



Replicable Innovations of SSE in the provision of services and creation of decent jobs in the post Covid-19 crisis recovery

ROADMAP FOR REPLICABILITY

Consume Palestine Strategy: public-private collaboration for comprehensive support to rural value chains and women empowerment



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Executive summary

The Roadmap was elaborated within the framework of the ENI CBC Med **MedRiSSE project** (Replicable Innovations of SSE in the provision of services and creation of decent jobs in the post covid-19 crisis recovery) and it analyses the pilot experience of the **Consume Palestine strategy** which has been put in practice since 2012 in Gaza and the West Bank mainly under four key cooperation projects, starting from the ENPI CMC Med **RUWOMED** project (2012-2016).

The Consume Palestine strategy can be considered a **positive model of Social and Solidarity Economy practice**. The latter provides an **integrated** (drawing from public and private support and resources) and **comprehensive** (intervening on both supply and demand side) support to boost **rural value chains**, acting through the **social and economic empowerment of vulnerable social groups** (in the specific case of this experience, targeted vulnerable women). As a core element, the strategy drew from continuous and close **collaboration** both with the **public sector**, in particular key Palestinian governmental actors presiding over the cooperative sector (i.e., ministry-level actors, local authorities), as well as with **other key multi-sector actors** such as **private actors** (i.e., trade and export agents, marketing firms), **universities** and **civil society organisations** (i.e., women's associations, fair-trade NGOs).

With a view to the potential **replicability** of the Consume Palestine strategy, this Roadmap retraces and analyses the overall process, the key phases and respective main actors, resources, and actions, which allowed the implementation of the practice. Key determinants to replicate the strategy, as well as potential risks and respective mitigation measures, complete the overall assessment of the Consume Palestine experience for those readers

who might be interested or even considering embarking on a similar experience elsewhere.

In a nutshell, a **preliminary need assessment phase** of the Consume Palestine strategy mainly focused on deepening the understanding of the challenges and opportunities of the **Palestinian cooperative sector**, especially the cooperatives operating in the rural value chains and in particular the women's rural production and consumer cooperatives. A **second stage** of the strategy entailed supply-side as well as a demand-side support interventions. As for the first, a **well-rounded capacity building program** for targeted women, coupled with first-hand **marketing and branding** support, were part of the **"soft"-type support** aiming to **increase production quality and business capacities**. As for the **"hard" support**, targeted cooperatives were accompanied through every step of the **formalisation process**, including legal registration, product compliance with legal requirements, attaining of registered labels, and quality certifications (i.e., organic certification). Additionally, the strategy also entailed the registration of the **Consume Palestine Seal** (Uroq Seal), the **provision of needed production inputs** for targeted cooperatives (i.e., machinery, quality equipment), as well as **strategic support to export** targeted rural products to the Spanish markets. As for the **demand-side support**, the **Consume Palestine awareness Campaign** was carried out to enhance the image of Palestinian rural products as high-quality products and to raise consumers' awareness of the importance of purchasing Palestinian rural products. Against this backdrop, the Consume Palestine Campaign closely linked with raising consumers' awareness and solidarity with the Palestinian cause. A **third phase** of the process focuses on the **key sustainability measures** (currently effective, at the time of writing) of the Consume Palestine strategy which are likely

to provide long-term positive results.

Indeed, the accumulated experience through the Consume Palestine strategy could be capitalised to inspire the replication of the model in other territories given its **positive support to the SSE** and the **constructive promotion of public-private collaboration** for the benefit of the community.

In addition to the necessary **financial resources** needed for the implementation of the strategy, **key contextual determinants** for a positive replication of the practice may be summarized as follows:

- Relying on minimum **social conditions and norms** allowing the support strategy to reach out to, engage, and mobilize **rural economic actors** (i.e., consumer/producer cooperatives/groups, farmers, artisans), and their **families and communities**, especially if targeting individuals from vulnerable social groups.
- Relying on the support from **key national and international civil society organisations**, such as NGOs, labour unions, producers/consumers' associations, which can facilitate reaching out to and engaging rural actors in the support activities, leverage needed resources and networks, and support their access to the local and international marketplace.
- Counting on the **political endorsement and technical support** from key **governmental actors** (i.e., **ministry-level actors** and **institutions, local authorities**).
- Having a basic **legal framework** governing the marketplace, the economic actors, and their activities (i.e., labour rights, prices and access to the marketplace, production processes, environmental protection, market competition, product quality standards, transparency and consumers' protection, exports).
- Engaging with key **national and international private sector actors**, such as fair-trade and export agents, and marketing firms, which can allow rural actors to access the local and international marketplace.
- Having access to the **national and international marketplace** to sell supported rural products (i.e., local fairs and stores, supermarkets).
- Counting on having key **economic hard and soft infrastructures** in place needed by targeted rural economic actors to be operative in their market, hence, to produce, purchase and exchange resources, products, and services (i.e., local fairs and stores, supermarkets, market exhibitions, transportation and export infrastructures, power grid, water supply network, commercial services, transport and export logistics, legal and technical support).

- Relying on a staff team/collaborators/external service providers having **appropriate expertise, capacities, and skills** to oversee and provide the overall support strategy and activities, as well as proper **competences, sensibility, and cultural intelligence** needed to effectively engage and empower targeted vulnerable social groups.

When replicating the Consume Palestine strategy, some **potential risks/challenges** need to be accounted for, prevented, or mitigated. Firstly, to avoid the potential risk of running up against **complex bureaucratic procedures and legal compliancy requirements** when supporting rural economic actors accessing the formal market, it is advisable to **closely collaborate with key governmental actors** since the very beginning of the support strategy. In this regard, actively supporting the legal registration of a product Seal can greatly support rural actors in uplifting their image and market placement, especially those actors lacking the means to register their own labels. Additionally, carrying out parallel **policy advocacy actions** may also favour a push toward more enabling legal frameworks for the rural economic actors. Moreover, **logistical difficulties** may challenge the **export** of rural products, especially in unstable and challenging political contexts. Against this backdrop, it is key to secure **strategic partnerships** with **national or international organisations** that can help overcome exporting barriers. Finally, when dealing with **rural communities** where **rooted conservative social** norms, traditions, and practices (i.e., patriarchal social structures, "traditional" agricultural practices) are often in force, challenges such as **social resistance** or **mistrust** should be expected and considered. Such social challenges require thorough **understanding, dedicated and context-sensitive planning**, as well as dedicated **awareness-raising activities** targeting the overall **rural communities**.

SSE practitioners, policymakers and local administrations searching for ways to contribute to the sustainable and inclusive development of their territories may consider replicating the Consume Palestine strategy provided that key determinants are in place and the process is well adapted to their specific context.

DISCLAIMER

This document has been produced with the financial assistance of the European Union under the ENI CBC Mediterranean Sea Basin programme. The contents of this document are the sole responsibility of ARCO- Action Research for CO-Development - and can under no circumstances be regarded as reflecting the position of the European Union.

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Acronyms

ACPP: Asamblea de Cooperación por la Paz

ARCO: Action Research for CO-development

CBO: Civil-based organisation

CRTD-A: Collective for Research and Training on Development - Action (Lebanon)

CSO: Civil Society Organisation

ENI CBC Med: European Neighbourhood Instrument - Cross-Border Cooperation
Mediterranean Sea Basin Programme (2014-2020)

ENPI CBC Med: European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument - Cross
Border Cooperation Mediterranean Sea Basin Program (2007-2013)

EU: European Union

GVA: Generalitat Valenciana

IDEAS: Iniciativas de Economía Alternativa y Solidaria

MoU: Memorandum of Understanding

MSB: Mediterranean Sea Basin

NGO: Non-Governmental Organisation

PARC: Palestinian Agricultural Relief Committee
(now Palestinian Development Association)

PSI: Palestinian Standards Institute

RUWOMED: Rural Women of the Mediterranean

SSE: Social and Solidarity Economy



1. Introduction

MedRiSSE PROJECT

This Roadmap was developed within the framework of the **European funded project MedRiSSE (Replicable Innovations of SSE in the provision of services and creation of decent jobs in the post covid-19 crisis recovery)** under the **ENI CBC Mediterranean Sea Basin Programme 2014-2020**¹. The 24-month project launched in September 2021 is currently (at the time of writing) being implemented in **Spain, Palestine, Italy, Jordan, and Tunisia** by 8 partner organisations with a total budget of **1.1 million euros** (with 90% EU contribution).

The overall objective of MedRiSSE project is to develop a **Mediterranean scalability pathway for social innovations** that enable the co-production of public social services with local Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE) agents that have emerged from interactions between the government and the SSE involved in several ENI funded projects. The initiative aims to demonstrate **that co-production of public social services with SSE actors can provide with low-cost, highly effective, and scalable solutions** to fight poverty and promote equality, social inclusion, and environmental sustainability. These innovations, in fact, represent successful and efficient practices for the achievement of the SDGs in general, and for the protection of the most vulnerable groups in the post Covid-19 economies in the Mediterranean Sea Basin (MSB). In the post pandemic era, it will

be necessary to promote social inclusion and fight against poverty through cooperation, offering basic services in a different way, recovering, and creating decent employment through diverse and complementary organizational models of production. Many SSE are already responding to the COVID-19 pandemic in the fields of social and health protection, provision of food and prevention equipment, financial support, education and training, organization of community aid, converting their production to face the emergency, re-localizing supply chains, and many more.

However, the full potential of the SSE for the recovery stage will depend on **governments' willingness** to co-design and **co-implement** public policies and recovery measures within a **multi-stakeholder approach**, as well as civil society's capacity to act and mobilize resources.

In this respect, the **capitalization and dissemination of good practices** has the potential to inform and inspire similar experiences and solutions through a multiplicative global effect on local communities. It is against this backdrop that MedRiSSE project developed the Mediterranean Replication Toolkit building on the learnings and capitalization of 5 EU funded projects, namely MedTOWN, MoreThanAJob, MedUP!, IESS! and RUWOMED.

¹The 2014-2020 ENI CBC Mediterranean Sea Basin Programme is a multilateral Cross-Border Cooperation (CBC) initiative funded by the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI). The Programme objective is to foster fair, equitable and sustainable economic, social and territorial development, which may advance cross-border integration and valorise participating countries' territories and values. The following 13 countries participate in the Programme: Cyprus, Egypt, France, Greece, Israel, Italy, Jordan, Lebanon, Malta, Palestine, Portugal, Spain, and Tunisia. The Managing Authority (MA) is the Autonomous Region of Sardinia (Italy). Official Programme languages. Official Programme languages are Arabic, English and French. For more information, please visit: www.enicbcmmed.eu.

The European Union is made up of 27 Member States who have decided to gradually link together their know-how, resources and destinies. Together, during a period of enlargement of 50 years, they have built a zone of stability, democracy and sustainable development whilst maintaining cultural diversity, tolerance and individual freedoms. The European Union is committed to sharing its achievements and its values with countries and peoples beyond its borders.



THE ROADMAP

The **aim** of this Roadmap is to provide **guidance and resources** for **policy makers, public servants, and SSE practitioners** in the Mediterranean **wishing to replicate social innovation and co-production models and initiatives**.

A total of **5 Roadmaps**, one for each good practice identified from **MedTOWN, MoreThanAJob, MedUPI, IESS!** and **RUWOMED** projects, were elaborated under the MedRiSSE project within the [Replication Toolkit](#). The other 4 Roadmaps are accessible [here](#).

Each Roadmap was built upon the results of the **replicability assessment** carried out by MedRiSSE partner **PIN S.c.r.l.**- Didactic and Scientific Services for the University of Florence/[ARCO – Action Research for CO-development](#) - research centre (Italy). The assessment followed an evaluation framework elaborated by ARCO following a thorough literature review on replication and scalability methods on social innovations. Moreover, the framework was grounded on a conceptual and interpretative framework based on the **Sustainable Human Development paradigm** and **Capability Approach perspective** (Sen; 1985,1999) which frames the Social and Solidarity Economy with a territorial ecosystem perspective. The assessment was primarily based on the desk review of project documents and materials, as well as information and insights collected during the semi-structured interviews carried out with key informants of the good practices [the assessment **methodology** is described in detail in the [Toolkit](#)].

HOW TO READ THIS ROADMAP?

The objective of this Roadmap is to provide readers a **practical guidance to replicate the analysed good practice** (or similar initiatives) **in other contexts and territories**. However, the overall process as well as the identified key determinants, which are presented in this Roadmap as important elements for a positive implementation of the good practice, should be always and carefully (re)considered in the **local and national contexts** in which replication may take place. In other words, an underlying and thorough understanding of the readers' contexts must be taken into consideration in order to tailor and adapt the process and the suggestions here reported.

The Roadmap is structured as follows:

- **Presentation of the good practice:** its origin and context, triggering factors and main objectives, its distinctive features, innovativeness and value-added.
- **Theory of change:** a schematic overview of how inputs, actions, outputs, outcomes and impacts of the good practice are related, in order to facilitate the planning and the implementation of similar practices in other contexts.
- **The process:** an overview of all the sequenced main phases which allowed the execution of the good practice, from the triggering factor(s) to planning, implementation and, finally, sustainability phase, identifying for each key actors, resources, and actions. Additionally, Suggested Actions and Self-Assessment Questions are also provided to assist the reader when considering the feasibility of this model in his/her own context. The purpose is to offer supporting tools allowing to abstract key elements from the assessed good practice to be applied in other contexts.
- **Key determinants for replicability:** an outline of the **main contextual determinants** that emerged during the analysis when seeking to identify key “ingredients” and conditions that should be in place in a given context for the replicability of the analysed good practice. The purpose is to support readers in running a quick general screening of their own context to assess the preliminary feasibility of replicating the practice.
- **Drawbacks and risks:** a list of possible drawbacks and potential risks that may arise for future replications, accompanied by possible coping strategies for prevention and/or mitigation.
- **Final remarks:** a final overview of why this practice can be considered an effective driver for sustainable human development and the objectives that could be reached by implementing this practice.



2. The good practice

The **Consume Palestine strategy** proves to be a **good Social and Solidarity Economy practice** when it comes to providing an **integrated** (drawing from public and private support and resources) and **comprehensive** (intervening on both supply and demand side) support to boost **rural value chains**, acting through the **social and economic empowerment of vulnerable social groups** (targeted vulnerable women, in this case).

The strategy traces its origins from the learnings of the ENPI CBC Med **RUWOMED project**² (Rural Women of the Mediterranean) implemented by Asamblea de Cooperación por la Paz (ACPP), Palestinian Agricultural Relief Committee (PARC -now Palestinian Development Association), and Collective for Research and Training on Development - Action (CRTD-A) in Spain, Palestine, and Lebanon, from November 2012 to December 2016. The project aimed at developing and strengthening viable and sustainable economic activities among Palestinian and Lebanese women in rural areas through capacity building programs, input support and the local and international promotion of their products.

The same objective continued to be pursued in Palestine by other programmes, including the project **“Sustainable, Equitable, and Fair: Consume**

Local, Consume Palestine”, an almost 1 million EUR initiative funded by the Generalitat Valenciana (GVA) and implemented in Palestine by ACPP, and local partners such as PARC, through different project editions³ starting from June 2018. The initiative aimed at supporting the socio-economic empowerment of Palestinian rural women in four target locations in the West Bank and strengthening the value chain of Palestinian rural products with sustainability and responsible consumption criteria. Therefore, starting from 2012, the Consume Palestine strategy took shape building on the activities and **learnings** of the continuous succession of these cooperation projects.

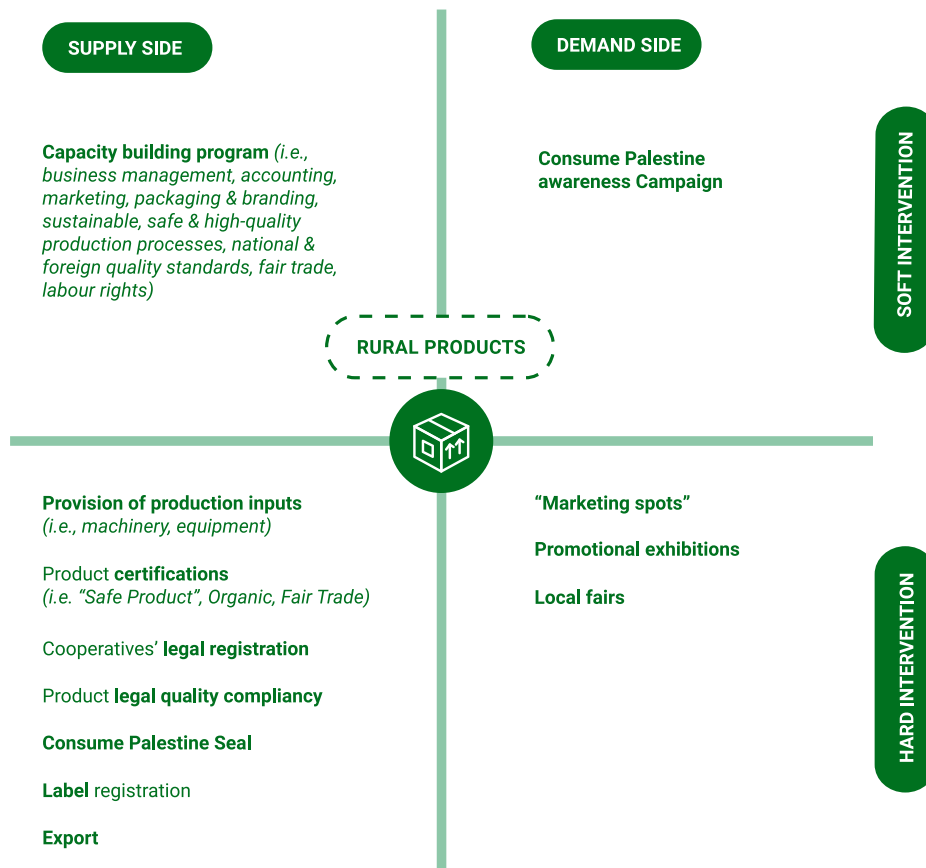
More specifically, the strategy supports Palestinian **rural value chains** by strengthening both the supply and demand sides, as illustrated in the figure below.

²RUWOMED project full title: “Supporting and connecting rural women’s traditional know how within the Mediterranean Sea Basin through the promotion of fair products to enhance their economic and social future and to participate towards the achievement of a harmonious development for a good neighbourhood in the region”. ENPI CBC Med was the multilateral cross-border cooperation “Mediterranean Sea Basin Programme” part of the European Neighbourhood Policy and of its financing instrument (ENPI) for the 2007-2013 period, which included the European Union and partner countries regions placed along the shores of the Mediterranean Sea.

³The main project editions who carried out the Consume Palestine strategy were GVA17, in Jenin (from January 2018 to January 2020 - almost 400.000 EUR), GVA18, in Tulkarm, Nablus, and Ramallah (from July 2019 to January 2021- almost 350.000 EUR), and GVA19, in Hebron, and Bethlehem (from December 2020 to May 2022 - almost 200.000 EUR).



Overview of the Consume Palestine strategy



Source: ARCO

As for the **supply side**, the strategy envisaged a **well-rounded capacity building program** for women working in the targeted cooperatives to improve their skills and competences in business management, accounting, marketing, and branding (including better labelling and packaging strategies). Moreover, women acquired needed skills to ensure sustainable, safe, and high-quality production (quality management systems), as well as new knowledge on foreign quality standards, fair trade, and labour rights. Representatives of the Palestinian women cooperative groups also benefitted from **learning visits** to their cooperative peers in the other countries (i.e.,

the trip to Valentian Community in Spain during GVA17 project) which is a good approach to establish direct contacts with interested importing companies and to participate in a fair trade. Furthermore, nowadays targeted Palestinian cooperatives can also benefit from the use of the **officially registered seal** (“Uroq Seal”) and **logo** identifying and promoting the good quality of “Palestinian made” rural products⁴. Additionally, the Strategy entailed a first-hand support to guide cooperatives in obtaining their **legal registration** and to ensure the **compliance** of their products with **national quality requirements**.

⁴The “Uroq Seal”, released in October 2022, was the successful result of a long process carried out by PARC and ACP. The latter managed to obtain the legal registration of the Seal from the Ministry of National Economy after an 11-months long procedure. The Uroq Seal logo was previously elaborated by means of an award contest among university students - in coherence with an awareness-raising perspective of the strategy. In addition to contributing to the promotion of the Palestinian rural products, the Seal also benefits Palestinian small cooperatives and producers that are less likely to register their own label due to burdensome and costly procedures and requirements. PARC will manage the Seal for the next 7 years, therefore deciding upon granting its use to local rural producers conditional to receiving support to ensure the good quality and branding of their products.



Cooperatives were also supported through the demanding process of attaining formal registration of their own **labels** and **certifications** (i.e., the “Safer Product Certificate”, the organic certification, Fair Trade certification, or any other specific certification released by the Palestinian Standards Institute - PSI).

As for the **demand side**, the Strategy promoted the “**Consume Palestine**” **awareness Campaigns**⁵. The latter positively contributed to enhance the image of Palestinian rural products as high-quality products and to raise consumers’ awareness of the importance of purchasing Palestinian rural products as means to support and protect small rural producers, especially the women, and the overall local economy. Moreover, the Campaign successfully **promoted the Consume Palestine Seal** (“Uroq Seal”) which is now considered the major tool to brand Palestinian quality rural products. Against this backdrop, the Consume Palestine Campaign also contributed to raising consumers’ awareness and solidarity with the Palestinian cause (locally and abroad).

As a core element, the strategy drew from a **continuous and close collaboration with the public sector**, in particular key Palestinian governmental actors presiding over the cooperative sector (i.e., the Work Cooperative Agency, ministry-level actors, PSI, local authorities). Since the first need assessment phase carried out under the RUWOMED project, the project staff established solid connections with governmental actors who provided **key technical advice** and information to better understand the **cooperative legal framework, legal requirements and regulations** disciplining cooperative products’ quality and hygiene standards, as well as procedures concerning product seals and certifications. Moreover, these governmental actors were consulted to consider their take on the needs, challenges, and opportunities of the cooperative sector in Palestine. Local authorities were also fundamental to reach out to key CBOs and, ultimately, to women from all backgrounds (i.e., coming from urban, rural and/or disadvantaged contexts) to engage them in the activities. In this respect, **local authorities’ support and endorsement** was strategic to overcome resistance of small rural communities

and conservative environments and to make people understand the importance of seizing such support opportunities.

Furthermore, backing from governmental actors (i.e., Palestine Standards Institution - PSI) was crucial when it came to support women’s cooperatives to obtain **legal registration**, to improve the **quality and compliance** of their products with all the **legal requirements** and to help them navigate through the mandatory and burdensome procedures required to obtain certifications and to access the formal marketplace.

The Consume Palestine strategy draws its strength also from collaborating with other **key multi-sector actors**. Close relationships were established with the **local Universities** which provided, among other resources, labs for the quality analysis of the cooperatives’ products. Also, **private actors**, such as trade and export agents, marketing firms, Chamber of Commerce, as well as **civil society organisations**, such as Fair-Trade NGOs and CSOs, were all fundamental to improve the cooperatives’ access to the marketplace.

In the following sections, the Roadmap retraces and analyses the key phases, and respective main actors, resources, and actions, which led to the set-up and implementation of the Consume Palestine strategy. Key determinants to replicate the model, as well as potential risks and respective mitigation measures, complete the overall assessment of strategy for those readers who might be interested or even considering embarking on a similar experience elsewhere.



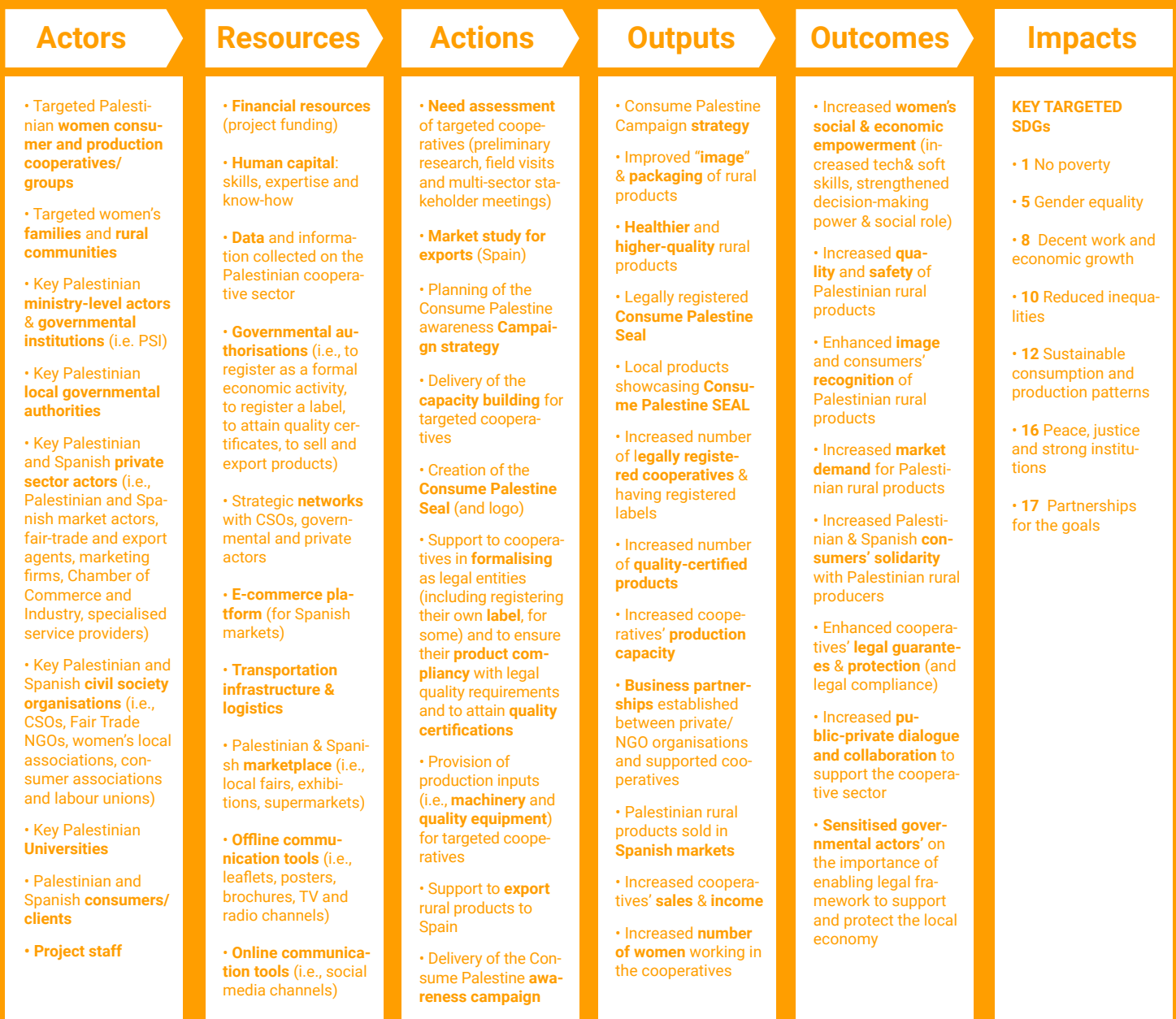
⁵ For each of the subsequent edition of the Consume Palestine initiative, an awareness Campaign was planned and delivered, continuously building on the learnings from the previous experiences.



3. Theory of change

TRIGGERING ELEMENT

Palestinian rural products are greatly challenged by the **competitive advantage** of international products, especially Israeli products. The case is worsened by the unstable Palestinian political context, and a widespread perception of Palestinian products being lower quality compared to the Israeli, Jordanian, European or Egyptian ones, which also negatively couples with generally low marketing skills and capacities by Palestinian rural cooperatives. Moreover, socially rooted **gender inequality dynamics** undermine women’s agency to participate in and to contribute to Palestinian cooperatives’ activities, as well as to benefit from their economic returns.



4.

The process

For the purpose of this Roadmap, 4 key phases of the process enabling the Consume Palestine experience were identified and analysed, starting from the triggering factors (Phase 0) to planning (Phase 1), implementation (Phase 2) and, finally, sustainability phase (Phase 3), identifying for each key actors, resources, and activities.

In summary, in response to the **competitive disadvantage** that Palestinian rural products face with national and international products, as well as to **gender inequality dynamics** undermining women's involvement within the activities of Palestinian cooperatives, the Consume Palestine support strategy responded with a comprehensive support to targeted **rural value chains**.

A **first phase** of the strategy focused on deepening the **understanding** of the opportunities and challenges of the cooperative sector in Palestine, especially women's rural production and consumer cooperatives.

This preliminary phase allowed to **plan** the strategies which were **implemented** in a **second phase** of the process, which focused both on **strengthening** the **supply capacity** of the targeted rural value chains as well as on **boosting demand** for Palestinian rural products.

A **third phase** focuses on the **key sustainability measures** (currently effective, at the time of writing) of the strategy which are likely to provide long-term positive results.

Phase 0

TRIGGERING
FACTORS



Phase 1

PREPARING THE GROUND
FOR THE STRATEGY -
PRELIMINARY RURAL
VALUE CHAIN NEED
ASSESSMENT AND
STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT



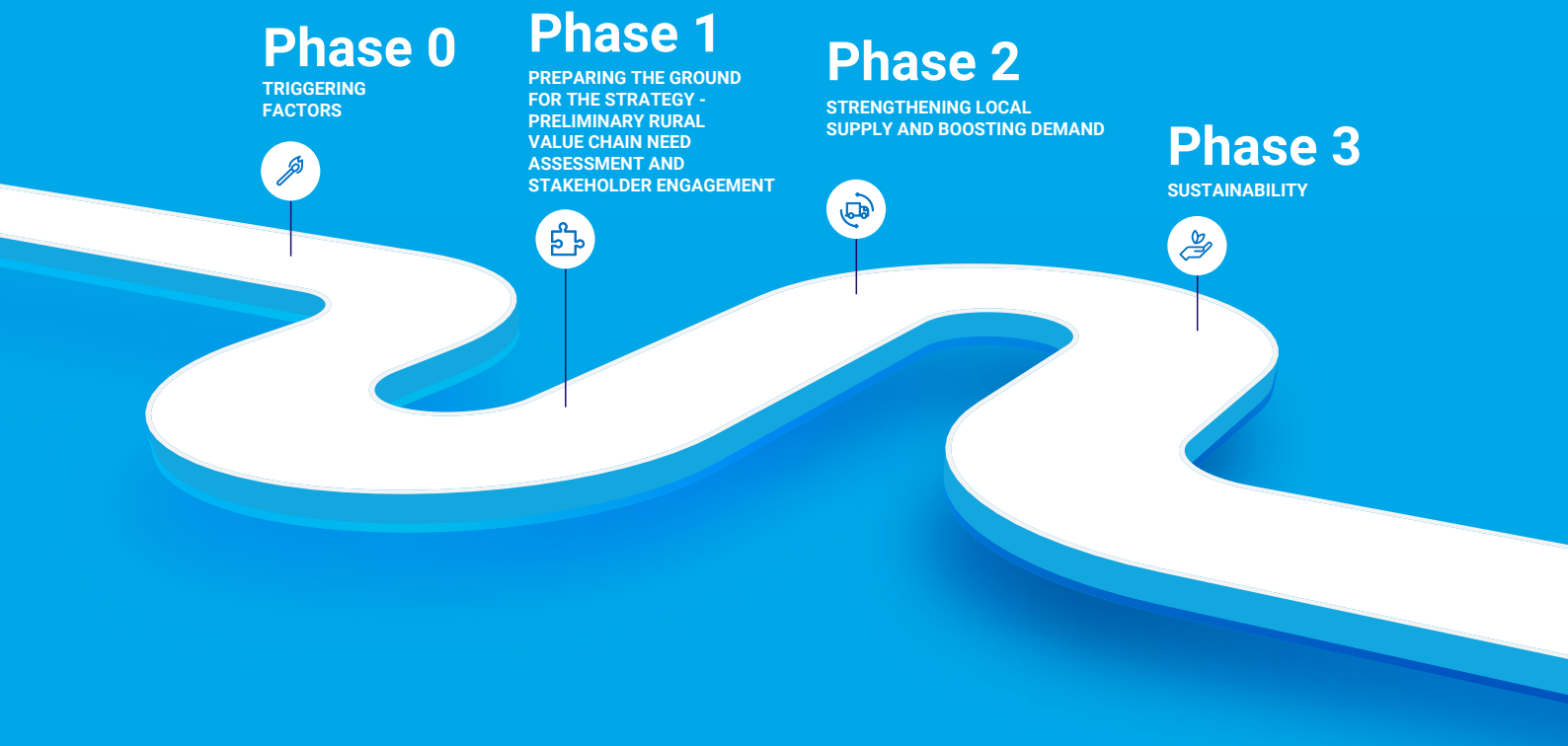
Phase 2

STRENGTHENING LOCAL
SUPPLY AND BOOSTING DEMAND



Phase 3

SUSTAINABILITY



Phase 0

TRIGGERING FACTORS

Insights from the intervention

Palestinian rural products are greatly challenged by the **competitive disadvantage** with international products, especially **Israeli products**. The latter, in fact, affect the Palestinian market dynamics, as they benefit from relevant national subsidies which allow Israeli producers to sell at lower prices, therefore gaining competitive advantage.

In addition to the highly unstable Palestinian political context, there is a **widespread perception of Palestinian products being lower quality** compared to the Israeli, Jordanian, European or Egyptian ones. The scenario is worsened by the generally **low marketing skills and capacities** of Palestinian rural cooperatives.

Moreover, **women's agency** to participate in and to contribute to Palestinian cooperatives' activities, as well as to benefit from their economic returns is quite **limited**, mainly due to rooted, traditional and **patriarchal cultural and social norms and distribution of gender roles** undermining gender equality in the country.

All these factors called for an **integrated** (drawing from public and private support and resources) and **comprehensive** (acting on both supply and demand side) support to uplift and strengthen the Palestinian rural value chains, acting through women's socio-economic empowerment.

Self-assessment questions

- Which are the **local rural value chains** that can and need to be supported in your territory? What are the key needs, gaps, challenges, and barriers they face?
- Are local rural producers threatened by more competitive national or foreign goods? Do they have the means, skills, and capacities to **compete** with national and foreign goods?
- Do local rural products satisfy consumers' and legal **quality standards**?
- Are there certain **social groups** which face greater challenges in terms of access, participation, and representation in local rural value chains? (i.e., women, people with disabilities, individuals from disadvantaged contexts)

Phase 1

PLANNING: PREPARING THE GROUND FOR THE STRATEGY - PRELIMINARY RURAL VALUE CHAIN NEED ASSESSMENT AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Insights from the intervention	Suggested actions	Self-assessment questions
MAIN ACTORS		

The first **planning phase** of the Consume Palestine strategy mainly focused on deepening the understanding of the **Palestinian cooperative sector**, specifically the cooperatives operating in the **rural value chains** and, in particular, **women's rural production and consumer cooperatives**. Therefore, the following key actors were involved:

- Targeted Palestinian **women consumer and production cooperatives/ groups/associations**.

- Key Palestinian **ministry-level actors**, such as the Work Cooperative Agency and representatives of the Ministry of Labour, the Ministry of National Economy, the Ministry of Women Affairs, and the Ministry of Agriculture.

- Key Palestinian **local governmental authorities** which were fundamental, among other things, to reach out to key CBOs in rural communities and, ultimately, to vulnerable women coming from rural contexts, to engage them in the activities.

- When assessing a local rural value chain, make sure to have **consumers and producers' first-hand view** on their needs, challenges, and barriers they perceive as most relevant. This is particularly crucial should you aim to focus on more vulnerable social groups (i.e., rural communities, women, people with disabilities, individuals from disadvantaged contexts).

- Engage **key ministry-level actors** to properly understand the legal framework which governs the value chains you intend to support and to consider the governmental perspective on the overall sector.

- Among other key advantages, **local authorities' support and endorsement** can be strategic to overcome resistance when working in small rural communities and conservative environments and to make people understand the importance of seizing support opportunities.

- Can you reach out to **consumers and producers** of the value chain you intend to support in order to consider their **first-hand view** on their needs, challenges, and barriers they perceive as most relevant?

- Can you engage **key ministry-level actors** to properly understand the legal framework which governs the value chains you intend to support and to consider the governmental perspective on the overall sector?

- Can you count on key **local authorities' support**? Can their endorsement help you to reach out to key value chain actors, especially if coming from rural communities and conservative environments?



Insights from the intervention	Suggested actions	Self-assessment questions
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MAIN ACTORS

• **Key private sector actors**, such as fair-trade and export agents, marketing firms, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

• **Key civil society actors and NGOs**, such as CSOs and labour unions, which, in this preliminary phase, helped to assess cooperatives' barriers and potential to access the local and international marketplace (i.e., women's associations, the Coalition of Rural Development Associations - CORDA, the Youth Development Association, the Rural Women Development Society, the Palestinian Farmers Union, the Palestinian Society for Consumer Protection, IDEAS - Iniciativas de Economía Alternativa y Solidaria).

• **Project staff**, carrying out the need assessment, the field visits to the women's cooperatives, the meetings with stakeholders from public, private and civil society sectors, as well as planning the Consume Palestine awareness Campaign strategy.

• Connect with **key private sector actors**, such as fair-trade and export agents, marketing firms, Chambers of Commerce and Industry, to assess and consider the market potential of the value chain you intend to support, both nationally and internationally.

• Engage **key civil society actors and NGOs**, such as CSOs and labour unions, which, in this preliminary phase, can help you to assess the value chain barriers and potentials to access the formal local and international marketplace.

• Make sure you can count on project staff having **appropriate skills and expertise** in research, data collection, and analysis, as well as core communication skills to elaborate an awareness campaign strategy.

• Which **key private sector actors**, such as fair-trade and export agents, marketing firms, Chambers of Commerce and Industry, can help you to assess and consider the market potential of the value chain you intend to support, both nationally and internationally?

• Which **key civil society actors and NGOs**, such as CSOs and labour unions, can help you to assess the value chain barriers and potential to access the local and international marketplace?

• Can you count on a staff team having needed **skills, expertise, and know-how** to collect necessary data, as well as core communication skills and expertise to elaborate an awareness campaign strategy?

MAIN RESOURCES

In this first preliminary need assessment phase, the key resources used can be summarised as follows:

• **Financial resources** coming from different international cooperation donors (Project funding).

• To carry out an accurate preliminary work underlying the value chain support strategy, **appropriate financial resources** need to be secured to carry out a thorough need assessment, insightful market studies and an effective awareness campaign strategy.

• Can you secure needed **financial resources** to carry out a thorough need assessments including field visits, stakeholder meetings, market studies and a detailed awareness campaign strategy?



Insights from the intervention

Suggested actions

Self-assessment questions

MAIN RESOURCES

• **Strategic networks** with CSOs, governmental and private actors.

• **Data and information** collected concerning the Palestinian cooperative sector (legal framework and barriers, market opportunities and challenges), with particular attention to rural communities and vulnerable women.

• **Human capital:** facilitation and research skills, expertise, and know-how to collect necessary data through meetings, field visits and desk work; core communication skills and expertise to elaborate an awareness campaign strategy.

• Relying on good **networks** with CSOs, governmental and private actors is strategic to reach out to key informants, stakeholders, beneficiaries of the local value chain you intend to support.

• It is key to rely on **up-to-date and quality data and information** on the specific sector you intend to support, including relevant insights on the applicable legal framework and related barriers, potential market trends, opportunities, and challenges.

• Make sure you can count on project staff having **appropriate skills and expertise** in research, data collection, and analysis, as well as core communication skills to elaborate an awareness campaign strategy.

• Can you leverage **strategic networks** with CSOs, governmental, and private actors to reach out to key informants/stakeholders of the local value chain you intend to support?

• Can you rely on **up-to-date and quality data and information** on the specific economic sector you intend to support, including relevant insights on the applicable legal framework and related barriers, potential market trends, opportunities, and challenges?

• Can you count on a staff team having needed **skills, expertise, and know-how** to collect necessary data, as well as core communication skills and expertise to elaborate an awareness campaign strategy?

MAIN ACTIVITIES

The first **planning phase** of the Consume Palestine strategy mainly focused on deepening the understanding of the **Palestinian cooperative sector**, specifically the cooperatives operating in the **rural value chains** and, in particular, **women's rural production and consumer cooperatives**. Therefore, the following key activities were carried out:

• A thorough **need assessment** of the targeted production and consumer **women's cooperatives**, mainly through meetings and field visits to vulnerable and marginalised rural women and Palestinian rural women cooperatives.

• A well-rounded strategy to uplift a local rural value chain, especially if involving individuals belonging to vulnerable social contexts, should be anticipated by a **thorough need assessment** of directly and indirectly targeted economic actors through in-person meetings and field visits.

• Do you have an **accurate understanding** of the **local value chains** which can and need to be supported in your territory? Who are the key actors of the value chains? What are the key needs, gaps, challenges, and barriers they face?



Insights from the intervention	Suggested actions	Self-assessment questions
MAIN ACTIVITIES		

- Meetings with **key Palestinian governmental actors** in the cooperative sectors (i.e., the Work Cooperative Agency, ministry-level actors, local authorities) who provided **key technical advice** and information to better understand the Palestinian **cooperative legal framework**, the **legal requirements and regulations** concerning quality and hygiene standards and certifications for cooperative products as well as the legal procedures to follow when registering seals. Moreover, these governmental actors were consulted to consider their take on the needs, challenges, and opportunities of the cooperative sector in Palestine. **Local authorities** were also fundamental to reach out to key CBOs (i.e., women’s associations) and, ultimately, to vulnerable rural women to engage them in the activities.

- **Engage and connect key governmental actors** from the very planning phase of the support strategy. The latter are fundamental to better understand the legal and institutional framework which governs the value chain you intend to support, allowing you to clearly identify the opportunities, barriers, and challenges. Moreover, it is key to have **political endorsement and support** to the planned activities to effectively reach out to the targeted beneficiaries. **Local authorities**, for example, may be strategic to overcome resistance when working in small rural communities and conservative environments and to make people understand the importance of seizing such support opportunities.

- How can you engage **key governmental actors** that can deepen your understanding of the legal and institutional framework governing the value chains you wish to support? What is their point of view on the needs and challenges faced by the sector? Can they support you in reaching out challenging targets, such as economic actors from rural and conservative communities? Can these governmental actors facilitate connections with **key CSOs** (i.e., women’s and consumers’ associations) that can help you reaching out to targeted economic actors, especially if belonging to vulnerable social groups?

- Meetings with other **key informants and stakeholders**, such as **private actors**, like fair-trade and export agents, marketing firms, Chamber of Commerce, as well as **CSOs**, such as Fair-Trade NGOs, to assess cooperatives’ potential access to the national and international marketplace.

- When assessing the possible strategies to support a local value chain it is key to **open dialogue with key stakeholders and informants ranging from different sectors**, such as key **private sector** actors (i.e., fair-trade and export agents, marketing firms), and **CSOs**, which may help to assess the accessibility of your local products to the national and international marketplace.

- Who are the **key informants and stakeholders** in your territory that can help you assess the potential access of your local rural products to the national and international marketplace? (i.e., **private actors**, like fair-trade and export agents, marketing firms, or **civil society organisations**, such as Fair-Trade NGOs)

- Thorough **market study** to map the potential of the Palestinian rural products in the Spanish markets, as well as the mandatory exporting procedures, regulations, and potential barriers.

- To better assess and map the market placement potential of your local products in **national and/or foreign markets**, carry out an accurate market which should also allow you to attentively identify existing regulations, exporting procedures, legal barriers, and requirements.

- In which **national and foreign markets** could your local rural products potentially be sold? Which are the existing regulations, exporting procedures, legal barriers, and requirements?

- Attentive planning of the **Consume Palestine awareness Campaign strategy**.

- When planning an awareness campaign strategy to boost demand for your local rural products, it is key to promote an **effective and clear message** targeting the right audience and choosing **proper tools and channels** (audience-centred approach).

- Can a public **awareness campaign** be a useful strategy in your territory to enhance the image of your local rural products as high-quality goods? Can it work to raise consumers’ awareness of the importance of “purchasing local” as means to support and protect small rural producers, especially the most vulnerable? Which key features should the **Campaign strategy** have to be successful in your territory? Which key message should the Campaign promote? Which is the **right target audience** for the Campaign? Which are the **proper tools and channels** for each targeted audience?



Phase 2

IMPLEMENTATION: STRENGTHENING LOCAL SUPPLY AND BOOSTING DEMAND

Insights from the intervention	Suggested actions	Self-assessment questions
MAIN ACTORS		

During this phase, the following key actors were engaged:

- Targeted Palestinian **women consumer and production cooperatives/ groups/ associations**.

- Targeted women's **families and rural communities**, traditionally **conservative and patriarchal**, were also informed and involved in the support activities. Facilitating open dialogue and striving to effectively communicate the opportunity of the support for the women and, consequently, for the overall community, was crucial to achieve their consent and "endorsement", allowing women to participate to the capacity building program and other support activities.

- **Women's local associations**, among other key CSOs, were also strategic as they provided the premises for the capacity building program and support activities, moral and logistical support to targeted women, as well as access to key local and rural networks.

- **Specialized private training providers** for the delivery of the capacity building program for targeted women.

- Target and address **key producers** of the rural value chain you intend to support to engage them in the capacity building program and overall support activities strengthening the supply side.

- If you are addressing **vulnerable economic actors** of the value chain, such as women coming from rural and conservative areas, make sure you properly engage and dialogue also with their **families and communities** to avoid their possible "resistance" toward the support activities and actors.

- When addressing rural communities, engage **key local CSOs** which can leverage key resources and networks, as well as facilitate reaching out to key targeted actors.

- Choose **competent and highly skilled trainers** to provide capacity building programs. When targeting vulnerable groups, make sure trainers have proper experience, competences, sensibility, and cultural intelligence to effectively engage and empower trainees.

- Who are the **key producers** of the rural value chain you intend to support? How can you engage them in the capacity building program and overall support activities?

- Are you addressing **vulnerable economic actors**, such as women coming from rural and conservative areas? Can engaging their **families and communities** be a good strategy in your context to prevent any possible "resistance" toward the support activities and actors?

- Which are the **key local CSOs** in your territory which can leverage key resources and networks, as well as facilitate reaching out to the targeted economic actors?

- Can you count on **competent and highly skilled trainers** to provide capacity building programs? Do they have appropriate experience, competences, sensibility, and cultural intelligence to effectively engage and empower vulnerable trainees?

Insights from the intervention	Suggested actions	Self-assessment questions
MAIN ACTORS		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spanish local producers and cooperatives involved in the learning exchange visits with targeted Palestinian women. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have your beneficiary economic actors meet with their peers in different cities, regions, or countries to learn from exchanging experiences and to foster strategic networking and connection opportunities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which peers in different cities, regions, or countries can you put your supported actors in contact with, to learn from exchanging experiences and to foster strategic networking and connection opportunities?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Palestinian Universities who provided, among others, the laboratories for the quality analysis of the cooperatives' products. In addition, university students were engaged in the award competition for the design of the Uroq Seal logo and were identified as one of the targets of the Consume Palestine awareness Campaigns. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage and collaborate with local universities which can leverage useful resources and support (i.e., laboratories for quality analysis of the supported products of the rural value chain). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can collaborations with local universities in your territory leverage useful resources and support? (i.e., quality analysis of the supported rural products)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governmental actors involved in the support activities, such as, among others, the Uroq Seal registration, the formal registration of the targeted cooperatives, the release of labels and certifications, and in the Consume Palestine awareness Campaign (i.e., Palestinian Work Cooperative Agency, the Ministry of Labour, the Ministry of National Economy, the Ministry of Agriculture, the Palestinian Standards Institution, local authorities – governorates and local councils). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make sure you engage and foster collaboration with key governmental actors which can concretise (and facilitate) your support to the targeted rural value chain (i.e., support you in reaching out to targeted rural actors, in granting authorisations to formally register the cooperatives, their local seal, labels, or certifications). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can you engage key governmental actors in your territory which can concretise (and facilitate) your support to the targeted value chain? (i.e., support in reaching out to targeted rural actors, grant authorisations to formally register the cooperatives, the local seal, labels, or certifications).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local and international CSOs and private sector actors supporting, among others, the cooperatives' marketing and access to national and Spanish fairs, exhibitions, and markets (i.e., IDEAS Fair Trade NGO, the Union of Cooperative Associations for Saving and Credit – UCASC, the Rural Women's Development Society – RWDS, consumers' associations, the Palestinian Chambers of Commerce, private marketing companies, Al Reef private trade company). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When working with a comprehensive approach to support a rural value chain it is key to foster collaborations with key local and international stakeholders such as key private sector actors (i.e., fair-trade and export agents, marketing firms), and CSOs which may support the access to the local and international marketplace. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which are the key local and international stakeholders such as key private sector actors (i.e., fair-trade and export agents, marketing firms) and CSOs which may help the access to the local and international marketplace?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specialised media agency supporting the delivery of the Consume Palestine awareness Campaign. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make sure the awareness campaign is handled by skilled, fully dedicated, and experienced experts (i.e., media agencies). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can you count on skilled, fully dedicated, and experienced experts (i.e., media agencies) to deliver an effective awareness campaign for the supported rural products?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project staff providing and overseeing the support activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure a competent, hands-on, and skilled staff team that can oversee and provide the overall support strategy and activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can you count on competent, hands-on, and skilled staff team that can oversee and provide the overall support strategy and activities in your territory?



Insights from the intervention	Suggested actions	Self-assessment questions
MAIN RESOURCES		
<p>In this second stage of the Consume Palestine strategy, the key resources used can be summarised as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial resources coming from different international cooperation donors (Project funding). • Human resources: appropriate expertise and skills to oversee and provide the support strategy and activities, to provide capacity building programs, to deliver an effective awareness raising campaign, to engage with stakeholders, among other tasks. Moreover, dealing with targeting vulnerable groups, proper experience, competences, sensibility, and cultural intelligence are needed to effectively engage and empower targeted actors. • Strategic networks with CSOs, governmental and private sector actors, and Universities which, in turn, leveraged needed resources for the support strategy (i.e., premises for the capacity building programs, university laboratories for the products' quality analysis, governmental approvals/authorisations, logistics and moral support to involve targeted women, partnerships with national and international trade organisations). • Palestinian and Spanish marketplace (i.e., local fairs and exhibitions) to promote and sell Palestinian rural products. • E-commerce platform used by NGO IDEAS to market Palestinian rural products in the Spanish market. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To carry out a well-rounded value chain support strategy, appropriate financial resources need to be secured to carry out, among others, key actions such as the capacity building program, the provision of needed equipment and machinery for producers, the awareness campaign strategy, as well as to cover needed human resources overseeing and providing the support strategy and activities. • Make sure you can count on a staff team/collaborators/external service providers having appropriate expertise and skills to oversee and provide the overall support strategy and activities, to provide capacity building programs, to deliver an effective awareness raising campaign, and to properly engage with stakeholders. Moreover, when dealing with vulnerable groups, proper experience, competences, sensibility, and cultural intelligence are needed to effectively engage and empower targeted actors. • Relying on strategic networks with CSOs, governmental and private actors, and universities is strategic to leverage, in turn, needed resources for the support strategy (i.e., premises for the capacity building programs, university laboratories for the products' quality analysis, governmental approvals/authorisations, logistics and moral support to involve targeted women, partnerships with national and international trade organisations). • Make sure you identify the proper local, regional, national, or international marketplace to promote and sell targeted rural products. • Should you envisage an exporting component of the rural value chain support strategy, identify strategic trade channels such as e-commerce platforms, or international fairs and exhibitions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can you secure needed financial resources to carry out, among others, key actions such as the capacity building program, the provision of needed equipment and machinery for producers, the awareness campaign strategy, as well as to cover needed human resources overseeing and providing the support strategy and activities? • Can you count on a staff team/collaborators/external service providers having appropriate expertise and skills to oversee and provide the overall support strategy and activities, to provide capacity building programs, to deliver an effective awareness raising campaign, and to properly engage with stakeholders? Do they have the proper experience, competences, sensibility, and cultural intelligence to deal with targeted vulnerable actors? • Can you leverage strategic networks with CSOs, governmental and private actors which, in turn, can leverage needed resources for the support strategy? (i.e., premises for the capacity building programs, university laboratories for the products' quality analysis, governmental approvals/authorisations, logistics and moral support to involve targeted actors, partnerships with national and international trade organisations). • Which is the proper local, regional, national, or international marketplace to promote and sell targeted rural products? • Should you envisage an exporting component of the rural value chain support strategy, which are the most strategic trade channels available in your context? (i.e., e-commerce platforms, international fairs, and exhibitions).



Insights from the intervention	Suggested actions	Self-assessment questions
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MAIN RESOURCES

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transportation infrastructure and logistics allowing targeted Palestinian rural products to reach the local marketplace and the Spanish markets (export infrastructure). • Channels and tools used for the Consume Palestine Campaign: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Offline communication tools (i.e., leaflets, posters, brochures) used during the Consume Palestine Campaign. - Online communication channels: social media (i.e., Facebook) used during the Consume Palestine Campaign. - Radio and television channels used during the Consume Palestine Campaign. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For both national and international marketplace, make sure the needed transportation infrastructure and logistics is in place for your local rural products to reach local fairs and foreign markets. • Choose the most suited tools, channels, and strategies to effectively deliver the awareness campaign: i.e., online and offline communication tools, radio, and television spots. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For both national and international marketplace, is there a proper transportation infrastructure and logistics in place in your context allowing your local rural products to reach local fairs and foreign markets? • Which are the most suited and available tools, channels, and strategies to effectively deliver the awareness campaign in your territory? (i.e., online and offline communication tools, radio, and television spots)
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MAIN ACTIVITIES

The Consume Palestine strategy aims to uplift the rural value chains by working comprehensively both on empowering women to **strengthen the supply** of Palestinian rural products, as well as on public awareness to **boost their demand**. Moreover, **public-private collaboration** is key to implement the strategy. In this second stage, therefore, the following key actions were undertaken:

SUPPLY SIDE (soft intervention)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery of the capacity building programme for women cooperatives focusing on improving their skills and competences in business management, accounting, marketing, and branding (including better labelling and packaging strategies), sustainable, safe, and high-quality production (quality management systems), foreign quality standards, fair trade, and labour rights, among others. • Learning exchange visit to Valentia for targeted women to exchange with their Spanish peers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To strengthen the supply side of the rural value chain you intend to support, start by providing well-rounded and tailored capacity building programs for targeted rural producers. Enable them to achieve/strengthen their knowledge and skills in business management, marketing and branding, quality standards and quality management systems, sustainable production practices, labour rights, and fair trade, among others. • Exchange visits with peers in different cities, regions, or countries can also be enriching and learning experiences, as well as strategic networking and connection opportunities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which key skills and knowledge are your targeted local rural producers missing/ needing? Do they have the skills to properly manage their business activities and financial resources? Are they able to carry out an effective marketing strategy and to build a solid brand identity? Are they knowledgeable in quality standards and quality management systems? Are they aware of sustainable and safe production practices? Are they conscious of their labour rights and the concept of fair trade? Could they benefit from a tailored and well-rounded capacity building program? • Could they benefit from learning exchange visits with their peers in different cities, regions, or countries?
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Insights from the intervention

Suggested actions

Self-assessment questions

MAIN ACTIVITIES

SUPPLY SIDE (hard intervention)

- Registration and management of Palestinian Seal (“**Uroq Seal**”) and logo which identifies and promotes the good quality of rural “Palestinian made” products⁶.

- First-hand support to guide cooperatives in **formalising as legal entities** (including registering their own **label**, for some) and to ensure the **compliance** of their products with **legal quality requirements** and to attain **quality certifications**. Additionally, close support to cooperatives undergoing the demanding process of attaining formal registration of their own **labels** and **certifications** (i.e., the “Safer Product Certificate”, the organic certification, Fair Trade certification, the export certification, or any other specific certification released by the Palestinian Standards Institute - PSI).

- Provision of needed **quality equipment** for women cooperatives (i.e., agricultural inputs, handicraft tools, food processing and conservation machinery)

- **Strategic partnerships** with key trade actors (i.e., Fair-trade NGOs IDEAS) to support the local market placement of women’s rural products as well as their **export** to Spain.

- In addition to contributing to the promotion of the local rural products, registering a **local, regional, or national Seal** (and logo) may particularly benefit small cooperatives and producers that are less likely to register their own label due to generally burdensome and costly procedures and requirements.

- To access formal markets, economic activities and their products/services need to go through mandatory legal steps. However, for economic activities to obtain **formal registration**, and for their products/services to comply with **legal quality requirements**, or attain **quality certifications, complex and costly procedures** are generally required. These steps may constitute harsh barriers particularly for small-scale economic actors coming from rural or disadvantaged areas, or belonging to vulnerable social groups (i.e., women, people with disabilities, migrants). In these cases, the latter can greatly benefit from **first-hand support and close guidance** to navigate through bureaucracy practices.

- Should your budget allow, **provide quality equipment** to your targeted rural producers in order for them to increase or improve production/sales (i.e., agricultural inputs, handicraft tools, food processing and conservation machinery)

- When working with a comprehensive approach to support a rural value chain it is key to **foster collaborations and partnerships with key trade actors**, such as **private sector** organisations (i.e., fair-trade and export agents) and **CSOs** which may help your rural products to access the local and international marketplace.

- Could the products of your targeted local rural value chain benefit from using a **registered local, regional, or national Seal** (and logo) promoting their quality and image among consumers?

- Can the economic actors of your targeted rural value chain benefit from having **access to formal national or international markets**? If yes, is the process of **legalisation/formalisation accessible** to your rural economic actors, especially those belonging to vulnerable social groups? Could they benefit from a **first-hand support and close guidance** to navigate through bureaucracy practices to obtain formal registration? Which are the **legal quality requirements** for products and services to be sold in your national market? Are there **official quality certifications** guaranteeing quality standards? Could your rural value chains benefit from such certifications? How can you support them in attaining legal product quality compliance and quality certifications?

- Do your producers have the means to purchase **quality equipment** to increase or improve their production/sales? (i.e., agricultural inputs, handicraft tools, food processing and conservation machinery)

- Which **key partnerships/collaborations** can you foster between your supported value chain actors and **key trade actors**, such as key **private sector** organisations (i.e., fair-trade and export agents) and **CSOs**, which may help your rural products to access the local and international marketplace?



Insights from the intervention	Suggested actions	Self-assessment questions
MAIN ACTIVITIES		

DEMAND SIDE (soft intervention)

- (Since 2016) Delivery of the **Consume Palestine awareness campaigns** to enhance the image of Palestinian rural products as high-quality products and to raise consumers’ awareness of the importance of purchasing Palestinian rural products. Moreover, the Consume Palestine Campaigns closely linked with raising consumers’ awareness and solidarity with the **Palestinian cause**. The Campaigns, which were constantly branded with the Uroq Seal, targeted, among others, citizens, consumers, private companies, supermarkets and restaurants, institutional actors and organisations, main Palestinian interest groups, activists, Universities, as well as rural producers and cooperatives other than the ones supported by the projects. Key actions of the Campaigns throughout the years included the following:

- Targeted and first-hand **engagement of key actors and organisations** (i.e., governmental actors, key trade agents, activists, successful social media influencers, Universities, key Palestinian interest groups, rural producers).

- Production and dissemination of **video and audio footage** (i.e., interviews to rural women producers).

- **Media coverage** (TV and radio) through strategic partnerships with broadcasting companies (i.e., (Watan Agency, Raya FM, Ajyal, Al-Fajr Radio and Television).

- **Social Media** advertising and dissemination, supported using the hashtag #Consumelocal_ ConsumePalestine and consolidating key partnerships with successful Palestinian **influencers**.

- Deliver the **awareness campaigns** to enhance the image of your rural products as high-quality products and to raise consumers’ awareness of the importance of purchasing local rural products to uphold and protect rural producers and support the local rural economy. Promote an **effective and clear message** targeting the **right audience** and choosing **proper tools and channels** (audience-centred approach).

- Engage in the Campaign **key actors and organisations** (i.e., governmental actors, key trade agents, activists, successful social media influencers, Universities, key interest groups, rural producers).

- Produce and disseminate effective **video and audio footage** (i.e., interviews to rural producers).

- Plan for an effective **media coverage** (TV and radio) of the Campaign thorough **strategic partnerships** with broadcasting companies.

- If delivering a **social media campaign**, choose the **appropriate channels**, make good use of **effective hashtags**, and engage **successful local influencers**.

- Which **key features** should the Campaign have to be successful in your territory? Which **key messages** should the Campaign promote in your territory? Which is the **right target audience** for the Campaign in your context? Which are the **proper tools and channels** (both offline and online) for each targeted audience in your context?

- Which **key actors and organisations** should you actively engage to support the Campaign in your context? (i.e., governmental actors, key trade agents, activists, successful social media influencers, Universities, key interest groups, rural producers)

- What kind of **video and audio footage** could best promote your rural products and foster the community’s engagement to support your local economy?

- If planning a media coverage (i.e., TV and radio) which **key broadcasting companies** should you partner with in your territory?

- If planning a **social media campaign**, which effective hashtag would work? Are there successful **local influencers** you can engage to support your Campaign?



Insights from the intervention	Suggested actions	Self-assessment questions
MAIN ACTIVITIES		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distribution and dissemination of visibility materials and posters (i.e., pamphlets, posters). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distribution and dissemination of visibility materials and posters (i.e., pamphlets, posters) can be useful for certain targets and contexts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can visibility materials and posters (i.e., pamphlets, posters) be useful to reach out to your targets and contexts?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Setting of "marketing spots" to promote and sell supported "Consume Palestine" labelled products in strategic selling points, such as dedicated shelves in targeted supermarkets. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic "marketing spots", such as dedicated shelves in targeted supermarkets can be an effective strategy to promote and sell rural products. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can organising strategic "marketing spots", such as dedicated shelves in targeted supermarkets, be an effective strategy to promote and sell rural products in your context?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meetings and trainings to cooperatives, including producers other than the ones supported by the projects and wishing to join the Campaign, to improve the packaging and labelling of their products in preparation for the exhibitions and local fairs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When organising a promotional exhibition or local fairs to promote the rural products, plan for preliminary trainings to participating producers/cooperatives to improve the packaging and labelling of their products. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should you plan for promotional exhibition or local fairs to promote the rural products, are participating producers prepared to showcase their products with effective and quality packaging and labelling? If not, could they benefit from preliminary training and support in this regard?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisation of promotional exhibitions in targeted malls and shopping centres to promote and sell Palestinian rural products labelled with the Uroq Seal. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When organising a promotional exhibition or local fairs to market your rural products, choose the most appropriate and strategic timing (i.e., in Islamic countries, the beginning of Ramadan is a good timing as people shop in large quantities for that month). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should you plan for promotional exhibition or local fairs, which is the most strategic time of the year/month to do so, in your context?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisation of local fairs in different rural villages to promote and sell Palestinian rural products labelled with the Uroq Seal. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When organising local fairs to promote rural products, opting for local fairs in multiple areas may unlock more advantages compared to major shopping malls and supermarkets in city centres, where competition is stronger. Moreover, avoiding long distance transportation benefits the conservation of the quality of rural products and reduces transportation costs for rural producers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should you plan for local fairs in your territory, which are the most strategic areas to do so? Can they be easily reached by your supported local producers without incurring in relevant costs? Can their rural products "safely" reach the location in terms of conservation and quality?

Phase 3

SUSTAINABILITY: ENSURING SUSTAINABLE SUPPORT TO RURAL VALUE CHAINS

Insights from the intervention	Suggested actions	Self-assessment questions
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The Consume Palestine comprehensive strategy is well oriented towards **sustainability**. The following actions can be identified as **key measures** that were put in place to promote the **sustainability** of the support strategy for the targeted Palestinian rural value chains:

a) SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

- **Fostering women empowerment:** the Consume Palestine strategy **directly targeted rural women** with the precise aim to provide them with the opportunity, means and skills to contribute to their empowerment, hence increasing their **decision-making power** and uplifting their **social roles** within their families and communities. In this respect, the tailored capacity building program, the dedicated efforts to open dialogue with women’s families and communities, the collaboration with women’s associations, among others, are all **dedicated actions** of the strategy to work through (and away from) **unequal gender role distribution** and **gender inequality dynamics/culture**.

- Working to uplift a rural value chain gives you a unique opportunity to **target and empower (potentially) involved economic actors belonging to vulnerable social groups** (i.e., women, people with disabilities, people with disadvantaged backgrounds). To achieve positive long-term social inclusion effects, make sure you provide them the needed means and skills to contribute to their own empowerment, hence increasing their **decision-making power** and uplifting their **social roles** within their families and communities.

- How can you really **empower vulnerable economic actors** of the targeted rural value chains within the framework of the overall support strategy, in your context? How can you support their **social inclusion**? How can you increase their **decision-making power** and uplift their **social roles** within their families and communities?

b) ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY

- **Working on increasing skills & competences:** the well-rounded capacity building program allowed beneficiary Palestinian women to acquire skills, among others, in business and financial management, marketing, branding, sustainable, safe & high-quality production. Targeted women are expected to **retain acquired skills and competences** and to apply them in their future daily economic activities. Hence, these skills are likely to allow them to keep increasing their sales and incomes in the future. Moreover, they can transfer acquired knowledge and skills to their peers, therefore driving a future positive multiplier effect.

- **Capacity building programs** are good measures to ensure sustainability of value chain support strategies as beneficiaries are expected to **retain acquired skills and competences** and to apply them in their daily economic activities. Moreover, beneficiaries might transfer acquired knowledge and skills to their peers, driving a future positive multiplier effect.

- Which key **skills and knowledge** are your targeted local rural producers missing/need? Do they have the skills to properly manage their business activities and financial resources? Are they able to carry out an effective marketing strategy and to build a solid brand identity? Could they benefit from a **tailored and well-rounded capacity building program**? How can you support their ability to apply acquired skills and competences in their future daily economic activities?



Insights from the intervention	Suggested actions	Self-assessment questions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fostering strategic national and international business partnerships: beneficiary women's cooperatives were encouraged to formalise business partnerships with strategic actors (i.e., Al Reef private trade company and IDEAS trade NGO) to increase their market reach both nationally and internationally. Such business connections and agreements are most likely to endure with positive medium to long-term effects on their business. • Guaranteeing (and certifying) product quality: the dynamic support given to targeted women's cooperatives to raise the quality of their production processes, as well as to help them comply with national quality requirements and to attain quality certifications, is likely to ensure medium to long-term advantages for them as it improved the image and market positioning of their products as "quality products". 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encouraging beneficiary economic actors to formalise business partnerships with strategic national and international actors (i.e., trade companies) is a good strategy to increase their market reach both nationally and internationally. Such connections and agreements are most likely to endure with positive medium to long-term effects on their business. • Actively supporting rural economic actors to raise the quality of their production processes and helping them to comply with national quality requirements and quality certifications, is likely to ensure medium to long-term advantages for them as it improves the image and market positioning of their products as "quality products". 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which key partnerships/collaborations can you foster between your supported value chain actors and key trade actors, such as key private sector organisations (i.e., fair-trade and export agents, marketing firms) and CSOs, which may help your local rural products to access the local and international marketplace? • Could your targeted rural value chain benefit from a first-hand support to comply with national quality requirements and quality certifications? Could this improve the image and market positioning of their products as "quality products"?
<p>c) INSTITUTIONAL SUSTAINABILITY</p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting cooperatives' legal formalisation: the strategy accompanied targeted cooperatives through their formal registration process. In Palestine, the latter entails being formally recognized by the Cooperative Work Agency, therefore benefitting from its funds and services. Moreover, formalisation for Palestinian cooperatives means operating under an official and legal framework which can protect their rights and promote good procedures and cooperative principles (i.e., transparency, democracy, open membership, environmental protection). Finally, having more cooperatives leaving the informal economy and accessing the formal market benefits the whole cooperative sector. This, in fact, allows governments and public institutions to have a better understanding of the actors involved, which is a first useful step to improve the governing legal framework. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rural value chains often entail informal economic activities. Usually, rural economic actors face severe barriers and obstacles to access the formal economy. In context where formal registration can unlock advantages and benefits for rural economic actors, especially if vulnerable individuals or groups, accompanying them every step of the way can be a good support strategy. Finally, having more economic actors leaving the informal economy and accessing the formal market can benefit the whole cooperative sector, as it allows governments and public institutions to have a better understanding of the economic actors, which is a first useful step to improve the governing legal framework. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can your rural value chains benefit from having access to formal national or international markets? If yes, is the process of legalisation/formalisation accessible to your rural economic actors, especially if belonging to vulnerable social groups? Could the economic activities of your targeted rural value chain benefit from a first-hand support to go through the process of obtaining formal registration?






Insights from the intervention	Suggested actions	Self-assessment questions
<p>• Guaranteeing (and certifying) product quality: the dynamic support given to targeted women’s cooperatives to raise the quality of their production processes, as well as to help them comply with national quality requirements and to attain labels and certifications, is likely to ensure medium to long-term advantages for the community at large as it allows greater governmental control over the safety and quality of the local products/ services (especially concerning food and agriculture).</p> <p>• Advocacy efforts to encourage policy change and enabling legal frameworks: Starring from GVA-17 project, a parallel policy work has been carried out by project implementors to actively encourage an improvement of the Palestinian legal framework to become more enabling for cooperatives’ development. Against this backdrop, from September 2020 to June 2022, project implementors organised a series of high-level conferences and intensive meetings to discuss opportunities and challenges of the Palestinian cooperative sector and to foster key actors’ agreement on proper recommendations for corrective and incentive policy measures. The overall process engaged local and international partners and key institutions of the cooperative work sector which formed a Committee driving the work of the conference and delivering key conference outcomes and recommendations to engaged Palestinian decision-makers (i.e., the Ministry of Labour, the Cooperative Work Authority, the Ministry of Finance). Such recommendations were then formalised in a MoU which was concluded with the decision-makers at the end of the process. Potential policy effects of such agreement need time to unfold and cannot be assessed at the time of writing.</p> <p>d) ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY</p> <p>• Guaranteeing (and certifying) product quality: the dynamic support given to targeted women’s cooperatives to raise the quality and sustainability of their production processes, as well as to help them comply with national quality requirements and to attain labels and certifications, is likely to ensure medium to long-term advantages for the community at large ensuring more sustainable and environmental-friendly production and consumption practices and, ultimately, healthier communities and environments.</p>	<p>• Actively supporting rural economic actors to raise the quality of their production processes, helping them to comply with national quality requirements and to attain labels and certifications, is likely to ensure medium to long-term advantages for the community at large as it allows greater governmental control over the safety and quality of the local products/services (especially concerning food and agriculture).</p> <p>• Working with an integrated approach to uplift rural value chains by means of women economic empowerment enables a deep and well-rounded understanding of the barriers and challenges that targeted actors face, including those deriving from legislative gaps or which can be solved by an improvement of the legal framework. Through these types of interventions, the valuable information gathered on the ground with rural producers, coupled with established networks with key public and private actors working in the related sectors, gives you a relevant asset to be invested in policy work. Try to bring key actors at a common discussion table (i.e., a series of high-level conferences) in order to discuss opportunities and challenges of the sector you are targeting and to foster key actors’ agreement on proper and concrete recommendations for corrective and incentive policy measures.</p>	<p>• Could your communities benefit from greater governmental control over the safety and quality of the local products/services? Are there legal quality requirements for products and services sold in your national market? Are there official quality certifications guaranteeing quality standards? Could your rural value chains benefit from such certifications? How can you support them in attaining official quality standard and quality certifications?</p> <p>• Is the legal framework governing your country economic sectors enabling for your local rural value chains? Which key barriers and challenges are the rural economic actors in your context facing? Are some deriving from legislative gaps in your context? Can some be solved/improved by improving the legal framework? Which key advocacy initiatives could work in your context to encourage such policy change? How can you effectively engage policy-level actors for this purpose?</p>
<p>• Guaranteeing (and certifying) product quality: the dynamic support given to targeted women’s cooperatives to raise the quality and sustainability of their production processes, as well as to help them comply with national quality requirements and to attain labels and certifications, is likely to ensure medium to long-term advantages for the community at large ensuring more sustainable and environmental-friendly production and consumption practices and, ultimately, healthier communities and environments.</p>	<p>• Actively supporting rural economic actors to raise the quality and sustainability of their production processes, as well as to help them comply with national quality requirements and to attain labels and certifications, is likely to ensure medium to long-term advantages for the community at large. The latter can entail more sustainable and environmental-friendly production and consumption practices and, ultimately, healthier communities and environments.</p>	<p>• How can you actively support your rural economic actors to ensure healthier, more sustainable, and environmental-friendly production and consumption practices?</p>



5. Key contextual determinants for replicability

The following table aims to inform readers of the **main contextual determinants** that emerged during the analysis when seeking to identify key “ingredients” and conditions that should be in place in a given context for the replicability of the Consume Palestine value chain support strategy. The table should support readers in running a quick general screening of their own context to assess the preliminary feasibility of considering replicating the practice.






	Key determinants	Self-assessment questions
 <p>SOCIAL CONTEXT</p>	<p>Minimum social conditions and norms allowing the support strategy to reach out to and engage with rural communities and actors, especially if targeting individuals from vulnerable social groups (i.e., possibility to have women participate to capacity building programs and to engage in/own economic activities)</p>	<p>Are there minimum social conditions and norms in your rural contexts allowing a similar support strategy, especially involving individuals from vulnerable social groups? (i.e., do women in your rural communities have the possibility to participate in capacity building activities? Can they engage in economic activities? Is a preliminary awareness-raising component necessary to this respect?)</p>
 <p>POLITICAL FRAMEWORK</p>	<p>Political support from governmental actors, especially from local authorities, allowing to implement the support strategy.</p>	<p>Can you count on some degree of political support from governmental actors in your context, especially from local authorities, allowing to implement the support strategy?</p>
 <p>INSTITUTIONAL & LEGAL FRAMEWORK</p>	<p>Basic legal framework governing the marketplace, the economic actors, and their activities (i.e., labour rights, prices and access to the marketplace, production processes, environmental protection, market competition, product quality standards, transparency and consumers' protection, exports).</p>	<p>Is there a basic legal framework in your country governing the marketplace, economic actors, and their activities? (i.e., labour rights, prices and access to the marketplace, production processes, environmental protection, market competition, product quality standards, transparency and consumers' protection, exports).</p>
 <p>FINANCIAL RESOURCES</p>	<p>Financial resources coming from different international cooperation donors (Project funding).</p>	<p>Can you secure needed financial resources to carry out the overall support strategy and activities?</p>
 <p>HUMAN CAPITAL</p>	<p>Key expertise and skills to oversee and provide the support strategy and activities (i.e., to provide capacity building programs, to deliver an effective awareness raising campaign, to engage with key stakeholders). Moreover, when dealing with vulnerable groups, proper experience, competences, sensibility, and cultural intelligence are needed to effectively engage and empower targeted actors.</p>	<p>Can you count on a staff team/collaborators/ external service providers having appropriate expertise, capacities, and skills to oversee and provide the support strategy and activities (i.e., to provide capacity building programs, to deliver an effective awareness raising campaign, to engage with key stakeholders)? Do they have proper experience, competences, sensibility, and cultural intelligence to effectively engage and empower targeted vulnerable actors?</p>



ACTORS AND ORGANISATIONS

Key determinants	Self-assessment questions
<p>Targeted local rural (vulnerable) economic actors (i.e., consumer/producer cooperatives/ groups, farmers, artisans)</p>	<p>Who are the key economic actors of the value chain you intend to support? Can you reach out to them and engage them in the support strategy? Do they belong to vulnerable social groups?</p>
<p>Families and communities of the targeted local rural (vulnerable) economic actors</p>	<p>If targeting vulnerable economic actors, such as women coming from rural and conservative areas, can engaging their families and communities be a good strategy in your context to prevent any possible "resistance" toward the support activities?</p>
<p>Key ministry-level actors and institutions governing the targeted social-economic sectors, including key public institutions issuing national quality standards and quality certifications.</p>	<p>Which are the key ministry-level actors and institutions governing the targeted social-economic sectors in your country? Which are the key public institutions issuing national quality standards and quality certifications? Can you engage them in your support strategy?</p>
<p>Key local governmental authorities which can facilitate reaching out to and engaging targeted rural communities and vulnerable social groups.</p>	<p>Can you count on key local authorities' support and endorsement to reach out to key value chain actors, especially if coming from rural communities and conservative environments?</p>
<p>Key national and international private sector actors such as fair-trade and export agents, marketing firms, which can support rural actors' access to the local and international marketplace.</p>	<p>Which key national and international private sector actors could support your targeted rural actors' access to the local and international marketplace?</p>
<p>Key national and international civil society organisations, such as NGOs, labour unions, producers/consumers' associations, which can facilitate reaching out to and engaging rural actors in the support activities, leverage needed resources and networks, and support their access to the local and international marketplace.</p>	<p>Which key national and international civil society organisations can facilitate reaching out to and engaging your targeted rural actors in the support activities? Can they help you leverage needed resources and networks? Can they support rural actors' access to the local and international marketplace?</p>
<p>Palestinian and Spanish consumers/clients targeted by the Consume Palestine awareness campaign and purchasing supported rural products.</p>	<p>Who are the potential consumers/clients of the supported rural products in your territory and/or abroad?</p>
<p>Project staff providing and overseeing the overall support strategy.</p>	<p>Can you count on competent, hands-on, and skilled staff team that can oversee and provide the overall support strategy and activities in your territory?</p>

Key determinants	Self-assessment questions
 <p>NETWORKS</p> <p>Strategic networks with key actors (i.e., CSOs, governmental and private sector actors, Universities) which, in turn, can leverage needed resources for the support strategy (i.e., premises for the capacity building programs, university laboratories for the products' quality analysis, governmental approvals/authorisations, logistics and moral support to involve targeted women, partnerships with private or NGO national and international trade organisations).</p>	<p>Can you leverage strategic networks with key actors (i.e., CSOs, governmental and private actors, Universities) which, in turn, can leverage needed resources for the support strategy? (i.e., premises for the capacity building programs, university laboratories for the products' quality analysis, governmental approvals/authorisations, logistics and moral support to involve targeted women, partnerships national and international trade organisations).</p>
 <p>BASIC HARD INFRASTRUCTURES</p> <p>All key economic hard infrastructures needed by local rural economic actors to be operative, hence, to produce, purchase and exchange resources, products, and services (i.e., local fairs and stores, supermarkets, market exhibitions, transportation and export infrastructure, power grid, water supply network).</p>	<p>Can local rural economic actors in your context count on existing and functioning basic economic hard infrastructures to be operative, hence, to produce, purchase and exchange resources, products, and services? (i.e., power grid, water supply network, local fairs and stores, supermarkets, market exhibitions, transportation and export infrastructure allowing your local rural products to be transported locally/to reach foreign markets).</p>
 <p>SOFT INFRASTRUCTURES (SERVICES)</p> <p>All services needed by the rural economic actors to be operative in their market: i.e., commercial services, transport and export logistics, legal and technical support, research and development, advertising.</p>	<p>Which are the key services your targeted rural economic actors need to be operative? (i.e., commercial services, transport and export logistics, legal and technical support, research and development, advertising). Are they available in your context?</p>



6. Drawbacks and risks

DRAWBACKS AND RISKS

Main risks which may arise when replicating the intervention

COPING STRATEGIES

Good strategies that could be implemented in order to cope with and/or prevent these risks

DEALING WITH LEGAL COMPLIANCE AND COMPLEX BUREAUCRACY:

•The Consume Palestine strategy entails a first-hand support for rural producers to help them **access the formal market**. The project staff accompanied rural producers through the **complex formalisation process** to register their economic activities as legal entities (cooperatives), and, for some, to also register their own labels. This also entailed making sure the rural products were compliant with in force **quality requirements and standards**, hence undergoing long and numerous quality analysis and conformity tests to attain legal authorisations and quality certificates. Additionally, the overall and demanding process to register the **Uroq seal** through the Ministry of National Economy took more than 11 months to complete.

COLLABORATE WITH KEY GOVERNAMENTAL ACTORS:

The Consume Palestine strategy concretely supports the shift of rural value chains from an undervalued and informal economic sector to **competitive formal national and international markets**. This necessarily entails **dealing and complying with legal frameworks** which is often an unsurpassable barrier for most rural producers lacking the knowledge, the means, and the support to get by complex and bureaucratic legal procedures and requirements. The Consume Palestine strategy successfully managed to overcome such “disabling” legal frameworks mainly through **strategic and close collaboration with governmental actors**. Since the very first planning phase of the strategy, the project staff reached out to key governmental ministry-level actors who provided **key technical advice and information** to better understand the **cooperative legal framework**, the **legal requirements and regulations** concerning cooperative products’ quality and hygiene standards as well as food seals and certifications procedures. Later, the project staff **worked closely with key actors**, i.e., the Palestinian Standards Institute (PSI) and local universities, to actively support the quality screening and certification process of the supported rural products.

SEAL REGISTRATION

The Consume Palestine strategy strived to obtain the **legal registration of the Uroq seal** which can be easily used by rural producers (provided they comply with basic quality and marketing requirements by PARC), especially those lacking the means to register their own label, to uplift their image and market placement.

ADVOCATE FOR POLICY CHANGE:

Finally, the Consume Palestine strategy also entails a **policy advocacy component** (-> see Section 4, Phase 3- Institutional sustainability) to actively push for a policy change in favour of more enabling legal frameworks for the cooperative sector and rural economic actors.





DRAWBACKS AND RISKS

Main risks which may arise when replicating the intervention

COPING STRATEGIES

Good strategies that could be implemented in order to cope with and/or prevent these risks

EXPORT BARRIERS FOR PALESTINIAN RURAL PRODUCTS:

The Consume Palestine strategy had to face considerable obstacles to allow the export of supported rural products to the Spanish marketplace. In addition to the harsh challenges caused by the Covid-19 pandemic context, this was largely due to the **unstable and challenging political Palestinian context**, especially in the targeted critical areas of Gaza and West Bank. Palestinian products can be exported only through Israeli ports and this entail undergoing numerous checks and time-consuming procedures. The **logistical difficulties** in allowing rural products out of these areas are reflected in extra transportation costs which raise the prices of the rural goods, therefore hindering their competitive advantage. Additionally, exporting to the Spanish market requires numerous checks in terms of quality assurance and safety, needed certifications, among others, and some specific tests could not be carried out in any Palestinian laboratory.

CHALLENGING PATRIARCHAL SOCIAL NORMS:

Consume Palestine support strategy primarily targeted **women from rural communities**. This entailed some challenges when trying to engage beneficiary women in the activities (i.e., capacity building program sessions) due to **rooted patriarchal social norms** in force within the women's families and rural communities. The latter, as an example, were reluctant to "allow" beneficiary women to leave their households to attend meetings with other male participants. Unequal gender role distribution, in fact, undermined the communities' understanding of the opportunity offered by the Consume Palestine support strategy. As entrenched conservative social norms relegate women's role exclusively as caregivers within their household, the project staff had to deploy considerable efforts to make targeted rural communities understand the broader positive returns and social impact of promoting women's economic empowerment and supporting them in having a key role within rural value chains.

CHANGE-AVERSE CONSERVATIVE RURAL MINDESET:

The Consume Palestine strategy first-hand support to improve the quality of the rural production process faced considerable **resistance** from targeted actors. The latter, in fact, were reluctant to change their **consolidated and rooted agricultural production techniques and processes**, such as the heavy use of chemicals. It was challenging for the project teams to convince beneficiaries to **change such habits and mindset** in favour of a safer and higher-quality agricultural production and understanding of the wider and longer-term advantages. In few cases, in fact, some women refused to abandon the use of chemicals in their agricultural production.

OVERCOMING EXPORT BARRIERS THROUGH STRATEGIC INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS:

The Consume Palestine strategy responded to logistical exporting barriers through **successful partnerships** with exporting companies, such as the Spanish fair trade NGO IDEAS - Iniciativas de Economía Alternativa y Solidaria- which allowed the export of Palestinian rural products and their placement in the Spanish markets, fair trade exhibitions, and e-commerce platform. Moreover, these partnerships were also key to overcome specific exporting challenges such as the required quality tests which did not find equipped laboratories in Palestine. In this case, some product samples were sent to Italian laboratories for quality testing.

WORKING AROUND PATRIARCHAL SOCIAL NORMS:

Dealing with rural communities where **patriarchal social norms** are widely rooted and collectively endured requires **dedicated and context-sensitive planning and activities**. Firstly, it is important to thoroughly understand the underlying gender social norms and gender role distribution within the targeted community and households. Then, it is key to plan the support activities (i.e., capacity building program) accordingly, therefore considering all existing barriers faced by beneficiaries and working around any possible cultural resistance, for example: hiring female trainers, having separate meetings for male and female participants, envisaging transportation services for women to avoid unsafe commuting to the training venue. Extra efforts should be dedicated to **raise the rural communities' awareness** of the **positive social and economic** impact potential of **empowering women** and supporting them having a **key role** within the rural value chains.

PATIENT AND DEDICATED AWARENESS-RAISING EFFORTS TO OVERCOME CONSERVATIVE RURAL MINDESET:

Intervening to modify **traditional production processes** of rural value chains often entails confronting **consolidated mindset** which is **hard to change**. This holds particularly true when promoting healthier, environmental-friendly, and higher-quality production processes as returns are not immediately visible in the short run, nor exclusive for producers. It takes **time and dedicated efforts to make rural communities understand the wider and longer-term advantages** of today's changes, and that returns for the overall community entail advantages for the entire rural value chain and, ultimately, for producers themselves. In this respect, strategies such as the Consume Palestine, need **patience** and continuous and dedicated **awareness-raising actions** to allow the mindset to change.



7.

Final remarks

The **SSE** has long demonstrated its ability to promote more **sustainable and inclusive development** by creating **quality jobs** that generate **positive social and environmental impacts**. **Strengthening rural value chains** with a **comprehensive and integrated approach** unlocks **remarkably positive social, economic and environmental returns** for the vulnerable rural economic actors, in the first place, but also for their families and close rural communities, as well as for the local economy as a whole.

Through the Consume Palestine strategy, targeted **vulnerable rural economic actors** which are supported to increase their skills, resources and opportunities can produce and sell more and better and can compete more equitably in the markets. The resulting positive returns go beyond becoming capable to raise their sales and income (economic gain), but also entails a **transformative process** through which these actors also acquire the **agency to participate in, contribute to, and benefit from the economic gains**, also referred to **economic empowerment**. The latter implies moving from limited power, voice, and choice to **increased decision-making power** and **uplifting within more equitable distribution of social roles** in their families and communities.

Moreover, the Consume Palestine strategy targets **consumers** to raise their awareness of the importance of **purchasing local products** to support and protect rural producers, therefore favouring **greater solidarity** and, ultimately, **social inclusion**. Last but not least, by promoting the shift towards **higher quality** and **environmental-**

friendly rural production practices, the strategy also contributes to **healthier communities and environment**.

Finally, in coherence with the SSE principles, the Consume Palestine strategy proves the importance of **close public-private collaboration** for the benefit of the whole community.

SSE practitioners, policymakers and local administrations searching for ways to contribute to the sustainable and inclusive development of their territories may consider replicating the Consume Palestine strategy provided that key determinants are in place and the process is well adapted to their specific context.



8. Useful Contacts

Agricultural Development Association (PARC)

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