



ssnup

Smallholder Safety Net
Upscaling Programme

project results

MODERNISATION OF DATE PROCESSING OPERATIONS IN TUNISIA



Beneficiary organisation

Beni Ghreb is a Tunisian date marketing and processing company, created by producers for producers. The company's exclusive supplier is the Groupement de Développement de l'Agriculture Biodynamique (GDABD) in the Hazoua region, with **130 producer families (more than 1,650 people)**. Beni Ghreb exports biodynamic quality dates, which is a niche market with good added value, particularly to Germany, Italy, and Switzerland. Through its marketing activities, the company contributes to the economic and social development of the Hazoua oasis, both by buying dates from the producers (with biodynamic prices up to 40% higher than conventional prices) and by paying the workers. The company and the Group are playing a leading role in proposing a sustainable model for the use of water resources in the oases of southern Tunisia.

The challenge

Beni Ghreb has faced a number of significant challenges over the last few years, originating mainly from the Covid crisis, which hit them hard when all exports were suspended in 2020. Not only was it in need of renegotiating its international loans, but the company was also in dire need of modernisation. Indeed, **the company's processing and management system was based on a manual paper-based tracking system, which made its operations inefficient and prone to errors.**

The proposed solutions

In order to improve the company's profitability and efficiency and ensure it continues its mission of producing and marketing dates, it was decided to begin by focusing on modernising the processing and management systems. As part of a plan to support and recapitalise the company, Beni Ghreb and SIDI agreed to begin with **acquiring and installing a new Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) software to replace the current paper-based system.**

The following project results were expected:

- 1 Thanks to a customised ERP, Beni Ghreb will be able to efficiently manage the packaging, processing, and marketing of 1,000 tonnes of dates per season, in line with customer requirements.
- 2 The company's date marketing business will continue to provide a decent income to 130 producer families and thus benefit more than 1,650 oasis inhabitants.



Internal management



IMPACT INVESTOR



BENEFICIARY ORGANISATION

Beni Ghreb

buying from

130 smallholder households

Tunisia

AGRICULTURAL VALUE CHAIN

Date

START DATE

June 2022

END DATE

September 2022

TOTAL EXPENDITURE

€ 19,838

of which **€ 14,693** (74 %)

financed by SSNUP





key results



Successful installation and configuration of the Condismart software



5

employees trained on the new software



Project's contribution to the SDGs



2. Zero hunger

2.3 Improving agricultural productivity and increasing smallholder

8. Decent work and economic growth

8.5 Promote sustainable economic growth, productive employment and decent work for all



The digital solution has enabled rigorous recording and control of product flows, as well as the transmission of information within the company



The improvement in the company's capabilities and the greater efficiency of the processing activity have contributed to securing investment from different investors:

- ✓ € 270,000 in equity granted by SIDI, and € 972,000 in equity granted by Coopera and the Saïdi family in 2022;
- ✓ A new campaign loan of € 150,000 granted by SIDI and € 350,000 by Alterfin in the same year.



lessons learnt

✓ Support over several years is necessary for the complete installation of an ERP

The Condismart software package was implemented in 2022 alongside the old system to test its ability and reliability, particularly for stock monitoring. The service provider had to make many modifications to the software package to adapt it to Beni Ghreb's operations.

One year after the implementation, a full verification was performed, leading to the decision to abandon the old system completely and use the new software package for the 2023/2024 crop season. A maintenance contract with the service provider includes quarterly visits over the course of 2024 to resolve any user issues.

The support provided by an ERP expert was crucial to the success of the project. The expert was involved from the identification of the software package through to its implementation. The expert also provided more general support to the company in refining its business model. In addition, SIDI delegated a person to oversee and ensure the smooth running of the project.

Outlook

The new ERP was a structural change that allows Beni Ghreb improve its operations.

Nonetheless, in 2022, Beni Ghreb faced several additional difficulties, including the suspension and postponement of deliveries to Europe due to the Covid-19 crisis. The company also encountered liquidity problems affecting payments to suppliers and workers, leading to delays and reductions in its ability to export dates. For these reasons, the company's activities were forced to slow down at the end of 2022.

Taking into account the above, the company has applied for additional support from the investor Alterfin, another SSNUP partner, to help sell off its date stocks and strengthen its commercial operations.

