

Knowledge Hub for Organic Agriculture and Agroecology in North Africa (KHNA)

KHNA is part of the Knowledge Centre for Organic Agriculture and Agroecology in Africa (KCOA)

KCOA is a collaborative country-led partnership that aims to scale up the adoption of organic and agroecological farming practices through a network of five Knowledge Hubs in Africa. Within KCOA, the implementing organisations have four main objectives: to improve access to knowledge on organic agriculture and agroecology; to strengthen the technical and professional capacity of multipliers; to foster networking and to strengthen relationships in the sector; and to strengthen actors in their advocacy activities.

The challenge

The organic and agroecological sectors in Egypt, Tunisia and Morocco have shown great improvements in the last decade. As examples, Egypt's connection to international markets has helped to boost the national organic sector; Tunisia has increased its production in a country-wide organic sector development supported by the government, having a growing organic production of olives, dates, fruits, and vegetables; and Morocco's organic citrus production has shown positive results. However, the expansion of organic and agroecological practices in the region still requires a wide dissemination of knowledge. Producers need support in this transition through capacity development, trainings, and the adaptation of technics, e.g., soil fertility building with compost, smart crop rotations, and intercropping at the individual, local, and national levels. Moreover, the sector is still operating in isolated niches, requiring efforts to connect different stakeholders, such as value chain operators, service providers, research institutions, government bodies and the civil society. Linkages and cooperation between these actors can build strong and resilient networks to boost the development of the sector.

KHNA approach

With the principles of sustainable agriculture and resilient food systems, and having the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) in mind, KHNA and partner organisations developed their vision plans. After workshops and meetings, the plans were materialised in the Sekem Vision 2057, the Green Morocco Plan or the Tunisian Organic strategy 2030. As one of the KCOA's five knowledge hubs, KHNA enables leading organic institutions in North Africa to implement their mission focussing on knowledge management. KHNA runs under the motto: "Let the knowledge flow for the development of the organic

sector and its stakeholders with a focus on smallholders, women and youth."

Partners collect traditional and scientific knowledge and support the verification, validation, and dissemination of knowledge products to practitioners and multipliers along the organic and agroecological value chains within KHNA and the whole KCOA network. KHNA also promotes connections with other actors, improving the sector's coordination and collaboration.

Multipliers in action with Micro-Interventions and their dialog

A cascade system of trainings enables multipliers to implement organic and agroecological innovations in their communities. KHNA has so far facilitated over 250 small projects ranging from enabling conversion to organic agriculture and mitigation of climate change, addressing fertilisation and plant protection challenges, to opening and consolidation of new markets. Trainings and other forms of knowledge facilitation and exchanges happen on demonstration plots, where innovative and effective experiments are used as learning methods.

KHNA reach

Project name	Knowledge Hub for Organic Agriculture and Agroecology in North Africa (KHNA) – one of the hubs within the KCOA project
Commissioned by	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
Project region	Egypt (Hub base), Tunisia and Morocco
Implemented by	GIZ in cooperation with SEKEM (Egypt) and partner organisations, Centre Technique de l'Agriculture Biologique – CTAB (Tunisia) and KHNA Team in Morocco (multiple organisations)
Duration	2019 – present



Innovative actions: Carbon Credits in Egypt and Ecotourism in Tunisia

Economy of Love (EoL) – Carbon Credits (CC)

With the organic and biodynamic agricultural methods, the “Economy of Love Standard” is committed to actively increasing carbon sequestration through afforestation projects, compost production, soil carbon sequestration, and the implementation of renewable energy on licensed farms. The EoL Carbon Credits initiative is valuing the environmental service of organic farmers and providing an additional source of income through the sale of carbon certificates. The EoL CC model is not only about carbon offsetting, as it also ensures a holistic approach to agriculture production, considering ecological, economical, societal, and cultural aspects.

Ecotourism in Tunisia

The cooperative “Lella Kmar Elbaya” in Tunisia, which cultivates medical and aromatic plants and processes organic food, is one of the 250 success stories of micro-interventions in North Africa. With support from KHNA and an entrepreneur spirit, the cooperative created a recreation and gastronomic site for national and international visitors, who after experiencing the place can buy unique local traditional products. Parallel to serving the visitors, the cooperative has opened an organic shop, in which they were able to expand to other consumers and offer a wide range of herbs, fruits, vegetables, hard wheat and distilled products. They preserve, cultivate and process ancient varieties of cereals and other foods, and do that with sustainable and locally developed mechanisms and technologies. Through the recently improved facilities, they reach visitors and sensitise them on nutrition and heritage food aspects, getting national and international attention and recognition for their community work.

KHNA Expected Outcomes



270 Knowledge Products

On organic agriculture uploaded in the Digital Knowledge Platform and accessible to the network



500 multipliers trained

sharing knowledge on organic agriculture and agroecology, making sure to include women and youth.



500 farmers and local businesses

supported in attaining certification via community developed certification systems



More than 100 connections and collaborations

between different stakeholders that work together on a regular basis to strengthen organic agriculture

Story from the field: Pistachio trees in Morocco

In the Moroccan pre-Rif mountains near Taounate, 100-year-old pistachio trees, whose ecological and economic benefits are still not understood, are often cut down. The farmers cutting them hope to gain more space for their crops but forget that the trees hold together the soil of the mountains and prevent erosion.

In 2010, Souhad Azennoud, a former senior manager in a multinational company and an agroecology activist since 2000, attended a conference on fruit forests. On this occasion, she learned that this endemic pistachio trees play a double role: they protect the soil from erosion and, when grafted, they produce edible pistachios, which are sources of nutritious food and profitable trade products. She also learned that the fruit can be processed into pistachio oil, a raw material much in demand in the cosmetics industry. The importance of the pistachio in the world is translated in the fact that pistachios are the 3rd most produced nut in the world and the market is expected to double by 2029 (Source: [Statista 2021](#)).

As a KHNA multiplier, Souhad integrates ecosystems protection into her advocacy. In her micro-interventions, she shows farmers the grafting techniques for the pistachio tree. She equips the local populations with solid arguments for safeguarding the pistachio tree of the Atlas and its valorisation. Today, 80% of the inhabitants of the area preserve the pistachio trees instead of cutting them down. Nevertheless, Souhad dreams even bigger. She hopes to develop a new organic and ecological industry for pistachios. This initiative will create opportunities for more people, especially for the region’s young people, and prevent even further the deforestation in the area.

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Knowledge Centre for Organic Agriculture
and Agroecology in Africa

Dag-Hammarskjöld-Weg 1-5, 65760 Eschborn, Germany
Phone +49 6196 79-0
Fax +49 6196 79-11 15
kcoa@giz.de
www.giz.de/en/worldwide/80037.html

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