

WFP News Release

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FRANCE SUPPORTS WFP'S AGRICULTURAL RESILIENCE-BUILDING PROJECTS IN THE SOUTH OF IRAQ

BAGHDAD – The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) welcomed a 250,000 Euro contribution from France towards agricultural resilience-building activities in Basra governorate – in the south of Iraq, that will support 7,500 people and their families.

This is the first time France supports WFP's work in southern Iraq, enhancing the long-term self-reliance of tens of thousands of people indirectly in food-insecure, vulnerable communities. Such initiatives are even more vital during the pandemic.

The project is also funded by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and implemented in collaboration with the municipality in Basra, local communities and NGO partner Action Against Hunger.

"Iraq is particularly affected by climate change through droughts and salinization of irrigation water, including the South of the country," said Bruno Aubert, French Ambassador to Iraq. "There is an urgent need for action. Against this backdrop, France is deeply committed to support Iraqi agriculture through the World Food Programme. Planting date palm trees contributes to combatting desertification and supporting revenues of Iraqi farmers."

More than half of the participants are women, and the project is providing business grants to 50 women trainees, to support them in setting up small businesses. This includes advice on food production, marketing and selling to local markets, enhancing linkages and helping create sustainable incomes.

"WFP welcomes this generous support from France, which will help create new job opportunities and mitigate the impact of climate change on natural resources," said WFP Representative in Iraq Abdirahman Meygag. "WFP's strong partnership with France on development assistance has a positive effect on local communities, improving agricultural productivity and people's access to water. The participants are also able to build small businesses and value chains for the food they produce in the southern Iraq."

Solar water pumps for irrigation are another innovative solution introduced in the project, along with agro-ecology training to participants, covering practices with low environmental impact. In this way, the initiatives help improve livelihoods in an environmentally and economically sustainable manner.

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