

MIDDLE EAST WATERSHED MONITORING AND EVALUATION PROJECT

ANNUAL REPORT

JANUARY 15, 2002

Section I. Technical Progress

This is the first Semi-Annual report of the Middle East Watershed Monitoring and Evaluation Project. USAID MERC approved the project on March 1, 2001. Prior to that date the Project had preliminary funding from the US State Department and the USDA Forest Service. Although funding was available prior to the USAID MERC grant the Project was incompletely funded and work was slow to begin. On May 29, 2001, the Project Coordinator provided overall guidance on the study to all participants. That guidance established the annual project cycle to be from January to December for the years 2000/1 to 2005. The initial period September 2000 to December 2001 was included in year one of the study. All technical and financial reporting will be coincident with the annual cycle of the project as outlined in the May 29, 2001 guidance.

1. Research Objectives:

The specific Project objectives are:

- a. Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of watershed management practices in preventing erosion and increasing the efficiency of water use in arid and semi-arid watershed pilot programs.
- b. Evaluate the biophysical measurements appropriate for evaluation of operational watershed management practices implemented for erosion control and biomass production in arid and semi-arid regions.
- c. Demonstrate effective practices for forest and grassland management using pilot watershed programs.

The Project is focused on two different components. The first is the evaluation of the effect of watershed treatments on vegetation, hydrology, and erosion/sedimentation. The second component is the evaluation of the monitoring tools used to assess treatment effectiveness.

During the first year the specific objectives were to:

- a. Complete the partner country research site selection. All partner countries have identified their research study site. Study site descriptions and photographs are available at the Project Website: (www//fs.fed.us/institute/middle_east)
- b. Complete Partner country study plans for the five year Project. All countries have completed their study plans. Study plan documents are available at the Project Website shown above.
- c. Complete site preparation, purchase, and installation of monitoring equipment. Israel, Jordan, Turkey and the United States have ~~completed~~ **APPENDED**

site work, equipment purchase and installation. The Palestinian Authority has been unable to purchase their equipment or access their site during the last year due to troubles in the Region. The Palestinian Authority continues to plan for the opportunity to initiate the study.

2. **Research Accomplishments.**

There have not been research accomplishments during this first year beyond initiation of the study plan in Partner countries.

3. **Scientific Impact of Cooperation:**

It is too early to determine the scientific impact of cooperation however the prospect for this to happen is good.

4. **Description of Project impact:**

It is too early to provide tangible evidence of the impact of the project however the prospect for this to occur is quite good.

5. **Strengthening of Middle Eastern Institutions:**

- a. The study involves both University and Government Agency personnel to intentionally build institutional relationships with countries and between countries. Technical exchanges both in person and through the project website are expected to facilitate the opportunity to strengthen institutions.
- b. As long as the current security situation exists, the Palestinian Authority team is invited to participate at the study sites of the other participating countries.
 - i. The United States, Israel, Jordan and Turkey agreed to invite members of the Palestinian Authority team to come to their countries and work on their own experiments, or in collaboration with the home country.
 - ii. Training and/or education can be provided.
 - iii. Turkey and Jordan could provide office space and the opportunity for Team Members and their families to stay for up to 6 months.
 - iv. Israel has an international graduate school that would be available for prospective graduate students for a 1-2 year period in which the MERC project would be a part of the study program. Housing is available for students and families.
 - v. The US State Department has provided 2002 funding for a joint supplemental project in which the Palestinian Authority, Jordan and Israel would collaborate. Use of the Jordanian and/or Israeli site for the Watershed monitoring project would be very useful for this collaborative study

6. Future Work:

The study plans that are available on the Project Website provide a description of the specific activities that each partner country will undertake during the 5-year study.

Section II.

1. Managerial Issues:

None to report at this time.

2. Special Concerns:

The continuing troubles in the Middle East are preventing the Palestinian Authority partners from conducting field research and limiting their full participation in the overall study. They have prepared a study plan and identified the study site and equipment needed to conduct the study, however they cannot work at the study site. The study is proceeding in all other partner countries according to plan.

3. Cooperation, Travel, Training, and Publications:

The US State Department has provided funds for the Study to have all partner countries meet during January 2002 (year 2 of the study). This is a key opportunity to establish personal interactions early in the deployment of the study. There are still opportunities to make some changes in the study plans of the various partner countries and this meeting will allow calibration of individual objectives and methods.

The inclusion of universities in the country leaders for the study will facilitate the opportunity to make the latest knowledge and technology available to all the participants. It will also permit the inclusion of graduate students on partner country study site research.

4. Request for USAID actions:

There is no request for USAID action at this time.