



# The well-known unknown: a special travel destination with unique natural products



## TRADE PARTNERSHIP TUNISIA AND THE EU

- + The EU is Tunisia's **largest trading partner** – **57.9 percent** of trade is between Tunisia and the EU (2020)
- + **70.9 percent** of Tunisian exports are traded with **European partners** (2020)
- + 48.3 percent of **Tunisian imports** are **from the EU** (2020)
- + **France, Italy** and **Germany** are Tunisia's largest trade partners
- + **Tourist arrivals to Tunisia** from Europe in 2019: **2.7 million** (29 % of all arrivals)

Tunisia is an intriguing travel destination located in close proximity to the EU offering much more than just classic beach holidays. There are many things to discover inside the country's hinterland, far from mass tourism. Moreover, small and medium-sized enterprises produce a wide range of natural ingredients for food and cosmetics. Tunisia has gone to great lengths to satisfy the requirements of the European market with quality standards and certifications – both in the field of sustainable tourism and natural ingredients. Today the European Union is Tunisia's largest trade partner.

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## IPD PRODUKTGRUPPEN

### + Natural ingredients for food

(e. g. dates, dried tomatoes, dried herbs, olive oil, various seed oils)

### + Natural ingredients for cosmetics (e. g. aesthetic oils, high-quality fatty oils, spirulina, saffron)

### + Sustainable tourism

(cultural and adventure travel, e. g. bird-watching or nature tours, family travel with accommodation in ecological hotels, adventure trips into the Tunisian Sahara, e. g. desert safaris and camel trekking)



## IPD COMMITMENT IN TUNISIA

For the German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and German development cooperation, Tunisia is one of the main focuses. Following the Arab Spring of 2011, Tunisia is the northern African country upon which all political hopes are pinned. Positive economic development and sustainable trade relations could stabilise the region.

Import Promotion Desk (IPD) has been active in Tunisia since 2015 – firstly, in the sector of natural ingredients, and since 2018 also in the tourism sector. Action is concentrated on rural regions and in the tourism sector too IPD works with inland providers, far removed from mass tourism. The country's hinterland is home to a third of the Tunisian population, there are few jobs and little economic development and the agriculture industry is dominated by small and micro family-based enterprises.

The marketing of high-quality natural produce and sustainable tourism products has great potential for fighting poverty – both in terms of job creation and increasing income in rural areas. Sustainable tourism also contributes to the preservation of natural resources. It is IPD's goal to put agricultural and tourism enterprises in direct contact with European importers and travel providers, thus eliminating the need for intermediaries and enabling realisation of the full value creation potential.

## CHALLENGES: INCREASING AWARENESS AND ESTABLISHING CONTACTS

Tunisia is known above all for beach holidays. Individual sustainable tourism products on the other hand do not have a high enough profile and in many cases, have a lack of government support. This has become abundantly clear during the current covid-19 pandemic. Travel warnings and quarantine regulations have resulted in an almost total suspension of international tourism in Tunisia – and small and medium-sized travel companies can hardly count on governmental support.

IPD has continued to support its partner enterprises with advice during the pandemic, informing them of possible sources of aid and above all, preparing them to restart after the pandemic. Our broad-based training programme shows enterprises ways to improve their marketing and develop products while also complying with all the required hygiene measures.

There is little public funding or bank loan support in Tunisia, not even in the agricultural sector to invest in machines, certifications or modern processing and packaging equipment. The IPD experts are available to the enterprises to advice on strategic planning, but above all for the "last mile", i.e. contact to European traders and tour operators. IPD establishes valuable business contacts between the enterprises and potential customers, e.g. at international trade shows.





**Afef Ben Amara**  
Director Promotion, APIA

»Together with IPD we have now organised a number of exhibition stand presentations. We have seen a steady increase in our members' interest in participating in exhibition stand presentations, as well as the interest of visitors in the range of offers from Tunisia.«



#### **OPPORTUNITIES: GEOGRAPHICAL PROXIMITY AND CERTIFIED QUALITY**

Tunisia's tourism is attracting the interest of travel providers in Europe, and importers of natural ingredients are also discovering Tunisia to be a relevant and exciting purchase market. Travel offers include cultural, nature and adventure tours, exploring routes little used up to now. At the same time Tunisia is reachable from Europe in just a few hours travel, which is a plus for the North African travel destination in regards to the rising awareness of emissions. In terms of natural ingredients from prickly pear products, spirulina and dried herbs to cold-pressed seed oils, many Tunisian enterprises fulfil EU requirements. They produce specialties, like prickly pear seed oil, that meet the valid quality standards and offer an ever growing range of organic products. The proximity to the European market is both an advantage and a challenge in equal measures. On the one hand, high-quality products, such as Tunisian olive oil, find it difficult to gain market access, as they have to compete with European rivals, on the other hand the unique qualities and geographical proximity offer advantages in terms of logistics and costs.

#### **SUPPORT FOR PARTNER COMPANIES: PREPARATION FOR THE EUROPEAN MARKET**

The IPD experts work closely with local enterprises. In the tourism sector the products and processes of IPD partner countries are improved through training and adapted to European requirements. During the covid-19 pandemic, IPD has continued its commitment and worked together with its partner enterprises on their external representation, gave trainings on digital marketing and developed a common strategy for market access to Europe. In addition, IPD puts great emphasis on preparing the companies for professional representation at trade exhibitions and in the context of virtual B2B events. These coaching measures are also a fixed component of the capacity building for producers of natural ingredients, which includes information on the EU market, quality standards, EU regulations and certifications, as well as training on topics relevant to market access, such as marketing and corporate social responsibility.

#### **OVERVIEW: ACTIVITIES OF IPD**

- + Regular **fact finding missions** in Tunisia for the selection and evaluation of small and medium-sized enterprises
- + Provision of **market information** and product fact sheets on various products
- + **Training** on topics relevant to market access (e.g. USP, product development, export market strategy, digital marketing, sustainable tourism, professional tour operations, corporate social responsibility [CSR])
- + **B2B matchmaking activities** at European trade exhibitions, e.g. Biofach since 2016, Food Ingredients since 2015, ITB Berlin since 2019.
- + Organisation of **virtual B2B events** for networking with suitable importers / travel providers in Europe
- + **Workshops** and **coachings** for exporters and partner firms on representation at trade exhibitions, **sales training, market orientation missions** or FAM trips and roadshows, development of business contacts



#### IPD COMMITMENT IN FIGURES

+ Number of IPD companies in Tunisia:	<b>26</b>
+ Number of trainings:	<b>37</b>
+ Number of business deals:	<b>35</b>
+ Export turnover to Europe	<b>3.3 million €</b>

#### COLLABORATION WITH BSOs: SUSTAINABLE STRUCTURES FOR PROMOTING EXPORTS AND TOURISM

In the tourism sector, IPD works closely with the Tunisian "Fédération Tourisme Authentique Destination Dahar" (FTADD). Together with the FTADD the IPD experts have provided capacity building measures on various topics, such as market information, product development and sustainable tourism, in addition to developing a sustainable charter for the Dahar region. From now on, FTADD offers its members training in the field of sustainable tourism and thus raise the profile of the destination of Djebel-Dahar.

Together with the "Agence de Promotion des Investissements Agricoles" (APIA) and the "Centre de Promotion des Exportations de la Tunisie" (CEPEX), IPD is arranging the participation of Tunisian enterprises in specialist trade fairs. In the course of the collaboration, the number of participating companies has increased, the exhibition stands have become ever larger and the presentations more professional. IPD cooperates closely with these national business support organisations (BSO) to establish sustainable structures for promoting exports from Tunisia.



**Mohamed Hédi Kallali**  
Managing Director  
FTADD

»This year we were included in the Green Destinations Sustainable Top 100. This makes us proud and shows that sustainability is valued in tourism. We are happy to have IPD as a partner who promotes sustainable destinations and specifically supports Tunisian tourism professionals with matchmaking«

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