
PRESS RELEASE

Ablah, Lebanon, 11/12/2014

On December 5th 2014, the small village of Ablah, in the Bekaa Valley, became the centre of Lebanese agriculture. Almost 300 people, including a large number of local farmers, gathered there in order to attend the speeches of important personalities concerning possible ways of adaptation to climate change. Throughout the day, several important leading actors of the agricultural and political Lebanese scenery gave their contribution and shared their experiences and opinions about the main topic of ACCBAT, a strategic ENPI CBC Med project focused on the adaptation to climate change and on the importance of using treated wastewater in agriculture.

After a welcome speech of the town's priest, the president of the union of municipalities of Zahle, Mr. Ibrahim Nasrallah remarked the growing importance of water in the world, especially in countries like Lebanon.

The president of Ablah municipality, Mr. Toufic Abou Zaydan, expressed his gratitude and satisfaction to ICU – Istituto per la Cooperazione Universitaria Onlus, to the European Union through the ENPI CBC Med Programme, and to ACCBAT project for the efforts in improving the water use efficiency in the village and in profiting of the treated wastewater coming from the WWTP (wastewater treatment plant) of Ablah, that otherwise would be wasted.

Mr. José Antonio Naya Villaverde, ICU representative in Lebanon, remarked the importance and the advantages for the local beneficiaries of ACCBAT and underlined the experience and the commitment of ICU in Lebanon (ICU is active in Lebanon with ENSIAP, a standard ENPI CBC Med project, and other activities).

Ms. Majida Mcheick, focal point of the project for the Lebanese Ministry of Agriculture (MoA), gave a description of the project and explained to the farmers the importance of using treated wastewater as an additional source of water for irrigation.

Mr. Louis Lahoud, the general director of MoA, remarked as well the crucial importance of water in agriculture and described the activities that the Ministry of Agriculture is carrying out in order to face the problem of water scarcity.

His Excellency Akram Chouhayeb, Minister of Agriculture, held the Conclusive speech of the farmers' day:

Dear colleagues, ministers and MPs,

Partners in facing climate change and developing best agricultural practices.

We suffered a lot from a draught that hit our region many decades ago and was tough this year on farms and agriculture, the Ministry and all the Lebanese citizens. Adaptation to climate change is a necessary and pressing step. We have to develop a policy for water management and safe ways to reuse it in order to face water scarcity which increases year after year, whether in surface, source, river or underground water that is exhausted arbitrarily, which affects our water storage and future reserves.

Dear friends,

We meet today to execute the vital project that aims to adapt to climate change, and for the first time in Lebanon, a project built on a technique that uses treated drainage water to meet water demand in irrigated agriculture is adopted. The importance of the project consists of the fact that it reuses the water safely, i.e. after treating it, which guarantees its safe use for a safe and healthy agricultural production. Hence, I address my brothers, the farmers, and invite them to abide by the use of the treated water in irrigation in order to guarantee the safety of the use and production.

In this context, I cannot but praise the farmers' enthusiasm and the cooperation between them and the project in order to make it succeed.

Adaptation to Climate Change through Improved Water Demand Management in Irrigated Agriculture
by Introduction of New Technologies and Best Agricultural Practices – ACCBAT

May we succeed together in our cooperation for this project and future ones, in order to fight desertification, irrigation water scarcity and draught effects.

I would like to thank the civil society in all its spiritual, local and elected bodies, as well as the ICU - Istituto per la Cooperazione Universitaria and the European Union and partners. The Ministry of Agriculture will endeavour to make the project succeed and is ready for further cooperation with the European Union and its national and international partners in launching projects that serve the agriculture as well as the development of the agricultural sector, and therefore serve the national production and economy. May we always meet on production and development projects.



ACCBAT is a 5M€, 4-Country, 3-year project, co-funded by the European Union (90%) for an amount of 4,498,152.50 Euros that contributes to the adaptation to climate change promoting the environmental sustainability through the increase of the water-use efficiency and the use of treated wastewater for agricultural irrigation.

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The 2007-2013 ENPI CBC Mediterranean Sea Basin Programme is a multilateral Cross-Border Cooperation initiative funded by the European Neighborhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI). The Programme objective is to promote the sustainable and harmonious cooperation process at the Mediterranean Basin level by dealing with the common challenges and enhancing its endogenous potential. It finances cooperation projects as a contribution to the economic, social, environmental and cultural development of the Mediterranean region. The following 14 countries participate in the Programme: Cyprus, Egypt, France, Greece, Israel, Italy, Jordan, Lebanon, Malta, Palestinian Authority, Portugal, Spain, Syria (participation currently suspended), Tunisia. The Joint Managing Authority (JMA) is the Autonomous Region of Sardinia (Italy). Official Programme languages are Arabic, English and French.

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The project "Adaptation to Climate Change through Improved Water Demand Management in Irrigated Agriculture by Introduction of New Technologies and Best Agricultural Practices - ACCBAT" is implemented under the ENPI CBC Mediterranean Sea Basin Programme (www.enpicbcmcd.eu). Its total budget is 4,998,152.50 Euro and it is financed, for an amount of 4,498,152.50 Euro (90%), by the European Union through the European Neighborhood and Partnership Instrument.

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