

Evaluation summary

Collective and contextualized strategies to promote resilient and sustainable agricultural production in rural Mediterranean areas (SupMed project)

Thematic: Climate change

Country: Lebanon, Egypt

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Date of evaluation: 05/2025 - **09/2025**

Key data of the FFEM support

Project name: Collective and contextualized strategies to promote resilient and sustainable agricultural production in Mediterranean rural areas (SupMed project)

Project number: CZZ2476.01

Amount of FFEM financing: 1,700,000 €

Date of award: 31 March 2020

Duration: 01/12/2020 – 31/12/2024

Context

The Mediterranean region is recognized as one of the global climate change hotspots. The degradation of natural resources and the difficulty in adapting agricultural practices to climate change are key challenges for the development of Egypt and Lebanon due to their vulnerability to water stress and the risk of desertification. In Lebanon, the Bekaa Valley concentrates nearly one third of the country's agricultural land and presents a great diversity of crops. The SupMed project (budget: 6,563 M€) accompanied farmers in these two regions in the implementation of agroecological practices and irrigation management for climate change adaptation and mitigation purposes.

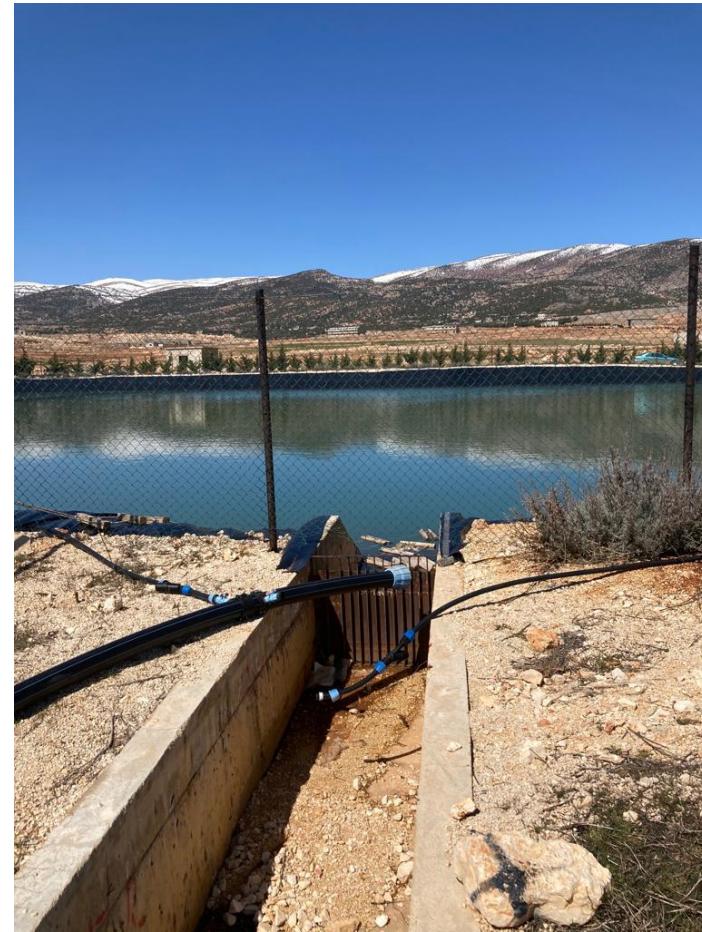
Stakeholders and operating procedure

Executing entity: CIHEAM Montpellier (CIHEAMM)

Implementing partners:

- **Lebanon:**
 - Private Agricultural Center of Hermel. Green Plan, Ministry of Agriculture
 - Union of Baalbek-Hermel Municipalities and Hermel Cooperative Union
 - Faculty of Agronomy of the Lebanese University
- **Egypt:**
 - Executive Agency for the Comprehensive Development Projects (EACDP)
 - Egyptian Association for Sustainable Development
 - Department of Statistics and Agricultural and Rural Development
 - Centre for Rural Development Studies

The CIHEAMM ensured the project management and project management of part of the project activities. The Plan Vert, for Lebanon, and the EACDP coordinated the project at national level for Lebanon and Egypt respectively. The Hermel Centre and the NGO EASD managed field activities, in collaboration with the Regional Agricultural Directorates, the public and private Agricultural Advisory Centres and the Cooperatives/associations of irrigators.



Irrigation © Aurélie Ahmim – Richard – FFEM

Objectives

Improve the resilience of producers in the region of Baalbek-Hermel (Lebanon) and Luxor (Egypt) to climate change by reducing their dependence on water resources.

Specific objectives:

- Preserving water resources
- Adoption of agroecological practices
- In a cross-cutting manner: capitalize on results and contribute to national climate change strategies

Appreciation of the performance

Relevance

The SupMed project strategy aims to strengthen climate resilience and improve the efficiency of irrigation water use in a participatory manner. It is fully aligned with the priorities formulated in the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and the agricultural development strategies of Lebanon and Egypt, thus confirming the relevance of the approach adopted by the project.

Coherence

The project contributed to the implementation of the resilience objectives of the NDCs of the two countries, by continuing and integrating the actions of other donors within the framework of agricultural development policies and natural resource conservation.

Efficiency

Studies conducted on the adoption of agroecological practices confirm, in a quantitative manner, an improvement in water use efficiency as well as the effectiveness of the innovations adopted. These results, responding to the objectives of the SupMed project and, in some cases, exceeding them, have contributed to strengthening agricultural systems according to productive models specific to each household, while promoting the structuring of partnerships and collaborations for the transfer of innovation from research to end users.

Efficiency

Coordination between partners was rigorous and effective, facilitating upstream decision-making both in the design and implementation of field activities. The project budget, composed of the FFEM contribution (26%) and co-financing from local partners (74%), was optimally allocated between technical, institutional and capacity building components. This balanced distribution allowed for a smooth implementation of activities, strong ownership by local actors and budget execution close to 100%, reflecting an efficient use of available resources.

Impact

The gross margin per agricultural household increased from 10% to 34% in Lebanon in 2023/2024, with a maximum observed in the olive sector. In Egypt, the increase was even more significant, reaching 75% to 93% in 2024. In parallel, the volume of water withdrawn at the territorial level has decreased by up to 80% in Lebanon and by up to 25% in Egypt.

Viability/sustainability

The SupMed project has established a participatory approach, developed knowledge and set up partnerships with high potential for reproducibility, due to their suitability to the local environmental and economic context, as well as their alignment with national strategies and plans.

Added value of FFEM support

The FFEM has provided a decisive added value by catalysing innovation and coordination between project stakeholders. Thanks to its support, the project was able to conduct demonstrations and targeted studies, promoting the dissemination of innovative knowledge on climate resilience and sustainable water management. This partnership-based approach has made it possible to reach the most vulnerable populations and strengthen their capacity to adopt sustainable practices.

Recommendations and teachings

The tracks for the deployment of a new support program should focus on creating "win-win" partnerships with investors in the field of carbon finance in Egypt. This implies the establishment of a certification mechanism for emissions, as well as an effort to promote the project's results. This action should be structured around the following objectives:

- Capacity building for carbon certification.
- Strengthening producer groups and their partners.
- The adoption of resilient agroecological practices.
- Knowledge and human capital management.

Regional collaborations should value farmers' networks, producer associations, study groups, as well as technology transfer partnerships in order to disseminate the agroecological practices with high replication potential tried by SupMed.

To be effective, the integrated approach to agricultural diversification and value chain development must be based on a variety of actions, adapted to different stakeholder profiles. It should also promote synergies between development projects financed by donations and economic initiatives supported by financial instruments intended for the private sector

In this perspective, it would be desirable for the donors of the SupMed project to engage in a structured dialogue with the national authorities of the Mediterranean partner countries. This dialogue could make it possible to harmonize existing support instruments within a common framework, focusing on sustainability, agroecological transition and strengthening climate resilience.