

**Division:** *Sustainable Development and Productivity Division (SDPD)*  
**Section:** *Productive Sector Section (PSS)*

### Activities

Activities as in work programme (Section 21):

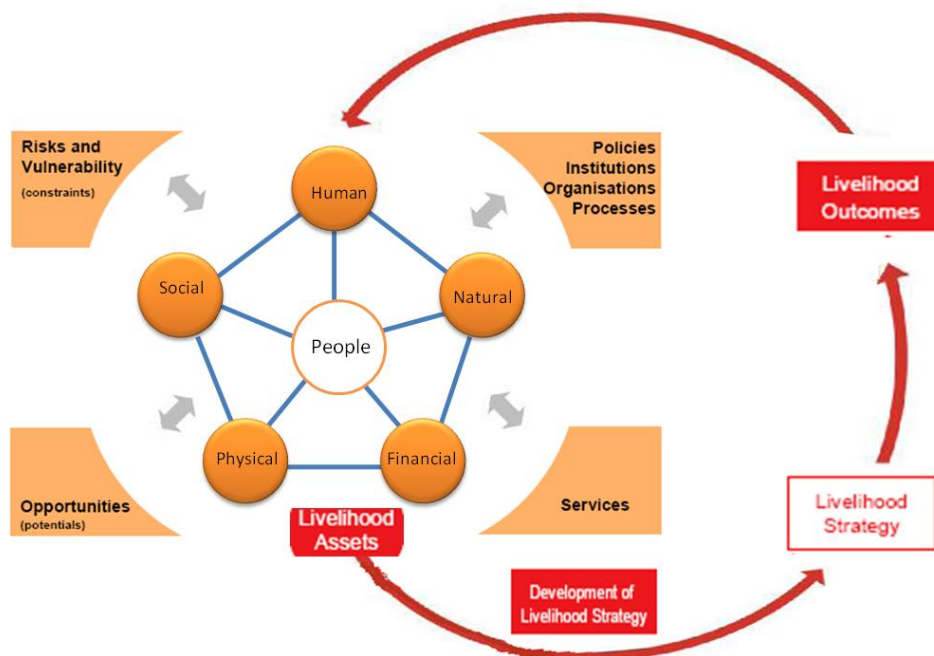
1. Expert group meeting: Promoting best practices on sustainable rural livelihoods in the ESCWA region (revised title)
2. Technical Material: Guide on the application of sustainable livelihoods approach in the ESCWA region (revised title)

The additional activities proposed below are expected to enhance the impact of the above planned activities but no funds has been earmarked and as such there will a need to look into external funding sources. As such, they would be implemented pending availability of funds:

3. Training Workshop(s): one or two training workshops (including Training of Trainers) on SLA related activities
4. Pilot Project: one pilot project in a selected country to apply results from the SLA guide

### 1. The Sustainable Livelihood Approach (SLA): Overview

The livelihood approach considers resources and policies from the perspective of people in their struggle to make a living, and highlights the need for specific sector-related interventions targeted to the needs of the concerned people or beneficiaries (Scherr, 1999). Thus, SLA places people, particularly rural poor people, at the centre of a web of inter-related influences that affect how they obtain a livelihood for themselves and their households. This livelihood becomes sustainable when it can cope with and recover from stresses and shocks, maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets, while not undermining the resource base.



As shown in the picture above adapted from the Swiss Development Agency (SDC) and DFID, closest to the people are the resources and assets that they access and use. These resources include:

- Human such as skills, knowledge or capacity;
- Natural such as land, water, trees, livestock, quarries;
- Financial such as capital, credit or income;
- Physical such as technology, machinery or inputs; and
- Social such as community support, social networks or social infrastructures.

The extent of people's access or use of these assets is affected positively and/or negatively by various factors including:

- Risks and vulnerabilities such as degradation, climate change, biodiversity loss, epidemics, natural disasters, civil strife, crises such as the prevailing financial and food crisis, low prices, too low or too much rainfall, low employment opportunities, increasing salinity and water shortage or the need to green the economy;
- Policies, institutions and processes including macro and micro policies, environmental legislations, tax regulations, subsidies, supporting entities and external factors;
- Opportunities they can build on such as international agreements on water sharing or free trade or existence of appropriate marketing channels; and
- Availability of supporting services such as capacity building institutions, extension education or research and development support.

Thus, the people – both stakeholders and development agents – will assess the assets and capabilities available and the supporting or impeding factors present and combine and/or use these to devise the best livelihood strategy that would allow the concerned stakeholders to achieve their goals or livelihood outcome.

SLA can be used at various levels both geographical and/or sectoral. It can be used as a tool for research, policy and strategy planning and implementation or programme monitoring and evaluation. It has proved useful in the analysis of complex trends and interactions and in analyzing and refocusing actions related to assessing and overcoming the impact of such broad issues as climate change, greening the economy, desertification and environmental degradation, biodiversity loss, water and energy shortage and other crises (including the recent food and financial crises) but also on more topical or specific issues such as zaatar production, use of drip irrigation or production and processing of a particular product. As such, the aim of SLA is to strengthen people's resilience by advocating for a better use of resources and diversification of revenues.

## **2. SLA examples from the ESCWA/ Arab region**

The SLA has been used in the region by various entities. Among the major potential partners are the UNDP (Dryland Development Center), which has implemented a number of activities aimed at enhancing livelihoods in the drylands of the region such as enhancing market access for drylands products in Lebanon and Morocco; enhancing water resources governance in Yemen; and enhancing adaptation to drought in Syria; ICARDA carried out a project on poverty and livelihood analysis and on impact assessment in dry areas. The project, which has 6 main outputs, aims at improving sustainably and welfare of poor people living in dry areas. With funding from UNDP and IDRC, AUB has implemented a project in the Aarsal region of Lebanon on the sustainable use of marginal land and livelihood improvement through the development of the cactus flower. It has also implemented another one on the development of cherries in the same region.

The FAO and IFAD, both of which have also worked extensively on the issue of SLA in various areas related to sustainable development as both aim to support the efforts of developing countries in achieving sustainable rural development and to help them meet their millennium development goals related to alleviating poverty. A few other actors have relied on SLA in order to improve intersectoral and institutional

coordination and collaboration, encourage decentralization, enhance governance, empower women and the most vulnerable, and assist the poor by providing them alternative and/or additional sources of income.

## **2. SLA in ESCWA activities:**

Efforts to promote the utilization of SLA within ESCWA activities are quite recent. SLA is being promoted as ESCWA's work in previous biennia focused on various issues related to development and poverty alleviation such as rural development, rural financial institutions, policies analyses, land degradation and sustainable land management. As such, the most likely extension was the introduction of the issue of sustainable livelihood as it allows tapping on the rich and varied experience accumulated so far in order to better serve our member States in their efforts to promote sustainable rural development. Past activities introduced various concepts and methodologies as potential tools that can be used to assess problems and/or issues faced by countries of the region.

The aim during this biennium, and hopefully the upcoming ones, will be to further refine and assess these tools while at the same time going beyond in order propose the most potent ones to member countries for implementation and build their related capacity. As a starting point, there will be a need to identify and analyze best practices in order to extract the most appropriate lessons and propose related action-oriented recommendations that could be acted upon.

In order to achieve the above clusters of activities are proposed to be undertaken with a group of partners and pending availability of resources. These include:

- the organization of expert group meetings, seminars and/or workshops aiming at identifying bottlenecks and short listing the most important areas of concern;
- the production and dissemination of relevant technical reports;
- the production and conduct of capacity building programs; and
- the implementation of pilot projects and/or the identification and dissemination of appropriate case studies and best practices.

With such a comprehensive program, it is hoped that member countries will have adequate information and appropriate tools and methods and demonstrative nuclei that will allow them to enact and implement related policies in an informed manner and thus be able to push forward their development agenda particularly as related to agriculture and rural areas.

These SLA activities are in line with the strategic framework of ESCWA as it relates to Subprogramme 1 on Integrated Management of Natural Resources for Sustainable Development (EA(b)), the Millennium Development Goals (Goal 7) and WSSD (Sustainable Development) among others.

## **3. Objective:**

To further the adoption of the Sustainable Livelihood Approach as a tool to support sustainable agriculture and rural development in the ESCWA region.

## **4. Results to be accomplished**

- (i) Improved capacity of member countries in applying SLA for sustainable development;
- (ii) Strengthened policy and decision-making process for the application of SLA and programs for sustainable development; and
- (iii) Improved knowledge of SLA and its application to support programs for agriculture and rural development.

## **5. Indicators of Achievement**

- Number of measures/approaches/best practices identified and proposed for implementation;
- Number of experts participating in the discussions or showing interest in the proposed approaches;

- Feedback from experts and other end-users on the usefulness of the approaches proposed;

## **6. Approach to be adopted:**

To achieve the above objective various activities are planned for 2010 and 2011, including the preparation of a guide and the organization of an Expert Group Meeting and others for which funding is to still being sought (two workshop and a pilot project, which are proposed to be undertaken in 2011 if funding can be secured).

The implementation of these activities will involve both analytical and operational work; i.e. conducting deskwork researches and analyses; field visits and surveys; liaising with experts to exchange information, experiences and best practices; identifying suitable SLA indicators or a common framework/platform for evaluating and selecting best practices; producing quality materials to inform and build capacity of decision makers and stakeholders; and implementing related pilot projects/case studies to showcase the usefulness of the methodologies. To this end strategic partnerships will be sought particularly with various institutions including those UN sister agencies that have worked extensively on SLA issues such as the UNDP/DDC, FAO or IFAD but also with other international institutions such as ICARDA, UK's DFID or Swiss' SDC and national and regional institutions such the American University of Beirut and others.

## **7. Activities Proposed and Timeframe**

### **Activity 1: Strategic Guide**

- Develop a guide on how best SLA could be adopted in the region based on available case studies and other existing guides detailing relevant approaches for rural development;
- The guide would contain various case studies and practices classified under different categories, namely climate change, land degradation & desertification, environmental degradation, habitat & biodiversity loss, renewable energy & energy efficiency, water use efficiency, rural development, agriculture intensification, etc.;
- Derive appropriate SLA indicators for the successful design and implementation of SLA programs;
- Draft general capacity building modules for good practices in applying SLA in selected sectors i.e. climate change, biodiversity loss, land degradation, etc. aimed at policy-makers and development planners;
- Draft one detailed capacity building module for applying SLA in one selected sector aimed for technical staff and stakeholders.

### **Activity 2: Expert Group Meeting**

- Present initial draft of the strategic guide;
- Discuss the pros & cons of the guide and selected practices;
- Agree on and come up with recommendations for the way forward particularly with regard to the capacity building modules ;

### **Activity 3: Training Workshops** (one or two workshops pending on availability of funds)

- Prepare related concept papers and information notes to be presented to potential partners and donors;
- Prepare appropriate Terms of Reference (TOR) and contracts for consultants and resource persons;
- Prepare background papers and documents;
- Organize the training workshops.

### **Activity 4: Pilot Projects** (subject to fund availability)

- Prepare project documents to be presented to potential donors;

- Refine the detailed guide for implementation at field level;
- Implement the pilot project

**ANNEX: Tentative Timeframe for activities under RB**

2010-2011	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
<b>Strategic guide</b>											
Activity narrative	←→										
Concept paper	←→										
Methodology	←→	←→									
TOR	←→										
Recruitment of consultant		←→									
Collection of data & information		←→	←→								
Identification of case studies			←→	←→							
Drafting			←→	←→	←→						
Review & presentation at EGM						←→	←→				
Finalization after EGM							←→	←→	←→		
<b>EGM</b>											
Information Note			←→								
Invitation letters & follow up			←→	←→	←→	←→					
TOR consultant/resource persons and follow up			←→	←→	←→	←→					
Logistics				←→	←→	←→	←→				
Organization/conduct of meeting							←→				
Meeting report							←→	←→	←→		
<b>Proposed workshops and pilot project*</b>											
Concept note for training workshop to be submitted for funding							←→	←→	←→		
Preparation of project documents							←→	←→	←→		

Pending availability of funds, proposals will be formulated end 2010 and work proposed to be initiated in 2011.