



“Typical products can become a source of pride for producers, thus contributing to local economic development, reducing poverty and keeping populations in their towns and villages of origin.”

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Promoting market access for typical agro-food products in Tunisia

More and more consumers are searching for authenticity and are willing to pay higher prices for typical food products that are deeply rooted in their territories of origin. For small and medium producers, this new trend signifies a major opportunity. It frees them from having to compete on price with standardized products in commodity markets and rewards them for maintaining biodiversity and cultural heritage. In recent years, Tunisia has been setting up a legal framework to promote and protect origin-linked products. In 2013, UNIDO launched the PAMPAT project to support Tunisian institutions and the private sector with the practical implementation of quality label schemes and the promotion of market access for typical agro-food products.

UNIDO's APPROACH

The PAMPAT project aims at improving the performance, market access and socioeconomic conditions of producers in three selected value chains in Tunisia, namely the fig of Djebba with a protected geographical indication (GI), the spicy chili-pepper harissa with the Food Quality Label Tunisia, as well as the organic-certified cactus and prickly pear products. UNIDO strengthened the organization of selected value chains, improved the productivity, quality compliance and product development of small and medium producers, and enhanced their position in both domestic and export markets. UNIDO has also supported the Tunisian Ministries of Agriculture, Industry and Tourism to set-up the first nation-wide inventory of typical food products and to organize the biannual competition of Tunisian agro-food products.

IMPACT

Following the set-up of the GI, the fig of Djebba producers have seen prices double, while 40% of GI figs are being exported to Canada and the Gulf countries. As a result, the scenic mountain village Djebba is becoming increasingly famous. The number

of visitors has doubled in three years. The newly-introduced Food Quality Label for the spicy harissa paste has become the pillar of an international public-private marketing campaign for the Tunisian flagship product. The number of export markets of the six Food Quality Label companies has quintupled. Small suppliers of high-quality chilies used in labelled harissa production are rewarded with a 17-25% price premium. In the organic cactus value chain the number of companies operating in the cosmetic and agro-food sector has gone up from 5 to 25, resulting in investments of over EUR3 million and the creation of over 800 temporary and permanent jobs. Furthermore, the 76 medal-winning agro-food products at the competition for typical Tunisian products have recorded sales' increases of 30-50%. Retail chains like Carrefour and Géant have

promoted the winners following the set-up of public-private partnerships.

WAY FORWARD

Tunisian institutions are now convinced of the market potential of typical food products and the value-added of origin-linked quality label schemes. The preparations for the second edition of the nation-wide competition for typical agro-food products are underway, while an increasing number of GI producers are being supported to implement the labelling scheme. While the cactus value chain continues its rapid expansion process, the Ministry of Industry is already collaborating with UNIDO's support with the Ministry of Culture to protect typical harissa production techniques as intangible world cultural heritage. Tunisian ministries are increasingly mainstreaming the valorization of typical products, thus setting the ground for a striving sector.

AT A GLANCE

Project title	Market access project for agro-food and typical products PAMPAT TUNISIA
Thematic area	Creating shared prosperity
Donor	SECO Switzerland
Project counterpart	Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Industry
Budget	4 972 000 CHF
Duration	6 years 2013-2019