be critical for the restoration of their livelihoods and food security.

### 5. Technological sustainability

The intercropping of winter vegetables and olives, the promotion of modern irrigation techniques and the concepts covered during training sessions are all suitable to the agricultural context of the Lattakia governorate. Importantly, project activities enabled farming HHs to establish self-sufficiency following the damage caused by forest fires.

### 6. Economic sustainability

The project formed part of the resilience programme approach that has been adopted by the FAO country office. The high level of success achieved during project implementation and the clear demonstration of the potential for similar projects has resulted in the mobilization of additional resources. Nevertheless, the primary ongoing challenge will be to secure funding to support national institutions that can ensure the sustainability of the project's results.



## DOCUMENTS AND OUTREACH PRODUCTS

- Interim report on project implementation. E Yehia Al Mohamad. January 2018. 11 pp.
- Final report on project implementation and achievements. E Yehia Al Mohamad. March 2018. 10 pp.
- Interim report for the additional LOA to target an additional 598 affected farmers. E Yehia Al Mohamad. January 2019. 11 pp.
- Final report for the additional LOA to target an additional 598 affected farmers. E Yehia Al Mohamad. May 2019. 14 pp.
- Training curricula and a package on technical topics of interest (the curricula has five topics and was sent to FAO on 18 January 2018 and cleared by Y Al Jasem 12 February 2018). 37 pp.
- Brochure on the scope and objectives of the project.

## ACHIEVEMENT OF RESULTS - LOGICAL FRAMEWORK

<b>Expected Impact</b>	<b>Contribute to improved food security and livelihoods of vulnerable farmers affected by the forest fires</b>		
<b>Outcome</b>	Restored agricultural production capacities and strengthened resilience of 2 700 small-scale households affected by the forest fires in Lattakia governorate		
	<b>Indicator</b>	1) Number of affected vegetable/olive producers whose orchards/farms are rehabilitated 2) Area (ha) of orchards/farms covered with improved irrigation and sustainable natural resource management measures	
	<b>Baseline</b>		
	<b>End Target</b>	1) 2 700 HHs (2 700 farms with planting area of 930 ha) 2) 2 ha	
	<b>Comments and follow-up action to be taken</b>	The project greatly exceeded its original target of reaching 2 700 HHs, affecting a total of 3 298 HHs comprised of 9 894 individuals. Additionally, although it was originally envisaged that the project would establish 42 drip irrigation systems in a total of 42 HHs, this target was also exceeded, with 55 drip irrigation systems being established in 55 households, covering an area of 2.8 ha (each system is suitable for an area of 500 m <sup>2</sup> ). Winter vegetable seeds were planted in these areas resulting in approximately 900 kg of produce per HH, valued at USD 675. The project successfully achieved its goals thanks largely to the proper targeting of vulnerable farming HHs following a joint assessment of fire damage performed by FAO and MAAR. Moreover, efficient procurement under the project allowed for additional farmers that were affected by the forest fires in the Lattakia governorate to gain access to agricultural inputs (seeds and irrigation facilities) and receive training.	
<b>Output 1</b>	Vegetable seeds packages and olive saplings distributed to 2 700 households for immediate production		
	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Achieved</b>
	Number of winter vegetable seeds and new healthy olive saplings distributed	– 2 700 winter vegetable seed packages – 25 000 olive saplings	Yes
<b>Baseline</b>	0		
<b>Comments</b>	The project exceeded its objectives by reaching a total 3 298 HHs (9 894 individuals) affected by forest fires in the Lattakia governorate.		
<b>Activity 1.1</b>	<b>Identification of the targeted locations</b>		
	<b>Achieved</b>	Yes	
<b>Activity 1.2</b>	<b>Comments</b>	The identification of geographical areas that were to be covered by the project was discussed by FAO, the MAAR, representatives from affected areas in the Lattakia governorate and service providers. The selected locations were those affected by the fires.	
	<b>Finalization of the list of beneficiaries</b>		
<b>Activity 1.3</b>	<b>Achieved</b>	Yes	
	<b>Comments</b>	The targeted beneficiaries included the most vulnerable small-scale fruit-producing HHs in the fire-affected districts of the Lattakia governorate, which had lost 50 to 90 percent of their fruit trees/production during the period from October to December 2016. These farmers were deemed unable to resume agricultural activities without external support. Essential agricultural inputs to start vegetable farming and to restore fruit farming activities was therefore considered critical to the re-establishment of these farmers' livelihoods. The identification process was conducted during an FAO assessment in February 2017 and in consultation with the Directorate of Agriculture in Lattakia (MAAR Lattakia), local community leaders, community-based organizations and the Directorate of Rural Women Development (RWED) at MAAR. The final list of beneficiaries was jointly prepared and endorsed by MAAR and FAO.	
<b>Activity 1.3</b>	<b>LOA signature</b>		
	<b>Achieved</b>	Yes	
<b>Activity 1.3</b>	<b>Comments</b>	Two LOAs were prepared and formalized with the Federation of Syrian Chambers of Agriculture (FCSA). The first LOA ensured the provision of support to the initial 2 700 HHs targeted under the project, while the second LOA extended this support to an additional 598 HHs. The FCSA had previous experience with this form of intervention and possessed a strong understanding of the concepts and goals of FAO.	

Activity 1.4	Inputs procurement		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	Agricultural inputs were procured according to FAO rules and regulations. These inputs included winter vegetable seed packages, sets of vegetable farming tools, olive saplings and shredders for composting.	
Activity 1.5	Input transportation and distribution to final beneficiaries		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 3 289 winter vegetables seed packages were distributed to the targeted 3 289 farming HHs. Each package contained a bag of crops seeds for fava beans, onions, garlic, peas, cabbage, chard and spinach.</li> <li>- 2 700 sets of hand tools for vegetable farming were distributed to the targeted 2 700 farming HHs. The set included a garden hoe, a transplanting hoe and a hose.</li> <li>- 25 354 olive saplings were supplied to the targeted 3 289 olive farming HHs.</li> </ul>	
Output 2	Low cost water-efficient systems established		
	Indicators	Target	Achieved
	Number of low cost water irrigation systems established in fruit orchards	42	Yes
Baseline	0		
Comments	55 modern irrigation systems were distributed to 55 HHs (each system included one drip irrigation kit and one water pump). The targeted farmers included those whose land holdings were located near a water supply and those whose irrigation networks were damaged by the fires. Moreover, the project exceeded expectations, effectively irrigating 2.8 ha of farmland (it was originally envisaged that 2 ha of farmland would be covered).		
Activity 2.1	LOA signature		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	An LOA was developed and formalized with the FSCA, which already had prior experience with this type of agricultural intervention and a good working knowledge of the concepts and goals of FAO.	
Activity 2.2	Inputs procurement		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	55 modern irrigation systems and pumps were procured and distributed to targeted farmers.	

Sustainable natural resources management practices promoted in vegetable and olive production			
Output 3	Indicators	Target	Achieved
	Percentage of affected vegetable/olive producers demonstrating improved knowledge and skills on GAPs (pest and disease management, compost management, intercropping)	5%	Yes
Baseline	0%		
Comments	ToTs was provided for 23 extension officers, who then delivered training to 229 representative farmers. The project exceeded expectation by reaching more than the originally targeted 165 representative beneficiaries.		
Activity 3.1	Assessment of the capacity of local institutions to conduct a ToT programme on GAPs, pest and diseases management, compost management, intercropping, FFSs, IFFM, low cost water-efficient systems and water harvesting infrastructure in the field		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	Assessment of the available implementing partners (FSCA, Aga Khan Foundation, etc.) as potential candidates to provide the capacity building training sessions was carried out. The FSCA was selected to provide technical support as it met the requirements that were necessary for the delivery of training under the project. These included: – experience in the delivery of technical capacity training in the agriculture sector; – a thorough knowledge of the agricultural situation in the Syrian Arab Republic; and – a long history of implementing agricultural assistance projects with FAO and other UN agencies.	
Activity 3.2	LOA signature		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	An LOA was signed with the FSCA.	
Activity 3.3	Development of the training material by IP with technical support from FAO		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	FAO and FSCA collaborated to develop the training materials for the ToT programme on GAPs, olive pest and disease management, vegetable pest and disease management, compost production and management, IFFM, low-cost water-efficient systems and water harvesting infrastructure.	
Activity 3.4	ToTs for local extension service experts of MAAR Lattakia		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	ToTs was provided for 23 extension officers from the agricultural directorate in Lattakia. This exceeded the original target of 15 extension officers.	
Activity 3.5	Training of the selected beneficiaries' representatives		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	The 23 trained extension officers delivered training to 229 representative farmers. This exceeded the original target of 165 farmers.	
Activity 3.6	Establishment of FFSs		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	Three FFSs were established in the targeted areas of the governorate. There was a total of 79 trainees, of which 49% were women.	
Activity 3.7	Training of the remaining households by the trained beneficiaries representatives		
	Achieved		
	Comments	The trainers (trained under the project) were using the FFSs to train the remaining beneficiaries and others as needed.	

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