



IUF SFM  
SEMINE  
FORESTIÈRE  
MÉDITERRANÉENNE

IUF MFW  
MEDITERRANEAN  
FOREST  
WEEK

IUF SFM  
SEMANA  
FORESTAL  
MEDITERRÀNEA

## **TOURISME DURABLE: ASSOCIATION IBN AL BAYTAR**



# ASSOCIATION IBN AL BAYTAR

Pour la Promotion des Plantes Médicinales

22 Rue de Sebou, Appartement N°2, Agdal, Rabat. Maroc

Tel : 212 5 37 77 53 80

Email : [association.ibnalbaytar@gmail.com](mailto:association.ibnalbaytar@gmail.com)

[www.association-ibnalbaytar.com](http://www.association-ibnalbaytar.com)

## Association Ibn Al Baytar

1999-2015

The Ibn Al Baytar Association (Association Ibn Al Baytar - AIB) was established in 1999 following the work undertaken by its president Professor Dr Charrouf (as a professor at the Faculty of Sciences of Rabat) since 1985 to use the argan tree as a lever for local development and empowerment of rural women. The association realized several activities such as research and development, training, income generating activities, reforestation, communication, organization of the sector, labeling etc ...

From 1996 to 2008, the AIB's projects, supported by several Moroccan and international partners, have promoted the mobilization and training of rural women's groups through the creation of argan cooperatives with more than 3,000 women and the emergence of the argan oil industry.

All these projects have had extremely interesting socio-economic benefits:

- ✓ At present more than 300 women's cooperatives exist employing nearly 10,000 women. Four *Groupement d'intérêt économique* (abbreviated GIE in English: Economic Interest Group) and 2 four cooperative unions contribute at the downstream stage of the argan value chain to market the products of their members.
- ✓ More than hundred SMEs and SMIs, working with women's cracking<sup>1</sup> groups, market ¾ of the national production.
- ✓ Export of more than 1,000 tons / year for the equivalent of 200 million dirhams.
- ✓ International recognition of argan oil (best cosmetic product in 2009)
- ✓ Development of the region through tourist visits
- ✓ The members of the women's cooperatives profit from social development.
- ✓ An interesting environmental impact: the reforested areas were multiplied by 100 between 2000 and 2010 and the Moroccan state seeks to plant 200,000 ha until 2020, thus contributing to preserve the green curtain in the desert.
- ✓ The argan tree project served as a model for other local products regarding value chain structuring and product labeling.
- ✓ The Moroccan government created an agency for the development of the oasis zones and the argan tree (ANDZOA) and has provided means to this end.

---

<sup>1</sup>As part of the oil-extraction, the soft pulp has to be removed and the hard nut is cracked by hand, between two stones, to retrieve the seeds needed for oil production.

Despite these positive results, it should be emphasized that the majority of cooperatives are depend on one product. The cracking step, carried out manually until now, has just been mechanized, representing a risk in the short and long term to their members. Finally, the marketing of argan oil does not benefit producers and forest rights-holders but intermediaries.

In line with its vision, AIB leads since 2009 a pilot project in the Mesguinaforest with an eco-systemic approach enabling the sustainable development of this forest. This is to improve the structure of the argan value chain, to help local people to develop their skills, diversify their income and build wealth while seeking to preserve their natural resources.

In this way, AIB continued its efforts to structure the upstream stage of the argan value chain through the creation of the association of right holders of the Mesguina forest.

In April 2014, AIB presented the draft for a "eco-touristic route Mesguina" project to the GIZ program "Climate Change Adaptation and Valuation of Biodiversity - Implementation of the Nagoya Protocol (ACCN)." The "eco-touristic route Mesguina" aims at establishing an agri-tourism route in the Mesguinaforest and in the prefecture Agadir Ida Outanane located in the hinterland of Agadir. The project targets the promotion and valorization of local products (argan, medicinal and aromatic plants, honey ...), handicraft (basketwork) and local heritage (ourten, Saadian tombs, waterfalls, caves, etc.).

This project was planned in May 2014 and launched in September 2014 in Agadir, in the presence of different sustainable development and tourism actors as well as concerned stakeholders. This project will be implemented with the technical support of GIZ-ACCN for a period of 3 years.

Due to this eco-tourist route, the local population will no longer be dependent on a single product (argan). Rather, more financial resources can be created through the promotion and valorization of several local products, local handicrafts, local heritage as well as the reconciliation of tourism and the environment. Thus, the rural exodus will be reduced.

#### EXPECTED RESULTS

R1- The capacities of the population are enhanced

R2- Land use is planned

R3- Potentials of the Mesguinaforest are described

R4- A ecotourism development plan is developed

R5- A communication and marketing plan is developed

R6- The valorization of the production of cooperatives on the local level is ensured