

# RuralInvest

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RuralInvest course participants. Beirut, February 2014

## Optimizing RuralInvest: intensified training formula to address growing demand for country-driven investment.

In February of this year, 21 participants from 14 institutions, including government, universities and NGOs, gathered at the Lebanese ENA (Ecole Nationale d'Administration) for a five-day training on FAO's RuralInvest toolkit.

The event was conducted by the FAO Investment Centre at the request of the Government of Lebanon, and supported by the FAO office in Beirut. It provided training on identifying and appraising investments, both income-generating and non income-generating, like those

aimed to achieve broader social and environmental objectives, such as reforestation.

"This event was very timely for the country considering its current investment portfolio and development priorities," said Maurice Saade, the FAO Representative in Lebanon who inaugurated the course.

Feedback on the toolkit was positive, and enthusiasm was palpable, with trainees engaged in group work and in mastering the software.

"RuralInvest is a user-friendly software, which takes into consideration the financial analysis required in proposals," said Mireille Jazi from the University of Balamand. "Having a systematic tool to develop investment proposals would be of high importance to academia."

The training featured a mandatory online course exploring the key concepts of RuralInvest, complemented by classroom training centred around practical

exercises tailored to the Lebanese context.

The course concluded with a final test. Students had to present their own investment project proposals for review. Participants granted the RuralInvest Master Trainer certificate will now become an arm of the FAO Investment Centre in Lebanon and in the region to further disseminate the toolkit.

"To cover the full content of the RuralInvest toolkit, it normally takes at least ten days," said Takayuki Higihara, the lead trainer of this course. "The combination of online and face-to-face elements made it possible to deliver all of the course modules in record time – just five days."

The training event was possible thanks to the valuable support of the FAO office in Beirut and – as a final cherry on the cake – the RuralInvest methodology may become an integral part of the curriculum of Balamand University.

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RuralInvest developed by FAO, is a free, multilingual toolkit comprising training courses, manuals and custom software to support the preparation of successful rural development projects. For more than 15 years, RuralInvest has been used to identify and prepare small- and medium-scale agricultural and rural investments. The toolkit offers a series of modules that foster participatory approaches to development and can be used as a powerful communication tool, essential for participatory rural appraisal of projects. Training material and software are continuously updated to reflect practitioners' needs.

Watch the video on the RuralInvest training in Beirut on [our website](#).

## FACTS & FIGURES

Geographical coverage: Lebanon, Syria

Course duration, days	5
Total Participants	21
Participating institutions	14