

Terms of Reference for Consultancy
Marketing and Value Chain Component
Pilot Technical Concept and Plan
Izbet Alhamra – Beheira -Egypt

Project Title	Al-Murunah Project: Building Climate Resilience through Enhanced Water Security in MENA
Implementing organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - International Water Management Institute (IWMI) - Centre for Environment and Development for the Arab Region and Europe (CEDARE)
Project Location	Izbet Alhamra, Abu Almatamir district, Beheira Governorate

I. Background

In response to water and climate change challenges in Egypt, the Government of the United Kingdom (FCDO) has funded the five-year “Al Murunah” Project with the objective of increasing water security in the MENA region through the integration of Resilient Nature-Based Solutions for Water (RNBSW) and Agricultural Water Management (AWM) in the face of climate change and land degradation. While identifying and demonstrating pragmatic approaches to investing in NBSW/AWM in the region, the initiative will focus on four countries - Jordan, Lebanon, the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT), and Egypt. The central premise of the Al Murunah Project is that appropriately designed on-the-ground NBSW and AWM interventions can, in tandem, enhance water security in the agricultural regions of the Middle East, thereby increasing the resilience of households and communities in the targeted area.

II. Pilot Technical Concept and Plan– Marketing and value chain component

- 1. Introduction** – The RNBWS initiative is specifically aimed at improving agroecological practices within smallholder farms and gender categories (women and youth) located in Izbat Al-Hamra, Abu Al-Matamir District, Egypt. This initiative adopts a comprehensive approach that encompasses sustainable crop diversification and intensification practices, all tailored to local soil and water salinity conditions. Furthermore, the initiative actively promotes women-led value chains for AOC-certified artichokes, facilitates local Community-based Organizations (CBOs) access to loans, and introduces advanced water conservation and efficiency systems and crop management practices.

Key components that emphasize resilience and sustainability and are designed to support the existing Community-Based Organizations led by women and youth include:

- Innovative cropping systems that feature a diverse range of salt-tolerant crops.
- Sustainable infrastructure development to enhance agricultural practices.
- A strengthened value chain that focuses on post-harvest processing and packaging.
- Improvement in access to agriculture inputs/ end users' markets and financial resources.

The diagram presented in [Figure 1](#) visually illustrates the RNBWS framework for Egypt, highlighting the interconnectedness between these key components.

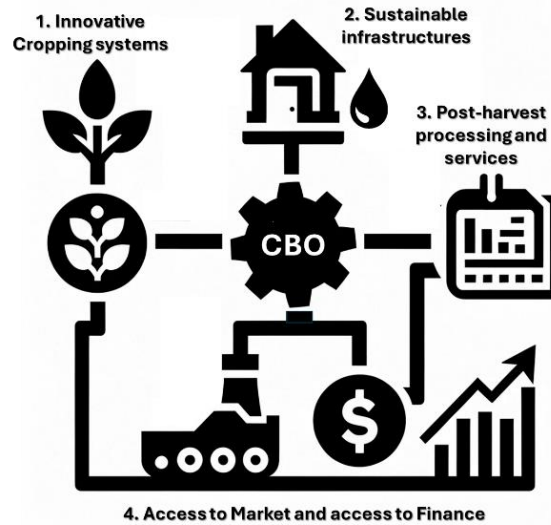


Figure 1. The RNBWS definition in Egypt: pilot integrated components.

III. Pilot components

1.1. *Post-harvest processing and services component*

Marketplace for selling transformed produce, agriculture inputs including seeds and bio-fertilizers/pesticides, and machinery service provision: These facilities could also serve as a **local marketplace**. The construction of these facilities places a strong emphasis on environmental sustainability. Formalized groups could be prepared to act as retailers for agricultural inputs.

Within this project, **the women-led value chain for post-harvest processing** takes center stage, where women are the driving force behind the meticulous handling and transformation of artichokes and other crops after they are harvested. Their role encompasses various critical stages, including:

- **Sorting, cleaning, packaging, and preparing products for market distribution.** These women not only bring traditional knowledge but also adapt to modern techniques to meet quality standards and ensure that the produce reaches consumers in optimal condition.
- This component aims at fostering women-led value chains for AOC-certified artichokes (and other crops like cabbage). This component supports women in establishing and managing value chains, facilitating access to markets and ensuring quality production standards.

In parallel, a group of energetic and forward-thinking **young individuals' takes charge of vital services activities** that complement the value chain. Their focus is on:

- The effective **preparation, packaging and marketing of seeds of alternative drought/salt-tolerant crops and needed agriculture inputs such as organic fertilizers and bio pesticides**, employing semi-mechanized processes that enhance efficiency and accuracy. Their involvement is a guarantee for the availability of high-quality seeds for multiple year plantings, further contributing to agricultural sustainability.
- Moreover, this young CBO is also deeply involved in the **valorization of crop by-products**. They harness innovative semi-mechanized processes to extract additional value from agricultural waste, turning it into resources such as silage, biochar, and compost. This sustainable approach

not only reduces waste but also generates valuable inputs that can be reinvested in farming operations.

- Additionally, key facet of their role is the **mechanized field operations**, where adapted machinery and technology are deployed to streamline tasks like plowing, planting, weeding, pest management and harvesting. This mechanization not only reduces manual labor but also boosts overall agricultural productivity. The integration of modern technology aligns with the project's goals of enhancing efficiency and yield while making farming more appealing to the youth.
- Services could also include retailing agricultural inputs through local representation of wholesale agricultural inputs companies.

In essence, the collaboration between women-led value chains for post-harvest processing and youth-led services and retail activities represents a harmonious blend of traditional expertise and modern innovation. This synergy creates a sustainable agricultural ecosystem that not only ensures food security but also offers economic opportunities to women and youth, paving the way for a prosperous and resilient agricultural sector.

1.2. Access to market and access to finance:

This access to market and access to finance component target empowering local CBOs or formalized groups of women for economic sustainability. In this critical component of the Technical Pilot, the focus is on providing essential support for local CBOs led by women in post-processing activities and by youth in service-oriented endeavors. The overarching objective is to enhance economic sustainability and foster self-reliance among these groups.

The access to market should be facilitated through:

- **Crop Contracting and Market Linkages:** The subcomponent facilitates partnerships between local CBOs or formalized groups of women and organizations like Mozar3Egypt (and/or other private sector companies). These collaborations enable crop contracting, ensuring that the produce meets market demands and quality standards. By securing contracts and market linkages, CBOs can sell their processed products at fair prices, thereby increasing their income and contributing to the economic growth of the community. Mozar3 (and/or other private sector companies) could also share the cost of the hydroponic demonstration setup for the women CBO/ formalized groups of women with a design of a dedicated end-users financial scheme.

The access to finance could involve customizing:

- **Revolving Loans:** Access to finance is a cornerstone of this Pilot. Revolving loans are made available to support the financial needs of CBOs/ established formalized groups. These loans are designed to provide the necessary capital for various purposes, including the acquisition of crop produces processing inputs, and the scaling of produce transformation efforts. Repayments from previous loans are reinvested, creating a sustainable cycle of financial support. This not only enhances the quality of products but also increases production capacity, enabling CBOs/ formalized groups to meet growing market demands. The ultimate goal is to foster economic sustainability within this women-led CBO/ women formalized groups.
- **Financing Production Inputs and Services:** The access to finance extends beyond CBOs/ formalized groups to support farmers (lead farmers and early adopters through the 2 remaining years of the project and beyond) in procuring essential production inputs. This ensures that farmers have the resources they need to implement advanced agricultural practices, including agricultural inputs for the cultivation of salt-tolerant crops and the procurement of modern machinery services and agricultural inputs from the youth CBO/ youth formalized groups.
- **Strategic Partnership with private sector companies:** The project will strategically partners with Mozar3 (that will be part of the NPAC), a key private sector player in Egypt that works to bridge the gap between agricultural produce and market opportunities. Mozar3 (and/or other private sector companies) involvement ensures that the crops cultivated under the project find a reliable and consistent market. This includes establishing contract cropping arrangements with male farmers, guaranteeing a market for their produce, and promoting agricultural resilience.
- Mozar3 (and/or other private sector companies) also contributes significantly to capacity building within the existing CBOs/ formalized groups. Through tailored training and skill development programs, local farmers are equipped with the knowledge and expertise needed to optimize their

agricultural practices. This capacity building enhances the community's ability to adapt to changing environmental conditions and market dynamics.

- **Support for Women-Led CBOs:** The project places a special emphasis on supporting women-led CBOs/ women formalized groups, recognizing the crucial role women play in agriculture and post-harvest processing.
 - Central to the success of the Access to Market and Access to Finance component is its focus on empowering women-led CBOs/ women formalized groups within the agricultural value chain. These organizations are at the forefront of post-harvest processing, including the packaging of high-value crops such as artichokes and cabbages. Through the provision of machinery and financial support, women-led CBOs women formalized groups become key players in ensuring the quality and marketability of agricultural products.
 - A notable initiative is the cost-sharing arrangement for the establishment of a hydroponic demonstration unit. Hydroponics, as a modern and water-efficient agricultural technique, not only increases crop yields but also conserves valuable water resources. Furthermore, the partnership with Mozar3 (and/or other private sector companies) extends to the potential design and implementation of customized end-user financial schemes. These schemes are specifically tailored to the needs of women-led CBOs/ women formalized groups, enabling them to access essential capital for investing in hydroponic systems. This financial support not only empowers women but also promotes their financial sustainability, ensuring their active participation in the project's activities.
- **Empowering through Revolving Loans and related end-users training:** At the heart of the financial component lies the provision of revolving
- **technical/financial training by CEDARE/NARS/Private Sector companies).** These loans are strategically allocated to existing women processing and youth machinery services CBOs/ women formalized groups. The impact of these loans is multifaceted:
 - **Management of Cropping Systems:** The loans empower CBOs to acquire machinery and equipment essential for the efficient management of cropping systems. From planting to harvesting and crop processing, these tools streamline agricultural practices, leading to higher productivity and improved crop quality.
 - **Efficiency Improvement:** The loans contribute to the modernization and efficiency enhancement of agricultural activities. This translates to increased yields, reduced post-harvest losses, and improved profitability for project beneficiaries.
 - **Supporting Youth-Led SMEs:** A crucial aspect of the loans is their role in bolstering Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) led by young entrepreneurs. These enterprises focus on providing mechanical services, such as silage and biochar production, adding significant value to the agricultural value chain. Moreover, they create employment opportunities for the youth, fostering economic growth and entrepreneurship in retail of agricultural inputs.

In summary, the Access to Market and Access to Finance component embodies a holistic and empowering approach to economic sustainability within the project. It leverages strategic partnerships, modern agricultural practices, financial inclusion, and the strength of community-based organizations to create a thriving and resilient agricultural ecosystem. This approach not only improves the livelihoods of project beneficiaries but also catalyzes economic growth, fostering prosperity in the region.

IV. Pilot technical plan Terms of Reference/ Deliverables

The key components (the deliverables) and their associated design objectives are outlined below:

Task 1: Warehouse Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan the utilization of the facility as a meeting point and potential marketplace.
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Task 2: Access to Market and Access to Finance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide recommendations on the framework for a strategic partnership with Mozar3 (and/or other private sector companies) for market access.• Develop a cost-sharing model for the hydroponic unit for women-led CBOs/ women formalized groups and recommend a feasible model that can be used.• Recommendation on the provision of revolving loans to existing agriculture cooperatives.• Provide recommendations on strategies for generating employment and fostering entrepreneurship.
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Deliverables

- Draft inception report highlighting methodology and expected deliverables.
- Draft report highlighting technical design and key recommendations
- Final report highlighting technical design and key recommendations

Timeline for the consultancy

The consultancy duration is three months

I. How to Apply

Interested applicants should submit their technical and financial proposal, as well as the professional CV, to gmohamed@cedare.int before 30th of April 2024 with the following subject line “Al-Murunah Project: Pilot Technical and Financial Proposal”.