

REPUBLIC OF TURKEY
Ministry of Environment and Forestry
General Directorate of Afforestation and Erosion Control
Planning Department

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SUBJECTS :

- i. Middle East Watershed Monitoring and Evaluation Project-Turkey
- ii. Aridland Workshop For Middle East and North Africa Resource Manager

**United States Department of Agriculture
Forest Service
Inventory and Monitoring Institute**

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Dear Sharon Friedman
Acting Director

I felt happiness to hear your new position and I wish you my best wishes and deepest gratitude. I hope you have received the fax message sent by General Director in the date of 24th of January, 2005.

Let me to introduce myself briefly. My name is Ismail BELEN and I am a Forest Engineer. I am working as the Head of Planning Department of General Directorate of Afforestation and Erosion Control which is an institute of Ministry of Environment and Forestry, Republic of Turkey.

My purpose to write this letter is that, I would like to give you some information about the **“Middle East Watershed Monitoring and Evaluation Project-Turkey”** and using this opportunity, I would like to bring to your kind notice my opinions.

As you know better than me, the **“Middle East Watershed Monitoring and Evaluation Projects”**, with leading your institute as representative of the U.S.A, is being carried out in Israel, Jordon, Palestine Authority and Turkey. The responsible unit of this project in Turkey is the General Directorate of Afforestation and Erosion Control. The general coordination is being performed by the Planning Department, and I am Head of this department. **On behalf of my General Directorate, I have the pleasure to inform you that, we feel ourselves very fortunate to be a party of this project.**

In spite of the fact that this project is not so large in respect of its budget and application field, it has been considered very important referring to its effects and outputs.
In casting a glance through these:

a. Monitoring and Evaluating Needing

In Turkey, many projects related to erosion control and watershed rehabilitation have been fulfilled by the government. While some of them are being implemented with foreign financed project like **“East Anatolia Watershed Rehabilitation Project”**, the others are being executed with interior budget resources.

The “**East Anatolia Watershed Rehabilitation Project**” which supported by the World Bank, implemented in mainly East West Anatolia with more than 110 millions USA \$ amount of budget. After this, another foreign-financed project so-called “**Anatolia Watershed Rehabilitation Project**”, again with support of the World Bank credit and GEF donation has been put into practice. Besides these, more than 70 millions USA Dollars being spent for above-mentioned activities as governmental resources annually.

But, unfortunately the results of these activities are not being observed and evaluated on the basis of scientific method. As a consequence, the project we are working on together, has an invaluable role on removing these deficiencies. With this respect it has been accepted very important not only by the Ministry circulars but also by Universities, Research Institutes and the other relevant units.

b. Contribution to International-Interregional Peace and Collaboration

The projects which are being implemented using the same or close methods in five different countries spreaded out whole the region and the USA, allows us to make a worldwide comparison. Along with, I believe in that co-operation apparently has precious effect on gaining the ability of working together with different countries and experts. Furthermore, if we take into consideration the conditions of Middle East Region, understanding the role of project will be easy.

c. Improvement of Water Resources

It is obviously known that the whole world will be faced with water shortage in close future and most probably it will influence the Middle East Region more deeply. When the geographical position of Turkey and its role on water sources are taken into consideration, it is clearly be appreciated that this project will play an important role for planning of future of this region.

Consequently, because of the reasons above-mentioned and the others, the project is being appreciated very important and the necessary precautions are being taken immediately.

The Activities Carried Out Up To 2004

1. Implementing of the Project:

Necessary equipments have been set up at project fields and it has been starting the necessary measures according to project text.

2. International Relations

The responsible experts have fulfilled to international meetings and annual reports have been presented orderly.

3. Responsible Units and Persons in Turkey

The responsible institute for this project in Turkey is the General Directorate of Afforestation and Erosion Control and as the Head of Planning Department of this unit I am (Mr. Ismail BELEN) responsible for the general coordination and international relations.

In land the project is being implemented by Malatya Environment and Forest Management. So far, Mr. **Mahmut TEMİZ** and **İsmail Hakkı ATABAY** who are both Forest Engineers executed the relevant works successfully and Mr. ATABAY is still going on.

Besides this, the General Directorate of Rural Affairs, an institute of Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs has joined to this project on the central and province level and Dr. Gursel KÜSEK had an important role both central, province and international level. He will keep on working afterwards too. These staffs have been joined to international meetings until today both inside and outside of Turkey.

4. 2004's International Experts Meeting- And Excuse

The former director of your institute **Mr. Thomas HOEKSTRA** has invited me officially and kindly to join the last international expert meeting took place in the USA last year. Although I was very desirous and completed all the necessary preparations (e.g. visa, presentation) the Minister of Environment and Forestry ordered me very important mission and I failed to attend this meeting.

Using this opportunity I would like to express my deepest gratitude and also my excuses to **Ms. Marsha JAMES** who become very helpful sending my invitation both electronically and as hard copy. Failing to this meeting didn't cause so important effects on implementing the project but for me, I could not able to meet your staffs and to discuss future collaborations.

5. Others Transactions Executed in 2004

Although there is not any matter as technical, we have some problems such as introduction, declaration, advertisement and the evaluation of the project up that date. In the year of 2004, we have tried to eliminate them. For example:

- a. Due to the centralize structure of Turkey, project was not known enough at the core of institute. To eliminate this position we have published booklets and distributed them to all relevant circulars and established trip for working fields both Turkish and foreign delegation.
- b. The aerial photographs needed to evaluate the results of activities and comparative studies have been purchased.
- c. The latest event is that 12 staffs, working related to project issues both at central and provincial scale, were being taken to education program since January 24, 2005. The training program will last for 10 days.
- d. A web page for project is under the construction and it will be ready in a short time.

6. Our Objectives in 2005

For the duration of 2005:

- a. Assessment of aerials photographs will be completed,
- b. The training program will be accomplished,
- c. A detailed report including the assessments and other relevant issues will be prepared.
- d. The web page is going to be published.
- e. A brochure will be prepared in Turkish and English languages and will be distributed both internally and externally (To project partners and other relevant circles)
- f. Project site and activities will be showed to a Persian and Armenian delegation, which are coming to Turkey under the umbrella of the World Bank, after April 2005.
- g. With the frame of Environmental Action Program for Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) a workshop is going to be take place in this region.

Dear Friedman,

We believe in completely the supporting the international collaboration and contributing the regional peace, which is one of the reasons lying down the project and we would like to participate actively in the operations realized for these purposes.

With this respect:

- a. We have the pleasure to inform you that, seeing you and your colloquies in Turkey at your earliest convenience, will make us fortunate. We believe in that there are so many different kind of theme could be work on together with Turkey and the USA, like afforestation, erosion control, range rehabilitation, watershed rehabilitation, and avalanche control. If we consider the situation of this region I am sure these activities could bring invaluable outcomes for both sides.
- b. After above-mentioned report and other things related to our project were over, to present the results and to discuss the possibilities for further collaboration and in order to see your works on ground, we want to have a short visit to your institute. The delegation should be consisting of the General Director of Afforestation and Erosion Control Mr. Mustafa YÜKSEK, I (Ismail BELEN), Dr. Gürsel KÜSEK (you know him) and may be one more person. Should you kindly accept, we are planning our visit for April or May 2005?
- c. As you know, with the aiming of supporting regional cooperation, a workshop so-called **"Arid Land Management for Sustainable Development: A Regional Workshop for Middle East and North Africa Resource Managers"** has been announced to be carried out in 2004. At that time I had sent our presentations offering to take a role as **"Country Coordinator"**. As I have just learned form relevant web page the workshop will be take place between 14 and 17 February 2005 in Cyprus. I would like to take part to this workshop as country co-coordinator. By this means, I hope that I will discuss what to do towards region, and in case sufficient source is provided three people from our General Directorate will participate to this workshop to present.

Dear Director,

I hope that we are not late for mentioned subjects and we can find proper opportunities to create better world.

We should really feel obliged to you for a reply to this letter.

Best regards. 1/26/2005



Ismail BELEN
Forest Engineer
Head of Department