MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE   **FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION**
AND LAND RECLAMATION   **OF THE UNITED NATIONS**
AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH CENTER
RURAL AND AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION
NETWORK PROJECT (RADCON) UTF/EGY/021/EGY

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To   : Dr. El-Sayed El-Azhary   NPD
From   : Dr. Mohamed H. Kassem   Stakeholder Analysis Consultant
Subject   : Report on the workshop on potential development of VERCON Systems
Date   : June 18, 2005

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Rational:

Reference to the TOR of National Consultant of RADCON Stakeholders Analysis and the meeting of RADCON consultants and FAO representatives on 23/3/2005; a Workshop on Potential development of VERCON Systems as a component of the Rural and Agricultural Development Communication Network (RADCON) was conducted on 23 May, 2005. The workshop is complementary to the study on Information Needs Assessment of VERCON stakeholders as a component of RADCON stakeholder analysis that was conducted by the consultant.

Venue:

Central Laboratory for Agricultural Expert System, 6 El-Nour Street, Dokki, Giza

Workshop objectives:
1. To Brief audience about the current setuation of VERCON systems.
2. To present justifications for developing VERCON, suggestiond for upgrading the current systems and review the new systems proposed.
3. To discuss the potentials of VERCON systems development in the next phase.

Participants:

The workshop was attended by directors, deputies, or representatives from the current and potential VERCON stakeholders. Participants represented the following institutions:
- FAO/RNE and FAO Egypt
- ARC/HQ
- Field Crop Research Institute
- Horticulture Research Institute
- Animal Production Research Institute
- Plant Protection Research Institute
- Plant Pathology Research Institute
- Central Administration for Agricultural Extension Services
- Central Administration Agricultural Research & Experimental Stations
- Economic Sector, MALR
- Development Support Communication Centers
- Regional Research Station in the New Lands
- Field Crops Research Station in Nobaria
- Regional Research Station in Fayoum
- Regional Research Station in East Delta
- Horticulture Research Station in Kassaseen
- Regional Research Station in North Delta
- Field Crops Research Station in Sakha
- Regional Research Station in Upper Egypt
- Field Crops Research Station in Shandaweel
- Regional Research Station in West Delta
- Field Crops Research Station in Sabhia
- Agricultural Directorate and related Extension centers in Kafr El-Shiekh
- Agricultural Directorate and related Extension centers in Assuit
- Agricultural Directorate and related Extension centers in Nobaria
- Agricultural Directorate and related Extension centers in Ismailia
- Agricultural Directorate and related Extension centers in Fayoum

- Agricultural Directorate and related Extension centers in Behira

Proceedings:
- **Opening**
  - Dr. Tag El-Deen   ARC Deputy for Extension and training
  - Dr. El-Sayed El-Azhary   Director of CLAES
  - Dr. Ahmed Rafea   National Consultant
  - Dr. Mohamed Shaker   Director of AERDI
  - Dr. Mohamed El-Ansary   FAO

- **Overview of current VERCON systems**
  - General Concept   Dr. Ahmed Rafea
  - VERCON Architecture   Dr. El-Sayed El-Azhary
  - Usage of VERCON in Extension   Dr. Mohamed Shaker

- **Potentials of VERCON interface development**
  - Forum & News   Dr. Mohamed El-Helly
  - Expert Systems   Eng. Kaled Bahnacy
  - Agricultural Problems   Eng. Ashraf Hendam

- **Study results to develop VERCON systems**   Dr. Mohamed Kassem
- **Discussion and formation of working groups**
- **Working Groups**
  - Group 1   News system, forum and training system.
  - Group 2   Farmer problems system and Extension programme monitoring system
  - Group 3   Registry, expert system, Extension programme and e-commerce system.

- **Presentation of each group results and discussion**
- **Wrap-up Session**

Recommendations:
The news system
1. Approving the study recommendations
2. Add an archive system to enable the user to locate the news by date, subject and source.
3. Add all the radio and TV programs schedules including the time of airing and episode subject.
4. Add the monthly action plan of the extension equipped vehicle by the related Development Support Communication Center (DSCC).
5. Add a component for the announcement of agriculture exhibitions.
6. Enable the news source suggested in the study recommendations to upload its related news. after the source director approval, AERDRI will publish it.

Vercon forum system
1. Approving the study recommendations
2. Add a help page on how to use the system.
3. Add a function for publishing successful experiences and ideas.
4. Suggested discussion groups
   - Youth problems in agriculture
   - Rural Women
   - Different agricultural commodities

Training system
1. Approving the study recommendations
2. Consider covering different specialization.
3. Use distance learning techniques.
4. Training modules should be based on needs assessment.

5. Publish the training plans including syllabus, trainors, target trainees or groups, venue, duration and training cost if applicable.

Registry system

Approving the study recommendations.

Expert systems
1. Approving the study recommendations.
2. Develop a list for all possible symptoms and avail it in a printable format to help extensionists identify it during their field diagnosis.
3. Develop multi-disciplinary expert systems such as weed identification and control or IPM.

E-commerce system
1. Approving the study recommendations.
2. Change the name of the system to be agriculture marketing information system.
3. The system should be under RADCON and not VERCON.

Extension programs system

Approve the study recommendations

Extension program monitoring system
1. Approving the study recommendations
2. Monitoring the program should include: title, general goals, and extension objectives.
3. Levels of progam planning should not be included but rather the system should focus on extension activities related to the action plan of the program. This should enable the extension center officer to fill field data for every activity according plan and then submit it the higher level and then to the central level. As a result the decision maker at the central level will be able to follow-up crop production in all concerned governorates.
4. AERDRI should participate in this monitoring process by identifying farmers response towards different recommendations and follow-up the adopted recommendations and projected once. This will enable extension program planner to re-adjust the program for the next season and provide researchers with the clear picture of adopting their recommendations.

Farmer problems system
1. Approving the study recommendations
2. Provide the sites in extension centers, agricultural directorates and research stations with digital cameras to enable them to include a picture of the symptoms either for the problem or the solution.
3. Add a function in the problem data base to search the frequently repeated problems or persisting problems.
4. Limit problems upload to the extension centers and if any farmer has a problem send it through the email.
5. Continue developing the slide picture database and enable the DSCC to upload it.
6. The manager of the research station should coordinate with research departments to assign a research officer to solve the daily problems.