

Regional Training Workshop

Project Leadership, Management and Proposals' Development in Agriculture Research Organizations



Date: 7-10 November 2022

Venue: Kazakh National Agrarian Research University, 8 Abai avenue, Medeu district, Almaty, 050010, Republic of Kazakhstan

Highlights

There has been growing interest in Central Asia in agricultural research. It has made substantial contributions to the economic development of Central Asian countries, particularly in the last 30 years. However, it is generally agreed that agricultural research institutions are now facing several challenges, including effectively and efficiently managing research and development projects. It has become increasingly clear that this problem must do not only with factors relating to the winning and allocating grant funds for research or the technical competence of institutes but also and to a great extent, with factors relating to their managerial efficiency. There have, in fact, been many cases of research programs well provided with human and financial resources but failing to achieve their objectives because of inadequate and poor management practices. There is, therefore, a strong feeling that a major, coordinated effort to improve the management of agricultural research projects would go a long way towards streamlining the process of generation and adoption of new technologies in agriculture, to the ultimate benefit of economic and social development.

There is general agreement that projects are the main operational engagements through which agriculture research organizations realize their mission and goals. Large, competitive, and donor-restricted projects are increasingly becoming a more significant portion of research organizations' financial base. We recognize that managing the cluster of high-level programmatic, administrative, and financial demands during the initial stages can make or break a project. Without successful implementation, research organizations cannot effectively contribute to improving farming and livelihoods in the developing world. Research organizations' significant growth, coupled with an increasingly competitive marketplace, demands a consistent approach to project management. Many research organizations have developed models that outline their interpretation of the life cycle of projects and programs.

By the end of the training workshop, participants will be able to:

1. Apply the principals of leadership and teamwork within their institutions;
2. Identify the key activities in the project life cycle;
3. Align the components of project phases to the institution strategies;
4. Develop successful project concept notes and proposals and target potential donors.

Organizer

International Center for Biosaline Agriculture (ICBA),
Dubai, United Arab Emirates

National Agrarian Science and Education Center,
Kazakhstan

Kazakh National Agrarian Research University,
Kazakhstan

Islamic Development Bank, Saudi Arabia

Trainers

Dr. Charbel Tarraf, Chief Operations and
Development, ICBA, UAE

Dr. Asad Sarwar Qureshi, Senior Scientist – Water and
Irrigation Management, ICBA, UAE

Ms. Diletta Ciolina, Project Management Specialist
(Monitoring and Evaluation), ICBA, UAE

Coordinators

Dr. Aziz A. Karimov, Head of the regional office for
Central Asia and South Caucasus, ICBA, Uzbekistan

Mr. Ghazi Al-Jabri, Capacity Development Specialist,
ICBA, UAE

Agenda

Monday 7 November 2022

- 08:00 – 09:00 Registration
- 09:00 – 10:30 **Opening Session**
- Welcome speech, **Mr. Rustem Toktarov**, Head of the Strategic Development Department, National Agrarian Science and Education Center, Kazakhstan
 - Welcome note, **Dr. Charbel Tarraf**, Chief Operations and Development, ICBA, UAE
 - Welcome note, **Mr. Islamov Esenbay Israilovich**, Deputy Rector of Kazakhstan National Agriculture Research University
 - Presentation on the research of the International Center for Biosaline Agriculture
 - Introduction of trainers and participants
- 10:30 – 11:00 Group Photo and Coffee Break
- 11:00 – 13:00 Session 1: ***Presentations by participants***
- 13:00 – 14:30 Lunch break
- Module 1** **Project Leadership and Teamwork**
- Facilitator** **Dr. Charbel Tarraf**, Chief Operations and Development, ICBA
- 14:30 – 16:00 Session 2: ***Principles of leading a successful project***
- 19:00 – 21:00 Welcome dinner

Tuesday 8 November 2022

- Module 2** **Team building**
- Facilitator** **Dr. Charbel Tarraf**, Chief Operations and Development, ICBA
- 09:00 – 10:30 Session 3: ***Team building, self-management, and motivation***
- 10:30 – 11:00 Coffee Break
- Module 3** **Developing a project proposal**
- Facilitator** **Dr. Asad Sarwar Qureshi**, Senior Scientist – Water and Irrigation Management, ICBA
- 11:00 – 12:30 Session 4: ***Definitions and steps of writing a project proposal***
- 12:30 – 14:00 Lunch break
- Module 4** **Developing a project proposal**
- Facilitator** **Dr. Asad Sarwar Qureshi**, Senior Scientist – Water and Irrigation Management, ICBA
- 14:00 – 16:00 Session 5: ***Key Ingredients of a Project Proposal***

Wednesday 9 November 2022

- Module 5** **Developing a Project Proposal**
- Facilitator** **Dr. Asad Sarwar Qureshi**, Senior Scientist - Water and Irrigation Management, ICBA
- 09:00 – 10:30 Session 6: ***Defining problem and possible solutions***
- 10:30 – 11:00 Coffee break
- 11:00 – 12:30 Session 7: ***Developing activities, outputs, and deliverables***
- 12:30 – 14:00 Lunch break
- Module 6** **Writing a Project Report**
- Facilitator** **Dr. Asad Sarwar Qureshi**, Senior Scientist - Water and Irrigation Management
- 14:00 – 15:00 Session 8: ***How to write an effective project report?***
- Module 7** **Principles of Project Management**
- Facilitator** **Ms. Diletta Ciolina**, Project Management Specialist (Monitoring and Evaluation), ICBA
- 15:00 – 16:30 Session 9: ***Project initiation, planning scope, budget, and schedule***

Thursday 10 November 2022

- Module 7** **Principles of Project Management cont...**
- Facilitator** **Ms. Diletta Ciolina**, Project Management Specialist (Monitoring and Evaluation), ICBA
- 09:00 – 10:30 Session 10: ***Project planning risks, project executing, project monitoring and closing***
- 10:30 – 11:00 Coffee break
- Module 8** **Monitoring and Evaluation applied to Agricultural Research for Development**
- Facilitator** **Ms. Diletta Ciolina**, Project Management Specialist (Monitoring and Evaluation), ICBA
- 11:00 – 12:30 Session 11: ***Theory of change, why M&E, key definitions***
- 12:30 – 14:00 Lunch break
- Module 8** **Monitoring and Evaluation applied to Agricultural Research for Development Cont...**
- Facilitator** **Ms. Diletta Ciolina**, Project Management Specialist (Monitoring and Evaluation), ICBA
- 14:00 – 15:30 Session 12: ***Performance management, indicators, and evaluation***
- 15:30 – 16:00 Training evaluation

Trainers

Dr. Charbel Tarraf, Chief Operations and Development

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Dr. Charbel Tarraf joined ICBA in December 2020 as Senior Manager - Corporate Services and Development.

Dr. Tarraf brings to this role substantial international experience, having either worked or studied in Lebanon, Germany, USA, Canada, Malta, and Saudi Arabia.

Most recently he held the position of Associate Dean of Student Affairs at the American University of Beirut (AUB).

As an assistant professor in the biology department at AUB and before becoming the Associate Dean of Student Affairs at the same institution, Dr. Tarraf was involved in teaching undergraduate and graduate courses, conducting research, and working on curriculum development. During his tenure as Associate Dean at AUB, Dr. Tarraf worked as part of a team with responsibilities for a wide range of activities that involve an array of stakeholders. His duties included overseeing the activities and operations required to achieve students' personal and professional growth and development, as well as ensuring institutional excellence. Equally significant was his role in providing administrative oversight and strategic directives to achieve synergy and innovation. He chaired the strategic planning committees for his unit and was an active member of several strategic planning committees at the university. He was also the chairperson of the Unit Review Committee, which was tasked with conducting the review(s) and drafting the self-study of his unit. Dr. Tarraf also worked with a group on "Verification of Compliance" and was a member of the Institutional Assessment Committee. Additionally, Dr. Tarraf served as Vice Dean for Academic Affairs at Almana College of Health Sciences in al-Khobar, Saudi-Arabia, on secondment.

In both capacities, Dr. Tarraf introduced structure, developed clear roadmaps, streamlined processes, aligned objectives with the mission and strategic goals of the institution, and improved customer service. Dr. Tarraf was also an active and contributing member of the Board of Partners of the "Mediterranean Program for Human Rights and Democratization" at the University of Malta. His areas of expertise include Leadership, Operations Management, Strategic Planning, Policy Development, Coaching, Mentoring, and Research.

Dr. Tarraf holds a PhD in Reproductive Physiology from the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences of Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Virginia, USA, and a Master of Sciences from AUB. He also holds a Diploma, Ingenieur Agricole from AUB and a Diploma of Agricultural Sciences from Georg-August University, Göttingen, Germany.



Dr. Asad Sarwar Qureshi, Senior Scientist - Water and Irrigation Management

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Dr. Asad Sarwar Qureshi is Senior Scientist in Irrigation and Water Management at ICBA. Before joining the Center in 2014, he had worked at the International Water Management Institute (IWMI) and International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center (CIMMYT) in different scientific and management capacities in Pakistan, Iran, Iraq, Central Asia, and Bangladesh. He has served as country head of the IWMI offices in Pakistan, Iran and Central Asia. He was engaged with USAID, World Wildlife Fund, the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA) of Pakistan as a consultant for different



assignments related to water resources and environmental management.

He has about 30 years of experience in action research for finding agronomic and engineering solutions to mitigate incipient water logging and salinity problems of the irrigated areas and development of conservation strategies for the water-scarce regions of the Middle East, South Asia, Africa and Central Asia. He has managed projects covering irrigation and water management, drought coping strategies, conjunctive management of different quality waters, rehabilitation and management of salt-affected and waterlogged soils, groundwater management, climate change and adaptation, impact assessment of irrigation infrastructure development, water user associations and wastewater management.

He holds a Ph.D. degree in water resources management from Wageningen University, the Netherlands. He is author of more than 100 scientific publications.

Ms. Diletta Ciolina, Project Management Specialist (Monitoring and Evaluation)

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Ms. Diletta Ciolina joined ICBA as Proposal Development Specialist in 2015. She is currently Project Specialist. She is in charge of managing projects within DRI Division from start to end, including planning, executing, monitoring and evaluating according to pre-determined timelines and budgets. Her duties include building and managing project teams, reporting to project funders and ensuring quality control throughout project life cycles.

Before joining ICBA, she had worked as an international marketing executive for Parmalat, an Italian food company. She started working in the non-profit sector in 2009 as a food security and nutrition project manager for LVIA, an Italian NGO, in Burundi, D.R. Congo and Burkina Faso.

She holds an M.A. in International Relations, University of Trieste, Italy, and a master's degree in food and agribusiness, Catholic University in Cremona, Italy.

