

**Roundtable discussion on the development of  
a consortium for capacity building and resource development  
in agricultural information  
in the West Asia and North Africa**

1-2 December 2003  
Aleppo - Syria

**Agenda**

**Day One and Two - December 1-2 2003:**

1. Discussion/Adoption of Agenda
2. Presentations Participants (5-10 minutes per participant) to speak about what are their agency's current activities in information and communication for rural development and food security.
3. Review of proposed consortium: (a) objectives, (b) membership, (c) mode of operation (Discussion paper to be provided).
4. Short term objectives for 2002.
5. Standards/Guidelines.
6. Training Materials and Training Programmes.
7. Development of Network(s).
8. Medium term: Development of Strategic Approach to Information Capacity Building and Networking in the Near East and North Africa.
9. Any other business

## **CONSORTIUM ON REGIONAL COORDINATION IN CAPACITY BUILDING IN AGRICULTURAL INFORMATION MANAGEMENT IN WEST ASIA AND NORTH AFRICA**

### **Premise**

In West Asia and North Africa (WANA), various types of development initiative are currently active in capacity building and training in the management and exchange of agricultural information, aimed at policy makers, institutions and rural communities. Considerable advantage could be obtained from improved coordination between development assistance agencies and national organizations working in this area, which would also reduce the potential for duplication and overlap of efforts.

### **Goal**

- ❖ To contribute to the eradication of rural poverty and food insecurity in West Asia and North Africa through improved impact and sustainability of capacity building efforts in information management.

### **Outputs**

- ◆ Standards for the creation and management of information content in a range of languages.
- ◆ A set of tested methodologies and tools for managing/exchanging information.
- ◆ Training methodologies and courseware adapted to different learner profiles and local infrastructures.
- ◆ A cadre of trainers able to handle different users' profiles.
- ◆ Improved awareness and skills amongst key groups of managers and information professionals in agricultural information management.

### **Mechanism**

A mechanism for facilitating coordination and collaboration, in the form of an informal Consortium, is proposed for the WANA region.

### **Composition of the Consortium**

The consortium's members could include public and private institutions, both national and international. FAO will be the liaison point, from its Regional Office for Near East (RNE) in Cairo and with the support of its Headquarters in Rome.

### **Features and Principles of the Consortium**

- The Consortium will be established under an informal agreement of the parties.
- There will be no membership fees, and no specific investments such as personnel, equipment or offices are foreseen. Any incidental costs of participation must be borne by the members.
- The Consortium will meet physically at least once a year, and more often if necessary. Electronic communication will be maintained between meetings.

- A website will be established to provide a focus for the Consortium, with a range of functionalities and activities to be decided on by the members.
- The members will be able to make different types of contribution to the Consortium, such as : information management tools and methodologies, human resources (e.g. for dissemination, training and translation), equipment and facilities (e.g. training installations), or funds.
- Collaborative activities and projects involving some or the entire Consortium will be identified and implemented at the initiative of the members, drawing on financial or other resources from outside the Consortium as necessary.
- The Consortium will develop, agree and update regularly an outline programme of work, specifying roles of individual members, contributions, outputs and products.
- The individual members will be responsible for any tools or software that they contribute and for any associated support to users.