



ENHANCING DATE PALM CULTIVATION AND DATE PRODUCTION IN NAMIBIA

The Government of Namibia is seeking to increase and diversify crop production in order to generate income and increase food security in the country, among other things. In this context, the Government and private sector date growers have recognized the potential of date production in the country, and are working on the establishment of date palm plantations and the promotion of a date production industry. In order to implement these programmes successfully, it was necessary to address certain issues, such as a shortage of high-quality date cultivars, a lack of rapid techniques and modern facilities to propagate date palm, and a poor technical base.



WHAT DID THE PROJECT DO?

Farmers and technicians' knowledge and skills were greatly improved through the training courses and study tours that were organized. A date palm gene bank consisting of selected varieties was established, to ensure the availability of basic plant material, and to evaluate adaptability and production under Namibian conditions. A settlement project for landless farmers, with date palms as one of the crops, was initiated; and high quality date palm varieties were introduced into household gardens. Before the project was implemented, only seedling date palms with insignificant production potential were present in the country. As a result of the project, more than 75 000 date palms of selected varieties were planted, and a significant volume of high-quality date fruit is now produced annually in Namibia.

IMPACT

The project interventions contributed significantly to increasing food security, creating employment, and generating income; as well as to preventing/reversing desertification. In addition, rural health and nutrition were improved.

KEY FACTS

Contribution

USD3 738 895

Duration

January 1998 – December 2016

Resource Partners

Government of Namibia

Partners

Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Rural Development / Namibia Development Corporation

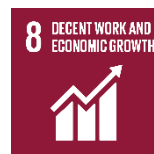
Beneficiaries

Settlers; small-scale and communal farmers; government and Namibia Development Corporation technical staff; private sector date growers; national research and development institutions; scientists and technicians



ACTIVITIES

- Establishment of date production units initiated to investigate date palm adaptation, production and viability, and serve as a nucleus for further development.
- Four commercial date palm plantations set up, producing different varieties of dates.
- Practical on-farm research conducted to clarify issues that could affect date palm production in the country.
- Support provided to private date farmers through formal training activities and technical advice, to ensure long-term sustainability.
- Approximately 650 date palms distributed for planting in household gardens, for which the owners received assistance and guidance.
- Processing of date fruit not suitable for marketing as fresh fruit was investigated, and a distillery was established, within a public-private partnership framework, for the production of fine spirits, brandy and gin.



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



Project Code
UTF/NAM/004/NAM

Project Title
Date Production Support Programme.
Second Phase: Strengthening of the Namibian Date Palm knowledge base and introduction of Date Palm Cultivation into Communal Farming and Settlement Project

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