



UNCTAD /CAMS Workshop for Dates Farmers and Stakeholders

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The Importance of Developing Dates as a Green Export Commodity for Oman Economic Diversification and New Policies to Support it

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Presentation outline

1. What is a green export sector?
2. The Oman date sector: strategic importance and potential as a green export
3. Policies, tools and approaches for promoting sustainable production and export of Omani dates
4. Implementation strategy



1. What is a green export sector?

Main characteristics

- Supply side: Sustainable production, inclusiveness, value addition, diversified range of products
- Demand side: Answering growing international demand for sustainable, healthy, quality products
 - ➔ Green Exports build on a positive relationship between trade and sustainability on specific markets. They contribute to enhance both value and sustainability of domestic production



1. What is a green export sector?

Exemple of green sectors and green exports

- **Sustainable fisheries:**
 - 4.5 \$ b spent by consummers on MSC certified products in 2015
 - 14% of total seafood production certified in 2015
- **Peruvian banana sector:**
 - « *Almost all of Peru's exported bananas are organic* » (FAO)
 - 145 \$ million and about 190 000 t exported between 2014 and 2015
 - 94% increase in Peruvian organic banana production (2010 – 2015)
- **Ecotourism** allow local stakeholders to capture up to 4.75 time more value than all inclusive packages



1. What is a green export sector?

Exemple of green sectors and green exports: Sustainability, Quality and Marketing in the coffee sector

- 59% of the coffee consumed in USA considered « gourmet coffee » in 2017 (US national coffee association)
- Blue mountain coffee (Jamaica) sold for more the 29\$/ 8 oz compared to less than 4\$ for basic coffee
- Customer requirements (willingness to pay) \leftrightarrow Quality, innovation, traceability, sustainability (biodiversity, climate change), more direct value chains
- State involvement: 2004 Ethiopian Coffee Trademarking and Licensing Initiative to increase coffee producers' return and retail prices for the 3 most famous coffee brands



Artistically-designed logos of different types of Ethiopian Fine Coffee

(Picture: WIPO/RES/DEV/GE/09/WWW[130155])



2. The Omani date sector: strategic importance

- **Major agricultural sector:**

- Global level; Oman is the 9th largest world producer of dates (2015 & 2016)
- Crop that occupies the largest cultivated area in Oman; Half of the cultivated area and 82% of all fruit crops (2008 study)
- Linkages with other crops (intercropping and animal feed)

- **Economic dimension:**

- Global date exports > 900\$ million in 2015 and 2016
- Omani date exports > 13\$ million (about 2.6 of the total production)
- Omani date imports > 11\$ million in 2016

Social implications: labour intensive, job creation in rural and urban areas, potential for women employment promotion (FAO)



2. The Omani date sector: strategic importance

- **Environmental implications:** desertification control, biodiversity, irrigation (sustainable water management), significant level of wastes but potential for recovery, chemical pest control
- **Cultural dimension:** Association with religion (references in the Coran and the Bible) and civilizations
- **Linkages with national priorities:**
 - One million date palm project
 - Priorities from the 8th and 9th, 5 Year Development Plans (diversification, manufacturing, private sector development, linkages with tourism)
 - Support from the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry
 - Support from research sector
 - Stakeholder mobilization



3. Implications of developing a green, date production and export sector:

Increasing value of Omani dates

- Quality of existing production (production practices, logistics, research...)
- Production of high value date species?
- Reducing wastes \leftrightarrow Developing processing
- Increasing value addition (Processing, Geographic Indications, Sustainability Standards)
- Increasing the value for producers and creating linkages with other sectors \rightarrow agro-processing, tourism



3. Implications of developing a green, date production and export sector:

Improving marketing

- Positioning Omani dates on high value markets
 - Internationally: in 2016, 84% of date export revenues came from India and Somalia
 - Domestically: developing further the offer of high quality Omani dates
- Positioning dates as a flagship Omani product
 - Branding (Dates of Oman)
 - Packaging
 - Storytelling (sustainable production, cultural aspect, tradition, linkages with tourism)



4. Policies; Tools and Approaches

• National Green Export Review

- Multi-stakeholder/Cross sectoral collaboration
(identifying win/win partnerships, bottom up action plans, public/private cooperation)
- Developing an enabling framework (Voluntary Sustainable Standards, Indications of Origin, Creation/improvement of sustainable agriculture standards)
- Private sector engagement and enhanced producer organization
→ Developing a comprehensive and inclusive strategic and action framework for palm dates

• Strengthening branding efforts

- Enhanced linkages with tourism sector (hotels, national airline)
- Communication on positive impact of dates on health or environment
ex. Olive oil sector (biodiversity and breast cancer)



4. Policies; Tools and Approaches

- **Targeting the domestic market**
 - Public procurement (schools, public catering services)
 - Communication campaigns
- **E-commerce** → more direct relationship with customers
- **Research**
 - Integration between production, marketing and research (products, processes, communication)
- **Enhancing linkages with target markets** ↔ Connection with market trends, distributors and consumers



5. Implementation strategy

- National ownership (national champions ex. Professional associations)
- Mobilizing stakeholders (support from the government/ private sector and research involvement)
- Market oriented approach + strong integration between production and research
- Target Market (high value markets + developing domestic market for high value green products ← domestic market is often viewed as a stepping stone for export)
- Comprehensive/inclusive national initiative (production, export, research, branding...)

Thank You

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