

AnMOON – Olive Oil Morocco

Assignment Overview

1. Project vision and ambition

The AnMOON project aims to support the Olive Oil sector in Meknes-Fez in Morocco to be inclusive and *future proof*¹. AnMOON wants to support the sector in becoming more inclusive of young workers and service providers, a group that holds huge potential to make the olive sector future proof.

The key performance indicator for impact will be the visible changes at the regional ecosystem, most importantly;

- Young entrepreneurs developed service delivery business ideas for farmers and millers
- A more future proof value chain due to uptake of these services
- More and improved employment for youth active in the sector

Market opportunities for olive oil on regional and international markets is considered a critical driver of this process. Access to export markets is a means to reach our goal, and not a goal in itself. Additionally, as global and regional companies strive to achieve their climate goals, there may be opportunities to spur further investment in sustainable business models.

The sector showed a strong incentive to respond to changing weather conditions and adopt more sustainable production practices. The project will run until Q1 2028.

2. Project overview and short description of the 3 lots

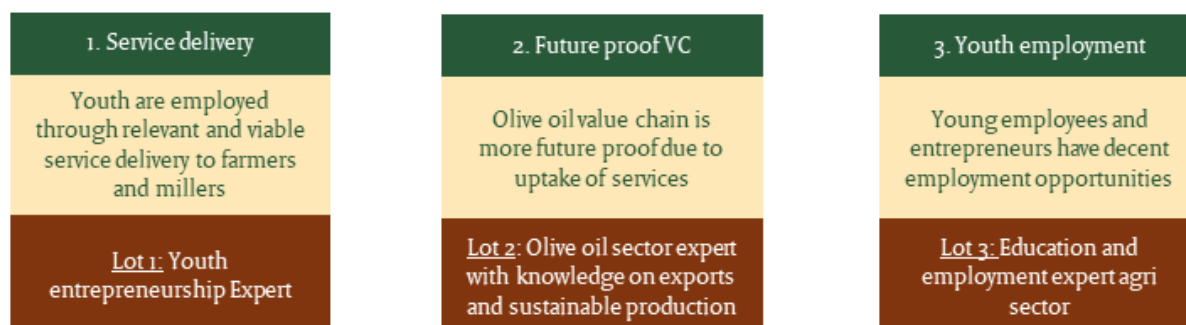
The targeted overall long term outcome of the project is to achieve a regional olive oil sector that is more inclusive of young women and men, and that the ecosystems offers adequate support to improve the inclusion of both young workers and service providers.

The project is targeting youth at different places in the value chain; as young farmer, as employee at a farm or mill, as agent at a service provider, or as entrepreneurs. They all operate in their own ecosystems with its market dynamics, rules and regulations and supporting functions.

We foresee that our project will also include direct engagements with youth, but this is primarily to design and pivot the interventions. CBI can capacitate other stakeholders in the ecosystem to adopt a similar youth-centred design methodology, in order to make offerings more inclusive for youth

The involvement, commitment and ownership of the sector stakeholders is therefore key, and will be fundamental part of every intervention.

¹ The four elements that are part of this definition are; Being (a) resilient to climate change, (b) resource efficient, (c) resilient to market dynamics (diversification), (d) inclusive of the next generation.



Lot 1: (Youth) Entrepreneurship expert

A (team of) experts on (youth) entrepreneurship is requested as part of Pathway 1 (Service delivery). The long term outcome target of this pathway is that relevant and valuable services (needed for a transition to a more future proof olive oil sector) are developed for farmers and millers. The interventions will be focused on two groups of service provider entrepreneurs, namely (i) start-ups with innovative agri-tech services ideas and (ii) existing service providers.

In order to ensure the key barrier as identified by youth, seasonality of the work in olive oil sector, the service provision will not be uniquely for olive farmers and oil millers, and we expect to target in a segment of services that can be offered across multiple crops, such precision agriculture technologies, remote sensing applications, mobile apps for farm management to enhance productivity, efficiency, & competitiveness.

Entrepreneurship support will be offered by the experts to support the service delivery growth and capacity building on specific themes as needed e.g. access to finance (see box), but also workshops or courses on entrepreneurship, Human Centered Design and business management skills, including business planning, financial management, budgeting, sales and marketing strategies, CRM, soft skills/leadership skills, and legal aspects of running a business. As much as possible the experts will collaborate with local BDS providers such as incubators, public organisations, consultancies with the aim to jointly orient their services to the target group.

Start-ups

In the inception phase we found that there are opportunities for youth as lead entrepreneurs, especially in the area of agri-tech and digitized services. Since youth is overall more tech-savvy, this is an area of work where there is a clear opportunity to add value. In the longer run, it may of course also generate employment opportunities for young employees or agents. In order to support the development of new service provider businesses, the experts will refine and scale the incubation approach as piloted in earlier phases of the project. Important element should be to pitch ideas to prospective clients to get their feedback and validate the business idea. Winning solutions are to be showcased during Agri Tech Networking events such as SIAM or local Tech Fora.

Existing service providers

For the existing service providers, the opportunity lies in the employment of youth with these service providers through their growth and better use of skills of young generation. The refinement of scaling of agent models will be researched and supported by the expert. The project will identify service providers that are active in the olive oil value chain, are looking to scale and are interested in hiring youth. The project will offer them support to facilitate their growth and more inclusion of youth, based on their needs. Specific attention will be given to the conditions of employment of youth and opportunities to improve this for both the service provider and the young employees. The root cause that was identified on youth not having the right skills or practical experience will be part of Lot 3.

Lot 2: Olive Oil Sector expert with knowledge on exports and sustainable production in Morocco

A (team of) consultants is needed for the implementation of pathway 2 (Future proof VC). This is aimed at supporting the uptake of the new services that are supported under pathway 1. Future proof is for this project broadly defined as being *(a) resilient to climate change, (b) resource efficient, (c) resilient to market dynamics (diversification), and (d) inclusive of the next generation*". In the inception phase it was found that the SMEs that were attending the workshop confirmed interest to invest in becoming more future proof on all 4 elements as mentioned above. The drivers they mention to invest in becoming more future proof are;

- Resilient to market dynamics – It is risky to rely only on the local market – changing market dynamics and consumer preferences may create opportunities of need to access new markets. Diversification and access to new export markets will improve their resilience.
- Climate: As in all olive producing countries, changing weather conditions are affecting the production. Farmers indicated that they see this as a key challenge for the future and they need to find ways how to be more resilient, and ready to report on water and CO2 footprinting.
- High costs of resources – water and energy are increasingly scarce and costs are increasing. Being more efficient can lower business costs.
- Inclusive of the next generation – Olive growing and oil production is an important part of the culture in Meknes Fez. Its continuation by the next generation should be assured.

As part of this project pathway the expert will work on the uptake of the services by working with key value chain actors including ambitious young farmers and millers, as well as SMEs that can be considered frontrunners on one or more of the different drivers for innovation as mentioned above. Especially the opportunities for high quality olive oil on global and regional markets is considered a key driver (*'locomotif'*) to initiate and move the transition of the sector.

SMEs (frontrunners) and young farmers and millers (second-movers)

A group of 5-8 SMEs and 3-6 ambitious young entrepreneurs active in farming, milling or both, will be identified and selected to join the project. Key criteria for selection will be that they are motivated to invest, and are, or can be frontrunners in becoming more future proof because of one or more of the drivers as mentioned above. Also we would want to receive commitment from these companies that they will be willing to test and/or provide feedback to new or existing services for their business and/or be committed to work with the project on (better) inclusion of youth in their workforce.

The experts are required to provide to them expertise on the different drivers, most importantly in the following areas;

- Business export coaching for SME's, to support diversification and access to EU markets. This can include topics like export marketing, CSR, branding, e-commerce and traceability and certification. It can also include guidance and support on trade fair participation.
- Business development support to young farmers and millers (this can be overlapping with the entrepreneurship support to service providers in pathway 1).
- SME sustainability scan – what investments can improve business performance and make the business more resilient (resource use, recycling, climate adaptation etc.)
- Human Resource management – coaching on how to align with aspirations of youth, career guidance and the business case for doing this.

The expert will need to explore and seek partnerships with export promotion agencies and programmes, like Morocco FoodEx; Morocco Now; Centre Marocain de Promotion des Exportations and ITC.

The group of businesses that will be invited to be part of the project are frontrunners. We expect that they can inspire not only other businesses in adopting practices that are more future proof, but also showcase to the rest of the ecosystem the importance and value add of doing so, thereby pushing the transition towards a future proof olive oil sector in Morocco. We will do this by ensuring that success stories are visible and shared.

Lot 3: Education and employment expert agri sector Morocco

Lot 3 is looking for a (team of) consultants to lead the third project pathway; Youth Employment. This pathway has a focus on contributing to resolving the key issue that graduated youth from agricultural schools/TVET are not well prepared for labor market, root causes being a lack of practical experience, poor guidance during education as well as the negative stigma that lies on youth as employees.

Education (TVET and agricultural schools, universities)

The experts will contribute to make training and education more adequate and prepare both youth and employers for better career guidance. Specifically they will be working on achieving the following;

- More practical training; they will work with OFPPT and schools and a selected group of SMEs as selected under pathway 2, to develop and pilot an internship/traineeship model to facilitate the transition from TVET education to work. This intervention will be mostly focused on youth aiming for employment in the sector, however also TVET graduates with entrepreneurial service delivery ambitions can benefit from this experience. The team will also need to look into the possibility to reach rural youth better – for example by establishing mobile or community based training centers located in the rural areas.
- Better orientation and guidance for students. From the HCD research the need for improved guidance was mentioned by interviewed youth. The experts will work with OFPPT to develop orientation service/mentors to guide effectively during studies and career choices.
- Ecole Nationale d'Agriculture (ENA), Sidi Mohammed Ben abdellah and Moulay Ismail universities, and Ecole Supérieure de Technologie (EST) have limited places for olive oil production engineering students, limited focus on olive oil in courses and curriculum. The experts should further research the reasons for this and discuss the potential to include it more prominently in the curricula.
- The experts will organize youth-centric events, workshops, and training sessions tailored to the interests and preferences of young people in the olive oil sector. Incorporate interactive activities, hands-on demonstrations, and peer-to-peer learning opportunities to foster engagement, networking, and skill development among youths.

Employers HRM

Employers will be guided to improve the provision of decent jobs including professional development opportunities for youth, and allow for upward mobility of young workers. Several elements related to this were identified;

- There is a need to build young employees' soft skills through youth mentorship projects where experienced workers are paired with young individuals to transfer knowledge, skills, and work ethics, thereby fostering mutual respect and understanding.
- With a selected group of SMEs the experts will work on reviewing and if needed improving their process for recruitment, onboarding and career guidance for youth. With some small adaptations the work may better match with their aspirations. Also upward mobility of young workers within the organization will be discussed. The companies we will work with on this, are considered frontrunners and we will use their experience to inspire and incentivize others.