

Participatory Planning with Rural Communities in Egypt by EU-JRDP

The European Union - Joint Rural Development Programme (EU-JRDP) adopted the participatory planning approaches as an operational instrument to adapt activities to be implemented in the field to the needs of local stakeholders integrating local stakeholders' expectations.



"The core of participatory planning is the participation, as the process of decision making and problem solving, involving individuals and groups who represent different interests, expertise and point of view and who act for the good of all those affected by the decisions they make and the actions that follows.

The participatory approach is based on the following steps: i) initiating the participatory planning process, ii) building the partnerships, iii) assessment and strategy, and iv) planning".

Source: GAP:<http://gap2.eu/>



EU-JRDP approach for participatory planning is based on the following: Organizing multi-stakeholders workshops:

To engage all involved actors, organization and institutions to work together and jointly identify constraints and needs and propose solutions.

- Three multi-stakeholders workshops on "Good Agricultural Practices" between November 2015 and February 2016 in the Governorate of Matrouh, Fayoum and Minya under the auspices of the Egyptian Ministry of Agriculture and Land Reclamation (MALR) and the Governrates.
- Total participants: 240 from the EU Delegation, the Egyptian Ministries of Agriculture and Local Development, representatives from research centers, NGOs, related associations and unions; local communities /associations of farmers, including community-based associations.
- During the workshops the participatory planning was initiated and partnerships were established.

Facilitating thematic working sessions:

Participants to the workshops were called to take an active part in working groups organized thematically (e.g. geographic indications, irrigation, composting) or on commodities value chains. Each working group was represented by actors (including external actors like policy makers) of influence (e.g. generator of solutions to answer to the constraints as identified during the group discussion).

For each thematic working group session, participants identified missing links of different segments of the value chain (e.g.: the production and processing, the institutional, regulatory and legal framework, the trade and marketing/export of local production opportunities) and main lessons learnt have been analyzed.



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Prioritizing:

The process of prioritization was necessary to list what could, or could not be financed by EU-JRDP and to find the best "optimum" based on the available resources.

Feedback meetings with smaller groups of stakeholders for checking and prioritizing the workshops outputs (e.g. recommendations and way forward) were organized in each Governorate.

During such meetings, participants prioritized topics, areas of intervention and main crops to be promoted.

Lessons Learnt from Multi-Stakeholders Workshops:

There is a clear need expressed from local stakeholders to participate in local planning processes. All relevant stakeholders and decision makers should be included in the process from its early stages.

Participants should be selected for representing all segments of value chain (from production to marketing, including public administrator and private service providers).

Conflicts between stakeholders are the rule, not the exception. As such the role of the facilitator is instrumental and beneficial to support the process of the acknowledgement of responsibilities and reconciliation among different actors.

Discussions should allow for time to share and build knowledge, mutual trust and consensus. As such a thematic group discussion should not be less than a full working day.



Different interventions of EU-JRDP following the participatory planning approach:

- Selection of command areas for irrigation development. The selection was done in a participatory fashion and in tight connection with all concerned line ministries by adopting a set of criteria identified in connection with main stakeholders.
- Selection of Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs). GAPs were selected through multi-stakeholder consultations and outcomes from feedback meetings.
- Selection of Geographic Indication (GI) products: About 15 potential GI products for Marsa Matruh were selected through multi-stakeholder consultations.



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