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REPORT

FIRST CONSULTATION MEETING ON COMPONENT I OF THE FOOD AND WATER SECURITY PROJECT: CRITERIA FOR SELECTING GEOGRAPHICAL COVERAGE OF THE PROJECT

CAIRO, EGYPT, 29 - 30 MAY 2016

Summary

Within the framework of a project financed by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) and entitled “Promoting Food and Water Security through Cooperation and Capacity Development in the Arab Region,” the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), in cooperation with the Food and Agriculture Organization / Regional Office for the Near East and North Africa (FAO-RNE), organized the 1st Consultation Meeting on Component I of the project. The meeting was held in Cairo during 29 - 30 May 2016.

Component I aims to strengthen capacity to assess the impacts of changing water availability due to climate change on agricultural production in the Arab region. The meeting was organized in order to consult with the project’s coordination committee members, and other experts, on the geographic scope of the project component.

The meeting provided an opportunity to discuss criteria, requirements and risk factors associated with the selection of geographic coverage. As a result of the meeting, project partners agreed on a list of countries that will be invited to participate in component I activities. Future steps were also identified to ensure countries’ and stakeholders’ engagement in project activities.

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Introduction

1. Within the framework of a project financed by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) and entitled “Promoting Food and Water Security through Cooperation and Capacity Development in the Arab Region,” the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), in cooperation with the Food and Agriculture Organization / Regional Office for the Near East and North Africa (FAO-RNE), organized the 1st Consultation Meeting on Component I of the project. The meeting was held in Cairo during 29 - 30 May 2016.
2. Component I aims to strengthen the capacity to assess the impacts of changing water availability due to climate change on agricultural production in the Arab region. The meeting was organized in order to consult with the project’s coordination committee members, and other experts, on the geographic scope of the project component.
3. Section I summarizes the main points agreed to as a result of the meeting. Section II provides a summary of interventions and discussions over the two-day meeting, while section III provides organizational information.

I. CONCLUSIONS AND WAY FORWARD

4. The meeting provided an opportunity to discuss criteria, requirements and risk factors associated with the selection of the geographic coverage of component I. Discussions were informed by a review of previous work undertaken by project partners in the area of climate and hydrological modeling and assessments of vulnerability to climate change in the agricultural sector. A review of the evidence-base, including a set of indicators reflecting the importance of the agricultural sector and its contribution to food security and sustainable development in the Arab countries helped provide further insight. Finally, an examination of the policy and institutional setups, including statistical and technical capacities in countries of the region, shed further light on the potential risks that the project may face during implementation and challenges in achieving intended objectives.
5. Issues that were recurrently brought up during the discussions included the following:
 - (a) Technical considerations, notably issues of data availability and quality, as well as methodological concerns relating to the choice of the crop growth model and the statistical approaches to be used;
 - (b) Institutional considerations relating primarily to: climate change adaptation in agriculture being a policy choice; willingness of countries to engage in the project; the level of technical capacities available; and the availability of good inter-sectoral coordination mechanisms. Regional - national level linkages were also among the institutional aspects discussed;
 - (c) The need for multi-tier, or differentiated engagement approaches, with the countries in view of disparities from one country to another in terms of the above-mentioned technical and institutional aspects;
 - (d) Role of non-government stakeholders, notably academic and research institutions, in light of the nature of the project, which combines scientific research, capacity-building and policy formulation components.
6. As a result of the meeting, project partners agreed on a list of countries that will be invited to take part in component I activities. In order to maximize benefits from the project, the countries were selected on the following basis: a) They are countries in which agricultural production has a significant weight in socio-economic and natural resources terms; b) They are countries that are particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, notably in the agricultural sector; c) They are countries where FAO’s current engagement with national government through the Water Scarcity

Initiative and other work is favorable in ensuring commitment and the establishment of multi-disciplinary teams; d) The countries provide a fairly balanced geographic representation across the Arab sub-regions that favors regional-national linkages.

7. The 13 countries selected to be approached are the following (in alphabetical order): Algeria; Egypt; Iraq; Jordan; Lebanon; Mauritania; Morocco; Oman; Saudi Arabia; Sudan; Syrian Arab Republic; Tunisia; Yemen.

8. The following short-term steps were also identified as a way forward for project implementation:

(a) Finalize as early as possible the ESCWA-FAO agreement and the FAO-ACSAD letter of agreement (Action by ESCWA, FAO and ACSAD);

(b) Develop a clear communication strategy with the countries, including the preparation of a project brochure and letters to the selected countries (Action by FAO);

(c) Organize an inception meeting for participating countries (Action by FAO).

II. SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS

A. OPENING SESSION

9. The opening session included introductory remarks by FAO, ESCWA and the League of Arab States (LAS). *Mr. Nabil Gangi*, Senior Advisor to the Regional Representative, conveyed the regards of Mr. Abdessalam Ould Ahmed, Assistant Director-General and FAO Regional Representative, and welcomed all participants to FAO-RNE premises. He expressed his gladness to be joining hands with ESCWA for such an important cause, noting the importance of strategic partnerships for achieving results.

10. *Mr. Hammou Laamrani*, Advisor to the Technical Secretariat of the Arab Water Ministerial Council, and GIZ Advisor on Adaptation to Climate Change in the Water Sector in the MENA Region, spoke on behalf of LAS. He reiterated the importance of building partnerships and synergies, and the relevance of the topic, noting that consultation at the early stages of the project was essential. Mr. Laamrani indicated that while the region will remain a net importer of food, it should strive to ensure food security and halt further increase in the food gap.

11. *Mr. Mohamed Al-Hamdi*, First Economic Affairs Officer at the Food and Environment Policies Section in ESCWA, thanked FAO for hosting this meeting, and acknowledged the added value of working with FAO and LAS. He indicated that this meeting will kick-start an intensive programme of work over the next two years, the details of which are being formalized in the ESCWA-FAO agreement. Mr. Al-Hamdi hoped that the project will help transfer accumulated knowledge on the impacts of climate change on agriculture from the scientific sphere to the policy sphere. He finally stressed on the importance of selecting the geographic scope of the project through a systematic process that ensures maximum impact from the project.

12. Opening remarks were followed by a tour de table and a review of the meeting agenda.

B. SESSION 1: OVERVIEW OF THE FOOD AND WATER SECURITY PROJECT PROGRESS

13. The session was moderated by *Mr. Aziz Elbehri*, Senior Economist at FAO. It provided an update on overall project progress.

14. *Mr. Mohamed Al-Hamdi* from ESCWA presented the project, including its rationale, intended objectives, and expected outputs. He highlighted that a myriad of challenges provide a strong

justification for the project, including natural (water and land availability), socio-economic (population, contribution of agriculture to the economy, food import burden), and geo-political (governance and food import security) challenges. Mr. Al-Hamdi went on to present the concept behind the project and the design of its four components, including the major activities under each of these components. He concluded with reflections on food security as a broad concept that requires regionally appropriate, and effective, institutional mechanisms and a high level of coordination between concerned sectors.

15. *Mr. Faycel Chenini*, Water Scarcity Initiative Consultant at FAO-RNE, zoomed onto component I of the project, which aims at strengthening capacity in the Arab region to assess the impacts of changing water availability due to climate change on agricultural production. Mr. Chenini explained that the project component also falls within the scope of FAO's Water Scarcity Initiative. He provided an overview of the planned outputs, namely: a methodology for assessing agricultural production under different climatic and environmental zones; a capacity-building programme for the Arab countries, including a set of manuals and guidelines for the application of the methodology; and a set of country assessments reports that are nationally endorsed. Mr. Chenini then provided a proposed list of activities and an implementation timeframe.

Summary of discussions

16. The ensuing discussions raised the following points:

(a) There are observed differences between what the Arab countries agree to at the regional level and what the countries are effectively implementing at the national level. One of the complexities of the project resides in translating regional consensus into national implementation and securing coherence between regional policy and national-level action. The sub-regional level might offer a more applicable middle-ground.

(b) Water availability for agriculture will be affected by considerations beyond climate change, including competition for water from other sectors and the contribution of non-conventional sources of water. While the scope of the project is limited to climate change impacts, complementarities with other initiatives (e.g. by UNESCO, ICBA, etc.) might be explored.

(c) The role of stakeholders such as farmer groups is critical for sustaining the outcomes of the project. Modalities for their early involvement in the project needs to be explored.

C. SESSION 2: ASSESSMENT OF CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACTS ON AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION

17. The session was moderated by *Mr. Hammou Laamrani* from GIZ/LAS and aimed to review work implemented to date by project partners on assessing the impacts of climate change on agricultural production in the region.

18. *Mr. Ihab Jnad*, Head of the Water Resources Department at the Arab Center for the Studies of Arid Zones and Dry Lands (ACSAD), presented the project on "Climate Change Adaptation Solutions for the Green Sectors of Selected Zones in the MENA Region", which is implemented in a partnership between GIZ, FAO, ACSAD, and ESCWA. He indicated that the project builds on the outcomes of the regional climate and hydrological modeling undertaken within the framework of the collaborative, ESCWA-led, Regional Initiative for the Assessment of the Impact of Climate Change on Water Resources and Socio-Economic Vulnerability in the Arab Region (RICCAR). In particular, it benefits from temperature, precipitation, runoff and evapo-transpiration data, which are available on daily basis.

19. Mr. Jnad presented the three pilot assessments conducted under the project in the North Delta of Egypt (an irrigated agriculture zone, assessment conducted for maize, wheat and cotton); Karak

governorate of Jordan (rainfed agriculture, assessment conducted for wheat and barley); and Orontes watershed in Lebanon (mixed agriculture, assessment conducted for eggplant, potato and maize). The regions were selected to reflect different ago-ecological zones and dependence on irrigation. Mr. Jnad explained the methodology of work, which basically combined climate data with parameters on crops, soil and field management practices into a model which simulates yield response to water. AquaCrop was used due to its relatively limited data requirements and simplicity.

20. The results of the various pilot assessments were presented, including impacts on yield, growth cycle and water requirements for the RCP4.5 and RCP 8.5 scenarios. Mr. Jnad indicated that the yield results changed quite significantly for some crops depending on whether the effects of elevated carbon dioxide levels were included or not, indicating high sensitivity to CO₂ concentration. He also pointed to the significant increase in the number of failure years observed for rainfed crops. One limitation of RICCAR is that its output is not suitable for areas with a micro climate due to relatively low spatial resolution (e.g. study of tomato production in AlGhor area in Jordan).

Summary of discussions

21. The ensuing discussions raised the following points:

(a) Uncertainty from climate and hydrological models is high, affecting the quality of the assessment results, and suggesting that more historical data is required (if available) to ensure better calibration. In addition, it is important to study different statistical indicators to evaluate the fitness of the model, as R² alone may not be indicative.

(b) A stochastic, rather than a deterministic approach, may be more suitable to apply in future assessments as it allows for a better interpretation of assessment results.

(c) The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change is currently considering a more optimistic scenario following the Paris agreement. Changing scenarios will require re-running the models, which may not be feasible in the short term.

D. SESSION 3: SELECTION CRITERIA OF THE GEOGRAPHICAL COVERAGE OF THE PROJECT

22. The session was moderated by *Mr. Waleed Zubari*, Coordinator of the Water Resources Management Program at the Arabian Gulf University. It aimed at discussing criteria for setting the geographic coverage of the project.

23. To inform the discussions, *Mr. Ihab Jnad* from ACSAD-LAS shared the results of an assessment of vulnerability to change in water available for agriculture/crops. Prepared within the context of RICCAR, the assessment aggregates exposure and sensitivity to reflect the potential impact of the change; the latter (potential impact) is then combined to adaptive capacity to determine vulnerability. Each of the three component of vulnerability was calculated through the geometric aggregation of a number of indicators as follows: For exposure, indicators of temperature, precipitation, runoff, evapotranspiration and extreme events; For sensitivity, indicators of population, natural and man-made factors affecting agriculture; For adaptive capacity, indicators of knowledge, technology, infrastructure, institutions, economic resources and equity.

24. As a result of this exercise, vulnerability maps for RCP4.5 and RCP8.5 for mid-century and end-century were produced. From these maps, highly vulnerable “hotspots” can be identified that Mr. Jnad suggested should constitute a starting point for identifying the geographic coverage of the project.

25. *Mr. Mohamed Al-Hamdi* from ESCWA presented views regarding the country selection criteria. He indicated that the contribution of agriculture to food security and sustainable development in a country constitutes an important criteria and a starting point for selection. The sector’s contribution can be evaluated using a number of indicators including economic factors (such as the contribution of

agriculture to GDP, employment in agriculture, and food import dependency), but also food production factors (such as land under cereal production, food production index, land equipped with irrigation, and water availability).

26. Mr. Al-Hamdi proposed a methodology in which a threshold value for the above-listed indicators is set (for e.g. based on a known benchmark or against world average); accordingly countries that recurrently surpass the threshold are considered to be good candidates for inclusion within the geographic scope of the project. The country list could then be further “sifted” according to additional criteria including geographic representation, and institutionally induced requirements such as technical and statistical capacity, financial resources and institutional and legal frameworks.

Summary of discussions

27. The ensuing discussions raised the following points:

(a) RICCAR’s vulnerability hotspots exercise is very informative and can guide the selection of the geographic coverage of the project. Yet, there are other criteria that are specifically relevant to the project, such as government commitment, technical capacity and data availability, that will also influence country selection.

(b) National agriculture production policies constitute important criteria for country selection. For example, some Gulf countries that are looking into scaling down their production in favor of more investments abroad and reliance on import do not constitute priority countries for this project.

(c) On the other hand, each country has its own particularities and would benefit from the project to some extent. The geographic scope of the project could be expanded as long as countries have capacity needs and are benefiting from project outcomes. Geographic representation also constitutes an important criteria since the project is targeting regional policy.

E. SESSION 4: ADMINISTRATIVE AND DATA REQUIREMENTS FOR SELECTING THE GEOGRAPHICAL COVERAGE OF THE PROJECT

28. The session, which was moderated by *Mr. Mohamed Al-Hamdi* from ESCWA, focuses specifically on institutional requirements that need to guide the selection of geographical coverage of the project.

29. *Mr. Aziz Elbehri* from FAO made an intervention in which he stressed on the importance of the socio-economic dimension in country selection. He cited for example that the dimension of trade, and the weight it is given by a country as a vehicle for food security compared to self-sufficiency measures is a significant factor. The issue of weighing the indicators proposed for the selection of the countries according to their relevance is an issue that Mr. Elbehri highlighted. He made links to the need to adopt a flexible, demand driven approach in dealing with the selected countries, since this would in principle reflect national priorities and ensure higher benefits from the project. He also stressed on the need to clarify the commitments of the various stakeholders in the project and reaffirmed the importance of data availability and quality, as critical aspects that determine the success of the project.

30. *Ms. Jana El-Baba*, Project Coordinator at ESCWA, provided an overview of two institutional aspects of importance for country selection, namely statistical capacity and the priority given by countries to climate change adaptation in agriculture. On the first aspect, Ms. El-Baba presented the results of an assessment conducted by ESCWA within the context of the preparation of the Arab Sustainable Development Report 2015, which showed medium statistical capacity at best in the Arab countries in terms of compiling the indicators of the Millennium Development Goals. On the second aspect, Ms. El-Baba presented a preliminary analysis of the Intended Nationally Determined Contributions submitted by Arab countries to UNFCCC COP 21. The INDC documents revealed that

most Arab countries (with the exception of few Gulf countries) have identified agriculture among the top priority sectors for climate change adaptation action, while some countries intend specifically to build national capacity in climate change assessments. This is an important proxy for country willingness to engage in the ESCWA project and these country should be prioritized.

Summary of discussions

31. The ensuing discussions raised the following points:

(a) Data requirements need to be well-established, including specific data quality needs. While data availability is an important requirement for conducting climate change assessments, it should not be considered as a “deal breaker” as solutions can always be found to address data gaps. For example, data may be available in the research/academic sphere, and such data could provide a good starting point and an incentive for governments to pursue regular collection of such statistics. Moreover, the project itself will build the capacity on how to extract data from RICCAR.

(b) It is important to convince the countries about the methodology for assessing climate change impacts on agriculture. Although some flexibility in tailoring the methodology may be possible, especially that ACSAD is building its own capacity in the use of other crop growth modeling software, it is not recommended if comparable results between the countries are to be achieved.

(c) A minimum, critical mass, of capacity is needed if the project is to achieve its objectives. A training of trainers modality need to be pursued to transfer knowledge at the national level.

(d) Climate change concerns are rarely mainstreamed into sectoral policies. Coordination and synergy between sectors is seen both as a requirement for achieving project objectives and a co-benefit from the project itself. Indeed, an added-value of the project is that it provides countries with a concrete tool and with the analysis needed to improve synergy and encourage tighter coordination.

F. SESSION 5: RISKS ASSOCIATED WITH THE SELECTION OF COUNTRIES

32. The session was moderated by *Mr. Khalid Alrwis*, Head of the Department of Agricultural Economics at King Saud University. It aimed to explore potential risks associated with the selection of countries for the project.

33. *Mr. Ihab Jnad* from ACSAD-LAS presented a matrix of possible risks and measures that can be taken to mitigate them. Identified risks included unresponsiveness and lack of committed involvement from beneficiary countries; Conflict or political instability in participating countries, which could delay or prevent the implementation of in-country activities; Lack of adequate and reliable data; and insufficient technical knowledge is. Proposed mitigation measures included leveraging regional intergovernmental councils to facilitate communication and coordination with countries; maintaining close and persistent communication with national focal points; and conducting adequate assessments of technical gaps. *Mr. Jnad* noted that while security concerns are high in some countries of the region, this should not constitute a handicap in countries where ministries are still functioning.

Summary of discussions

34. The ensuing discussions raised the following points:

(a) The highest risk to the project is institutional in nature. Institutional setups in the countries varies with different ministries handling issues of water, climate change and food. However, FAO and ACSAD are constrained in their entry points to Ministries of Agriculture. National teams would need to be established, however, that include all concerned stakeholders. Countries that are part of FAO’s Water Scarcity Initiative have already formed multi-disciplinary teams; hence project implementation in these countries is expected to face less institutional barriers.

(b) While some countries decide to engage in a project depending on budget allocations, this project should be sold to the countries as a capacity-building undertaking that brings much needed expertise and added value to policy-making. Moreover, and rather than being considered a purely scientific research exercise, the project will give countries the opportunity to mobilize resources from adaptation funds. An attractive project brief needs to be prepared before approaching countries.

(c) The project is highly technical and demanding; hence the need to target countries where “seed” technical capacity is already available. This should not be difficult, however, since prior experience in modeling is not a pre-requisite.

(d) Depending on the level of risk (institutional, data, security, etc.), implementation modalities in the different countries participating in the project may need to be tailored/differentiated, from a very detailed and robust modality in low-risk countries, to “softer” modalities focusing on sensitization in high-risk countries. Implementation should not follow a one-size fits all approach.

(e) FAO national offices have a wealth of information and their experience is very important in assessing the level of risk and identifying the right outreach plan for each country.

(f) While all Arab countries are included within the geographic scope of the umbrella project, the donor has limitations imposed on sponsoring government officials from the Gulf countries; ESCWA is committed to involve the Gulf countries in project activities and ensure they benefit from the project’s knowledge products.

G. SESSION 6: ENGAGING COUNTRIES AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

35. The session, which was facilitated by *Mr. Mohamed Al-Hamdi* from ESCWA, aimed to discuss ways of engaging countries and other stakeholders in project implementation.

36. *Mr. Ihab Jnad* from ACSAD-LAS, presented a proposed four step country-outreach plan in which: a) Letters are formulated and sent to ministries of agriculture in the selected countries explaining about the project and asking them to nominate a national coordinator for the project; b) Terms of reference are prepared for the national team; c) National teams are selected jointly with the national coordinator; and d) A national implementation plan is prepared and agreed to with the national team.

37. *Mr. Faycel Chenini* from FAO-RNE, indicated that the national teams would constitute the project’s implementation units, and are expected to include representatives from the agriculture, water and environment sectors, as well as other concerned sectors. The team coordinates activities and enres timely inputs from national entities. The Government nominated focal point is FAO’s vis-à-vis ad is expected to act as Secretary of the national team and can mobilize the team for day-to-day activities.

38. *Mr. Gumataw Abebe*, Assistant Professor in the Department of Agriculture at the American University of Beirut, facilitated a discussion on the engagement of non-governmental stakeholders in the project. He called on the meeting to identify who are the stakeholders that need to be involved and what are their specific roles.

Summary of discussions

39. The ensuing discussions raised the following points:

(a) It is important to establish a knowledge management platform to ensure sustainability of results. The project budget allocates resources for such platforms to be established at ACSAD and in countries. This should complement the knowledge hub to be established at FAO under RICCAR.

(b) While this is not purely a research project, the involvement of universities and research centers (e.g. ICARDA, ICBA) will multiply the benefits from capacity-building activities. Concerns

were raised that governments may not be favorable of the participation of universities in general and private universities in particular.

(c) The topic of climate change impacts on agriculture will need to be part of the university's curriculum to ensure continuity of engagement. Research centers were thought to have an important role to play in ensuring availability and quality of data.

(d) Gender considerations need to be kept in mind in the implementation of the project. For example, efforts need to be made to ensure to the extent possible that national teams and training beneficiaries include a balanced number of women and men.

III. ORGANIZATION

A. DATE AND VENUE

40. The 2-day meeting was held at FAO-RNE premises in Cairo over the period 29-30 May 2016.

B. AGENDA

41. The meeting was organized in six main sessions in addition to the opening and final closing sessions. The detailed agenda is included in Annex I.

C. PARTICIPANTS

42. The meeting was attended by 20 participants, including representatives of members of the project coordination committee (ESCWA, FAO, LAS, ICARDA and GIZ), and representatives of academia and research centers. The full list of participants is provided in Annex II.

D. EVALUATION OF THE MEETING

43. An evaluation questionnaire was distributed to assess the substantive and logistical aspects of the meeting. A total of 11 participants responded to the questionnaire. The majority of respondents expressed their satisfaction with the clarity of the meeting's objectives, the quality of presentations, and logistical aspects. The variety of ideas and clarity reflected in the methodology and case studies were highly praised, as well as the interaction between meeting participants. Few participants suggested to condense the meeting into a one day agenda, changing the order of presentations and enhancing their clarity and legibility. Other suggestions for improving future meetings included: sending relevant documents prior to the meeting; providing regular updates on project activities; and clarifying the roles and responsibilities of stakeholders.

E. DOCUMENTS

44. Presentations delivered during the meeting may be accessed through the following meeting webpage: <https://www.unescwa.org/events/food-water-security-component1-consultation1>.

Annex I. Agenda

Day 1: Sunday, 29 May 2016

- 8:30–9:00 **Registration**
- 9:00–9:30 **Opening Statements**
- *FAO: Mr. Nabil Gangi, Senior Advisor to the Regional Representative*
 - *LAS: Mr. Hammou Laamrani, Advisor, Technical Secretariat of Arab Water Ministerial Council*
 - *ESCWA: Mr. Mohamed Al-Hamdi, First Economic Affairs Officer, Food and Environment Policies Section, Sustainable Development Policies Division, ESCWA*
- Tour de Table
- *Organization of work and review of the Agenda
Mr. Mohamed Al-Hamdi, ESCWA*
- Discussion
- 9:30–10:30 **Session 1: Overview of the food and water security project progress**
Moderator: Mr. Aziz Elbehri, FAO
- *Scope, objectives and expected accomplishments of the project
Mr. Mohamed Al-Hamdi, ESCWA*
 - *Scope, objectives and activities of component I of the project
Mr. Faycel Chenini, FAO-RNE*
- Discussion
- 10:30–11:30 **Session 2: Assessment of climate change impacts on agricultural production**
Moderator: Mr. Hammou Laamrani, GIZ/LAS
- *Developed methodology for assessing climate change impacts on agricultural production
Mr. Ihab Jnad, ACSAD-LAS*
 - *Assessment application and results in pilot areas
Mr. Ihab Jnad, ACSAD-LAS*
- Discussion
- 11:30–11:45 Coffee Break
- 11:45–13:15 **Session 3: Selection criteria of the geographical coverage of the project**
Moderator: Mr. Waleed Zubari, Arabian Gulf University
- *Agro-climatic and other technical criteria; identification and analysis
Mr. Ihab Jnad, ACSAD-LAS*
 - *Identification and Analysis of Criteria, Requirements and Risks
Mr. Mohamed Al-Hamdi, ESCWA*
- Discussion

- 13:15–14:30 Lunch Break
- 14:30–16:00 **Session 4: Administrative and data requirements for selecting the geographical coverage of the project**
Moderator: Mr. Mohamed Al-Hamdi, ESCWA
- Data availability, institutional & human capacity, and other requirements
Mr. Aziz Elbehri, FAO
 - Statistical capacity and INDCs as indicator of country willingness
Ms. Jana El-Baba, ESCWA
- Discussion
- 16:00 **Wrap-up of the first day**
Mr. Faycel Chenini, FAO-RNE

Day 2: Monday, 30 May 2016

- 9:00–11:00 **Session 5: Risks associated with the selection of countries**
Moderator: Mr. Khalid Alrwis, King Saud University
- Risks and mitigation measures
Mr. Ihab Jnad, ACSAD-LAS
 - Proposed list of countries to be included in component I of the project
Mr. Faycel Chenini, FAO-RNE
- Discussion
Facilitated by Mr. Faycel Chenini aiming to finalize the list of countries on the basis on the outcome of the discussions of sessions 3, 4 and 5.
- 11:00–11:30 Coffee Break
- 11:30–13:00 **Session 6: Engaging countries and other stakeholders**
Facilitated by Mr. Mohamed Al-Hamdi, ESCWA
- Project activities and country-outreach plan
Mr. Ihab Jnad, ACSAD-LAS
 - Forming national joint (agriculture-water) teams
Mr. Faycel Chenini, FAO-RNE
- Discussion
- Potential role of academia and other stakeholders
A discussion facilitated by AUB
- 13:00–14:30 Lunch Break
- 14:30–15:45 **Session 7: The way forward and next steps**
 Discussion
Facilitated by Mr. Faycel Chenini and Mr. Mohamed Al-Hamdi
- 15:45-16:00 **Closing by FAO and ESCWA**

Annex II. List of participants

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