SPATE IRRIGATION PROFILE OF TUNISIA
PLAN

- Definition of SPATE irrigation in Tunisia
- Cultivated area under SPATE irrigation
- Administrative state of SPATE irrigation
- Size of SPATE irrigation systems
- SPATE irrigation systems characterization
- Water sources for SPATE irrigation
- Water distribution methods
- Gender and SPATE irrigation
- Water diversion
- Bank protection and wadi training
- Water distribution rules and rights
- Enforcement of water distribution rules
- Maintenance of SPATE systems
- Soil moisture conservation techniques utilized in SPATE irrigation
- Risks in SPATE irrigation and cropping strategies
- Crops and productivity under SPATE irrigation
- SPATE irrigation constraints
- List of SPATE irrigation systems
- Costs of SPATE irrigation projects
- Farm incomes
INTRODUCTION

The location of Tunisia and its topography are responsible for its limited water resources. Its total surface area is 164 150 km², the agricultural land is only 28% of this total area, i.e., about 4.5 million ha.

The climate varies from Mediterranean to semi-arid and arid; it is characterized by hot and dry summers and mild winters receiving the major part of the annual precipitation.

Average annual rainfall is around 594 mm in the North, 289 mm in the Centre, and 156 mm in the South; it is ranging from 1500 mm in the extreme North to less than 100 mm in the extreme South.

The annual precipitation in Tunisia is on average equal to
37 billion m$^3$ and is ranging from 11 to 90 billion m$^3$.

Average annual evapotranspiration is also high and water deficit is particularly significant from May to October.

The annual evaporation varies between 1300 mm in the north to about 2500 mm and even more in the south.

The water resources are about 4.67 billion m$^3$ of which 2.7 billion m$^3$ are from surface water and 2 billion m$^3$ from groundwater.
Water shortage is a critical problem in the center and the south of Tunisia

Several water harvesting methods have been initiated to alleviate this problem

Floods have positive aspects for irrigation, roots soil layers Recharge and water table recharge
Definition of SPATE Irrigation in Tunisia

- SPATE irrigation is a type of water management, that is unique to semi arid environment

- SPATE irrigation was practiced by riparian in order to control the water flood use. The local name is “Mgoud”,

30/11/2011

SPATE irrigation profile of Tunisia
Avantages of SPATE irrigation

- It improves the crops yield (especially cereals and fodder crops).
- It contributes in the maintenance of the hydrologic system equilibrium.
- It improves the soil quality.
Cultivated area under SPATE irrigation

The irrigated perimeters surface (400,000 ha)

The potential of SPATE cultivated area (20,000 ha) located in the centre

Sidi Bouzid et Kairouan
Irrigation depends on the floods generated by non-perennial rivers such as Wadi Kebir, Wadi sidi Aich, Wadi Fekka, Wadi sidi Ali ben Jeballah, Wadi El Hachim and Wadi Sahha.

During the last 5 years, the SPATE cultivated areas are about 16,000 ha.
SPATE perimeters in Tunisia are mostly public.

SPATE system is managed and maintained by the CRDA.

There are few farmers who spread water floods on their perimeters independently.
**Size of SPATE irrigation systems**

- SPATE irrigation systems size depends on:
  - The extent of the river from where flood waters are arrived.
  - The agrarian state of perimeters

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SPATE System Category</th>
<th>SPATE Perimeter Size (Ha)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Small (S)</td>
<td>&lt; 50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium (M)</td>
<td>50-150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large (L)</td>
<td>&gt; 150</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In Tunisia, the common source of SPATE irrigation systems is only SPATE flow (there is no use of ground water or base flows)
The most used methods in Tunisia are:

- Individual field
- Field-to-field
- Extensive
- Intensive by cluster
Women are integrated in almost all the different economic sectors in Tunisia.

Women represent 32% of the agriculture sector (2004).

In SPATE irrigation, women are involved in agricultural practices, harvesting.

They are also involved in infrastructure only with studies.

About marketing, the role of men is generally more important.
SPATE irrigation in Tunisia is divided into two types:

- **Traditional SPATE irrigation**: by derivation of the river part using a structure which begins from the middle of the river.

- **Modernized SPATE irrigation**: based on theoretical calculation, they allow:
  - To resist to strong floods
  - To derivate a pet of the strong floods
  - To better control the admitted discharge
  - To minimize the solid transport into the network
The system is composed from:

* A derivation dam, located across the river, in the upstream of the perimeter to irrigate.

* A network of channels, inside each parameter.
Bank protection and wadi training

The used materials are:

* Earth (clay) and stones

* Reinforced concrete
There is only AIC (Association of Collective Interest) whose the role is the management of water floods and their distribution between farmers
The maintenance of the SPATE system is among the roles of the AIC
A management contract of a three years length must be signed between the administration and every AIC
We utilize the same technics used for the other irrigation systems:

* Ploughing after irrigation
* Conservation tillage
* Breaking crusts prior to irrigate depends of the existence of rocks or not in the soil.
The SPATE system is a kind of conservation of water and soil. It is a complementary way to increase the economic yield.
The center of Tunisia (Sidi Bouzid) is known by its cerealiculture and fodder crops.

recently, watermelon is introduced in SPATE perimeters.

the intercropping is also practiced between fruit trees.

NB : the government of Sidi bouzid become one of the main agricultural regions of the country.

This irrigated sector produces 291 000 quintals of cereal products, 320 000 tons of vegetables and 4 350 tons of arboreal per year = 50% of agricultural production and use 55% of the mainpower working in the agricultural sector.
There are some problems of water management between farmer

Sometimes strong floods destroy the SPATE structure

Old structures are becoming very weak
Structures are situated in the plain of Sidi bouzid on the oued Al fakka.

Structures of Nouael, in the intersection of the Tunis-Gafsa road with oued Al fakka.

Those of Zaafria constitute a good example of the possibility to put back today the old techniques of SPATE by new process.
The table below indicates the importance of reserved investissements in the 10th plan:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>2002-2006</th>
<th>2002-2011</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Units of SPATE flows and watertable refill (units)</td>
<td>27,95</td>
<td>6,63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost (million $)</td>
<td>1265</td>
<td>3 000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Area (ha)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</table>
The strong variability of rainfall and the dynamic of the economy in the market makes very difficult the assessment of farm income.
Thank you for your attention