

Association of Agricultural Research Institutions in the Near East
& North Africa (AARINENA)



AARINENA NEWSLETTER



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Executive Secretary:

Dr. Rida A. Shibli

Isra'a I. Odat

INTRODUCTION

The Association of Agricultural Research Institutions in the Near East & North Africa (AARINENA) has done a lot of activities during the first half of 2023. These activities included the launch of the Application of the Date Palm Innovation Platform, the signing of partnership agreements, also Extension the Digital Agriculture project, Participation in GFAR Project Planning Workshop, and different webinars on the diverse topics related AARINENA networks.

AARINENA's activities during 2023 included different workshops, training courses, webinars, and other meetings either virtually or physically. Also, we disseminated and communicated many activities such as webinars, workshops, talks... etc. of relevant to our members and partners.

AARINENA held its Executive Committee meeting at National Agricultural Research Center in Jordan, on May 18, 2023.

AARINENA'S EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING, MAY 18, 2023

AARINENA held the annual meeting for the Executive Committee members to discuss different activities and achievements made by AARINENA during 2022 – 2023. The meeting was hosted by National Center for Agricultural Research in Amman, on May 18, 2023.

The members of the executive committee of AARINENA discussed a lot of important topics of the AARINENA, which included the activities that were accomplished during the year 2022 and the activities of the first quarter of 2023, in addition to the discussions related to the outcomes of the Fifteenth General Conference of the AARINENA, which was held in Jordan in November 2022, in the presence of many members and partners of AARINENA.

The President of the AARINENA and all executive committee members expressed their great happiness at visiting the National Center for Agricultural Research through the tour made with the members of the accompanying delegation in the departments of directorates and specialized laboratories in the center. They pointed to the distinction that is unique to the National Center for Agricultural Research compared to research centers in the region, because it contains specialized laboratories and distinguished research teams, implements advanced research projects in cooperation with international organizations, and provides valuable community services. In addition, they mentioned that the presence of an incubator for innovation and agricultural entrepreneurship at the center is a qualitative and advanced leap in the field of transforming creative ideas into development projects and creating job opportunities for emerging companies.



AARINENA PROJECTS for 2023

Extension Digital Agriculture Project

After a lot of work done during the last quarter of 2022 that came as a result of the signature of the Letter of Agreement between AARINENA and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) on behalf of the Global Forum on Agricultural Research and Innovation (GFAR) under DeSIRA funding during the conducting of the “**Regional Survey and Study on Inclusive Digital Transformation of Agriculture in the NENA Region**”, this project has been extended for more three months to allowing more time for the completion of the activities, especially the interaction with other partners that need more time.

This work included the collection of surveys and studies on attitudes and challenges of small scale farmers towards digital agriculture in three countries (Jordan, Tunisia, and Egypt), to identify good practices for an inclusive digital transformation of agriculture. The conducted survey of small-scale producers’ attitudes and perceived challenges and drivers related to the use of digital solutions and reporting research review on the current scenario in Jordan, Tunisia, and Egypt on use of digital solutions by small-scale farmers.

AARINENA PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENTS for 2023

MoU between AARINENA and the Association for the Development of Sustainable Ecosystems (WADI)



The signing of a cooperation agreement between the “Wadi Association for the Development of Sustainable Ecosystems (WADI)” and the “Association of Agricultural Research Institutions in the Near East and North Africa (AARINENA)”. March 28, 2023.

AARINENA signed a cooperation agreement for three years with the Association for the Sustainable Ecosystems Development (WADI). Under the agreement signed by Mr. Tariq Abu Talib, Executive Director of the Wadi Association for the Development of Sustainable Ecosystems (WADI) and His Excellency Dr. Rida Shibli, the Executive Secretary of AARINENA, the work will focus on developing and supporting frameworks for scientific research collaboration in the agricultural sector, particularly in the restoration of forests and pastures, to enhance adaptation to climate change, improve community livelihoods, and ensure long-term water security.

The agreement stipulates the enhancement of cooperation in the fields of research and training, provision of technical and economic consultancy services, technical support, organization of conferences, seminars, and workshops of mutual interest, as well as collaboration between the parties in the field of media for the promotion of joint activities. The two parties will also collaborate on water collection and conservation efforts, as well as raising awareness within the community regarding water conservation practices. They will strive to support scientific research in order to maintain long-term water security.

For more details: <https://rb.gy/s2f06>

MoU between AARINENA and National Alliance against Hunger and Malnutrition (NAJMAH)



A cooperation agreement between AARINENA and the National Alliance against Hunger and Malnutrition (NAJMAH). March 28, 2023.

A cooperation agreement between AARINENA and the National Alliance Against Hunger and Malnutrition (NAJMAH), signed by the Vice-President of the National Alliance Against Hunger and Malnutrition, Dr. Ali Ghazzawi, and the Executive Secretary of the Association of Agricultural Research Institutions in the Near East and North Africa (AARINENA), Dr. Rida Shibli. The agreement aims to create fruitful and constructive cooperation in the fields of research, training, and qualification, raising capabilities and innovation, and developing frameworks for cooperation in scientific research mechanisms and the agricultural sector.

For more details: <https://rb.gy/u0mj8>

AARINENA NETWORKS ACTIVITIES for 2023

AARINENA - Date Palm Network Webinars

Webinar entitled "**Vertical and Ground Services in Date Palm After Pollination**", which was presented by Dr. Esam Madbouly, from the Agricultural Research Center (ARC) in Egypt, on April 10, 2023. This important session was moderated by Dr. Mohamed Kamal Abbas, the coordinator of AARINENA's date palm network, and it involved important information about the most important agricultural practice that farmers must do during the pollination process to ensure successful pollination. The meeting perceived fruitful discussions among the attendees from the different members of AARINENA from the North Africa and Near East (NENA) region.

For more details: <https://youtu.be/6PQTJRYTE5o> and <https://youtu.be/jLi-Wuc2Ih4>

Webinar entitled "**The Factors for the Success of the Pollination Process in Date Palms**", which was presented by Dr. Shereef Alsherbasi, from the Agricultural Research Center (ARC) in Egypt, on February 28, 2023. This important session was moderated by Dr. Mohamed Kamal Abbas, the coordinator of AARINENA's date palm network, and it involved important information about the most important factors for the successful process of pollination. The meeting perceived fruitful discussions among the attendees from the different members of AARINENA from the North Africa and Near East (NENA) region.

For more details: <https://youtu.be/GGIEoLn9D64>

Webinar entitled "**The Role of Food Processing Techniques in Developing New Functional Food Products from Dates and Their Products**", which was presented by Dr. Hajer Saleh on February 2, 2023. This important session was moderated by Dr. Mohamed Kamal Abbas, the

coordinator of AARINENA's date palm network, and it involved important information about developing new functional food products from dates and their products using new technologies. The meeting perceived fruitful discussions among the attendees from the different members of AARINENA from the North Africa and Near East (NENA) region.

For more details: <https://youtu.be/dM6va-NR1Do>

Webinar entitled "**Date Palm Borers: Types, Damages, and Control Methods**", which was presented by Dr. Ibrahim Jabouri on behalf of Dr. Mohammad Zaidan Khalaf on January 17, 2023. This important session was moderated by Dr. Mohamed Kamal Abbas, the coordinator of AARINENA's date palm network, and it involved important information about the types of date palm borers, the details damages caused by borers, and the methods for controlling these borers. The meeting witnessed constructive discussions among the attendees from the different members of AARINENA in the NENA region.

For more details: https://youtu.be/zobhsZAS_Mk

AARINENA – Biotechnology Network Webinar

AARINENA organized a webinar for the Biotechnology Network about "**Long-term conservation of plant genetic resources via cryopreservation**", which was presented by Eng. Tamara Alguda on February 21, 2023. The webinar was moderated by Dr. Henda Al-Mahmoudi, the coordinator of AARINENA's Biotechnology Network. The webinar involved a lot of useful information about the main method of term conservation of plant genetic resources via cryopreservation. This was followed by good discussions from the experts regarding this research paper.

For more details: https://youtu.be/C_cGims90MU

AARINENA – Medicinal and Herbal Plants Network Webinar

AARINENA organized a webinars about the "**Plant Peels and Their Medicinal Benefits**", which was presented by Dr. Talal Taha Ali, on February 14, 2023.

For more details: <https://youtu.be/xczhFcYx6ZE>

AARINENA PARTICIPATIONS WITH PARTNERS AND MEMBERS for 2023

The Role of Gene Banks in Food Security - Al-Ahliyya Amman University

Members of the AARINENA network from various organizations in Jordan, including the National Agricultural Research Center (NARC), different universities, numerous farmers, and various private sectors, participated in a workshop titled "The Role of Gene Banks in Food Security" at Amman Al-Ahliyya University on May 9, 2023.

Asia- Pacific Collective Action on Forgotten FoodsPartners' Meeting

The Global Manifesto on Forgotten Foods was developed through a series of consultations in 2021. This Collective Action on Forgotten Food aims to highlight both the initiatives of research institutions and development agencies and the ingenuity of farmers and their capacity to innovate based on everyday experimentation. In Asia-Pacific, small-scale and custodian farmers managed to continuously cultivate and use NUS/FF for various reasons.

Dr. Rida Shibli, the Executive Secretary of AARINENA participated in the regional framework (Asia-Pacific Manifesto on Forgotten Food), Sharing of Initiative from the Pacific. He shared the existing programs, initiatives, and recommendations to promote NUS/FF and foster participatory research with farmers and communities. This also facilitated the discussion of possible areas for collaboration globally.

May 3-5, 2023, in Ahmedabad, Gujarat.

Side Event: Enabling Agricultural Innovation Systems (AIS) for developing STI roadmaps for SDGs in the context of post COVID-19

AARINENA participated in the Tropical Agriculture Platform Partners, a global, multi-stakeholder facilitation mechanism on capacity development (CD) for Agricultural Innovation Systems (AIS), supported by the European Union and coordinated by FAO. They have taken on the AIS perspective and have designed and tested a Common Framework on CD for AIS. This framework includes a range of tools and guidelines to support member states in their efforts to achieve the SDGs.

May 3, 2023, Virtually.



E-meeting on “How to get involved and invest in GFAR?”

On October 26, 2022, GFAR organized its first webinar "Partnering with GFAR". The purpose of that meeting was to foster interactions with the resource partners by presenting GFAR work to new potential partners and reactivating collaborations with previous ones. During the webinar, GFAR presented its overall work (history, theory of change, collective actions, etc.), including perspectives from the regional and national members as well as from resource partners (EC) and facilitating agency (IFAD). GFAR also presented how to get involved in GFAR's work.

Following the online webinar, individual meetings, calls, or other forms of information exchange took place. During the initial online webinar and its subsequent follow-up meetings, participants highlighted some key topics of interest that would be taken into consideration in this second online webinar.

April 19, 2023

GFAR Project Planning Workshop

Dr. Rida Shibli participated in the GFAR Project Planning Workshop on March 15–17, 2023. This included numerous discussions related to various regions around the world, including Western Europe, Central and Eastern Europe, Asia, Africa, the Mediterranean region, and the Middle East.

March 15-17, 2023, in Bangkok, Thailand



First International Date Palm Production and Trade Conference 14-15 March 2023 / Khalifa International Award for Date Palm Agricultural Innovation – UAE

Dr. Rida Shibli participated in the 1st International Date Palm Production and Trade Conference on March 14-15, 2023, that was managed by Khalifa International Award for Date Palm Agricultural Innovation, UAE. Also, he participated in the Mejhoul International Network meeting on March 14-15, 2023. The meeting was held at the Emirates Palace in Abu Dhabi, under the patronage of His Highness Sheikh Mansour bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Deputy Prime Minister of the UAE. During the meeting, many discussions were held regarding the Mejhoul variety in the Arab countries. Dr. Rida Shibli, Executive Secretary

of AARINENA participated in important discussions regarding the date palm network affiliated with AARINENA at the date palm platform. He stressed the importance of collecting all the information related to the Mejhoul cultivar in our Arab countries and other issues related to palm trees.



Food Loss and Waste (FLW) in the UAE

AARINENA participated in the webinar on Food Loss and Waste (FLW) in the UAE. This webinar is funded by the UK government to support businesses in the UAE in finding solutions to tackle the challenge of FLW. You are no doubt aware of the environmental and financial costs of food waste. \$1 trillion is lost annually in the global economy due to FLW. That is why we are bringing experts to share their insights on how businesses can reduce food waste, save money, and support sustainable food systems. The webinar involved the following benefits:

- Learning about the Food Loss and Waste (FLW) Protocol and Standard
- Strategies for measuring and reducing food waste in your business
- How to identify and address the root causes of food loss
- Best practices and tools for tracking and managing food waste.

March 20, 2023

Virtual Expert Meeting on Unlocking the Potential of Rainfed Agriculture in the Arab Region

AARINENA participated in the UN-ESCWA a virtual meeting on February 23, 2023. The meeting reviewed and discussed key trends and issues related to unlocking the potential of rainfed agriculture in the Arab region.

APAARI-AFA - GFAR for the Multi Stake Holder Consultation

AARINENA participated in the "GFAR - AFA- APAARI Multi Stakeholder Consultation" Virtual Workshop on February 21st and 22nd, 2023, under the Collective Action of GFAR on Inclusive Digital Transformation for Agriculture.

The participating country members (Bangladesh, Bhutan, Sri Lanka, India, Iran, Samoa, Pakistan, PapuaNew Guinea, Lao PDR, Vietnam, and Thailand) of the collective action. Those countries allow to complete the analysis of the farmer survey.

UNDP Jordan

The RCO has initiated and coordinated a technical analysis, led by Cengiz, to determine the interlinkages between the CF priorities and outputs with Jordan's Economic Modernization Vision strategic goals and initiatives. AARINENA participated in this important meeting.

February 19, 2023

Monthly Meetings on Forgotten Food Community of Practices

AARINENA participated in the Monthly Meetings on Forgotten Food Community of Practices on February 2, 2023.

AARINENA Participation in a GFAR/FAO Webinar on UNFSS Follow Up

AARINENA participated in a GFAR/FAO webinar on UNFSS follow-up. The webinar provided an introduction to the conclusions of the UN Food Systems Summit and the implementation of UNFSS national pathways. It also introduced efforts to catalyze innovation and research to support national pathways drawing on the experience of PRIMA in the Mediterranean Region (PRIMA). This informed a conversation between UNFSS national convenors and GFAR, GFAR Regional Fora and members to reflect on what has happened already, what is being planned, and ways forward. The webinar showed where partnerships are being established, particularly where research and innovation have been

identified as priorities, to inspire other countries to move forward (e.g., Egypt; Vietnam).

January 19, 2023

“Improve Agricultural Research for Development and Enhance Institutional Linkages between National Agricultural Research Systems Actors in Jordan” Training Course

AARINENA participated with FAO in the training course entitled **“Improve Agricultural Research for Development and Enhance Institutional Linkages between National Agricultural Research Systems Actors in Jordan”**, on January 12, 2023.

Participants were from diverse backgrounds and organizations in the National Agricultural Research System (NARS), such as public and private research institutions, including universities and research centers, governmental institutions, non-government organizations, and the agricultural extension and advisory directorate. Participants were able to identify challenges and opportunities and have learned and improved their skills in the design of AR4D programs, understanding and analyzing the relevant stakeholders in AR4D, key elements for implementing demand-driven AR4D projects, and institutional linkages between AR4D actors. Therefore, participants were equipped with the knowledge and skills that they had gained through this training program. Participants asserted that the training program was beneficial for them both professionally and personally. After the training course, these participants can act as trainers for other staff in their respective organizations to improve AR4D and disseminate the findings and outcomes of the research to end-users in the NARS, more specifically farmers. Participants increased their knowledge of the developed guidelines that can be implemented to effectively help AR4D implementation, including assessing problems, identifying research needs, and out-scaling agricultural innovations and technologies. Furthermore, participants (trainees) have learned about the methodologies and framework tools to evaluate and assess research quality in specific contexts and the impact of research, and they have a better understanding of the current institutional linkages and collaboration within and between the NARS actors. Finally, participants asserted that the training program was meaningful and useful because it conveyed key points, messages, and recommendations that were concluded and can be taken into consideration by policy-makers and decision-makers in the NARS for further improvement of technical and financial support for AR4D.



Visit to Sultanate of Oman

During AARINENA's Fifteenth General Conference in Jordan, November 8-9, 2022, the new President of AARINENA became Dr. Hamdan Al-Wehaibi, from the Sultanate of Oman.

Dr. Rida Shibli visited the Sultanate of Oman, and he discussed important issues related to AARINENA with the new president.