

# Green Entrepreneurship

## Successful business cases of Green Entrepreneurs in the Mediterranean



Regional Activity Centre  
for Cleaner Production



Generalitat de Catalunya  
Departament de Territori  
i Sostenibilitat

### Echajara Ettaiba: Sustainable agricultural nursery in Tunisia

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**Name:** Echajara Ettaiba  
**City, country:** Grombalia, Tunisia  
**Name of entrepreneur/  
founder:** Mr. Khelifi Aboukacem

**Description** Production of fruit seedling, ornamental trees, olives and citrus fruits.

**Investment**  
*Start up capital:* DT 10,000.  
*Rate of return on investment:* 25%  
*Sources of funding:* Private funding.

**Stakeholders**  
*Shareholders:* Khelifi Slaheddine (Brother of the founder).  
*Customers:* public and private bodies, banks, communities.  
*Providers:* Foreign providers of seedling from Netherlands, Italy and Spain.  
*Strategic partners:* Farmers and private farming companies.  
*European partnership:* None.  
*International partnership (other than European):* None.

**Employment generation** Not available.

**Timeline**  
Date of Start up: 2004: The farm started with citrus fruits production.  
2005: Starting of ornamental trees production.  
2006: Starting of olives production.  
2010: Launching of landscaping activities.

**Feasibility study** The feasibility study has showed an acceptable profitability of the project through a market study. The study focused also on the competitors and the positioning of the company on the market.

**Geo-social-economic setting** The company provides public and private bodies in all regions of Tunisia and has developed its market to Libya.

**Key features** Production of seedlings and technical assistance in the field of landscaping.

**Overall rational and motivation** Not available.

**Strenghts** The company focuses on the quality of its products and the use of recent and efficient technology. The proximity of the customers and a demand driven approach is also considered as strength of the company.

## Challenges and constraints

In the Tunisian market, there are big companies producing seedlings. Those ones have 'monopolized' the market because of special relationship they have developed with the political sphere. Thus, before the revolution of January 2011, all tenders have been won by those big companies. Currently, it is changing towards more transparency and honest competitiveness.

Besides that, we are facing some problems with municipalities who pay our services and products with an important delay, causing a shortage of cash liquidity for the company.

Finally, we are facing the problem of the lack of qualified work force because of the important presence of industries in the Cap Bon region. Sometimes, we invest to train workers, who rapidly quit our company. It is a special case in the Cap Bon region: despite of the unemployment rate in the country, the region is till economically very dynamic.

## Direct activities and Impacts

*Social:* jobs creation in the region.

*Environmental:* The main activity of the company is related to environment (production of seedling, forestation, recycling activities on the farm is also implemented).

*Economic:* Contribution to a better production and profitability of our customers (citrus fruits, olives...) through a high quality seedlings and technical assistance provided.

## Use of innovative Technologies

Use of drip irrigation. Use of compost produced locally. Development of an automatic controlled temperature hothouse.

## Evidence of a holistic approach/world view

The company is contributing to a greener world through producing seedling and trees for ornamental and agricultural purposes. The turnover of the company is increasing annually showing that this kind of green project is viable and useful for the society and for the nature.

## Scale of benefits

There is a need to organise the seedling producers in a kind of association to upgrade our performance and access to bigger markets abroad throughout cost reduction (we could for example reduce the costs of transport and supply). It is also necessary to alleviate administrative procedures to easily access to the subsidies allocated; otherwise, young promoters without private funds will be discouraged to extend their projects.

We have also a huge financial problem in importing seedling, because of the limitation imposed by the BCT (Banque Centrale de Tunisie) in term of advance payment to international companies. The latter request sometimes the entire payment of the products ordered, while the BCT procedures allow only a partial payment in currency.

## Policies, incentives and regulations needed

The most important lesson learned to be successful in the field of seedling production is to be innovative. The utilization of new technology (such as the drip irrigation) to improve quality of the products and profitability is crucial, notably when the work force is not well trained.

## Lessons and recommendations

Not available.

## References

Rue Malek Ibn Anes Grombalia, Tunisie

Tel.: +216 72 212 655

Fax: +216 72 212 908

e-mail: cid\_tunisie@topnet.tn

www.echajaraettaiba.com