



UN-ESCWA

UNITED NATIONS - Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia



# Mainstreaming biodiversity in socio-economic development

## Lessons learned from the ESCWA region

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## Context

- Memorandum of Understanding between UN Regional Commissions and the CBD;
- UN-ESCWA Support to the League of Arab States on environmental issues, including biodiversity;
- Study and EGM planned within ESCWA/SDPD work programme 2010-2011 on biotechnology;
- Arab regional preparations for CSD-20/21.

## Objectives

- Highlight UN-ESCWA activities addressing biodiversity issues and which fall under the following frameworks:
  - Trade and environment linkages
  - Sustainable livelihood through sustainable land management
- Summarize lessons learned

# Trade & Environment Linkages



## **Project 1: Sustainability impact assessment of the Euro-Mediterranean Free Trade Area (SIA/EMFTA, 2004-2007)**

- **Partners:**
  - Commissioned by the EU and implemented by the University of Manchester and multiple partners including UN-ESCWA
- **Overall objective:**
  - Assess the potential economic, social & environmental impacts of the liberalization of trade related to industry, agriculture and services as a result of the establishment of the EMFTA
- **Biodiversity aspect:**
  - Biodiversity is one of the key aggregate indicators of sustainability outcomes in the pre-assessment, and is also proposed as indicator for the post-assessment

## Project 1: SIA/EMFTA (*Continued*)

- Summary of SIA results in relation to **biodiversity** :
  - For agricultural liberalization due to the EMFTA:
    - **Short terms effects** would be mixed, with beneficial impacts where production declines and adverse pressures where production rises
    - Positive and negative impacts do not cancel
    - In the EU the overall effect is expected to be small
    - In Mediterranean Partner Countries the effect is expected to be significantly adverse unless mitigated
    - Effects in both directions would be most significant in areas where water scarcity or land conversion are already causing pressure on biodiversity
    - **In the longer term**, the adverse pressures from increasing production would be partially countered by greater resource efficiency from more competitive agricultural techniques
  - For liberalization of services and industrial goods due to the EMFTA:
    - Effects are not expected to be significant

# Trade & Environment Linkages



## Project 1: SIA/EMFTA (Continued)

Snapshot from the impact summary table related to agricultural liberalization under EMFTA showing various environmental impacts

Impact	Countries / sectors affected	Causal factors	Factors affecting significance	Potential significance	
				short term	long term
<b>Environmental</b>					
<u>Biodiversity</u>	Positive and negative effects in locations where production falls and rises.	Production changes and pressures on resources	Existing levels of stress. Implementation of programmes to protect sensitive areas and promote sustainable use	↑↓	↑↓
<u>Environmental quality</u>					
water quality	Positive and negative effects in locations where production falls and rises.	Production changes, greater intensification, greater resource efficiency	Stronger regulation, support for efficiency improvements	↑↓	↑↓
climate change	all	International transport	transport modes	↓	↓
urban environment	all	Loss of rural jobs exacerbates trends for internal migration	Town planning systems and infrastructural investment	↓	↓
<u>Natural resources</u>	all	Positive and negative effects on water abstraction and land conversion. Economic growth.	Existing levels of stress. Water management and land use policies and regulations	↑↓	↓

Source: Final report of the SIA/EMFTA project, November 2007

## **Project 1: SIA/EMFTA (Continued)**

- Lessons learned:
  - SIA is an effective instrument for mainstreaming biodiversity into trade analysis across sectors
  - Indicators of biodiversity need to be chosen carefully and through a consultative process to ensure acceptability and relevance of results
- For more info: <http://www.sia-trade.org>

# Trade & Environment Linkages



## **Project 2: Regional Programme for Trade & Environment Capacity Building in the Arab Region (TEAR, 2003 – ongoing)**

- **Partners:**
  - League of Arab States and UNEP/ROWA
- **Overall objective:**
  - Support Arab countries to address the challenges and take advantage of the opportunities presented by T&E within the context of the global trading system
- **Biodiversity aspect:**
  - Focus on market access and competitiveness issues arising from environmental, health and safety requirements, including those related to GMOs

## **Project 2: TEAR (*Continued*)**

- ESCWA activities under TEAR relevant to biodiversity:
  - ESCWA working paper discussing the policy framework for GMOs in the ESCWA region, with a case study on Lebanon (2005)
  - E-Forum on Modern Biotechnology and its Implications in the Near East and North Africa Region (1 September - 10 October 2005)
  - Capacity building and technical assistance provided to inter-ministerial/multi-stakeholder national T&E committees on market access and competitiveness issues related to GMOs (upon request)

## Project 2: TEAR (*Continued*)

- Lessons learned
  - The private sector (producers and retailers) must be fully informed of opportunities/challenges posed to market access due to GMOs
  - Assessing farmer perceptions of GMOs is as important as assessing consumer/market preferences
  - Need for farmer capacity building on GMOs, especially in countries of the region which have poor extension services
  - Research centers (public and private) will be central actors in efforts to establish gene banks in Arab countries for preserving both national and regional genetic resources  
(*Coordination being arranged under the auspices of LAS*)
- For more info: <http://www.escwa.un.org/tear/>

# Sustainable Livelihoods



## **Project: Cultivation of traditionally wild medicinal and aromatic plants (zaatar (thyme) & sumac) in South Lebanon (2004 – ongoing)**

- Partners:
  - ILO, UNIDO, AFESD, World Vision, ADR
- Overall objective:
  - Income generation and employment creation opportunities in an impoverished area in post-conflict
- Biodiversity aspect:
  - Focus on propagation and cultivation protocols for targeted species instead of random and unsustainable harvesting from the wild (typically in marginal lands)

# Sustainable Livelihoods



## Project: *Zaatar* & sumac (*Continued*)

- Summary of project outputs – **Zaatar**:
  - Three clusters of farmers
  - 30,000 m<sup>2</sup> of planted land
  - Seedling propagation greenhouse
  - Post-harvest facility (*drying and processing*)
  - Booklet assessing zaatar productivity and competitiveness in Lebanon (*to be published soon*)



**Zaatar field**



**Zaatar greenhouse**



**Zaatar seedling**

## Project: *Zaatar & sumac (Continued)*

- Summary of project outputs - **Sumac**:
  - National survey of sumac varieties in Lebanon
  - Propagation protocol developed
  - Training program and research facility on sumac propagation and production



**Sumac plant**



**Sumac seeds**



**Sumac training programme** 13

## **Project: Zaatar & sumac (Continued)**

- Lessons learned:
  - Preserving local species through domestication and development of propagation methods has positive implications for biodiversity while serving socio-economic objectives
  - Establishing standards and geographic indicators is not enough by itself to preserve species that are endemic to countries/sub-regions

# Next Steps



## Partnerships sought

In 2010:

- EGM on the Production and Use of Biotechnologies in the ESCWA Region
- Study on Biotechnology Applications for Enhanced Productivity and Competitiveness in the ESCWA Region

Focus likely to relate to implications, opportunities and challenges for small and medium enterprises

# Thank you



## Contact

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