

Export-driven Job Creation / Agriculture - Lebanon

**Theme: Livelihoods / humanitarian-development
nexus**

Timeline: 1 year to 3 years

Key objectives:

- Increasing production capacity and enabling greater sales of food products both in-country and in international markets.
- Create opportunities for agricultural work for Syrian women and men through agrofood processing and public works.

Key activities:

Activity 1: Training sessions for agricultural cooperatives

The primary goals of the training sessions can be summarized by the following:

- To build the capacities of Lebanese and Syrian refugees to start small scale business enterprises
- To enhance business communication and organizational skills of participants
- To transfer know-how related to improving finance management and minimizing business risks
- To improve livelihoods of participants through the creation of employment opportunities
- To enable participants to implement business strategies and mitigate internal conflicts
- To improve team building capacities
- To prepare budgets and quantify resources

Activity 2: On-the-Job Coaching

During the production process performed by the selected cooperatives and association, PCPM will appoint experts in agro-food production and SME management to supervise and guide cooperative working members and intern beneficiaries alike. The objectives of the coaching are to ensure that:

- Most adequate raw materials are selected in terms of best quality-price
- Best practices are employed regarding hygiene, pest management, and preservation
- Interns are given the right tasks
- Recipes are standardized
- Required quantities are achieved
- Produced items are properly packed
- Prices are correctly calculated
- Financial records are soundly kept
- Communication channels are well maintained
- Other internal issues are well managed
- Successful candidates are selected from the groups of interns to fill in needed vacancies

Activity 3: Assistance with Certification of Food Products / Production.

In order to be able to export their products to Europe or even sell them locally, cooperatives will need to acquire various types of certifications, depending on the exportation business model chosen. PCPM, with the

Country: Lebanon



Map: PCPM Areas of main program activities in Lebanon and location of agriculture cooperates.



Extra Virgin Olive Oil from Chadra (Shadra) Cooperative is of excellent quality and already is exported in small amounts to the European Union market.



Pomegranate is one of the main agricultural products in Northern Lebanon.

support of WFP, will assist the cooperatives to reach the required specifications and get the certifications needed.

Project focuses on the following two certificates:

- FSSC 22000 for processing cooperatives - FSSC 22000 is a complete certification Scheme for food and feed safety management systems, which are in compliance with the publicly available food safety management systems standard ISO 22000 'Requirements for any organization in the food chain', technical specifications for sector PRPs and additional Scheme requirements.
- Bio Certificate - Farming organically means respecting the principles, rules and requirements of organic farming. All food producers, processors or traders who wish to market their food as organic need to be registered with a control agency or body. Any farm that wishes to produce organically has to undergo a process known as 'conversion'. During this period, organic production methods need to be used but the resulting product cannot be sold as organic. The length of this conversion period depends on the type of organic product being produced
 - 3 years for orchards of perennial soft, top and vine fruits
 - 12 months for pig and poultry grazing
 - 2 years for land ruminant grazing annual crops

In case of Bio certificates lasting longer than 1 year, the project would cover the first year's costs, while the remaining costs would be covered either from the next stages of WFP-PCPM project or from Polish Aid funding for support of agriculture in Lebanon.

Activity 4: Participation in International Trade Fairs

PCPM has identified seven international agro-food trade fairs that are most relevant to products processed by the cooperatives, in the spirit of creating a wide, international scope of exposure. We also invite ICDF to suggest relevant trade fairs in Taiwan that could be attended by the food producers from Lebanon.

Proposed project will be a continuation and extension of similar activities, funded by UN WFP until July 2019 and therefore based on well-rehearsed implementation plan. PCPM will be responsible for all implementation components of the project, including outreach, enrollment, training and coaching, finding adequate trainers/coaches, assessments, providing in-kind assistance, providing assistance with logistics and paperwork, creating, implementing, and supporting project activities, budgeting, liaising with local community stakeholders, and reporting to supporting partners. During the phases of the ongoing project, PCPM staff has acquired experience through WFP's support in cross-checking beneficiary eligibility, monitoring all activities, handling payments to beneficiaries, assessing PCPM's work, transferring funds as per financial reports, and liaising with the donor.

Beneficiaries will be selected according to preset criteria from Syrian refugees and vulnerable Lebanese families, ideally on a 50-50% basis, with the highest attention to creating equal opportunities by gender.

As for local communities, their role is to refer beneficiaries who will be assessed for vulnerability, and support activities in general by assisting PCPM to find training venues, reach out to local populations, and other activities as required by the project.

Agriculture cooperatives participating in the project include:



(1) Arsal - Cooperative Association of Rural Muneh

The village of Arsal is located in Baalbek El Hermel governorate, at a distance of 130 km from Beirut and 7 km from the village of Laboueh. Its land area is 430 km² and has a population of 40,000.

Cooperative's main activity is vegetable and fruit processing. The cooperative is distinguished by its organic product processing.

The cooperative works to keep Arsal and its land full of life and aims to improve the villagers' standards of living.

The cooperative is specialized in traditional food processing like macadam, eggplant, thyme, ketchup, broccoli, and blackberry.

At the beginning of the vegetable planting season, the cooperative engages in "Al-Awna" (a traditional agricultural activity), where vegetables are transplanted with the farmers as a voluntary work. On that day, cooperative members boil wild weeds to make food for the next day.



(2) Akroum - Cooperative Association for the Production and Processing of Olives in Akroum

The Cooperative Association for the Production and Processing of Olives in Akroum and its Vicinity was established in 2009 and has 7 board members. The number of its members increased from 36 in 2009 to 192 in 2013 and 313 in 2018. Production of Virgin Olive Oil

Project rationale:

Despite numerous media reports, **Syrian refugees are not returning to Syria**. According to UNHCR survey¹, only 6% of Syrian refugees intend to return to Syria in the next 12 months. As many as 90% do not plan to return in the next 12 months or are not planning to return to Syria at all (19.3% of all refugees). Furthermore, there are many credible news of refugees being arrested after returning to Syria.

It is safe to assume that majority of Syrian refugees will remain in Lebanon and other countries of the Middle East for at least several more years. In view of decreasing international humanitarian aid, it is increasingly important to create conditions for refugees' employment. However in Lebanon, Syrian refugees can legally work only in two sectors: construction and agriculture.

In order to stimulate employment of jobless Lebanese and Syrian refugees in Lebanese food sector, PCPM is implementing Polish Aid and WFP-funded projects that support the exportation of Lebanese food products to the EU. These employment activities are mainly available in the summer season, while refugees are often deprived of income opportunities from November to March. This is why PCPM is committed to secure food safety through increasing livelihood opportunities for Lebanese farmers and Syrian refugees who often do the field work.

Despite the fact that the agro-food products produced by the cooperatives and association are of good quality, they have a long way to go in order to be able to meet European importation standards, or even local market requirements, whether regarding recipe standardization, hygiene, packaging, or preservation, which can only be achieved through on-the-job coaching and close supervision of their production process. Some of these cooperatives lack adequate manpower in order to be able to produce quantities sufficient to meet potentially growing demand, whether internally or externally. On the other hand, local vulnerable populations suffer from increasing unemployment, which could lead to negative coping mechanisms such as a rise in crime rates and a general feeling of distress. Creating a link between the cooperatives' demand and the beneficiaries' supply of manpower can help both parties achieve their respective objectives and alleviate some of the burden of unemployment on the local communities.

Finally, most farmers in all areas of intervention live on revenues generated by their produce, which is often barely enough to survive. Diversifying their activities and complementing their income through agritourism could help alleviate their economic burdens and expose their products to a wider audience.

Related PCPM activities:

PCPM operates in Lebanon since 2012, is duly registered in Lebanon and participates in the **UN Humanitarian Appeal - Lebanon Crisis Response Plan (LCRP)**.

Under the current WFP-funded program, since mid-2018, PCPM experts assessed economic growth prospects, linking of Lebanese products to the market, job creation through agricultural activities (on the community level) and

increased from 17,100 liters in 2016 to 24,700 liters in 2018, while production of Extra Virgin Olive Oil remain steady at the level of 1,800 liters per year.



(3) Andket - Andket Pro Cooperative

The cooperative's objectives are to increase the level of income of its members, develop eco-tourism and the town in general, establish activities aimed at attracting people to the town, and preserve its heritage, especially the mortar industry and traditional food. However, it still needs work and assistance in order to reach its goals, and has the hope and the necessary momentum.

The cooperative produces many kinds of foods from kebabs, jams, pods, eggplant, lupine, compote, tomato ketchup and pizza sauce, and has not yet specialized in one product.



(4) Berdeh - Agricultural Cooperative Association for Rural Development in Al Barida

The cooperative currently processes pomegranate molasses in the traditional fashion because of the availability of required machines. It also produces olive oil and oil soap. The cooperative is currently encouraging farmers to engage in organic farming.

¹ <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/68443.pdf>

strengthening mechanisms on the local government level. In early March 2019 PCPM organized an exposure visit to WorldFood Poland 2019 expo for representatives of the eight most active / willing to be active cooperatives and association, with the potential to export. During the visit, participants had the opportunity to meet with local food importers and invite them to sample some of their products. Several importers expressed real interest in working with the said cooperatives, and one importer requested a quotation for a potential shipment in September, once this year's products are ready.

The underlying logic behind the past and proposed project is that one of the few remaining options to improve the condition and livelihood of the Lebanese food sector employees, and in view of the fact that access to the Syrian market has become limited, is to increase exportation of Lebanese food products, particularly to high-value markets. This is constrained by the low quality of Lebanese food products, as well as quantities insufficient to cater to the needs of even medium-sized supermarket chains in Europe. On the other hand, **Lebanese food products can benefit from their uniqueness, as Europe's young generation is now discovering many new food tastes.** Moreover, marketing the products by linking them to the fate of Syrian refugees will potentially help justify relatively higher prices.



(5) Chadra (Shadra) - Agricultural Cooperative Association in Chadra

The cooperative owns a modern, environmentally friendly olive oil processing unit. It has an investment certificate and produces extra virgin olive oil. It is classified as a third-grade food unit, taking into consideration all the required manufacturing conditions.



Lebanese cooperatives' stand at WorldFood Poland in Warsaw (March 2019).

Indicative project budget (in USD)

Budget line	Full budget	Budget minus co-financing
In-kind support to farmers	\$538,000	\$388,000
Farmers' capacity-building and training	\$899,372	\$749,372
Participation in international trade fairs	\$214,480	\$114,480
Staffing, operations, agriculture extension services	\$421,438	\$321,438
Project support cost (7%)	\$145,130	\$110,130
TOTAL	\$2,218,419	\$1,683,420

PCPM contact persons:

dr Wojtek WILK, CEO
wwilk@pcpm.org.pl

Mrs. Zofia KWOLEK, Fundraising Director
zkwolek@pcpm.org.pl