

OLIB – Strengthening Sustainable Local Development and Coexistence in Lebanon through Improved Olive Tree Yield and Productivity:

From 01 January 2024 to 31 December 2024

Project summary

Since 2019, Lebanon has been facing a multicausal humanitarian crisis. The financial crisis, political instability, the Covid-19 pandemic, the devastating explosion in the port of Beirut in 2020 and the recent bombings along the southern border started in October 2023, have all contributed to growing needs and significant challenges for farmers and producers in the olive sector. Rising production costs and government-imposed export restrictions are the main causes behind the surge in prices, making it difficult for the local population to access olives and derived products. OLIB aims to enhance agricultural transformation in the olive-growing sector by providing theoretical and practical training for producers, farmers, technicians and local advisors. This will serve to support innovative decision-making in agronomic management and olive production in the Nabatieh region of southern Lebanon. The training will be designed based on the local needs for cooperatives, farmers, advisors and technicians in the olive sector and delivered with the support of the women's organic agriculture and beekeeping cooperative of Deir Mimas.

The project aims to encourage use of meteorological and environmental data in the olive-growing sector, positioning oil quality assessment as a driving factor. This data can be applied to improve production and at the same time ensure the environmental sustainability of the crop.

Training will be delivered by Spanish experts with a wide range of expertise in education and experience in this part of Lebanon to offset the lack of professional capacity-building initiatives for farmers, advisors and technicians and limited knowledge of agronomic techniques that can make olive production more effective and sustainable in the context of economic crisis and global climate change.

Objectives

- To empower women by articulating the project through engagement with Deir Mimas women's cooperative.
- To achieve more sustainable management of olive crops and natural resources (water, soil and biodiversity) through producer capacity building.
- To draw up a compendium of best practices (Guidebook of Agronomic Techniques) in the local language (Arab) and in Spanish in order to protect the environment and make crops more resilient to climate change.
- To enhance the role of agrifood cooperatives in the sector.
- To improve knowledge on advanced olive processing techniques to improve the cooperative's organisational and olive processing capacity and produce better quality olive oil.

Activities

- Co-create learning materials in collaboration with the local cooperatives in the Nabatieh governate. Theoretical and practical activities on oil production and assessment of oil characteristics, with findings documented in a report of the oil mill.
- Provide an online advisory service for the network comprising farmers, advisors, researchers, private sector.
- A virtual seminar with the network of experts and coordinator of the project to knowledge sharing on the topics addressed during the project.
- Draw up a report detailing the training and knowledge-transfer activities conducted throughout the project. The report will highlight the progress made and initiatives undertaken within the project framework, underlining needs identified for future cooperation activities. This document will be used to disseminate the project's activities and outcomes among other stakeholders in the sector.
- Publish the Guidebook of Agronomic Techniques. This project outcome will be a compendium of agronomic practices and recommendations on olive grove management and olive processing in the oil mill. The guidebook will be made available to local cooperatives and stakeholders so they can disseminate and transfer the knowledge generated within the project.

Results and project impact

- Empowerment of women from the organic agriculture and beekeeping cooperative of Deir Mimas and local farmers in the surrounding area engaged in olive cultivation, oil production and bottling. Establishment of a benchmark of best practices for olive management and yield improvement in the area involved in the project as local partner that will facilitate the accomplishment of the project across all its stages.
- Support for the beneficiaries (farmers' cooperatives, farmers, advisors and technicians in the olive sector) of the theoretical and practical training to improve olive yield and crop efficiency without damaging the agricultural ecosystem.
- Creation of knowledge networks, strengthening collaboration between the Lebanese and Spanish experts and providing beneficiaries of the theoretical and practical training with an advisory service in questions related to olive growing.
- Publication of a 'Guidebook of Agronomic Techniques' consisting of a manual of best practices. This will be translated from Spanish into the local language (Arab) to be disseminated and used by the trainees and other farmers' cooperative members, advisors and technicians in Lebanon.

Contact: iamz@iamz.ciheam.org

Role of CIHEAM Zaragoza in the project: Leader

Coordinator: CIHEAM Zaragoza

Funding: Diputación Provincial de Zaragoza

Budget: EUR31 250