Droughts in the Middle East and North Africa have had terrible human and economic losses. In the normally semi-arid and arid countries of the region any reduction in precipitation or increase in temperature can have a significant impact on people, compounding the problems of natural resource management for agriculture, seriously threatening human and animal welfare and jeopardizing economic development. While in some areas increased irrigation from groundwater and rivers can help ease the impact, communities most at risk are agro-pastoralists who rely on rainfed agriculture. Too many of these communities are ill-equipped to counter the impact of droughts and the resulting economic and human losses can be severe.

In response, various drought management guidelines have been developed for the region. However, the lack of timely and ongoing monitoring has hampered drought management and disaster responses by countries and international agencies. The objective of this research project is to design an operational drought monitoring and early warning system so that countries can better prepare for and be more resilient to future drought episodes.

The work will be supported by experts at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln’s National Drought Mitigation Center, who maintain the U.S. Drought Monitor and a suite of web-based drought management decision-making tools that are used by farmers, educators and the government. Through this partnership, regional researchers can better understand the possibilities and realities involved in establishing a drought monitoring system.

**Principal Investigator:**
- International Center for Biosaline Agriculture (ICBA)

**Co-Principal Investigators:**
- National Center for Agricultural Research and Extension (NCARE), Jordan
- University of Nebraska—Lincoln, USA