

**Sub Regional Workshop & Training on  
Information and Communication Management Systems to Strengthen  
Extension and Research Linkages in NE Member States**

For Sustainable Rural Development and Poverty eradication

**Cairo, Egypt**

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**Dates:**

A) Sub-regional Workshop: 16 – 18 December, 2003

B) Training Workshop: 13 – 18 December, 2003

**Organizers**

Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)

Central Lab. For Agricultural Expert Systems (CLAES)

**Workshop Venue**

Central Lab. For Agricultural

Expert Systems

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**Accommodation**

Safir Hotel, Dokki,

Al Messaha Square,

Tel. Nos. 00-202-7482424 / 7482828

Cairo, Egypt

## Workshop background Information

New internet-based information and communication technologies (ICTs) provide a potentially powerful tool for improving communication between research, extension and even farmers. The Virtual Extension and Research Communication Network (VERCON) is a conceptual model that employs Internet-based ICTs to strengthen linkages among agricultural policy, research and extension institutions and individuals. The pilot FAO VERCON project in Egypt demonstrated that Internet-based ICTs do have an important role in enhancing national agricultural research and extension systems by improving the generation and collaborative use of agricultural knowledge and information.

VERCON as a concept as well as the Egyptian pilot experience and accomplishment in VERCON were first introduced to directors of extension and research in NE countries during FAO Regional workshop on "*Institutional Needs Assessment for Agricultural Research, Technology Development and Extension in the NE*", Amman/Jordan 29-31 May, 2002. Participants from several countries expressed their interest in VERCON and actually one of the workshop recommendations was *to give greater visibility to VERCON and promote support for its implementation as a pilot project in a number of countries in the Region.*

In follow-up to this recommendation, and as part of its Regular Programme activities, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Regional Office for the Near East (FAO/RNE), in collaboration with the Central Laboratory for Agricultural Expert Systems, (CLAES), Cairo, Egypt, is organising a sub-regional workshop on "Information and Communication Management Systems for strengthening Extension and Research Linkages in Near East Member States", to be held in Cairo, Egypt during the period from 16 – 18 December, 2003.

Directors of extension and research institutions, as well as technical officers from both disciplines from five countries: Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq and Egypt are expected to participate. The workshop will focus on VERCON concept in communication and information management, the pilot experience in Egypt, implications for adaptation in the other countries, as well as working towards the development of a sub-regional VERCON.

### **Workshop Objectives**

The workshop aims to achieve the following objectives

1. Raise awareness on existing potentials for improving extension and research linkages using ICM tools., and achieve better understanding of the concept, structure and management of VERCON.
2. Train participants on how to operate and use the various systems of VERCON, i.e. farmers' problems, agricultural expert systems, extension pamphlets database, economic database, VERCON forum, agricultural news system,
3. Adapt the VERCON to the needs of participating countries, following a participatory approach in discussion to identify components and outline of the sub-regional VERCON and formulation of a draft proposal.

## Tentative Programme A

### **Sub-Regional workshop on Information and Communication Management Systems to strengthen Extension and Research Linkages in NE Member States, December 16 - 18, 2003**

**Participants:** Directors of Extension and Research

**Total:** 10 Persons

**Duration:** 3 days (21 hours)

#### **Tuesday 16 December 2003**

09:00 — 9:30	Registration
9:30 — 10:00	Opening
	<b>-MOALR / ARC Representative</b>
	<b>- FAO Representative</b>
	<b>-CLAES Representative</b>
	<b>-AERDRI Representative</b>
10:00 — 10:30	Welcome Reception
10:30 — 13:30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Agricultural Knowledge and Information Flow System</li><li>• VERCON Conceptual Design and Structure</li><li>• Internet Networking Technologies for Exchanging Information between the Research and Extension Institutions</li></ul>
	AERDRI
13:30 — 14:30	Lunch Break
14:30 — 16:30	Operating NEWS System M. Yehia, CLAES Using NEWS System AERDRI
16:30 — 16:45	Coffee Break
16:45 — 18:45	Operating Forum Systems A. Fouad, and A. Hindam, CLAES Using Forum Systems AERDRI

#### **Wednesday 17 December 2003**

09:00 — 11:00	AKIS, country presentation Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria Representatives
11:00 — 11:30	Coffee Break
11:30 — 13:30	Workgroup session on Sub-regional VERCON
13:30 --- 14:30	Lunch Break
14:30 — 16:30	Workgroup session on Sub-regional VERCON

#### **Thursday 18 December 2003**

09:00 — 11:00	Presentation of findings and recommendations of workgroups
11:00 — 11:30	Coffee Break
11:30 — 13:30	Evaluation and closing ceremony FAO, CLAES, and AERDRI Representatives

## Tentative Programme B

### **Training on FAO VERCON Concept and Applications of ICT/ICM for strengthening Extension/Research Linkages December 13 – 18, 2003**

**Participants:** Technical Officers from Extension/Research Institutions (Focal Persons)

**Total:** 10 Persons

**Duration:** 6 days (42 hours).

#### **Saturday 13 December 2003**

09:00 — 9:30	Registration
9:30 — 10:00	Opening -MOALR / ARC Representative - FAO Representative -CLAES Representative -AERDRI Representative
10:00 — 10:30	Welcome Reception
10:30 — 13:30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Agricultural Knowledge and Information Flow System</li><li>• VERCON Conceptual Design and Structure</li><li>• Internet Networking Technologies for Exchanging Information between the Research and Extension Institutions</li></ul> AERDRI
13:30 — 14:30	Lunch Break
14:30 — 16:30	Operating NEWS System M. Yehia, CLAES Using NEWS System AERDRI
16:30 – 16: 45	Coffee Break
16:45 – 18:45	Operating Forum Systems A. Fouad, and A. Hindam, CLAES Using Forum Systems AERDRI

#### **Sunday 14 December 2003**

09:00 — 11:00	Operating expert systems S. Edrees, S. El-Azhari, CLAES
11:00 — 11:30	Coffee Break
11:30 — 13:30	Using expert systems AERDRI
13:30 — 14:30	Lunch Break
14:30 — 15:00	Operating Extension Pamphlets database K. Fouad, CLAES
15:00 – 16:30	Using Extension Pamphlets database AERDRI
16:30 – 16: 45	Coffee Break
16:45 – 18:45	Operating economic database M. Hazman, CLAES Using economic database AERDRI



## **Major Elements\* that form the contents of the participants' Reports**

### **RESEARCH AND EXTENSION ORGANIZATIONS**

- The organizational chart of research and extension.
- Management/organizational linkage between research and Extension.
- The source institutions of national agricultural policy.
- The source institutions of annual plans of research and Extension.
- Units/divisions/departments participate in research and Extension management.
- Faculties, research institutes or organizations that take part in agricultural technology generation or adaptation (locations, relations with MOA research, its extension activities if any, and computer facilities available including hardware, software, trained personnel).
- Organizational chart of faculties of agriculture high authority.
- Categorization of private sector organizations/companies according to its orientation (seed production, input supply, machinery, marketing, soil & water labs.). Does it generate, test or adapt technology? Does it have extension component? What kind of coordination exists with public extension? How it is authorized to do research or extension? What is the governmental institution monitor and control its activities? And How?
- Farmer centers on the village level (name, numbers per governorate/municipal, facilities regarding buildings, equipment, staff, telephone line, internet connection, computers, and relation with other institutions in the area.
- Agro-ecological zones of the country (number, names, types, ranks of relative importance for agriculture)

### **AGRICULTURAL KNOWLEDGE AND INFORMATION SYSTEM (AKIS)**

The following data are needed for the Ministry of Agriculture (MOA), faculties of agriculture, private sector, other international and local institutions working in agricultural sector and audience targeted by extension activities. Tables can be used for easy referencing.

- Information outputs
- Information needed
- Information flow among them (who? communicates with who?)
- Forms of output information exchanged like:
  - Printed material (extension bulletins, posters, pictures, reports, research papers, plans, regulations ...)
  - Audio and video (radio and TV programs, audio or video tapes, films)
  - Personal communication methods (meetings, visits, interviews, telephone calls..)
- Frequency of information exchange (daily, weekly, monthly, quarter or semi annual, annual, or on demand)
- Reach rate (number of copies per zone, area, or number of farmers)
- Production rate (copies per annum or season)
- Institution responsible for simplifying scientific material into an extension form, and institution responsible for authorizing publishing.
- Institution(s) of producing extension and training materials (print house, studios related to MOA, storage medium, computer facilities and environment IPM/Mac)
- Agricultural statistics e.g., cultivated areas, production rates, market crop prices. (data collection and publishing institutions, and its frequency)

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\* Data and variables to be considered when developing VERCON NETWORK

- Climatic and soil data (data collection and publishing institutions, and its frequency)

#### **AGRICULTURAL TRAINING CENTERS**

- Number and distribution of the centers in the country
- Training material produced
- Agricultural libraries
- Frequency of training
- Beneficiaries
- Number of trainees
- Computer facilities
- Infrastructure facilities available for computer and web training

#### **TELEPHONE AND INTERNET INFRASTRUCTURE FACILITIES**

- Types and costs of internet access
- Speed of Internet access
- Is it available at the village level?
- Agricultural sites on the web, and of what institutions (GO, NGO, private sector, and international if any).

## النقاط الرئيسية التي تشكل

### محتوى تقارير المشاركين

1. مكونات البنية التنظيمية الإرشادي ووظائفها على المستوى القطري والإقليمي والميداني.
2. خريطة تنظيمية للجهاز الإرشادي على مستوياته المختلفة توضح العلاقات بين هذه المستويات.
3. مكونات البنية التنظيمية البحثي الزراعي على المستويات المختلفة.
4. طبيعة العلاقة القائمة بين الجهاز البحثي والجهاز الإرشادي الزراعي وكليات الزراعة بالجامعات.
5. أنواع المعلومات، ومصادرها، وكيفية الحصول عليها من الهيئات المختلفة لأداء الأنشطة الإرشادية والتدريبية.
6. أنواع المعلومات التي يصدرها الجهاز الإرشادي والجهات المستفيدة منها.
7. الطرق الإرشادية المستخدمة في نقل وتوصيل التوصيات الفنية الزراعية إلى الزراع:
  - ما هي أنواع المطبوعات الإرشادية: المجلات، المطبوعات، النشرات الخفيفة، النشرات الفنية، الملصقات.
  - ما هي البرامج الزراعية الإذاعية والتلفزيونية.
  - ما هي معدلات تنفيذ الطرق الإرشادية الجماعية ومتوسط عدد الحاضرين في كل من الاجتماعات، والندوات، وأيام الحقل، وأيام الحصاد، والحقول الإرشادية، والرحلات الإرشادية.
  - ما هي معدلات تنفيذ الطرق الإرشادية الفردية مثل الزيارات المنزلية والحقلية والمكتبية والاتصالات التلفونية.
8. نوعيات الجمهور الإرشادي التي توجه إليها الأنشطة الإرشادية الزراعية مع توضيح أهم الخصائص التي تميز كل نوعية منها.
9. البنية التحتية لتكنولوجيا المعلومات والاتصالات في الجهازين البحثي والإرشادي من حيث:
  - توفر خطوط الاتصالات التلفونية على مستوى القرية.
  - توفر خدمة الإنترنت على مستوى القرية.
  - توفر أجهزة الحاسب الآلي على المستويات المختلفة.
  - النسبة المئوية لعدد المرشدين الذين يجيدون استخدام الحاسب الآلي والإنترنت على المستويات المختلفة.
  - النسبة المئوية لعدد الباحثين الزراعيين الذين يجيدون استخدام الحاسب الآلي والإنترنت على المستويات المختلفة.
10. ما هي الجهة الموجودة في وزارة الزراعة والتي تتوفر لديها الخبرات الفنية اللازمة لإدارة وصيانة شبكة اتصال البحوث والإرشاد (الفيكون).
11. أهم المعوقات التي تواجه كلا من الجهاز البحثي والجهاز الإرشادي في تحقيق أهدافهما.
12. أهم المعوقات التي تواجه المزارعين في الحصول على الخدمة الإرشادية.