



## Information note on the technical meeting

# “Improved Water Allocation for Agriculture in the Arab Region”

## Implementation of the resolution of the Second Joint Ministerial Council on the Guidelines on Improved Water Allocation for Agriculture in the Arab region

### 1. Background

In its first meeting held in October 2019, the High-Level Joint Water-Agriculture Technical Committee (HLJTC) of the League of Arab States requested the Joint Technical Secretariat of the Joint Ministerial Water Council for Water and Agriculture, consisting of the Technical Secretariat of the Arab Ministerial Water Council and the Arab Organization for Agricultural Development (AOAD) to develop *Guidelines on Improved Allocation of Water Resources for Agriculture* with the support of FAO and ESCWA. Hence, the Joint Technical Secretariat in collaboration with FAO and ESCWA, established a working group to prepare the requested Guidelines. The Guidelines were presented and discussed during the second and third meetings of the HLJTC and endorsed by the ministers of water and agriculture during the second Joint Ministerial Meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> January 2022.

In addition to the endorsement of the Guidelines, the resolution of the Joint Ministerial Council states the voluntary implementation of the Guidelines at country level and invites FAO and ESCWA to support this process through the implementation of pilot projects. The pilot projects will aim to address and improve water allocation in a given part of the national water system, following the above-mentioned Guidelines. The pilot projects will be representative of a main area of significant improvement in the water allocation in the country and will be expected to result impact within a foreseeable period and serve as a learning case.

Following this resolution, four countries officially expressed their interest in applying the Guidelines at a pilot scale: Egypt, Jordan, Palestine and Tunisia. All four countries established “project country teams” comprising representatives of the Ministries in charge of Water and Agriculture.

In this framework, the Joint Technical Secretariat, FAO and ESCWA are co-organizing a technical meeting to bring together representatives from the four candidate countries to work jointly and practically towards the preparation of a pilot project on the application of the guidelines on improved water allocation in the Arab region.

### 2. Objectives of the meeting

The general objective of the technical meeting is to contribute to the planning and design process of the pilot Project on improved water resource allocation for agriculture in the Arab Region.

Three specific objectives can be assigned:

1. Present and discuss the detailed methodological approach for developing improved water allocation plans in the pilot areas proposed by the four participating countries;
2. Review the prerequisites and identify the challenges and constraints specific to each participating country and explore solutions to coordinate with relevant stakeholders prior to and during the Project implementation;
3. Outline Project concept notes and preliminary action plans for each selected area.



### 3. Expected results

The expected outcomes of the technical workshop can be summarized as follows:

1. Country teams shall achieve an enhanced understanding of the future Project, including: the objectives and expected results of the pilot Project, the methodological approach and tools, the institutional framework<sup>1</sup> and implementation arrangements, the level of efforts, the timeline and the technical assistance needed to support the Project implementation;
2. Country teams shall reach a clear understanding of the concrete steps, activities and methodological tools needed to develop improved water allocation plans in their respective areas;
3. Country teams shall identify the national resources and prerequisites/commitments needed, prior to the start of the Project;
4. Country teams shall identify the follow-up activities to be implemented during the post-workshop period in preparation for the water allocation piloting project.

### 4. Deliverables

In the days preceding the workshop, each country team will deliver a concept note outlining key information items, including the description of the pilot area, the status of water resources, the water governance systems, etc. Following the workshop, each country team will turn the outline concept note into a preliminary action plan (or outline action plan) based on the discussions and main findings of the workshop. It is foreseen that the preliminary actions plans will be consolidated and turned into a single Project Proposal for financing and implementation. Throughout this process, country teams will work under guidance from FAO/ESCWA consultants, in coordination with LAS and AOAD.

### 5. Target audience

The technical workshop will target the four countries that have officially expressed their interest in applying the Guidelines as a pilot, namely Egypt, Jordan, Palestine and Tunisia. The workshop will target the following audience:

- Four country teams, comprising each four assigned officials from the Ministries in charge of Water and Agriculture;
- Four national consultants, whose role is to support the country teams in the development of the countries' actions plans.

### 6. Resource partners

The preparation of the workshop will benefit from the following resource partners:

- FAO RNE and ESCWA, as agencies supporting the agriculture-water policy dialogue process led by the League of Arab States;
- The FAO/ESCWA experts who prepared the *Guidelines*;
- One expert in advanced water accounting from the *Institute for Water Education IHE Delft*<sup>2</sup>;
- One expert in role-playing games from LISODE<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Institutional framework refers to the roles and responsibilities of all parties involved in the project.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.un-ihe.org/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.lisode.com/home/>



The application of water accounting frameworks will be critical during Project implementation to assess the status and dynamics of water resources in the pilot areas, set sustainable limits of water consumption and design appropriate water allocation plans. Complementarily, role-playing have proved to be effective an pedagogical tool and will support the assessment of the pilot areas and facilitate collective planning and decision-making processes.

IHE and LISODE experts will form a team in charge of (i) building understanding and capacities of the country teams around the pilot Project and (ii) supporting the country teams in the preparation of the preliminary action plans in the four project areas. IHE and LISODE experts will work under the direction of FAO/ESCWA Consultants.

## 7. Proposed agenda

26 September 2022			
Opening session	9:00 - 9:10	Ambassador Shahira Wahbi, Chief Natural Resources Sustainability, Partnerships and Disaster Risk Reduction, League of Arab States	Overall objectives and plan for voluntary implementation of guidelines on improved water allocation
Session 1: Presentation of the guidelines	9:10 - 9:40	Frank van Steenberg (FAO) and Nadim Farajallah (ESCWA)	Guidelines on Improved Water Allocation for Agriculture: direction, examples and processes
Session 2: Countries' concept notes – focus on water availability, water flows, water uses and water allocation arrangements	9:40 - 10:00	Country team of Egypt	Presentation of the draft concept note
	10:00 – 10:20	Country team of Tunisia	Presentation of the draft concept note
	10:20 – 10:45	Country teams of Egypt and Tunisia	Questions/answers
	10:45 – 11:10	Break	
	11:10 – 11:30	Country team of Palestine	Presentation of the draft concept note
	11:30 – 11:50	Country team of Jordan	Presentation of the draft concept note
	11:50 – 12:15	Country teams of Palestine and Jordan	Questions/answers
12:15 – 13:45 Lunch			
Session 3-A: Group sessions - Informing and improving water allocation arrangements	13:45 – 16:30*	Group “Jordan and Palestine” - Informing and improving water allocation arrangements through a generic role-playing game, Marc Haering (LISODE)	Group “Egypt and Tunisia” - Application of water accounting methodologies to inform and improve water allocation arrangements, IHE
	16:30 – 16:45	Break	
	16:45 – 17:15	Frank van Steenberg (FAO) and Nadim Farajallah (ESCWA)	Wrap-up of the day

*\*Note: Both sessions (role-play and water accounting) are run in parallel*



27 September 2022

Opening session	9:00 - 9:05	ESCWA	Brief outline of the day's agenda
Session 3-B: Group sessions - Informing and improving water allocation arrangements	9:05 – 11:30*	Group “Egypt and Tunisia” - Informing and improving water allocation arrangements through a generic role-playing game, Marc Haering (LISODE)	Group “Jordan and Palestine” - Application of water accounting methodologies to inform and improve water allocation arrangements, IHE
	11:30 – 11:45	Break	
Session 4: Introducing the “outline action plans”	11:45 – 12:30	Frank van Steenberg (FAO) and Nadim Farajallah (ESCWA), with assistance of IHE/LISODE	Guidance on developing the “outline action plans” with a focus on the process/activities and the roadmap (i.e. activities to be conducted until the end of the year)
	12:30 – 14:00	Lunch	
Session 5 : Developing the “outline action plans”	14:00 – 16:00	All country teams working on developing the “outline action plans” focusing on the processes, with support of rotating coaches (guidelines, water accounting and role-plays)	
	16:00 – 16:15	Break	
	16:15 – 17:00	Continuation - All country teams working on developing the “outline action plans” focusing on the processes, with support of rotating coaches (guidelines, water accounting and role-plays)	
	17:00 – 17:10	Frank van Steenberg (FAO) and Nadim Farajallah (ESCWA)	Wrap-up of the day
Closing session	16:45 – 16:55	Dr. Kamel Mostafa El Sayed, Head of the Middle Region Office, Water Resource Expert, Arab Organization for Agricultural Development	Concluding remarks

*\*Note: Both sessions (role-play and water accounting) are run in parallel*