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# Reviewing soil and water conservation research in Tunisia

A News release by Claudio Zucca & Tana Lala-Pritchard

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Food security and better livelihoods  
for rural dryland communities

## Foreword

This News was published to disseminate a technical report produced in the frame of the activities carried out by the CGIAR Research Program on Drylands Systems, North Africa and West Asia Flagship, Agro-Pastoral System.

The report, titled “Impacts of soil and water conservation techniques in Tunisia. Inventory of research works and studies” is one of the deliverables produced in 2015 by the Activity 6 - “Management of water scarcity” - (2015-6 month Deliverable).

# Reviewing soil and water conservation research in Tunisia

*Submitted by Dryland Systems on September 17, 2015*



Traditional soil and water conservation structures in the arid agroecosystem of Southern Tunisia/  
Photo credit: C. Zucca

A new report entitled “Impacts of Soil and Water Conservation Techniques in Tunisia - Inventory of Research Works and Studies” provides a comprehensive inventory of the research work and studies undertaken to date to assess the impacts of soil and water conservation in the country. This review is critical to the research effort at national and regional levels to address challenging issues such as water scarcity and land degradation.

A holistic systems approach that takes into account both biophysical and socio-economic factors was taken into account in order to pool together and categorize the main research topics, as follows:

- The economic cost of the soil and waters conservation structures
- The social value of soil and water conservation
- Impact on landowners, and their investment behavior
- Impact on the value of productivity
- Impact on the environment

This inventory report covers over 150 documents in the English or French languages published in scientific journals, conference proceedings, and project reports and technical studies by governmental agencies that were, in some cases, not easily available to the public. A variety of

studies on different soil and water conservation structures were reviewed, including terraces or contour benches, hill lakes, jessour, and recharge wells/check dams.

“What became evident during the compilation of this report was the scarcity of studies on the social and economic impact of soil and water conservation. This indicates how much an integrated system-based approach is needed in order to conduct research that addresses the issues of water scarcity and land degradation from an agricultural livelihoods perspective,” says Claudio Zucca, soil conservation and land management scientist, at ICARDA.

“Our efforts will provide national and regional scientists with comparative case studies and data required for cross-reference when planning and implementing new research. Students of agricultural sciences will also benefit by mining required information for their theses,” says Taoufik Hermassi, scientist at Institut National de Recherche en Génie Rural, Eaux et Forêts ([INGREF](#)).

[Click here to read the report.](#)

This report is the result of the collaborative effort of scientists at [ICARDA](#), INRGREF and Institut des Régions Arides ([IRA](#)) working under the framework of the CGIAR Research Program on Dryland Systems, North Africa and West Asia Flagship.

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The CGIAR Research Program on Dryland Systems aims to improve the lives of 1.6 billion people and mitigate land and resource degradation in 3 billion hectares covering the world's dry areas.

Dryland Systems engages in integrated agricultural systems research to address key socioeconomic and biophysical constraints that affect food security, equitable and sustainable land and natural resource management, and the livelihoods of poor and marginalized dryland communities. The program unifies eight CGIAR Centers and uses unique partnership platforms to bind together scientific research results with the skills and capacities of national agricultural research systems (NARS), advanced research institutes (ARIs), non-governmental and civil society organizations, the private sector, and other actors to test and develop practical innovative solutions for rural dryland communities.

The program is led by the International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA), a member of the CGIAR Consortium. CGIAR is a global agriculture research partnership for a food secure future.

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