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Bari : CIHEAM

Options Méditerranéennes : Série A. Séminaires Méditerranéens; n. 68

2006

pages 149-152

Article available on line / Article disponible en ligne à l'adresse :

<http://om.ciheam.org/article.php?IDPDF=800518>

To cite this article / Pour citer cet article

Jamal M., Kaisi A. **GCSAR: objectives, activities and GEWAMED tentative plan of work.** In : Sagardoy J.A. (ed.), Hamdy A. (ed.), Trisorio-Liuzzi G. (ed.), Lamaddalena N. (ed.), Quagliariello R. (ed.), Bogliotti C. (ed.), Guelloubi R. (ed.). *Institutional coordination and streamlining partners activities in the framework of GEWAMED project.* Bari : CIHEAM, 2006. p. 149-152 (Options Méditerranéennes : Série A. Séminaires Méditerranéens; n. 68)



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# **GCSAR: OBJECTIVES, ACTIVITIES AND GEWAMED TENTATIVE PLAN OF WORK**

**M. Jamal\* and A. Kaisi**

\* General Commission for Scientific Agricultural Research, Ministry of Agriculture and Agrarian Reform, Syrian Arab Republic;

Email: [majdiama@scs-net.org](mailto:majdiama@scs-net.org), [ak-gcsar@scs-net.org](mailto:ak-gcsar@scs-net.org)

## **PREFACE**

Within the framework of agriculture development and food security attainment, the General Commission for Scientific Agricultural Research (GCSAR) was established, according to Resolution No. 42 dated 10/07/2001, by merging MAAR's agricultural research-concerned directorates (Directorate of Scientific Agricultural Research, Directorate of Irrigation and water Uses, Directorate of Soil, Directorate of Cotton Bureau, Directorate of Olive Bureau, Directorate of Citrus Bureau as well as Apple Research Center).

## **1. GCSAR'S ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE**

GCSAR consists of the following administrations (Figure 1):

### **2) Research administrations:**

- Crop Research,
- Horticulture Research,
- Natural Resource Research,
- Livestock Research,
- Cotton Research,
- Plant Protection Research,
- Socio-economics Research.

### **3) Independent departments:**

- Bio-technology,
- Food Technology,
- Genetic Resources.

### **4) Service administrations:**

- Technical Affairs,
- Administrative and Financial Affairs.

### **5) Independent service departments:**

- Public and International,
- Technology Transfer,
- Information and Dissemination,
- Planning, Following-up and Statistics,
- Training and Qualification.

### **6) Scientific agricultural research centers in Syria.**

### **7) Scientific agricultural research labs.**

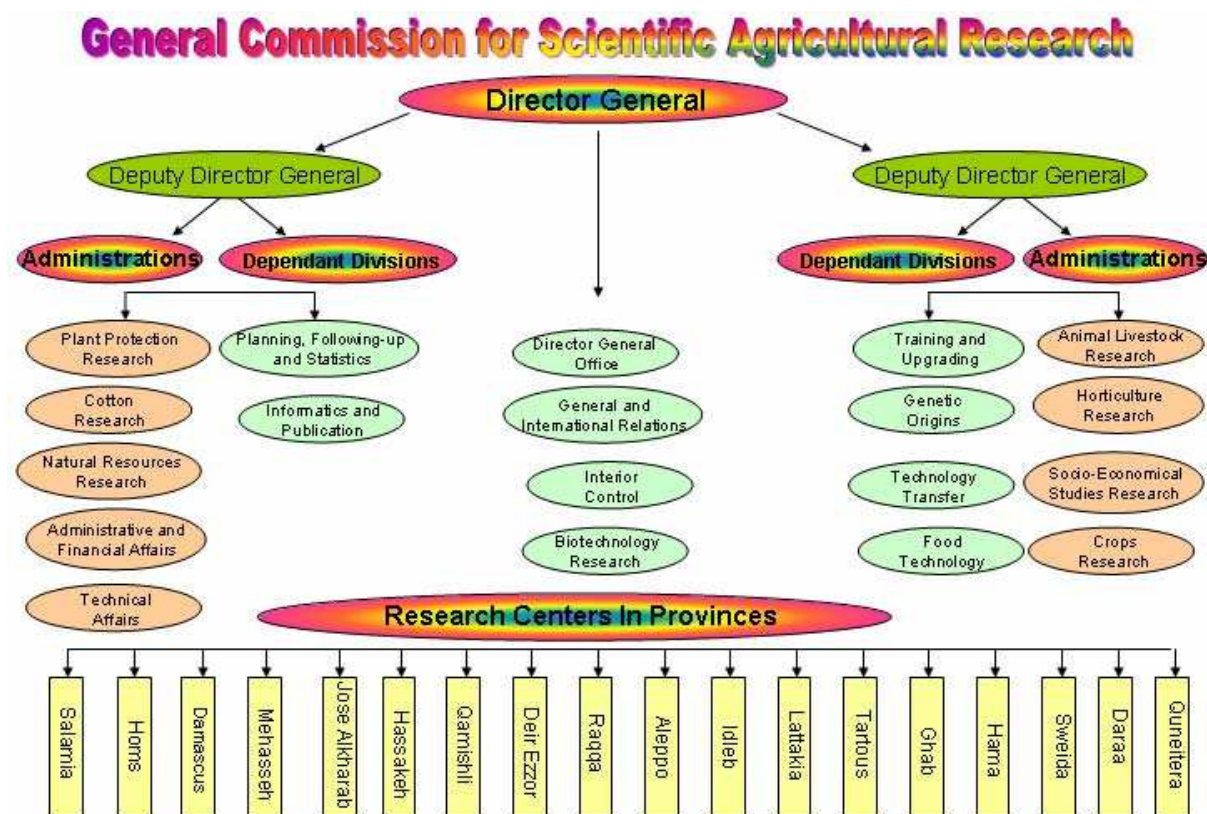


Fig. 1. GCSAR's organizational structure

## 2. GCSAR'S OVERALL OBJECTIVES

### 1) Development of agricultural research by:

- Studying the current status of Syrian agriculture and defining the problems and development potential.
- Charting long-term strategies and phased research plan to increase agricultural productivity, improve quality, reduce production costs and maintain natural agricultural resources, particularly water and vegetation.
- Implementing advanced research projects in the field of modern bio-technology, irrigation, drought, specifications of clean agricultural production and animal production.

### 2) Strengthening technical capabilities of researchers via training courses, conferences, seminars and post-graduated studies.

### 3) Linking agricultural research with planning and extension bodies, farmers and private sector in order to conduct agricultural research according to the priorities and speed up the application of research results.

## 3. GCSAR'S WORKFORCE

### 3.1. Personnel

The number of permanent personnel is over 2770, of which 80 Ph.D., 74 M. Sc. 1601 B. Sc. and 15 veterinarians.

Table 1. Number of researchers and assistant-researchers at GCSAR

| Degree | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 |
|--------|------|------|------|------|
| Ph. D. | 63   | 78   | 80   | 80   |
| M. Sc. | 39   | 59   | 74   | 74   |
| B. Sc. | 838  | 1023 | 1053 | 1601 |
| Total  | 940  | 1160 | 1207 | 1755 |

The above total number is added to over 1000 technicians and field workers.

Table 2. Number of female researchers at GCSAR

| Degree | Number |
|--------|--------|
| Ph. D. | 3      |
| M. Sc. | 20     |
| B. Sc. | 232    |
| Total  | 255    |

GCSAR conducts field trials at 15 research centers, 52 stations and 218 research locations spread all over the governorates, covering all different Syrian agro-ecological zones. It has 70 major multitask labs and 35 secondary ones, and these labs are distributed to different GCSAR administrations in Damascus and provincial centers. GCSAR undertakes efforts to develop these labs and supply them with equipment and technical expertise, and it intends to open more labs, particularly in the field of hydraulics, irrigation equipment evaluation, genetic engineering and tissue culture.

### 3.2. Researchers at Natural Resources Research Administration (ANRR)

ANRR contains a number of researchers and assistant researchers in the field of water management, on-farm water (conventional or non-conventional) use efficiency improvement, and land and forest management. Total number of ANRR's personnel at head office is 157 researchers and assistant researchers of which 98 male and 59 female, and 285 at research stations, of which 191 male and 94 female. Also, ANRR has 109 technicians of which 63 male and 46 female.

## 4. GCSAR STRATEGY

GCSAR strategy is crystallized by undertaking several important activities of which:

- Breeding new salinity/drought tolerant and water-consumption efficient varieties in order to increase productivity per area unit.
- Focusing on quality improvement of agricultural products and their suitability for processing and export.
- Improving conventional/non-conventional water management and increasing its use efficiency.
- Rationalizing the use of production inputs, improving product specifications and reducing production costs.
- Conserving natural agricultural resources (water, soil, vegetation) and their sustainable improvement, developing agro-systems, and combating desertification and land degradation.
- Searching for alternative crops adaptable for Syrian environment.
- Restudying the Syrian agro-ecological and water/land use map, and creating databases, reaching to the agricultural map.
- Paying attention to bio-technology and genetic engineering research and applying their results for improving crop quality and production.
- Studying the socio-economic impact of modern technology and its adoption.
- Promoting rural woman and finding-out alternative farm income sources.
- Enhancing the programmes of modern agricultural technology transfer to production locations via agricultural extension.
- Paying attention to informatics and its applications in agricultural research.
- Qualifying the scientific staff and increasing the number of M. Sc. and Ph.D. holders.
- Developing labs and research centers and supplying them with necessary machines and equipment.

- Increasing scientific cooperation with universities, local, Arab and international agricultural research centers and institutions.

## **5. PREVIOUS EXPERIENCES ON GENDER ISSUES**

GCSAR previously had some experience with gender issues through the regional Agrobiodiversity project which have been financed by GEF, where the role of gender in the conservation of agrobiodiversity and in the income generating activities was addressed in the project area.

In addition to that, the role of rural women in decision making and in agricultural economics also have been studied during the Mashrek and Maghreb (M&M) project which have been conducted by ICARDA and financed mainly by IFAD.

## **6. GCSAR AND GEWAMED PROJECT**

The followings are some ideas about how GCSAR organization could promote the role of women in the field of water resource management within the framework of GEWAMED project:

- To qualify female engineers on water education via training programmes.
- To organize field days and seminars at provincial level.
- To organize workshops in which experts on project's sphere of action are invited.
- To develop rural women by implementing income-generating projects for small-groups of women.
- To develop educational brochures on woman work in water management.
- To create a national database concerned with rural woman and water management.
- To establish an electronic site specialized with project activities and information exchange with participation countries, and make use of the experiences of developed countries.

## **7. SOME ACTIVITIES FOR THE NEXT 18 MONTHS (PLAN OF WORK)**

- Assigning a national team for project management locally.
- Conducting field surveys on woman role in on-farm water management in preparation of database establishment.
- Organizing training course for female women training on water education.
- Following-up the research conducted in the field of on-farm water management and the involvement of women in these research.