

# INTRODUCING THE MENA INITIATIVE

A multi-partner enterprise transforming rural livelihoods through sustainable agricultural development in Middle East & North Africa (MENA)

## FROM FARMS TO MARKETS

**Innovative agri-based value chains: new streams of income for women and youth**

**Join the Action ... be Part of the Solution**

When: **November 17, 15:00 – 16:30**

Where: **Green Space-Innovation, Room 6**

### High-Level Panel Discussions with:

Countries, donor organizations, FAO, GFAR, cooperation agencies, CGIAR, ICARDA and other international and regional research and development organizations

### CALL FOR PARTNERS

- Can your organization play a role?
- How can you get involved and contribute?
- How can we join forces and partner effectively?

Together we can envision and enable better and prosperous futures for the 28 million rural inhabitants in the MENA region, with **women and youth as key beneficiaries!**



## MENA's Extreme Challenges and Fragility

People in the MENA region live under severe pressures – water scarcity, fastest growing population, highest youth unemployment rate, and largest food imports globally – a potent mix for volatility and triggers for uprisings and conflict situations in the region.

Climate change will exacerbate the conditions as the food production systems are already hit by more frequent extreme weather events, rising temperatures and diminishing per capita water availability – threatening the region's fragile food security and rural livelihoods, which could potentially lead to implosion in migration.

## The MENA Initiative: a Vision of Thriving and Equitable Rural Communities

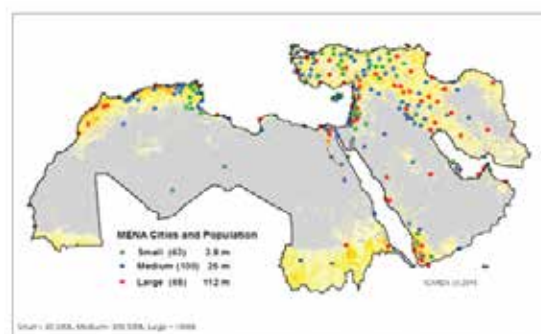
The MENA Initiative envisions market-driving transformation of agricultural systems that create new value chains and job opportunities, **particularly for young people and women**, while improving food production and mitigating land and resource degradation. The “Sustainable and Resilient Rural Futures and Improved Livelihoods in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA Initiative)” builds on the rich experience and expertise of ICARDA and CGIAR Research Program on Dryland Systems to scale up readily available technologies in the immediate future and, in the medium term, test and develop practical, value-adding innovative solutions that will create market access and hubs of economic activity in small- to medium-sized towns and communities.

### Scaling out new market-driving agricultural technologies will help MENA meet its Sustainable Development Goals under changing climate:

- **Job creation, poverty reduction**  
Modern agricultural technologies and innovations that create jobs and reduce poverty
- **Gender equity**  
Options and actions for women's income and women-led enterprises
- **Increased food and nutritional security**  
Crop technologies to increase yields & deliver nutritive foods
- **Natural resource conservation**  
Better water & land management to fight climate change

The **new MENA Initiative will bring together diverse stakeholder groups through unique platforms** to combine evidence-based science and innovation with skills and capacities of national research and extension systems, private sectors, universities, advanced research institutes, local NGOs, civil society organizations, and other actors **to create viable agri-based value chains.**

### The Agri-Based Value Chain Potential of MENA



163 small & medium sized cities as potential markets for linking smallholder farmers

### Sharing the vision of MENA Initiative: a Growing Alliance of Partners

- **Countries' National Agricultural Research Systems**  
*Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Syria, Tunisia*
- **CGIAR international research centers**  
*ICARDA, IFPRI, IWMI, CIMMYT*
- **Cooperation and donor organizations**  
*CIHEAM, European Commission, IFAD*
- **Forums, associations & UN agencies**  
*Agropolis International, GFAR, AARINENA, FAO*

**Along with private sector and development and civil society organizations**

MENA Initiative is coordinated by: