

PRELIMINARY REPORT ON THE METHYL BROMIDE COMPLETE PHASEOUT INVESTMENT PROJECT IN LEBANON

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In Lebanon, an investment project to phase out 218.5 ODP tones of methyl bromide, for over five years, in the sectors of vegetables, cut flowers, and tobacco production was initiated. This project will implement the technical, social and economic feasibility of methyl bromide alternatives for vegetables, cut flowers and tobacco production in Lebanon in combination with the integrated pest management system. The vegetable sector was identified as the most crucial sector, and coastal areas ranging between Akkar and Sour were defined as areas of project activity for the first year.

Implementation of the project during the first year involves the following phases.

1. Project mobilization and Training of the trainers
2. Project implementation and Farmers training sessions
3. Evaluation

1. Project mobilization and Training of the trainers

Based on the recommendation of the Ministry of Environment, and the approval of UNDP the project management has assigned an International Consultant. The Ministry of Environment designated a focal point among the project. Also, five agricultural site engineers and an administrative assistant were recruited followed by initiation of training of the trainers program in collaboration with the International consultant. The training program included topics on the methyl bromide issue in general, characteristics of each of the selected alternatives and appropriate methods of their application, organization of farmer's field schools, in addition to, site visits and farmers meetings.

2. Project implementation and Farmers training sessions

During the project implementation, the project site engineers identified alternatives as per the needs of each farmer included in the work plan of the project for the first year. This was achieved in about four weeks. As a result of the awareness raising approach of the project, 90 % of farmers in terms of total phase out area have chosen non-chemical alternatives that are proposed by the project. In the first year, 1023 farmers will be trained to phase out 26.04 ODP tones of methyl bromide in 96.5 ha. The project staff initiated farmers training sessions in the major agricultural areas of the coast. Through these sessions, groups of farmers of the same region having selected the same alternative are being acquainted with the characteristics of the alternatives, in addition to the accurate application methods of the alternatives. In some cases, experts from local agricultural companies are being invited to assist the farmers in the correct application of the chemical

alternatives. Furthermore, some of the alternative supplies are being provided to the farmers after the training sessions.

3. Evaluation

The progress made in the investment project on alternatives to methyl bromide alternatives in Lebanon are summarized as follows:

- ❖ Distribution of 50 tones of thermal polyethylene, and 757 liters of Vydate (Oxamyl) to 232 farmers having adopted soil solarization as alternative, over a total phase out area of 75.7 ha; Distribution of 1,860 liters of Condor (1,3-dichloropropene) to 49 farmers having adopted this alternative, over a total phase out area of 9.3 ha; Distribution of 136,500 grafted tomato plants to 57 farmers having adopted grafting as alternative, over a total phase out area of 10.5 ha; Distribution of 30 kg. of oil-radish seeds, and overhead sprinkler irrigation systems to 3 farmers having adopted biofumigation as alternative, over a total phase out area of 1.0 ha;
- ❖ Organization of a series of farmers training sessions in different regions of the country. For each session, special literature on the application details of the alternative have been distributed; Extension of project activities over the major agricultural areas of the country from Akkar (extreme North) to the district of Sour (extreme South);
- ❖ Designation of two Focal Points from the Ministry of Agriculture for the development of the rules and legislation for methyl bromide imports for the five coming years;
- ❖ Providing assistance to farmers and private institutions of neighboring countries. In this respect, the project has recently received the visit of a delegation of eight Jordanian farmers and owners of plant nurseries, and introduced them the grafting technique of vegetable plants through site visits and demo tours;
- ❖ The project management has received numerous requests from farmers not included in its first year plan, who expressed their readiness to shift to the alternatives methods, through the project plan of year II. Taken the above into consideration, the project initiate its activities for year II as of January 2003, according to the project document, in respect to the phase out of the second trance, namely 36 ODP tones of methyl bromide in Lebanon.