

2018



REGIONAL WORKSHOP FOR DESERT LOCUST INFORMATION OFFICERS

FAO COMMISSION FOR CONTROLLING THE DESERT
LOCUST IN SOUTH-WEST ASIA (SWAC)

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15–19 January 2018

Tehran, I.R. Iran



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FAO COMMISSION FOR CONTROLLING THE DESERT LOCUST IN
SOUTH-WEST ASIA (SWAC)

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FOR DESERT LOCUST INFORMATION OFFICERS**

15–17 January 2018
Tehran, I.R. Iran

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS

Rome, 2018

Table of Contents

1. Introduction.....	2
2. Participants.....	2
3. Programme.....	2
4. MacOS and apps.....	3
5. RAMSES (Rv4.1).....	3
6. Conclusion	4
Annex 1. MacBookPros in SWAC	6
Annex 2. Workshop programme.....	7

SWAC Regional Workshop for Desert Locust Information Officers

15–17 January 2018 (Tehran, I.R. Iran)

1. Introduction

In fulfilment of a recommendation made at the 30th session of the FAO Commission for Controlling the Desert Locust in South-West Asia (SWAC), the first regional workshop for Desert Locust Information Officers (DLIOs) in the three member frontline countries of SWAC was organised on 15–17 January 2018. The workshop was hosted by the Ministry of Jihad-e-Agriculture, Government of I.R. Iran at the Plant Protection Organization in Tehran. The workshop and participants were funded by the SWAC trust fund.

2. Participants

Six nationally designated DLIOs from India, I.R. Iran and Pakistan attended the workshop:

- Mahmoud Chalaki, I.R. Iran
- Ali Babali Fashki, I.R. Iran
- Jawed Iqbal Khan, Pakistan
- Pankaj Salunke, India
- Shahbaz, Pakistan
- Chandra Shekhar Sharma, India

In the spirit of interregional collaboration, the CLCPRO expert, Hichem Dridi, also attended the workshop.

The FAO Senior Locust Forecasting Officer, Keith Cressman, conducted the workshop assisted by the RAMSES GIS developer, Mehdi Ghaemian, from I.R. Iran.

3. Programme

The main objective of the workshop was to train the participants on the use of the new version of the MacOS and associated applications on the MacBookPro laptop. The purpose of this training was in followup in the transition from PC to Mac by DLIOs. Each commission has procured at least one MacBookPro laptop for each country. The current migration is nearly complete in all frontline countries of the three regions. In the SWAC region, the Commission provided five MacBookPros, one each to the two DLIOs in India, I.R. Iran and to the Rv4.1 developer in 2017. Pakistan already had a MacBookPro from the pilot phase and second one will be provided to them later this year. Each laptop was pre-configured by DLIS and ready to use. Consequently, each of the participants brought their MacBookPro laptop with them to the workshop (Annex 1).

The three-day workshop was organised as a morning session (0830/0900-1230/1300h) and an afternoon session (14-1730h) and focussed on learning the MacOS and its primary built-in applications (Annex 2). The DLIOs learned 20 different apps and utilities on the Mac. They practiced using Pages, Numbers and Keynote apps by preparing a locust bulletin, an eLocust3 battery management table, and situation maps, respectively.

4. MacOS and apps

Although most of the participants had been using their MacBookPro laptops for several months or longer so they were quite familiar with its operation. Consequently, much of the information presented during the workshop was to improve, fine tune and complete their Mac skills. This was accomplished through a progressive, step-by-step, systematic approach in order to maximise learning and retention. Each feature was presented and demonstrated, and then the participants practiced with hands on experience and by completing several exercises and practicals.

There was substantial emphasis on efficiently manage files with the Finder, how to use keyboard shortcuts, and the maximising the versatile TrackPad.

The DLIOs learned quickly each application because of similarities in menus and function between the applications. It became evident that work productive applications such as Pages, Numbers and Keynote were far more powerful and easier to use than the Microsoft equivalents of Word, Excel and PowerPoint. Nevertheless, the Mac apps are fully compatible with their PC Microsoft counterparts because they can open and save those file formats. Furthermore, participants found that it was easier to customise and configure the laptop due to the intuitive approach utilised by Apple.

In addition to the afore-mentioned, the primary differences in using the Mac are the reliance on the TrackPad and its many gestures, the ability to have multiple desktops, the drag'n'drop approach of the MacOS, the use of the Command key rather than the Control key for keyboard shortcuts, the ease in changing languages and updating, and the lack of freezes and other problems due to improved memory management and hardware/software compatibility.

5. RAMSES (Rv4.1)

Rv4.1 is currently used in 18 frontline countries where survey and control operations are carried out in which data are collected that need to be managed and analysed¹. RAMSEsv4, became operational on 1 January 2015, having been extensively redesigned as open-source software and containing a single unified database. It was updated Rv4.1 in May 2016.

Rv4.1 has evolved into a mature custom application that is now very stable with few bugs. DLIOs continue to use it well to manage remote sensing imagery, survey data and control results.

Refresher training has been provided on a regular basis to DLIOs during interregional workshops organised on an annual basis. In between the workshops, DLIS provides constant technical support to the DLIOs.

Ideally Rv4.1 should be used more for data summary and analysis, but this has not been fully realised by most DLIOs as more training is required in future regional and interregional workshops.

¹ Algeria, Chad, Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, India, Iran, Libya, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Niger, Oman, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Yemen, and DLCO-EA

6. Conclusion

The participants indicated that they learned a lot, even those who were already familiar with the Mac. They appreciated the teaching style with loud, clear voice that facilitated learning. The participants felt that the workshop remains a very valuable opportunity to come together to learn and to show problems in front of the teacher to they can be resolved.

This workshop represented an important milestone in the migration from PC to Mac as a significant means of improving the global Desert Locust early warning system. The workshop can be considered successful because it achieved the goal of providing sufficient knowledge and practice in using the MacBookPro and the MacOS so that DLIOs can use the Mac in their daily work for locust reporting. It is expected that from now onwards the DLIOs will no longer rely on the PC and, instead, use the Mac for Rv4.1, email and to prepare reports and bulletins.

In general, the annual workshops continue to contribute directly to the strengthening of the global Desert Locust early warning system, which is the basis for preventive control in order to reduce the frequency, duration and intensity of Desert Locust plagues. The participants reaffirmed the importance of and the need to continue these workshops on an annual basis. The workshop is the only opportunity for DLIOs from locust-affected countries within the SWAC region to get together to exchange experiences and share knowledge face-to-face, and to receive important training and feedback from DLIS. Therefore, it is critical that all frontline countries allow their nationally designated DLIO to take part in this activity, and that SWAC continues to organize this activity every year with DLIS participation.

Ideally, Desert Locust Heads should be invited every few years to participate in the workshop with their DLIO so they can observe first hand the tools that had been developed by DLIS and how DLIOs use them in reporting and early warning. This would also help to strengthen the important collaborative link between locust directors and locust information officers.

The participants expressed their desire that Rv4.1 continues to be updated so that it can provide the necessary functionality for summarising and analysing data, and to simplify tasks. However, DLIOs should improve their knowledge and use the full functions of Rv4.1. DLIS and the Commissions should continue to be responsible for providing the necessary training to DLIOs on Rv4.1 functionality and new technologies while users should make full use of the custom application for data management and analysis.

Annexes

Annex 1. MacBookPros in SWAC

User	Model	Tech Specs	SN	User	Gmail	iCloud
DLIOINDAA	MBP 2017	2.3GHz i5 128/16GB	C02VJ18ZHV2F	Pramod	dlioindaa	dlioindaa@icloud.com
DLIOINDBB	MBP 2017	2.3GHz i5 128/16GB	C02VP0TUHV2F	Sharma	dlioindbb	dlioindbb@icloud.com
DLIOIRN	MBP 2017	2.3GHz i5 128/16GB	C02VP0TVHV2F	Babali	dlioirn	dlioirn@icloud.com
DLIOIRN2	MBP 2017	2.3GHz i5 128/16GB	C02WD17NHV2F	Chalaki	dlioirn2	dlioirn2@icloud.com
DLIOPAK *	MBP 2012	2.9GHz i7 500/8GB	C02JM16CDR56	Shahbaz	elocustpak	elocustpak@gmail.com
DLIOPAK2 **	MBP 2017	2.3GHz i5 128/16GB	C02WD17PHV2F	Jawed	dliopak02	dliopak02@icloud.com

* user = Plague

** to be deployed in September 2018

Annex 2. Workshop programme

Day 1	15 January 2018
09:00–12:30	Morning session
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opening • MacOS introduction • MacBookPro components • Finder, Preferences, File management • Flycut app
	Lunch
14:00–17:30	Afternoon session
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Siri, Search • Notes, Preview apps • Cloud
Day 2	16 January 2018
08:30–12:30	Morning session
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of yesterday • Pages app – bulletin practical • Numbers app
	Lunch
14:00–17:30	Afternoon session
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Numbers app – eLocust3 battery management practical • Keynote app – Rv4.1 map practical
Day 3	17 January 2018
08:30–13:00	Morning session
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of yesterday • Safari, Mail, Contacts, Calendar app • Reminders, Dictionary, Lastpass, Photos app • Closing