



# **Migration, agricultural transformations and natural resource exploitation in the oases of Morocco and Tunisia**

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*with*

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# *Preface*

*by Leo de Haan (project co-ordinator)*

More than five years ago, Hein de Haas concluded his first research project analysing the impact of labour migration on Moroccan oases. In this, he stands in a long geographical tradition at the University of Amsterdam with respect to research on Morocco, which began with the late Willem Heinemeijer in the 1950s and was fostered by Paolo De Mas. I was just lucky to be around at the right moment, for the research theme immediately drew my attention, not least because of the many challenging similarities and differences I observed in comparison with my own experience from a number of research projects I managed in West Africa. It is within this context that this new research project has emerged.

Ideas are easily born within a proper scientific environment, but it takes more than that to implement them. It took us a lot of effort to convince the offices of the European Union in Brussels of the usefulness of the IMAROM project, to whom honour is due. The European Union and its INCO-DC programme deserves merit to have recognised the innovative character of the project and its policy relevance. Its role as IMAROM major funder should also be understood as an expression of the priority it confers on cross-Mediterranean co-operation. I am convinced that in this respect IMAROM has contributed its share. Through this report it delivers both scientific and policy-relevant conclusions. Moreover, research collaboration was boosted as a result, and in all four participating countries PhD projects will soon be included as part of the project.

Besides the EU, as co-ordinating institution the University of Amsterdam should be praised for scientifically, financially and organisationally hosting the project. It should be remembered that the University of Amsterdam (AGIDS) also provided part of the funding for IMAROM, both in its preparatory phase as well as during its actual implementation. Finally, the University of Nijmegen (CIDIN) allowed me to continue my participation and place the finishing touches on the final report after my nomination to chair of development studies there.

Finally, I would like to thank all my colleagues from the IMAROM partner institutes for constituting one of the most remarkable research teams I have ever known/experienced. With ups and downs, we have attempted to become a firm research team. All of us should receive credit for this. Nevertheless, all colleagues will agree that I thank in particular Hein de Haas for his unremitting energy and motivation in facilitating and stimulating our scientific endeavour, as well as relieving me of the largest share of the burden as acting co-ordinator.

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While elaborating the project's research proposal, the coordinators have greatly benefited from the valuable advice given by Barbara Hassing of the Bureau EC Liaison in The Hague and Ingeborg Berger of the Liaison Office of the University of Amsterdam. The assistance and help provided by the staff at the Royal Dutch Embassy in Rabat has enabled the smooth implementation of the fieldwork in Morocco, and we would like to thank in particular Youssef Salmane. Furthermore, we thank Nathan Rozema for designing the IMAROM webpage, Laurens Nijzink for providing valuable input in the discussions on the theoretical framework, and Olivier Kramsch for reviewing the text of this report.

During the fieldwork, the researchers in both Tunisia and Morocco have greatly benefited from the cooperation of the national, provincial, and local authorities as well as agricultural services. They have facilitated the implementation of the project in a great way, and provided us with their valuable advice on numerous issues. The literature research was greatly enhanced thanks to the excellent and easily accessible collection of the La Source library in Rabat.

We owe much to the almost 1,000 peasants in Tunisia and Morocco, who voluntarily cooperated to our research by responding to our questionnaires, as well as the assistants and many others who helped us to carry out the field research.



## IMAROM research partners

University of Amsterdam (Amsterdam, Netherlands)	UVA
Mohammed V University (Rabat, Morocco)	UMV
Mohammed I University (Oujda, Morocco)	UMO
Institut des Régions Arides (Médenine, Tunisia)	IRA
Estación Experimental de Zonas Aridas (Almería , Spain)	EEZA

Main participants involved in the IMAROM project:

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Hein de Haas	UVA / KUN	General coordination, database and questionnaire design, socio-economic data collection in Morocco
Paolo De Mas	UVA	Project advisor
Abdellatif Bencherifa	UMV	Scientific coordinator UMV
Hassan El Ghanjou	UMV	Questionnaire design, socio-economic data collection in Morocco
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Yolanda Cantón	EEZA	Bio-physical data collection in Tunisia and remote sensing analysis in Tunisia.
Marieta Sanjuán	EEZA	Digital topographical data processing in Tunisia.
Miguel Angel Domene	EEZA	Soil moisture data processing in Tunisia.
Elke Verbeten	UVA	Literature research on irrigation in arid environments (IMAROM working paper 1)
Christine Müller	UVA	Literature research on migration patterns Europe-Maghreb (IMAROM working paper 2)
Corine Otte	UVA	Field research on traditional local water management (IMAROM working paper 9)
Aleida van Rooij	UVA	Field research on the position of migrant women (IMAROM working paper 12)

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