



## Leveraging research for sustainable development in the Arab region

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The Arab region is the driest in the world, and it is home to 14 of the 33 most water-stressed countries on the planet. Additionally, low level of natural water abundance is intensified by wasteful approaches to water management and pollution from untreated wastewater. Several Arab countries have nearly exhausted their resources of renewable water, and some of them are facing frequent and prolonged water shortages that force them to make hard choices, regarding the management and allocation of these limited resources, in order to ensure the achievement of the sustainable development goals on national level. Prioritization of various demands for water resources, in such countries, is a complicated multi-dimensional process that entails not only national policies but also science-based solutions.

The International Center for Agricultural Research in Dry Areas (ICARDA) has conducted research, for more than 40 years, in the Arab region with an overall objective of enhancing food security and sustaining livelihoods of local rural communities through integrated agricultural production

systems. Since its establishment in 1977, ICARDA has worked on the development of scientific approaches for the optimization of water and energy use for food production. Such approaches are instrumental for halting the alarming process of natural resources degradation, and ultimately breaking the vicious cycle connecting such degradation to poverty, in the Arab region.

ICARDA research findings have been used throughout the Arab region within national and regional interventions aimed at enhancing agricultural productivity while ensuring the long-term sustainability of the natural resources base in the region. Some of these interventions have led to significant improvements both in terms of efficiency gains in natural resources use and in terms of national policies. This presentation aims at showing these findings, how they are being used in various ICARDA interventions, how they contribute to improved national policies, and ultimately how they contribute to sustainable development in the region.