

Draft Report
Proceedings of the Workshop on
Potential Development of RADCON Systems/Modules and Management
February 13, 2006*

Venue:

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

The workshop objectives:

The workshop goal was to present the current situation and progress of RADCON project to all potential stakeholders to be acquainted with RADCON components and reach an agreement on future collaboration and activities. In specific, the workshop aimed to:

1. Conduct a knowledge meeting for potential RADCON stakeholders and enhance their contribution.
2. Brief RADCON potential stakeholders about the project objectives, work plan, progress in project implementation and problems encountered, and seek participants' feedback .
3. Present and discuss the recommended systems/modules, and suggested content management.
4. Seek tangible technical contributions and commitments from potential project stakeholders, and confirm status of those present as 'fully participating' stakeholders or merely 'external users' of RADCON.
5. Present and discuss the involvement of local communities.

Participants:

The workshop was attended by 61 representatives from 31 potential RADCON stakeholders in addition to the project consultants. Participants represented the following institutions:

- Agricultural Research Center (ARC)
- FAO/RNE and FAO Egypt
- FAO international consultant
- Field Crop Research Institute (FCRI)
- Agricultural Extension and Rural Development Research Institute (AERDRI)
- Soil, Water and Environment Research Institute (SWERI)
- Animal Health Research Institute (AHRI)
- Central Laboratory for Agricultural Expert Systems (CLAES)
- Horticulture Research Institute (RHI)
- Central Administration for Agricultural Research & Experimental Stations
- Economic Sector, MALR
- Central Administration for Agricultural Extension Services (CAAES), and Department of Rural Development (DRD)
- General Authority for Veterinary Services
- Development Support Communication Centre in Dekerness (DSCC)
- Policy and Coordination Unit for Women in Agriculture (PCUWA)
- Regional Research Station in North Delta
- Agricultural Directorate in Kafr El-Shiek, Nobaria, Behira, and Assuit.
- Agricultural Directorate in Nobaria.
- Agricultural Directorate in Behira.
- Agricultural Directorate in Assuit.
- Regional Research stations in Middle Egypt, Seds
- Regional Research stations in Upper Egypt, Shandaweel
- Regional Research stations in East Delta, Kassaseen
- Regional Research stations in Mid-Delta, Gemiza
- Regional Research stations in North Delta, Sakha
- Regional Research stations in the New Land, Nobaria
- Faculty of Agriculture, Mansoura University
- CARE organization

* Dr. Mohamed H. Kassem, National project consultant.

- The Horticultural Export Improvement Association (HEIA)
- Mid-Delta Radio Station
- The Principal Bank for Development and Agricultural Credit

Proceedings:

a. Opening

- Dr. Soliman Edrees Director of CLAES
- Dr. Tag El-Deen Shehab El-Deen ARC Deputy for Extension and training
- Dr. Mohamed El-Ansary Assistant FAO Representative in Egypt

b. Overview of RADCON activities

- Current situation and progress Dr. Ahmed Rafea
Dr. Rafea's presentation focused on the project aim and objectives, expected project outputs, situation when project started, current situation, workshop objectives and concluding remarks.
- Results of RADCON needs assessment study Dr. Mohamed Shaker
Dr. Shaker's reviewed the information needs for target groups in the selected poor villages. He presented in brief the study objective, area, samples and the information needs identified regarding small projects, agricultural activities, environment conservation, rural woman in development, dealing with NGOs, human and veterinary health awareness

c. Potential modules of RADCON and planning

- Suggested Modules, information and sources Dr. Mohamed Kassem
The presentation included main modules concluded by the study of stakeholders analysis by matching information needs of poor communities and information available or can be availed by the stakeholders. Other than VERCON, modules suggested for RADCON were: Job opportunity module, Women's corner module, Towards a clean environment module, Associations at the service of community module, Marketing information module, and To the editor module (Contact us page, Successful Stories and Frequently Asked Questions). A web page for RADCON communication centers was suggested as well as other complementary modules like RADCON News, links to partners' home page if available, RADCON Forum, Useful links, and RADCON Monitoring System. Collaboration with mass media like Ch 6, West Delta Radio Station and the short campaign strategy were also presented.
- RADCON milestones Mr. Alberto Troilo
Mr. Troilo tracked in his presentation the foundations development from VERCON to RADCON ending up with RADCON starting point. He pointed out that phase zero is already concluded by having the pre-project studies results by identifying information needs and sources. In a comprehensive view, next phase will require working with knowledge and rural poor through participatory communication. Activities for the next phase might include: producing relevant content, adapting appropriate methodologies, conducting personnel trained, applying various media approaches, and involving stakeholders, in an overall frame of institutional arrangements.

d. Open discussion to seek tangible technical contributions and commitments

The discussions took two sessions and moderated by Dr. Yehia Zahran and Dr. A. Rafea. Three rounds were opened for discussion:

The first round was about having participants' comments, notes and inquiries about the presentations.

The second round was to elaborate on the "phase 1 model" suggested by the international consultant, how to use this tool to activate the system, how to apply the model, and what are the difficulties and barriers.

The third round was to discuss each of the suggested modules separately with more focus on contribution capacity of information for involving stakeholders,

availability and medium of information, and to assign voluntarily one stakeholder for each module to collect and organize this information.

Recommendations

Discussions with participants came to the following recommendations:

- The first phase of RADCON should focus more on easy information that have quick impact.
- A volunteer group in the village should lead the activities in the Communication Center
- Assign a small committee for each module to design the framework and formats/models, respond to audience needs, collect data, and coordinates data input
- The work in each module should focus in the beginning on one or two projects, areas, or sub-system as a start.
- Sub-groups of stakeholders should take over data collection, coordination and running each module. This sub-group should be led by one stakeholder. These groups were assigned and agreed upon as follows:

	Modules	Coordinator
1	Job opportunity module	Department of Rural Development, CAAES and Principal Bank for Development and Agricultural Credit
2	Women's corner module	Policy and Coordination Unit for Women in Agriculture
3	Towards a clean environment module	Soil, Water and Environment Research Institute
4	Associations at the service of community module	CARE
5	Marketing information module	Horticultural Export Improvement Association, and Union of Producers and Exporters of Horticultural Crops
6	To the editor module	None (ICD core team and CLAES)
7	Collaboration with mass media	Development Support Communication Centre in Dekerness

- In the light of limited project's time resources, budget, and targets, the following will not take a higher priority but will be met in a later phase:
 - Current prices and external exportation markets opportunities
 - FAQ
- Success stories will depend on the FAO format used for documenting Best Practices on the FAO Knowledge Forum; as it was considered a good model to start with.
- The DSCC in Dekerness will develop a three month plan in collaboration with the research station, Ch 6, and WDRS.