

## **ICARDA Involvement in the "Desertification Initiative" “ Project in the Middle East**

ICARDA is involved in the implementation of the Project on Collaboration to Control Natural Resources Degradation (Desertification) in the Middle East as part of the Multi-lateral Peace Talks on the Environment. In addition to the management responsibility, ICARDA contributes to the implementation of the Regional Support Programs (RSPs) and the National Support Activities (NSAs) in five themes in which each country plays a leading role. The duration of the Project is for three years from January 1, 1997 to December 30, 1999.

- Germplasm for Arid Lands
- Rangeland and Livestock Management
- Economic Forestry and Orchards (in cooperation with ICRAF)
- Marginal Water and Saline Soils
- Human Resource Development

In the research on Germplasm for Arid Lands theme, indigenous species in desert habitats are being collected from various countries involved in order to be maintained, characterized and evaluated for desirable characteristics. In situ conservation of desert indigenous species will be a major component of this theme.

In the research on Rangeland and Livestock theme, the emphasis is on the rehabilitation of degraded rangelands in marginal areas. It involves seed multiplication of indigenous rangeland species for rangeland rehabilitation purposes.

Economic Agroforestry will be carried out in cooperation with ICRAF.

In the research on Marginal Water and Saline Soils theme, the emphasis will be on on-farm water use efficiency, the use of treated sewage water and water harvesting. In saline solids, the work will be on identification of tolerant plant species and management practices to overcome the negative effects of salinity on crop production particularly forages.

In Human Resources Development, both short and long term individual and group training is being organized as regional or in-country activities in addition to the training at ICARDA headquarters.

The table attached presents the status of grants committed and funds received from multi donors up to March 31, 1997.