



Final Report
Achieving Land Degradation Neutrality Targets through
Restoration and Sustainable Management of Degraded Land in
Northern Jordan (ALDNT)
Assessment of the Olives Value Chain in Northern Governorates.

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Acronyms

LDN	Land Degradation Neutrality
AIQGO	Academic Institution and Quasi-Governmental Organization
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
IOC	International Olive Council
JOOWN	Jordanian Olive Oil Women's Network
ICARDA	International Center for Agricultural
MOA	Ministry of Agriculture
JOPEA	Producers Exporters Association
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
ToR	Terms of Reference
UNDP	The United Nations Development Program
ICARDA	International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas
EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
JOPEA	Jordan Olive Producers Exporters Association
GEF	Global Environment Facility
RSS	Royal Scientific Society
ILO	International Labour Organization
NCARE	National Center for Agricultural Research
JEDCO	Jordan Enterprise Development Corporation
JFDA	Jordan Food & Drug Administration

1.1. Executive Summary

The project “Achieving Land Degradation Neutrality Targets through Restoration and Sustainable Management of Degraded Land in Northern Jordan (ALDNT)” focuses on leveraging the olive value chain to support land restoration and sustainable resource use in the governorates of Irbid, Ajloun, and Al-Mafraq. These areas are experiencing increasing land degradation due to unsustainable agricultural practices, deforestation, and water scarcity. Since olives are the dominant crop and hold significant cultural and economic importance, the sector presents a unique opportunity to integrate sustainable land management with rural development.

The assessment revealed that, while the olive sector has strong potential, it faces challenges such as low productivity, aging trees, fragmented value chains, and limited market access. By promoting improved cultivation techniques, soil and water conservation, and enhanced value chain linkages including processing and marketing land health can be restored while improving livelihoods.

The report recommends integrated approaches that combine technical support, policy alignment, and community engagement to restore degraded land, increase the resilience of local ecosystems, and contribute to Jordan’s Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) targets.

1.2. الملخص

يركّز مشروع "تحقيق أهداف الحياد في تدهور الأراضي من خلال استعادة الأراضي المتدهورة والإدارة المستدامة لها في شمال الأردن (ALDNT) على الاستفادة من سلسلة قيمة الزيتون لدعم جهود استعادة الأراضي والاستخدام المستدام للموارد في محافظات إربد وعجلون والمفرق. تعاني هذه المناطق من تدهور متزايد في الأراضي نتيجة للممارسات الزراعية غير المستدامة، وإزالة الغابات، وشح المياه. ونظرًا لأن الزيتون يُعد المحصول السائد وله أهمية ثقافية واقتصادية كبيرة، فإن هذا القطاع يوفر فرصة لدمج إدارة الأراضي المستدامة مع التنمية الريفية. وقد أظهرت الدراسة أن قطاع الزيتون يمتلك إمكانات قوية، لكنه يعاني من ضعف الإنتاجية، وشيخوخة الأشجار، وتجزئة سلاسل القيمة، وضعف الوصول إلى الأسواق. ومن خلال تعزيز تقنيات الزراعة المحسنة، والحفاظ على التربة والمياه، وتعزيز الروابط في سلسلة القيمة – بما في ذلك التصنيع والتسويق – يمكن استعادة صحة الأراضي وتحسين سبل عيش المجتمعات المحلية. ويوصي التقرير باتباع نهج متكاملة تجمع بين الدعم الفني، ومواءمة السياسات، ومشاركة المجتمعات المحلية من أجل استعادة الأراضي المتدهورة، وزيادة قدرة النظم البيئية على الصمود، والمساهمة في تحقيق أهداف الأردن المتعلقة بالحياد في تدهور الأراضي.

1.3. Chapter one: Introduction

This section presents a comprehensive analysis of the olive value chain, focusing on identifying key actors, processes, market dynamics, and bottlenecks across all stages; from input supply to final product marketing. The analysis directly supports the project's objectives of strengthening farmer capacities, enhancing market access, and promoting sustainable economic opportunities through the circular economy. By improving efficiency and value addition within the olive s cultivate sector, the project aims to contribute to Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) by encouraging sustainable land use practices, reducing pressure on natural resources, and enhancing the resilience of Agro-ecosystems in targeted areas.

1.4. Overview of olive sector in Jordan

Recognizing the need for specialized knowledge, the University of Jordan launched a Master's program in "Olive Production and Processing" in 2015. This program, developed under an EU-funded project, aims to prepare specialists in olive agriculture and processing. It covers areas such as fertilization, pest management, oil extraction, and sensory evaluation of olive oil. The program is a collaborative effort between the Department of Nutrition and Food Technology and the Department of Horticulture and Crop Science at the University of Jordan, with support from European universities specializing in olive production and processing.

Additionally, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture, have organized training sessions on best practices in olive oil production. These sessions target millers, agro-engineers, and other stakeholders, focusing on aspects such as harvesting, milling, storage, and quality control to produce extra virgin olive oil.

The International Olive Council (IOC) has supported the establishment of the Jordanian Olive Oil Women's Network (JOOWN). This initiative aims to professionalize the production, dissemination, education, and teaching practices related to extra virgin olive oil, with a focus on integrating women into the olive oil industry. The network seeks to improve quality, enhance marketing strategies, and increase per capita consumption of olive oil. (International Olive Council) .

Despite advancements, the sector faces challenges such as fragmentation, labor shortages, and limited coordination between growers and processors. A study in Irbid, Ajloun, Al Mafraq Governorate highlighted issues like insufficient knowledge about market quality criteria, improper harvesting and storage practices, and a lack of effective coordination between olive growers and oil mills.

However, there are opportunities for growth. The development of a united brand identity for Jordanian olive oil aims to promote the sector's products in international markets, emphasizing quality and sustainability.

The International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA) has conducted studies to understand the livelihoods of communities involved in olive production. These studies aim to identify market segments and develop suitable marketing strategies to enhance community engagement and sector development.

Jordan boasts a rich olive heritage, with approximately 20 million olive trees covering around 130,000 hectares, constituting 36% of the nation's arable land. Olives occupy 72% of the total fruit tree area, and the sector provides employment to about 80,000 households. The country produces an average of 23,400 tons of olive oil annually, with a significant portion exported to international markets. ("FAO study explores ways to develop oil mills for Jordan's 20m olive trees Jordan Times", "FAO/EBRD in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture conduct trainings on best practices on olive oil milling and olive oil quality) United Nations in Jordan").

The Ministry of Agriculture MOA plays a central role in regulating and supporting the olive sector. It collaborates with various stakeholders, including the Olive Oil Producers Syndicate and the Jordanian Farmers Association, to implement policies aimed at enhancing production quality and market access.

Jordan has ratified the International Agreement on Olive Oil and Table Olives, 2015, under the International Olive Council (IOC), aligning its standards with international norms.

As part of efforts to develop the olive oil sector, the MOA, in collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), organized a series of training workshops aimed at promoting sustainable agricultural practices and improving production quality. These sessions provided farmers, mill operators, and agro-engineers with training on the latest techniques in production, milling, and quality control, contributing to enhanced sector efficiency and increased product competitiveness in the market. The Jordan Olive Producers Exporters Association (JOPEA), with support from Mercy Corps' Horticulture Project, has launched a branding initiative for "Ateek," a premium olive oil sourced from ancient trees. This initiative aims to position Jordanian olive oil as a high-quality product in international markets.

A national marketing campaign, initiated by the MOA in collaboration with the Olive Oil Producers Syndicate and the Jordanian Farmers Association, aims to raise consumer awareness about the benefits of purchasing virgin olive oil from trusted sources.

Collected data reveals a significant gender disparity within the olive value chain, with only a small number, identifying as female. This indicates a significant gender disparity within the sample, with males being the dominant gender group.

Despite the limited representation, the data suggests that women do have an active role in the olive value chain, according to 72% of respondents. This finding indicates that most respondents perceive women as actively involved in the various stages of the olive value chain through their work and contributions.

When asked about the specific roles women play in the olive value chain, the data reveals that the most commonly mentioned role is olive harvesting, with 77% of respondents acknowledging this involvement. This suggests that women are primarily engaged in the critical task of harvesting olives, which is an essential and labor-intensive activity within the value chain. Other roles mentioned include packaging (9%), sifting olive seeds (5%), manufacturing of olive products such as olive pickles and soap (4%), tree pruning (3%), and clearing the land of weeds (2%).

1.5. The ALDNT project

Achieving Land Degradation Neutrality Targets Through Restoration and Sustainable Management of Degraded Land in Northern Jordan (LDN) Project is a four-year project with estimated financing of US\$ 3.86 million, all are from the Global Environment Facility (GEF), under the supervision of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), and implemented by the Royal Scientific Society (RSS) through OPIM agreement.

The overall goal of the project is to support achieving land degradation neutrality (LDN) targets in Jordan during the project period. Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) represents a paradigm shift in land management policies and practices. It is a unique approach that counterbalances the expected loss of productive land with measures to avoid or reduce that degradation and the recovery of degraded areas. It places the measures to conserve, sustainably manage, and restore land in the context of land use planning. It has strategic implications to how the country plans and manages its land resources. To date, 120 countries have committed to achieve LDN by 2030. LDN foundational principles are the necessary minimum requirements for successful implementation and attainment of the LDN. UNCCD COP calls upon the Parties to observe these principles.

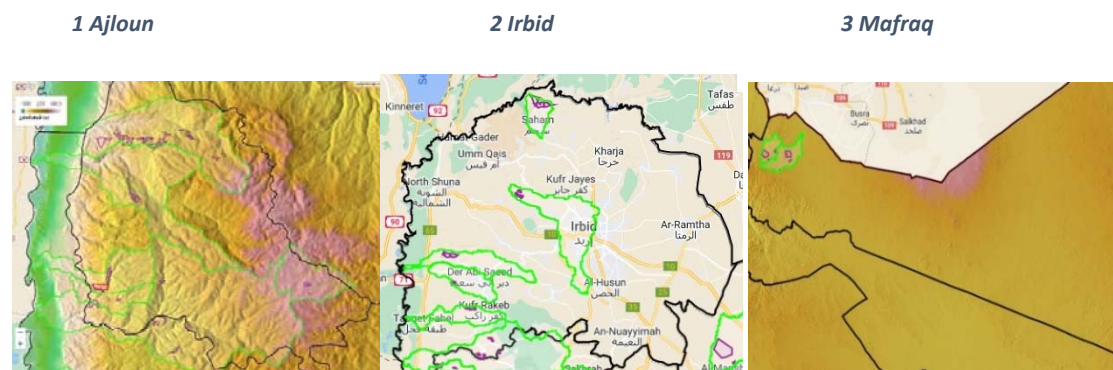
1.6. Project Intervention Areas (governorates and landscapes)

The main objective of this project was to conduct a comprehensive assessment of the olive value chain (OVC). The assessment aimed to identify market access mechanisms, as well as the technical and business development capacities required to strengthen the sector.

It also focused on designing and preparing intervention solutions that could have the greatest positive impact on livelihoods and income generation. Based on the findings, the assessment recommended relevant capacity-building training topics to support the growth and sustainability of the olive value chain.

As a cross-cutting concern, the assessment included the identification of activities that could contribute to the economic empowerment of local women and women-led NGOs.

The consultant worked in the project targeted governorates of - Irbid (Saham, Dair Abi Saeed, Kufr Asad, Jenin Es-Saf, Dhouqra, Al-Kourah), Ajloun (Kufranjah, Rajeb), and Mafraq (Hosha, Al Mansurah), with main focus on the selected sites in these governorates as shown in blew maps.



1.7. Study objectives:

The methodology focused on identifying the most significant products within the circular economy of olives such as olive oil, olive pomace, olive pits, and other by-products or waste materials that can be reused or processed. It also involved analyzing market access mechanisms and examining the challenges, opportunities, strengths, weaknesses, and potential solutions along the value chain. It aimed to enhance knowledge among stakeholders and promote knowledge exchange through the analysis of existing case studies and the development of new ones relevant to the olive value chain and circular economy practices. The ultimate goal was to build the capacity of farmers by improving their understanding of the value chain mechanism, market studies, and competition analysis. It also aimed to support the application of effective marketing strategies aligned with consumer needs and preferences, specifically by identifying the elements of the marketing mix (4 Ps: Product, Price, Place, Promotion).

Additionally, the primary objectives of the value chain analysis are to identify opportunities to maximize benefits for stakeholders, create added value, and ensure financial and business sustainability. The methodology will cover all stages of the product marketing process pre-production, production, and post-production., and post-production. It includes field visits to beneficiaries, interviews with key individuals, discussions with commercial market suppliers and retailers, and a review of national and global initiatives within small collaborative projects. These efforts aim to build on existing knowledge and experience to drive sustainable development in the olive sector, with a particular focus on promoting circular economy principles such as minimizing waste, maximizing the use of by-products, and enhancing resource efficiency throughout the value chain.

Chapter Two: Methodology and Data Collection

A comprehensive desk review of secondary data was conducted, including relevant projects and published documents, to enhance the current understanding of the studied governorates. This review also included an analysis of raw data and information. Existing books, literature, and articles both published and unpublished were examined thoroughly. Additional sources, such as scientific and non-scientific reports and information available on official websites, were also reviewed.

In parallel, purposive sampling was employed in the collection of primary data to ensure the inclusion of key informants and stakeholders with relevant knowledge and experience in the targeted areas. This approach aimed to complement the desk review and provide a more comprehensive and context-specific understanding of the situation in the selected governorates.

2.1. Desktop Review

A desk review of secondary data such as past projects and published documents was conducted to enhance the current understanding of the studied governorates. A review of existing books, literature, and articles either published or unpublished was carried out. A range of additional sources of information including scientific or nonscientific reports produced by A range of additional sources of information, including scientific and non-scientific reports produced by government agencies, research institutions, NGOs, and industry stakeholders, were also reviewed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the subject. and information on the websites were also reviewed.

2.2. Mixed data collection methodology:

The study team used two methods: qualitative methodology (focus groups and interviews) and quantitative data collection (electronic questionnaires).)beginning with a desk review, following by a data collection composed of field interviews with key informants, heads of cooperatives, and farmers; and concluding with an analysis of the value chain. This study relies on more than one methodology:

The consultant conducted field study and data collection work, for which have contacted stakeholders and concerned individuals, as well as group discussions. A targeted simple random sampling method was used to select lead informants for individual interviews. For the focus groups, members were drawn from different stakeholder groups, including service providers from the private sector, producer organizations, NGOs, manufacturers, orchard owners, retailers, wholesalers, the Directorate of Agriculture, consumers, and beneficiaries. Special attention was given to ensuring gender balance and a strong representation of women.

a data collection tool was developed in consultation with the project management, selected nominators for each governorate were trained, the nominators had interviewed a total of 70 farmers (60 Men and 10 Women) as in the table below.

Table 1: shows the numbers of men and women responding to questionnaires, by governorate

Governorate	Men	Women
Irbid	20	5
Ajloun	28	3
Al-Mafraq	12	2
Total	60	10



"Consultant's Meeting with Target Audience Focus Groups"

This data reveals a significant gender gap: only 10 women reported working in olive crop activities, compared to 60 men. Several key factors explain this disparity, particularly related to the method of data collection was personal electronic questionnaires:

1. Limited Access to Technology Among Women

In rural and agricultural areas, women often have less access to electronic devices (smartphones, tablets, or computers) compared to men.

Even when access exists, digital literacy may be lower among women, making them less likely to complete or engage with electronic questionnaires.

2. Social and Cultural Norms

In some conservative communities, women's work in agriculture, especially in family-based or informal roles is not always formally recognized, and they may not report it through electronic self-reporting tools.

Additionally, women may be less comfortable or less likely to participate in electronic surveys due to privacy concerns or lack of confidence in using digital tools.

3. Perception of Agricultural Labor

Women's roles in olive production often include tasks such as picking, cleaning, and post-harvest processing. These tasks are frequently seen as extensions of domestic duties, and women may not identify these activities as formal "work" when responding to a questionnaire.

As a result, their participation may go unreported, particularly in electronic formats where clarification from a data collector is not immediately available.

4. Self-Selection Bias in Response

Electronic questionnaires typically require self-initiation to respond. Men, who may feel more responsibility for or visibility in formal agricultural roles, are more likely to respond.

Women, especially those in informal or supporting roles, may exclude themselves from responding because they don't see their role as relevant to the questionnaire.

Conclusion

The low number of women reported in the olive crop sector is likely influenced by both social realities and the limitations of electronic data collection methods. While women's actual involvement in olive farming may be higher, factors such as limited access to digital tools, under-recognition of informal labor, and cultural norms have contributed to underreporting.

Informal labor such as unpaid family work, seasonal tasks, or small-scale processing activities plays a significant role in the agricultural value chain. Women often engage in these critical but unrecorded roles, which are essential for the productivity and sustainability of the olive sector. However, because informal work is frequently excluded from official statistics, women's contributions remain invisible in data and policy discussions.

Recognizing informal labor in both data collection and policy formulation is crucial for gender-sensitive development planning. It ensures that women's economic roles are properly acknowledged, which can lead to more inclusive support programs, better resource allocation, and empowerment initiatives tailored to the realities of all stakeholders in the value chain.



"Consultant's Meeting with Target Audience Focus Groups"

2.3. Semi structured interviews:

The data collection in(Irbid (Saham, Dair Abi Saeed, Kufr Asad, Jenin Es-Saf, Dhouqra, Al-Kourah), Ajloun (Kufranjah, Rajeb), and Mafraq (Hosha, al Mansorah). phase was implemented between February 10, and April 24, 2025 by Consultant. A total of 213(126 women and 87 Men) key informant interviews were collected as below table.

Table 2: shows the numbers of men and women responding to interviews, by governorate

Governorate	Men	Women
Irbid	٤٥	٦٢
Ajloun	٢٢	٣٧
Al-Mafraq	٢٠	٢٧
Total	87	126



"Consultant's Meeting with Target Audience Focus Groups"

The data shows a clear difference in participation, with 126 women compared to 87 men. This discrepancy can be understood through several social, economic, and methodological factors, especially considering the data was collected through personal interviews:

1. Gender Roles in Olive Harvesting

In the regions studied, especially in northern Jordan (e.g., Irbid and Ajloun), olive cultivation is often a family-based activity.

Women typically play a central role in labor-intensive stages of the olive harvest, such as hand-picking, sorting, and food processing. These tasks are often culturally associated with women's work in rural communities and are essential to the overall productivity of the value chain. However, much of this work is unpaid or informally compensated, often carried out within family farms or small-scale operations.

This lack of distinction between paid and unpaid labor obscures women's true economic contributions. Without proper recognition, these roles remain invisible in data, undervalued in economic planning, and overlooked in the design of support programs. Highlighting both the formal and informal dimensions of women's labor is therefore critical for developing gender-sensitive policies and ensuring equitable participation in value chain development.



"Consultant's Meeting with Target Audience Focus Groups"

2. Availability and Flexibility

Many men in rural areas may have full-time or seasonal employment outside of agriculture. In contrast, women especially homemakers are more available for seasonal agricultural work like olive picking. Their flexibility makes them more likely to participate during harvest periods.

3. Trust and Accessibility in Interviews

Since the data collection was conducted through personal interviews, it is possible that women were more readily available at home or in the fields during the interviews, especially if interviews occurred during working hours. This accessibility could have led to higher reported participation among women.

4. Underreporting of Male Participation

Due to the use of personal interviews as a data collection method, some working men may have been absent during the data collection period, especially those employed in non-agricultural or seasonal jobs. This absence

may have contributed to the underreporting of male participation in olive farming, even if their involvement is occasional or limited to peak harvest days.

According to data from the Jordan Department of Statistics, a significant portion of agricultural labor in Jordan is informal. This often includes men working in seasonal or daily-wage jobs outside their farms, making their availability during field interviews uncertain (Jordan Department of Statistics, 2023).

Reports from the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) further confirm that seasonal labor patterns and informal employment in agriculture lead to data gaps—especially when data collection does not align with key farming or harvest periods (FAO, 2021).



"Consultant's Meeting with Target Audience Focus Groups"

5. Cultural and Family Structures

In many of these governorates, entire families work together during the olive harvest. However, women may be more visible and consistently involved in day-to-day tasks, making them more likely to be identified and reported as active workers in personal interviews.

Conclusion

Due to the use of personal interviews as a data collection method, some working men may have been absent during the data collection period, especially those employed in non-agricultural or seasonal jobs. This absence

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Reports from the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) further confirm that seasonal labor patterns and informal employment in agriculture lead to data gaps—especially when data collection does not align with key farming or harvest periods (FAO, 2021).

Women’s higher availability, their traditional role in harvesting tasks, and the likelihood of being present during interviews contribute to the greater number of reported female participants across the three governorates.

2.4. Focus group discussions:

The focus group discussion session, in Irbid (Saham, Dair Abi Saeed, Kufr Asad, Jenin Es-Saf, Dhouqra, Al-Kourah), Ajloun (Kufranjah, Rajeb), and Mafraq (Hosha, al Mansorah). were 10 F.G session being held with a total participation of (271 Men and 308 Women, as in below table.

Table 3: shows the numbers of men and women responding to F.G, by governorate

Governorate	Number of FGDs	Men	Women
Irbid	0	102	116
Ajloun	0	87	163
Al-Mafraq	0	82	29
Total	10	271	308

This data shows a higher number of women (308) compared to men (271), with particularly large differences in Ajloun and Irbid. The reasons for this difference can be explained through a combination of socioeconomic, cultural, and methodological factors related to both the nature of olive farming and the focus group method used:

1. Regional Labor Division in Olive Farming

In governorates like Ajloun and Irbid, women are traditionally and heavily involved in olive harvesting, sorting, and olive oil production.

These tasks are often culturally associated with women, reflecting traditional family labor arrangements. However, it is important to recognize that many activities in olive farming are physically demanding, and women frequently perform labor-intensive work. Simplifying women’s roles as limited to less strenuous tasks overlooks their substantial and diverse contributions to the olive value chain.

In contrast, Al-Mafraq shows a different trend where male participation is higher. This could be due to its more rural or tribal context, where women's participation in agricultural work may be less visible or less commonly reported.

2. Influence of Focus Group Methodology

Focus groups leverage group interaction and self-reporting to encourage detailed discussions. While they can provide valuable insights, especially in contexts where individual interviews may be less effective, it is important to consider potential barriers such as lack of privacy, dominance by outspoken participants, or cultural hesitations that might affect participation and openness particularly for women.

Women may have felt more comfortable sharing their involvement in group settings, leading to more accurate or even higher reporting of their roles.

In some communities, men might underreport women's agricultural roles due to traditional gender norms, while women's focus groups might highlight their significant and active contribution.

3. Social Norms and Visibility of Labor

In Ajloun, the high number of women (163) compared to men (87) could reflect strong local traditions of female participation in olive farming, where women are seen as essential labor during harvest season.

In Al-Mafraq, the relatively low number of women (29) compared to men (82) may be due to cultural restrictions or lower visibility of women in agricultural spaces, influencing both actual participation and what was reported in focus groups.

4. Economic Contribution and Household Involvement

Olive farming in Jordan is often a family-based activity. Women are involved not only in field work but also in post-harvest tasks such as cleaning, pressing, and preparing olives for market or home use.

These informal and domestic roles are more likely to be recognized and shared in the open discussion format of focus groups, leading to more accurate representation of women's contributions.

Conclusion

The higher number of women involved in olive crop activities in Irbid and Ajloun aligns with local agricultural practices and family labor structures. The focus group methodology helped highlight women's voices and roles in these regions. However, it is important to consider potential limitations of this approach, such as group pressure and power dynamics among participants, which may have influenced the expression of views. In contrast, the lower female representation in Al-Mafraq likely reflects differing cultural norms. Overall, the data underscores how regional differences and data collection methods both play significant roles in shaping the reported gender distribution in agricultural labor.

2.5. Analysis of findings

After completing the fieldwork, the consultant analyzed the data using predefined frameworks based on established value chain analysis models, adapted as needed for the study's specific context. The analysis focused on the olive value chain and its related sectors, such as olive production, processing, and marketing. This approach enabled the identification of challenges and bottlenecks at each stage of the value chain, providing a clear picture of constraints and opportunities across the different levels.

An in-depth analysis was conducted on three market sub-systems for each sector: local low-income markets, local middle/high-income markets, and export markets. The selection of these market categories was based on their economic significance and relevance to the olive value chain. The first two market types were analyzed at both sub-national and national levels where sufficient data was available, while the export market analysis focused on the most profitable countries and regions identified through trade data and expert consultations. Specific export destinations included insert key countries/regions if known], providing a targeted understanding of external market opportunities. Criteria for determining the feasibility of national-level analysis included the availability and reliability of market data and the representativeness of sub-national samples.

. The market sub-system analysis included:

- An analysis of market access was conducted to identify specific local constraints affecting producers within the olive value chain. These constraints included limited technological capabilities for processing and packaging, inadequate infrastructure such as poor transportation networks and storage facilities, and insufficient bargaining power among smallholder farmers. For example, in Ajloun governorate, producers reported challenges with outdated olive oil extraction equipment, which reduced product quality and competitiveness. In Irbid, limited cold storage facilities hindered the ability to preserve fresh olives for longer periods, affecting market timing. Additionally, farmers across several governorates lacked access to up-to-date market information, limiting their ability to negotiate fair prices and respond to consumer demand. These findings highlight the need for targeted interventions tailored to the specific conditions of each governorate.
- Quality management systems: The assessment of quality management systems focused on supply chain management, particularly primary processes such as the transformation and creation of value-added olive products, quality improvement, and optimization of distribution channels. The consultant benchmarked existing technologies and practices in the target areas against national and international quality standards, including ISO 22000 for food safety management and Codex Alimentarius guidelines for olive oil quality. This comparative analysis revealed critical gaps, such as the widespread use of outdated extraction equipment that compromises oil purity, insufficient implementation of traceability systems, and inadequate cold chain infrastructure affecting product freshness during distribution. These gaps currently limit the ability of producers and processors to meet both local and export market quality requirements.
- Business enabling environment: This consists of a legal review within the industry analysis for each sector and the impact of existing laws and regulations on the cooperatives/markets and industry attractiveness.
- A “challenges and opportunities analysis” was conducted to summarize key findings and evaluate the competitiveness of each stage of the olive value chain from production and processing to marketing and distribution. The assessment of competitiveness was guided by a modified value chain competitiveness framework, incorporating criteria such as cost-efficiency, product quality, access to markets, innovation

capacity, and responsiveness to consumer demand. Indicators such as input costs, yield per hectare, value-added per unit, and market diversification were used to compare performance across stages and regions. In parallel, a political and economic analysis of the business enabling environment was carried out, focusing on regulatory frameworks, institutional support, trade policies, access to finance, and infrastructure availability. This helped identify systemic barriers and opportunities that influence the sector's overall competitiveness and capacity for growth.

Based on the analysis components outlined above, the consultant developed a set of targeted recommendations to upgrade the existing olive value chain. A central focus was placed on strengthening the role and operational capacity of local cooperatives, given their potential to organize small producers, enhance bargaining power, and facilitate access to shared services.

Key recommendations included:

- Capacity building for cooperatives in areas such as governance, financial management, and quality control;
- Investment in modern processing technologies to improve product quality and meet market standards;
- Development of market linkages, especially with high-value domestic and export markets;
- Support for branding and certification (e.g. organic, geographical indication) to increase product competitiveness;
- Improved access to finance through tailored credit schemes and partnerships with microfinance institutions.

The recommendations were prioritized based on potential impact, feasibility (including estimated cost), alignment with national agricultural policies, and the readiness of stakeholders. For example, capacity-building activities and cooperative governance reforms were identified as low-cost, high-impact actions that could be implemented in the short term. In contrast, infrastructure and technology upgrades were flagged for medium- to long-term planning due to higher investment requirements.

Chapter Three: Diagnostic report of the value chain Governorates

particularly in the governorates of Irbid (Saham, Dair Abi Saeed, Kufr Asad, Jenin Es-Saf, Dhouqra, Al-Kourah), Ajloun (Kufranjah, Rajeb), and Mafrq (Hosha, Al Mansorah). These regions contribute significantly to national olive production, both for table olives and olive oil. In the 2024/2025 season, Irbid alone produced approximately **89,200 tonnes of olives**, yielding **17,600 tonnes of olive oil**, with a total production value estimated at **JD 223.9 million** (Jordan Times, 2025). The olive value chain in these areas hosts a wide variety of actors, including smallholder farmers, cooperatives, local processors, and market intermediaries (ILO, 2022).

Mapping the olive value chain in this context is essential to understanding the interlinked stages of production, processing, distribution, and consumption, as well as the supporting services and institutional frameworks that influence sector performance (FAO & EBRD, 2023). For example, the **FAO and EBRD**, in collaboration with the **Ministry of Agriculture**, have implemented training programs on best practices in olive oil milling, quality control, and value-added commercialization (FAO & MOA, 2023). Additionally, the **CBI Olive Oil Jordan project** has supported SMEs in improving product quality, sustainability standards, and branding for European export markets (CBI, 2022).

To address persistent challenges such as pest outbreaks, limited coordination, and declining quality, the Ministry of Agriculture launched the **National Campaign for Integrated Olive Tree Management** in May 2025. This initiative focuses on climate-smart farming, combating the olive fruit fly, strengthening advisory services, and mobilizing local cooperatives (MoA & Jordan Times, 2025). Complementary efforts such as the **National Olive Oil Festival**, supported by **NCARE** and international NGOs like **Mercy Corps**, aim to improve market linkages, testing services, and equitable participation of women and youth in the sector (Jordan Times, 2025b; ICARDA, 2023).

This report provides a comprehensive analysis of the olive value chain in Irbid, Ajloun, and Mafrq, combining descriptive mapping with evaluative insights to identify key constraints, bottlenecks, and opportunities for value addition and sustainable development across the chain.

3.1 Olive Oil Value Chain – Stakeholder Mapping & Analysis

Table 4: summary of value chain stakeholder along the different stages

Stage	Actor	Role	Key Issues / Gaps
1. Production	Farmers in Irbid, Ajloun, and Mafrq	- Cultivate olive trees - Maintain groves - Manual/semi-mechanical harvesting	- Capacity: Varies across regions, often low due to aging trees and limited technical training - Access: Challenges with affordability and timely access to quality inputs - Sustainability: Water scarcity and limited knowledge of climate-resilient practices
2. Agricultural Supply	Agro-input stores	- Supply fertilizers, seeds, irrigation tools, pest control	- Access: Farmers face cost barriers and lack guidance on appropriate input use

			- Quality Control: No consistent regulation of agro-input quality
3. Technical Guidance & Support	Ministry of Agriculture (MoA), NCARE, NGOs (e.g., FAO, ILO, Mercy Corps)	- Train farmers on good practices - Provide quality testing, extension services, marketing advice	- Capacity Gaps: Limited extension staff - Coverage: Not all farmers benefit equally - Quality Testing: Available but underutilized - Follow-Up: Weak monitoring of adoption of recommended practices
4. Collection & Transport	Cooperatives, private transporters	- Aggregate and transport olives to presses	- Infrastructure: Poor rural roads can delay transport - Timing: Delays can reduce olive quality - Capacity: Cooperatives often under-resourced for efficient logistics
5. Processing (Pressing & Refining)	Local olive presses (e.g., Kafrajarah, al ryan)	- Extract oil using traditional/semi-modern methods	- Quality Control: Variable hygiene and temperature control standards - Regulatory Compliance: Limited enforcement of food safety or environmental regulations - Certification: Lack of ISO, HACCP, or organic certifications
6. Packaging & Marketing	Cooperatives, local fairs, presses	- Package, label, promote olive oil and by-products (soap, vinegar, pickles)	- Branding: Mostly generic; no strong regional identity or PDO labels - Access to Markets: Limited use of digital platforms and e-commerce - Design & Labeling: Often non-compliant with export standards
7. Export & Institutional Support	MOA, JEDCO, JFDA, cooperatives, donors	- Provide certification, facilitate trade/export, access to finance, advisory services	- Certification: Few products certified organic or PDO - Export Readiness: Low; gaps in traceability, packaging, and documentation - Finance: Limited tailored financial products for small producers

3.2. Agricultural Supply Stores by Governorate

Irbid

- Large number of agricultural stores located in Irbid City and surrounding rural areas like Juhfiyeh, Habaka, and Hashimiyya.
- Key Stores:
 - o Family Farm (مزرعة العائلة)
 - o Mohammad Al-Ghraibeh Agricultural Supplies
 - o Al-Asriya Agricultural Supplies

Ajloun

- Fewer stores compared to Irbid, mostly located in towns like Kafranjah, Anjara, and Ajloun City: The number of agro-input stores in Ajloun is significantly lower than in Irbid, with most concentrated in main towns such as Kafranjah, Anjara, and Ajloun City. However, precise figures are lacking. Some remote sub-regions particularly in highland or less accessible areas appear to be underserved, contributing to access barriers for smallholder farmers.
- Farmers usually access them directly but sometimes travel to Irbid for more options.

Mafraq

- Major Stores:
 - o Raed Mashaal Agricultural Materials Store
 - o Ahmed Ghosab for Agricultural Materials & Seeds
- Most are located in Mafraq City and on main agricultural routes, allowing easy access for local farmers.

Farmer–Store Relationship

- Generally direct and seasonal.
- Some stores offer advisory services or installment payments.
- Farmers usually maintain ongoing relationships with preferred stores for better pricing and trust.

The farmer–store relationship in Mafraq (notably in Hosha and Al Mansurah) is typically direct and seasonal, peaking during key cultivation periods.

- Many farmers develop long-term, trust-based relationships with specific stores, driven by consistent pricing, personalized service, and verbal credit arrangements.
- Some stores offer informal advisory services, including recommendations on pesticide types or fertilizer dosage, which are valued in the absence of formal extension support.
- Installment-based payment systems are sometimes available, particularly for loyal customers, functioning as a form of informal rural credit.

3.3 Agricultural Labor Information

- Most of the agricultural labor in the olive sector is non-Jordanian, especially during the olive harvest season (October–December).

- The labor force includes refugees and migrant workers, often working informally.:

The agricultural labor force particularly in olive cultivation and harvest includes a significant number of refugees (primarily Syrians) and migrant workers, many of whom are engaged informally.

- Informal employment often means workers operate without legal contracts, social security coverage, or health insurance.
- As a result, they face vulnerabilities such as lack of wage protection, unsafe working conditions, and exclusion from labor rights or grievance mechanisms.
- This also limits productivity and long-term sector sustainability, as skilled labor is underpaid and unprotected.
- Furthermore, informal labor complicates compliance with international labor standards, which can hinder export opportunities especially for buyers who require social certification (e.g., Fair Trade, Global GAP).
- Daily wages range from 10 to 20 Jordanian dinars, depending on the region and work intensity.
- Workdays can be long (8 to 13 hours), especially at peak harvest.
- Women make up a significant portion of seasonal labor, particularly in rural Ajloun and Mafraq:

Women constitute a substantial share of the seasonal agricultural labor force in rural areas of Ajloun and Mafraq, particularly during the olive harvest season.

- Their tasks often include hand-picking olives, sorting, cleaning, and sometimes packaging roles that are labor-intensive but typically undervalued.
- In many cases, this labor is informal and low-paid, and in some households, women’s work is unpaid and treated as part of family obligations, receiving little or no formal recognition.
- There is often no access to social protection, contracts, or health insurance, and their contribution is largely invisible in formal statistics or cooperative structures.
- Despite their central role, women are rarely represented in decision-making bodies such as agricultural cooperatives or farmer unions.

3.4 . Key Recommendations

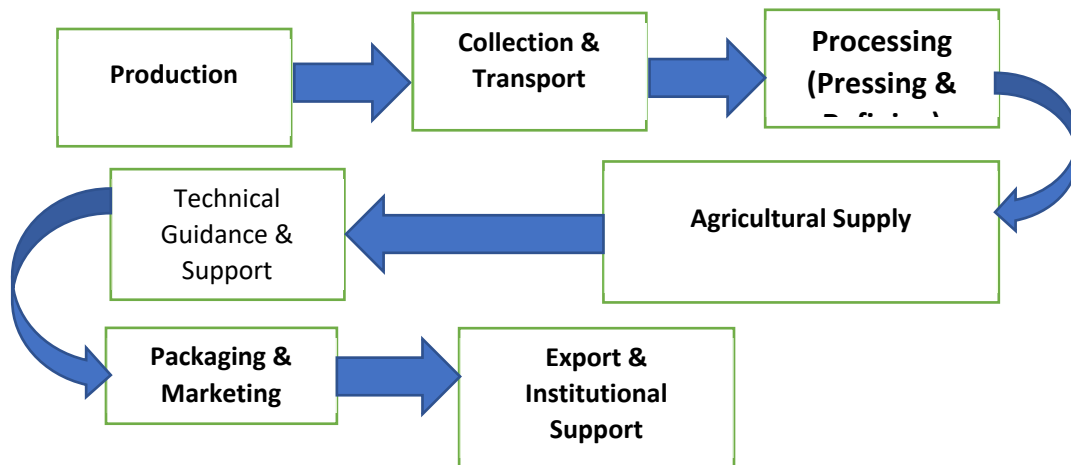
1. Strengthen agro-input stores in Ajloun and Mafraq to provide a wider range of supplies.
2. Organize and regulate seasonal labor, ensuring fair wages and safe working conditions:

In the context of organizing seasonal labor in the olive sector in the governorates of Irbid, Ajloun, and Mafraq, it is recommended to activate the role of the Ministry of Labor, the Ministry of Agriculture, and local municipalities in registering and regulating seasonal workers through the creation of a comprehensive database that includes both local and migrant labor, particularly women and refugees working informally. Written employment contracts should be mandated, clearly stating wages, working hours, and safety conditions, in coordination with agricultural cooperatives which can serve as effective intermediaries between farmers and workers. It is also proposed to establish wage guidelines that reflect the seasonal nature of the work, alongside the organization of pre-season awareness sessions on workers' rights and occupational safety. This requires strengthening labor inspections by the Ministry of Labor during the harvest season and ensuring the availability of safe and confidential grievance mechanisms. Additionally, transportation and accommodation arrangements for seasonal workers should be monitored in collaboration with municipalities, to ensure a safe and fair working environment that supports the sustainability of the olive sector and promotes social justice in rural Jordan.

3. Enhance coordination between farmers and suppliers through seasonal contracts or bundled offers.
4. Increase access to training via agriculture directorates and input suppliers in partnership with development projects: Increase access to technical and safety training for smallholder olive farmers and seasonal laborers, delivered through agricultural directorates and input suppliers in partnership with development projects. Training should cover best practices in olive harvesting, pesticide use, pruning, post-harvest handling, and occupational health and safety standards, with tailored sessions for women and youth to promote inclusive participation and skill development.

3.5 Olive value chain stakeholders in northern Jordan

According to Stakeholders and Previous Studies on the Olive Sector in in Irbid (Saham, Dair Abi Saeed, Kufr Asad, Jenin Es-Saf, Dhouqra, Al-Kourah), Ajloun (Kufranjah, Rajeb), and Mafraq (Hosha, al Mansorah). (FAO, 2022, Jordanian Olive Oil, 2023, International Olive Council, 2022, CBI, 2023, ILO, 2021),The olive sector is a cornerstone of rural livelihoods and agricultural productivity in northern Jordan, particularly in the governorates of Irbid, Ajloun, and Mafraq. These areas account for a significant portion of the country's olive groves, producing both table olives and high-quality olive oil. The sector supports thousands of smallholder farmers and contributes to food security, income generation, and Jordan's cultural heritage. This report outlines the main stakeholders involved across the olive oil value chain, from input supply through to waste and by-product utilization. The accompanying diagram presents a visual map of the olive value chain:



Developed by the consultant

3.6 Key Stakeholders

Understanding the actors in the value chain is critical for addressing challenges and leveraging opportunities:

Irbid

- **Producers & Farmers:** Large population engaged in agriculture (crops like olives, citrus, vegetables).
- **Agricultural Cooperatives:** Support small farmers, provide inputs, and facilitate marketing.
- **Processors:** Small to medium agro-processing units.
- **Traders & Exporters:** Local and regional market players, export fresh produce.
- **Government & NGOs:** Support agricultural development, provide subsidies and technical support.

Ajloun

- **Farmers:** Focus on olive cultivation, honey production, and some livestock.
- **Local Cooperatives:** Manage olive oil production and marketing.

- **Tourism-related stakeholders:** Due to rich natural and historical resources, tourism acts as a complementary sector.
- **Municipal Authorities & Development Agencies:** Work on rural development projects.

Mafraq

- **Farmers & Pastoralists:** Agriculture and livestock rearing dominate.
- **Traders:** Local and cross-border trade with Syria influences value chains.
- **Government Agricultural Offices:** Provide extension services and subsidies.
- **International Organizations:** Support refugees and local livelihoods, influencing supply chains.

3.7 Value Chain Gap Analysis

Value Chain Stage	Observed Gaps
Input Supply	Limited access to high-quality seeds, fertilizers, and equipment. Lack of affordable credit and finance.
Production	Low adoption of modern farming techniques and technology; dependence on rain-fed agriculture.
Processing	Insufficient agro-processing facilities, leading to low value addition. Poor cold storage infrastructure.
Marketing & Distribution	Weak market linkages, lack of branding and packaging, limited access to export markets. Fragmented trader networks.
Support Services	Inadequate extension services, training, and technical assistance. Weak institutional coordination.

[Table 5: Value Chain Gap Analysis](#)

3.8 . Weaknesses

- **Infrastructure Deficits:** Poor road connectivity and transportation hinder timely market access.
- **Water Scarcity:** Critical in Mafraq and Ajloun, affecting agricultural productivity.
- **Limited Financial Services:** Smallholder farmers have restricted access to credit and insurance.
- **Market Fragmentation:** Small scale and fragmented producers struggle to aggregate produce.
- **Low Technology Adoption:** Traditional farming methods dominate, reducing efficiency and yields.

- **Weak Export Capacities:** Limited certification and quality standards reduce competitiveness internationally.
- **Political and Security Concerns:** In Mafraq, proximity to Syrian border affects stability and trade flows.

3.9 Opportunities

- **Value Addition & Processing:** Establishing modern agro-processing units, especially for olives and dairy, can increase income.
- **Cooperative Strengthening:** Empowering cooperatives to aggregate production, improve bargaining power, and access new markets.
- **Technology & Innovation:** Introducing drought-resistant crops, modern irrigation, and mechanization.
- **Market Development:** Branding local products (e.g., Ajloun olive oil) to access premium markets.
- **Eco-Tourism Integration:** Leveraging Ajloun's natural heritage to complement agricultural income.
- **Cross-border Trade Enhancement:** In Mafraq, regulated trade with neighboring countries can boost local economies.
- **Capacity Building:** Training farmers in best practices, quality standards, and business skills.
- **Renewable Energy:** Use of solar-powered irrigation and storage can reduce costs and improve sustainability.

3.10 Conclusion and Recommendations

The value chains in **Irbid (Saham, Dair Abi Saeed, Kufr Asad, Jenin Es-Saf, Dhouqra, Al-Kourah), Ajloun (Kufranjah, Rajeb), and Mafraq (Hosha, al Mansorah)**, present both challenges and promising opportunities. Addressing infrastructure deficits, upgrading technology, and enhancing market access are critical for improving productivity and incomes. Stakeholders including government, private sector, and development agencies must coordinate efforts to strengthen cooperatives, promote value addition, and expand access to finance. Tailored interventions that consider the unique socio-economic contexts of each governorate will foster sustainable economic growth and resilience.

3.11 Recommended Training Program (Expanded)

Table 6 : Recommended Training Program (Expanded)

Training Topic	Target Group	Duration	Objective	Expected Output	Delivery Method	Lead Organization
GAP & modern agricultural practices	Small/medium-scale farmers	3 days	Improve productivity and fruit quality	Farmers adopt pruning, fertilization, and pest control best practices	Field demo + Workshop	MoA / NCARE
Mill operation & GMP compliance	Mill operators and owners	2 days	Reduce post-harvest loss and improve oil quality	Improved hygiene standards and oil extraction efficiency in local mills	On-site training + Manual	JFDA / MoA
Marketing, packaging & branding	Cooperatives, women producers	3 days	Add value and improve market access	Branded, market-ready olive oil products with improved labeling and packaging	Workshop + Case study review	JEDCO / Local NGOs
Climate-smart agriculture & irrigation	Especially for Mafrq farmers	2 days	Enhance resilience to drought conditions	Adoption of water-saving irrigation and climate-adaptive practices	Demo plot + Technical guide	NCARE / ICARDA
Cooperative & value chain management	Cooperative leaders & local CSOs	2 days	Strengthen organization and bargaining power	More coordinated producer groups with improved collective marketing strategies	Training + Role-play exercise	MoA / FAO / Local CBOs

Chapter Four: Capacity needs and recommendations for implementing marketing access and training needs

Identify the training needs of local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and smallholder farmers in the targeted governorates, with the aim of enhancing and developing the olive value chain. The task also includes providing actionable recommendations on the most relevant training programs and priority topics for the project to follow up on.

4.1. Training Needs Assessment by Stakeholder and Region

Consultations and diagnostic sessions were conducted with key stakeholders, including local NGOs and smallholder farmers, in **Irbid (Saham, Dair Abi Saeed, Kufr Asad, Jenin Es-Saf, Dhouqra, Al-Kourah), Ajloun (Kufranjah, Rajeb), and Mafrq (Hosha, al Mansorah)**. The following key training needs were identified:

Table 7: Training Needs by Governorate and Target Group

Governorate	Target Group	Capacity Needs	Recommendations for Improving Market Access	Capacity Development & Training Recommendations
Irbid	Smallholder farmers, Emerging cooperatives	- Knowledge of Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) - Understanding local market channels - Quality control and post-harvest handling	- Facilitate linkages to local markets - Develop cooperative branding - Support certification (organic, fair trade) - Improve supply chain logistics	- Workshops on GAP and quality standards - Training on negotiation and market trends - Cooperative management courses - Packaging and handling sessions
Ajloun	Women's NGOs, Table olive producers	- Modern packaging and labeling skills - Branding and marketing knowledge - Entrepreneurial skills for home-based products	- Support packaging/labeling improvements - Promote agri-tourism - Facilitate participation in fairs and online markets - Increase access to credit for women	- Training on packaging design - Branding and marketing workshops - Small business management and digital marketing - Exposure visits to agri-tourism sites
Mafrq	Farmers in marginal areas, Community	- Climate-resilient agriculture knowledge - Modern irrigation techniques -	- Promote climate-smart products - Encourage collective marketing via cooperatives -	- Training on climate-smart agriculture - Practical irrigation and water management sessions - Leadership

	development associations	Cooperative management skills	Improve storage and transport infrastructure - Build partnerships for input and market support	and cooperative management workshops - Market-oriented production planning
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4.2 Challenges Highlighting the Need for Capacity Building

1. **Limited knowledge of modern agricultural techniques among smallholder farmers.**
This leads to low productivity and poor olive fruit quality, especially in marginalized areas, where traditional methods dominate and limit the adoption of efficient and sustainable practices.
2. **Weak understanding of value chain development among local organizations.**
Without this knowledge, organizations struggle to support farmers in accessing markets, improving processing, or adding value, resulting in missed economic opportunities.
3. **Lack of technical staff and trainers within rural cooperatives.**
This restricts the spread of best practices and hinders internal knowledge transfer, preventing cooperatives from becoming hubs of innovation and learning.
4. **Gaps in marketing and digital promotion skills for olive products.**
This contributes to weak product visibility, poor differentiation, and limited market access, especially in competitive national and international markets.
5. **Limited collaboration between local NGOs and farmers in initiating economic activities.**
This reduces the effectiveness of community-based approaches and inclusive business models, leading to fragmented efforts and underutilized local resources.

4.3 Recommended Training Programs

Priority Training Areas

[Table 8: Priority Training Areas](#)

Training Area	Target Group	Suggested Duration	Objective	Expected Outcome	Facilitating Institutions
Good Agricultural Practices (GAP)	Smallholder farmers	3 days	Improve olive production quality and farm efficiency	Farmers apply GAP in pruning, fertilization, pest control, and harvesting	MoA, FAO, ICARDA

Marketing, Packaging & Branding	Women-led cooperatives & NGOs	3 days	Improve market access and product value	Participants develop branded, well-packaged, and marketable olive products	FAO, MoA, Jordan Exporters Association
Value Chain Management & Networking	Local NGOs and CSOs	2 days	Strengthen organizational role in economic empowerment	NGOs effectively support cooperatives and farmer groups across the olive value chain	ICARDA, FAO, MoA
Climate-Smart Agriculture & Irrigation	Farmers in Mafraq and arid zones	2 days	Promote sustainability and reduce crop loss	Adoption of water-efficient practices and drought-tolerant varieties	RSS, ICARDA, MoA
Training of Trainers (ToT) for Local Trainers	Agricultural NGOs and cooperatives	4 days	Ensure knowledge sustainability and local training capacity	Trained staff capable of independently delivering sessions locally	MoA, FAO, ICARDA, NCARE

4.4 Expected Outputs/Deliverables

- **Capacity Needs Assessment Report:** A detailed report outlining the capacity development needs of local NGOs and smallholder farmers in the targeted areas.
- **Comprehensive Training Plan:** A proposed training plan including topics, target groups, delivery methods, and suggested timelines.
- **Database of Local Trainers and Partners:** A list of potential local trainers and implementation partners in the three governorates.
- **Integrated Capacity-Building Recommendations:** Practical recommendations to integrate training activities into the value chain development process for increased economic and social impact.

4.5 Conclusion

Strengthening the olive value chain in **Irbid, Ajloun, and Mafraq** requires strategic investments in the human capital of smallholder farmers and the community-based organizations that support them. The findings confirm that customized and localized capacity-building programs can lead to improved product quality, better income, stronger cooperation, and increased access to markets ultimately contributing to sustainable rural development.

Table 9 : Proposed Capacity Development Outputs and Justifications for Local NGOs and Smallholder Farmers in Irbid, Ajloun, and Mafraq

Expected Output / Deliverable	Description	Linked Findings / Justification	Linked Interventions
1. Capacity Needs Assessment Report	A detailed report identifying capacity development needs of local NGOs and smallholder farmers in Irbid, Ajloun, and Mafraq.	Findings revealed critical gaps in technical knowledge, organizational skills, and market access. Structured capacity support is essential for enabling inclusive development.	Conduct field assessments; engage stakeholders; identify specific skill gaps in GAP, value chain management, marketing, and training capacity.
2. Comprehensive Training Plan	A proposed training plan covering topics, target groups, delivery methods, and timelines.	Assessment shows low awareness of best agricultural practices, post-harvest handling, and market strategies—necessitating targeted, practical training programs.	Implement GAP training for farmers; offer branding & marketing training for women-led cooperatives; organize ToT programs to build local trainer networks.
3. Database of Local Trainers and Partners	A list of qualified local trainers and implementation partners across the three governorates.	Findings highlight limited access to localized technical support; this output ensures continuity and community-level ownership of	Build a pool of trained facilitators through ToT sessions; engage experienced institutions (e.g., MoA, ICARDA, RSS); formalize local

		capacity-building initiatives.	partnerships for sustained delivery.
4. Integrated Capacity-Building Recommendations	Practical guidance for embedding training activities into broader value chain development processes.	Standalone training was found to be less impactful; integration with value chain interventions is essential for improved quality, income, cooperation, and market access.	Align training with value chain upgrades—processing, packaging, market linkage support; link cooperatives with buyers and institutions; encourage collaborative NGO–farmer initiatives.

4.6 Summary of Gap Analysis by Governorate

[Table 10: Summary of Gap Analysis by Governorate](#)

Governorate	Key Gaps	Weaknesses	Potential Opportunities
Irbid	Weak linkage between producers and modern markets; low adoption of good agricultural practices.	- Lack of continuous training - Dependence on traditional farming techniques	- Strengthen cooperatives to improve aggregation and bargaining power - Develop local branding and access to export markets
Ajloun	Limited packaging and storage facilities; weak product marketing skills.	- Absence of certified quality labs - Inadequate technical extension services	- Promote table olive production with value-added processing - Link olive-based tourism with marketing initiatives
Mafraq	- Inefficient irrigation systems - Poor post-harvest handling and market linkage	- Limited technical skills among farmers - Weak infrastructure in marginal areas	- Introduce climate-smart technologies and drought-resistant varieties - Establish decentralized packaging and processing centers

4.7 Recommendations and Prioritization of Interventions

1. Capacity Building for Farmers and Workers

- Training on Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) and modern technologies.

- Enhance knowledge on modern irrigation and climate adaptation, especially in Mafraq.

2. Improvement of Infrastructure and Facilities

- Support the establishment and upgrading of packaging and storage centers, especially in Ajloun and Mafraq.
- Provide quality laboratories for oil and olive fruit analysis.

3. Development of Marketing and Branding Skills

- Implement training programs on digital marketing and promotion, focusing on local branding.
- Link products with agri-tourism in Ajloun to increase product value.

4. Strengthening Cooperatives and Local Associations

- Support the organization and empowerment of cooperatives to manage the value chain effectively.
- Build leadership capacities in local NGOs to provide technical support to farmers.

5. Provision of Technical Support and Financing

- Facilitate access to advisory services and financing through partnerships with governmental and private entities.

4.8 Expected Outputs/Deliverables

- A detailed report on capacity building needs and required interventions in Irbid, Ajloun, and Mafraq.
- A proposed training plan including prioritized programs, topics, and target groups.
- Strategic recommendations to empower cooperatives and local organizations to enhance the value chain.
- A roadmap for implementing interventions based on prioritized needs.

4. 9. Conclusion

The successful development of the olive value chain in Irbid, Ajloun, and Mafraq depends on targeted interventions addressing technical gaps and infrastructure, alongside enhancing the capacities of workers and farmers. The recommendations in this report serve as a foundation for strategic planning that supports sustainable development and increases the competitiveness of olive products in local and regional markets.

Conduct a comprehensive assessment of current policies affecting smallholders' access to olive markets in the targeted governorates (Irbid, Ajloun, and Mafraq). Identify the barriers hindering market access and provide clear policy recommendations to address these barriers and improve the market environment.

4.10 Key Barriers to Market Access by Governorate

Table 11: Key Barriers to Market Access by Governorate

Governorate	Key Barriers
Irbid	- Weak transportation and storage infrastructure - Complex regulatory and licensing procedures - Limited knowledge of export markets
Ajloun	- Limited access to finance and technical support - Weak marketing and value chain linkages - Lack of institutional support and coordination
Mafraq	- High transportation costs and difficulty reaching main markets - Limited advisory and training services - Lack of incentive policies to encourage production and marketing

4.11 Proposed Policy Recommendations

- 1. Simplify Regulatory and Licensing Procedures**
 - o Develop streamlined licensing mechanisms to facilitate sales and exports.
 - o Establish one-stop service centers for technical and administrative support.
- 2. Improve Infrastructure and Logistics Services**
 - o Support the establishment of storage and cooling centers in production areas.
 - o Develop transport networks to ease product access to local and regional markets.
- 3. Enhance Financial and Technical Support for Smallholders**
 - o Launch targeted subsidized financing programs for small farmers.
 - o Provide technical and marketing training programs to build capacity.

4.12. Recommended Interventions Ranked by Priority

Table 12: Recommended Interventions Ranked by Priority

Priority	Intervention	Target Group	Proposed Villages	Objective	Justification
1	Training on Good Agricultural Practices (GAP)	Smallholder olive farmers	Irbid: Saham, Dair Abi Saeed, Kufr Asad Ajloun: Rajeb Mafrq: Hosha	Strengthen production quality and sustainability	Identified gaps in pruning, fertilization, and pest control among farmers affecting olive yield and quality. These villages are active in olive production.
2	Training of Trainers (ToT) for Local Facilitators	Cooperative staff, agricultural NGOs	Irbid: Dhouqra Ajloun: Kufranjah Mafrq: Al Mansorah	Build local training capacity and ensure knowledge transfer	The absence of skilled trainers in these villages limits knowledge dissemination. ToT ensures sustainability and local ownership of capacity-building programs.
3	Marketing, Packaging & Branding	Women-led cooperatives and rural producers	Irbid: Al-Kourah, Kufr Asad Ajloun: Kufranjah	Improve market access for smallholders and cooperatives	Despite active women-led groups, products suffer from poor packaging and branding, limiting competitiveness and access to higher-value markets.
4	Value Chain Management & Networking	Local NGOs, CSOs, farmer associations	Irbid: Jenin Es-Saf Ajloun: Rajeb Mafrq: Hosha	Enhance cooperative efficiency and economic coordination	Weak coordination along the olive value chain prevents scaling and integration. These areas have emerging NGO presence that can be strengthened.

5	Climate-Smart Agriculture & Efficient Irrigation	Farmers in semi-arid and arid zones	Maфраq: Al Mansorah, Hosha	Enhance resilience and reduce climate-related crop losses	These Maфраq villages are especially vulnerable to water scarcity and climate stress; targeted CSA training will improve resilience and reduce losses.
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4.13 Expected Outputs/Deliverables

- Policy Assessment Report: A detailed policy assessment report on barriers to smallholders' market access in Irbid, Ajloun, and Maфраq.
- Prioritized Policy Recommendations Matrix: A prioritized list of recommended policy interventions based on priority, feasibility, and cost.
- Stakeholder-Specific Action Guidelines: Practical recommendations for relevant stakeholders to implement supportive policies.

4.14 Conclusion

The assessment results indicate a range of political, logistical, and institutional barriers that limit smallholders' effective access to markets in Irbid, Ajloun, and Maфраq. These include fragmented value chain coordination, limited technical capacity, poor infrastructure, and weak policy support for rural producers. While the recommended interventions such as GAP training, value chain development, and improved marketing will have immediate project-level benefits, their strategic design also contributes to broader systemic change.

By empowering local cooperatives, enhancing institutional linkages (e.g., between NGOs, the Ministry of Agriculture, and research institutions), and embedding training into community structures, the interventions lay the groundwork for sustained transformation. They foster a more inclusive, coordinated, and market-oriented olive sector. In the long term, these efforts can inform national policies, improve rural extension services, promote agri-entrepreneurship, and reduce dependency on short-term donor-led initiatives. Thus, the project serves as a catalyst for structural improvements in the rural economy and agricultural governance.

4.15 Analysis of Gender, Age, and Climate Change Considerations by Governorate

Table 13: Analysis of Gender, Age, and Climate Change Considerations by Governorate

Governorate	Gender Considerations	Age Considerations	Climate Change Considerations	Recommended Interventions
Irbid	Increased participation of women in production and marketing activities; support for women in cooperatives.	Targeting youth for training and adoption of modern technologies.	Introduce drought-resistant olive varieties and water-saving irrigation methods.	- Conduct women-focused training on cooperative leadership and marketing.- Organize youth workshops on digital agriculture tools.- Distribute drought-resistant olive saplings and promote drip irrigation systems.
Ajloun	Enhancing rural women's role in packaging and marketing.	Tailored programs for young men and women to increase employment opportunities.	Implement soil conservation and rainwater harvesting techniques to address rainfall variability and erosion.	- Develop women-led olive packaging and branding centers.- Provide entrepreneurship training for youth.- Establish rainwater harvesting and terracing projects to reduce soil erosion.
Mafrq	Supporting the integration of women in agricultural value chains, especially in remote rural areas.	Focus on older adults to transfer traditional knowledge alongside modern technology adoption.	Promote heat and drought tolerant olive varieties and climate-smart irrigation systems.	- Create mobile training units for women in remote villages.- Facilitate intergenerational knowledge exchange programs.- Pilot climate-smart irrigation and introduce heat-tolerant olive cultivars.

4.16 Prioritization and Evaluation of Key Interventions for Olive Value Chain Development

Table 14: Prioritization and Evaluation of Key Interventions for Olive Value Chain Development

Intervention	Priority	Ease of Implementation	Cost	Primary Target Group	Notes
Training programs integrating gender and youth	High	High	Medium	Women producers, rural youth	Empowers women and youth in olive production, processing, marketing, and leadership roles through tailored, inclusive training.
Developing sustainable agricultural practices and climate adaptation	High	Medium	High	Farmers in drought areas (especially Mafraq)	Introduces drought-resistant olive varieties, efficient irrigation, and climate-smart techniques to improve resilience.
Strengthening local cooperatives with focus on age and gender diversity	Medium	Medium	Medium	Cooperative boards and members in all three governorates	Builds governance capacity of cooperatives and promotes inclusive participation of youth and women in decision-making and value chain activities.

4.17. Expected Outputs/Deliverables

- Integrated Analysis Report: A detailed report outlining how gender, age, and climate change considerations are integrated into the olive value chain analysis in the targeted governorates.
- Prioritized Interventions Matrix: A prioritized list of recommended interventions ranked by priority, ease of implementation, and cost, with explanations on how these factors are addressed.

- **Stakeholder Action Recommendations:** Practical recommendations for relevant stakeholders to implement programs that incorporate these considerations to achieve sustainable development.

4.18 . Conclusion

Integrating gender, age, and climate change considerations is a crucial factor for the successful development of the olive value chain in Irbid, Ajloun, and Mafraq. The recommended interventions provide a comprehensive framework to support all targeted groups, enhance production sustainability, and increase competitiveness in local and regional markets.

Throughout the assessment process, several key findings emerged regarding policy constraints that limit smallholders' access to markets. These include limited access to financing, insufficient extension services, fragmented supply chains, and regulatory challenges. Stakeholder consultations across the three governorates highlighted the need for more inclusive policies, improved infrastructure, capacity-building programs tailored to women and youth, and enhanced support for climate-resilient agricultural practices.

The inputs and recommendations from local stakeholders were instrumental in ensuring that proposed interventions reflect on-the-ground realities. Their insights emphasized the importance of localized solutions that consider the specific socio-economic and environmental contexts of each governorate.

Ultimately, these findings offer a roadmap for designing targeted, inclusive, and sustainable interventions that not only address current barriers but also empower smallholders to thrive within a more resilient and competitive olive value chain. By aligning future actions with these practical insights, policymakers and development actors can ensure greater impact and long-term success.

1. Summary of Overall Findings

- **Regulatory and Legal Barriers:** Complex procedures affecting smallholders' ease of access to markets, especially regarding licenses and administrative processes.
- **Insufficient Financial and Technical Support:** Limited funding and advisory services needed by smallholders to develop and improve their production and product marketing.
- **Weak Infrastructure:** Inadequate storage, transportation, and packaging facilities negatively impacting product quality and marketing opportunities.
- **Gender Age, and Climate Change Considerations:** The need to include women and youth in production and marketing activities. Tailored support is needed to address their specific roles and vulnerabilities, especially in the face of increasing climate-related challenges.

2. Stakeholders' Inputs and Recommendations

- **Government Entities:** The necessity to simplify regulatory procedures and provide financial incentives for smallholders.
- **Farmers:** The need for continuous training and specialized technical support programs tailored to different age groups.
- **Non-Governmental Organizations:** The importance of integrating gender considerations and providing equal opportunities for women and youth in the value chain.
- **Private Sector:** Recommended expanding marketing channels and building partnerships that connect small-scale producers with local retailers and export markets.

3. Final Recommendations

- Simplify regulatory and licensing procedures to ease market entry for smallholders and reduce administrative burdens that hinder value chain participation.
- Design and implement inclusive capacity-building programs that provide technical, business, and marketing training tailored to different age groups and responsive to gender dynamics.
- Invest in rural infrastructure by establishing modern storage, packaging, and processing facilities to reduce post-harvest losses and improve product quality.
- Foster multi-stakeholder collaboration by strengthening partnerships among government institutions, cooperatives, NGOs, and private sector actors to ensure coordinated planning and knowledge sharing.
- Mainstream climate change adaptation into agricultural support strategies by promoting climate-resilient practices and technologies suitable for drought-prone and vulnerable areas.

4. Expected Outputs

- A comprehensive assessment report on policy constraints to smallholders' market access in the governorates of Irbid, Ajloun, and Mafrq.
- A summary of stakeholders' inputs and recommendations.
- A proposed action plan based on final recommendations, reflecting identified priorities.

5. Conclusion

This report forms a comprehensive framework for following up on the development of policies supporting smallholders in the olive sector within the targeted areas by listening to stakeholders' feedback and discussing the findings objectively and effectively. It aims to enhance capacities, improve infrastructure, and provide a fair and sustainable marketing environment for smallholders.

4.19. Recommended Interventions Ranked by Priority

Table 15: Recommended Interventions Ranked by Priority

Priority	Intervention	Target Group	Proposed Villages	Objective	Justification
1	Training on Good Agricultural Practices (GAP)	Smallholder olive farmers	Irbid: Saham, Dair Abi Saeed, Kufr Asad Ajloun: Rajeb Mafrq: Hosha	Strengthen production quality and sustainability	Identified gaps in pruning, fertilization, and pest control among farmers affecting olive yield and quality. These villages are active in olive production.
2	Training of Trainers (ToT) for Local Facilitators	Cooperative staff, agricultural NGOs	Irbid: Dhouqra Ajloun: Kufranjah Mafrq: Al Mansorah	Build local training capacity and ensure knowledge transfer	The absence of skilled trainers in these villages limits knowledge dissemination. ToT ensures sustainability and local ownership of capacity-building programs.
3	Marketing, Packaging & Branding	Women-led cooperatives and rural producers	Irbid: Al-Kourah, Kufr Asad Ajloun: Kufranjah	Improve market access for smallholders and cooperatives	Despite active women-led groups, products suffer from poor packaging and branding, limiting competitiveness and access to higher-value markets.
4	Value Chain Management & Networking	Local NGOs, CSOs, farmer associations	Irbid: Jenin Es-Saf Ajloun: Rajeb Mafrq: Hosha	Enhance cooperative efficiency and economic coordination	Weak coordination along the olive value chain prevents scaling and integration. These areas have emerging NGO presence that can be strengthened.
5	Climate-Smart Agriculture &	Farmers in semi-arid and arid zones	Mafrq: Al Mansorah, Hosha	Enhance resilience and reduce climate-	These Mafrq villages are especially vulnerable to water scarcity and climate

	Efficient Irrigation			related crop losses	stress; targeted CSA training will improve resilience and reduce losses.
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Expected Outputs/Deliverables

- Policy Assessment Report: A detailed policy assessment report on barriers to smallholders' market access in Irbid, Ajloun, and Mafraq.
- Prioritized Policy Recommendations Matrix: A prioritized list of recommended policy interventions based on priority, feasibility, and cost.
- Stakeholder-Specific Action Guidelines: Practical recommendations for relevant stakeholders to implement supportive policies.

Conclusion

The assessment results indicate a range of political, logistical, and institutional barriers that limit smallholders' effective access to markets in Irbid, Ajloun, and Mafraq. These include fragmented value chain coordination, limited technical capacity, poor infrastructure, and weak policy support for rural producers. While the recommended interventions such as GAP training, value chain development, and improved marketing will have immediate project-level benefits, their strategic design also contributes to broader systemic change.

By empowering local cooperatives, enhancing institutional linkages (e.g., between NGOs, the Ministry of Agriculture, and research institutions), and embedding training into community structures, the interventions lay the groundwork for sustained transformation. They foster a more inclusive, coordinated, and market-oriented olive sector. In the long term, these efforts can inform national policies, improve rural extension services, promote agri-entrepreneurship, and reduce dependency on short-term donor-led initiatives. Thus, the project serves as a catalyst for structural improvements in the rural economy and agricultural governance.

4.20 Analysis of Gender, Age, and Climate Change Considerations by Governorate

Table 16: Analysis of Gender, Age, and Climate Change Considerations by Governorate

Governorate	Gender Considerations	Age Considerations	Climate Change Considerations	Recommended Interventions
Irbid	Increased participation of women in production and marketing activities; support for women in cooperatives.	Targeting youth for training and adoption of modern technologies.	Introduce drought-resistant olive varieties and water-saving irrigation methods.	- Conduct women-focused training on cooperative leadership and marketing.- Organize youth workshops on digital agriculture tools.- Distribute drought-resistant olive saplings and promote drip irrigation systems.
Ajloun	Enhancing rural women's role in packaging and marketing.	Tailored programs for young men and women to increase employment opportunities.	Implement soil conservation and rainwater harvesting techniques to address rainfall variability and erosion.	- Develop women-led olive packaging and branding centers.- Provide entrepreneurship training for youth.- Establish rainwater harvesting and terracing projects to reduce soil erosion.
Mafrq	Supporting the integration of women in agricultural value chains, especially in remote rural areas.	Focus on older adults to transfer traditional knowledge alongside modern technology adoption.	Promote heat and drought tolerant olive varieties and climate-smart irrigation systems.	- Create mobile training units for women in remote villages.- Facilitate intergenerational knowledge exchange programs.- Pilot climate-smart irrigation and introduce heat-tolerant olive cultivars.

Prioritization and Evaluation of Key Interventions for Olive Value Chain Development

Table 17: Prioritization and Evaluation of Key Interventions for Olive Value Chain Development

Intervention	Priority	Ease of Implementation	Cost	Primary Target Group	Notes
Training programs integrating gender and youth	High	High	Medium	Women producers, rural youth	Empowers women and youth in olive production, processing, marketing, and leadership roles through tailored, inclusive training.
Developing sustainable agricultural practices and climate adaptation	High	Medium	High	Farmers in drought areas (especially Mafraq)	Introduces drought-resistant olive varieties, efficient irrigation, and climate-smart techniques to improve resilience.
Strengthening local cooperatives with focus on age and gender diversity	Medium	Medium	Medium	Cooperative boards and members in all three governorates	Builds governance capacity of cooperatives and promotes inclusive participation of youth and women in decision-making and value chain activities.

Expected Outputs/Deliverables

- Integrated Analysis Report: A detailed report outlining how gender, age, and climate change considerations are integrated into the olive value chain analysis in the targeted governorates.
- Prioritized Interventions Matrix: A prioritized list of recommended interventions ranked by priority, ease of implementation, and cost, with explanations on how these factors are addressed.
- Stakeholder Action Recommendations: Practical recommendations for relevant stakeholders to implement programs that incorporate these considerations to achieve sustainable development.

Conclusion

Integrating gender, age, and climate change considerations is a crucial factor for the successful development of the olive value chain in Irbid, Ajloun, and Mafraq. The recommended interventions provide a comprehensive framework to support all targeted groups, enhance production sustainability, and increase competitiveness in local and regional markets.

Throughout the assessment process, several key findings emerged regarding policy constraints that limit smallholders' access to markets. These include limited access to financing, insufficient extension services, fragmented supply chains, and regulatory challenges. Stakeholder consultations across the three governorates highlighted the need for more inclusive policies, improved infrastructure, capacity-building programs tailored to women and youth, and enhanced support for climate-resilient agricultural practices.

The inputs and recommendations from local stakeholders were instrumental in ensuring that proposed interventions reflect on-the-ground realities. Their insights emphasized the importance of localized solutions that consider the specific socio-economic and environmental contexts of each governorate.

Ultimately, these findings offer a roadmap for designing targeted, inclusive, and sustainable interventions that not only address current barriers but also empower smallholders to thrive within a more resilient and competitive olive value chain. By aligning future actions with these practical insights, policymakers and development actors can ensure greater impact and long-term success.

Summary of Overall Findings

- **Regulatory and Legal Barriers:** Complex procedures affecting smallholders' ease of access to markets, especially regarding licenses and administrative processes.
- **Insufficient Financial and Technical Support:** Limited funding and advisory services needed by smallholders to develop and improve their production and product marketing.
- **Weak Infrastructure:** Inadequate storage, transportation, and packaging facilities negatively impacting product quality and marketing opportunities.
- **Gender Age, and Climate Change Considerations:** The need to include women and youth in production and marketing activities. Tailored support is needed to address their specific roles and vulnerabilities, especially in the face of increasing climate-related challenges.

Stakeholders' Inputs and Recommendations

- **Government Entities:** The necessity to simplify regulatory procedures and provide financial incentives for smallholders.
- **Farmers:** The need for continuous training and specialized technical support programs tailored to different age groups.
- **Non-Governmental Organizations:** The importance of integrating gender considerations and providing equal opportunities for women and youth in the value chain.

- **Private Sector:** Recommended expanding marketing channels and building partnerships that connect small-scale producers with local retailers and export markets.

Final Recommendations

- Simplify regulatory and licensing procedures to ease market entry for smallholders and reduce administrative burdens that hinder value chain participation.
- Design and implement inclusive capacity-building programs that provide technical, business, and marketing training tailored to different age groups and responsive to gender dynamics.
- Invest in rural infrastructure by establishing modern storage, packaging, and processing facilities to reduce post-harvest losses and improve product quality.
- Foster multi-stakeholder collaboration by strengthening partnerships among government institutions, cooperatives, NGOs, and private sector actors to ensure coordinated planning and knowledge sharing.
- Mainstream climate change adaptation into agricultural support strategies by promoting climate-resilient practices and technologies suitable for drought-prone and vulnerable areas.

5. Expected Outputs

- A comprehensive assessment report on policy constraints to smallholders' market access in the governorates of Irbid, Ajloun, and Mafraq.
- A summary of stakeholders' inputs and recommendations.
- A proposed action plan based on final recommendations, reflecting identified priorities.

Conclusion

This report forms a comprehensive framework for following up on the development of policies supporting smallholders in the olive sector within the targeted areas by listening to stakeholders' feedback and discussing the findings objectively and effectively. It aims to enhance capacities, improve infrastructure, and provide a fair and sustainable marketing environment for smallholders.

Chapter Five: Market access policy report

The olive sector holds significant economic, social, and environmental value in Jordan, particularly in the regions of Irbid, Ajloun, and Mafraq, which are known for their rich agricultural heritage and high-quality olive and olive oil production (FAO & EBRD, 2023; ICARDA, 2023). Despite its great potential, the olive value chain continues to face multiple challenges related to market access at the local, regional, and international levels (ILO, 2022; CBI, 2022).

This report aims to provide an in-depth analysis of the policies and regulations influencing market access within the olive value chain across these regions. It focuses on regulatory and trade barriers, infrastructure weaknesses, limited incentives, and gaps in financing and knowledge. Additionally, the report identifies key opportunities to enhance competitiveness and sustainability through supportive policies and targeted strategic interventions. (FAO & Ministry of Agriculture, 2023).

Special attention is given to the role of **women and youth** in the value chain, recognizing their vital contributions to production, innovation, and agribusiness entrepreneurship. The report also aligns its analysis with the broader context of the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**—particularly those related to poverty reduction, gender empowerment, food security, and the sustainable use of natural resources.

By providing actionable and practical recommendations, this report aims to support policymakers, producers, cooperatives, and development partners in designing inclusive policies and interventions that enhance the competitiveness of the olive value chain and contribute to inclusive and sustainable economic growth.

5.1 Gap and Constraint Analysis in the Olive Value Chain

1. Gaps and Weaknesses

- Weak technical and financial support for smallholders.
- Inadequate infrastructure related to storage, transportation, and packaging.
- Low participation of women and youth in olive-related economic activities.
- Production affected by climate change, especially drought and changes in rainfall patterns.

2. Policy and Regulatory Constraints

- Complex regulatory procedures affecting market access.
- Lack of financial incentives and government support for smallholders.
- Poor coordination among relevant stakeholders.

5.2 Stakeholders' Inputs

Table 18: Stakeholders' Inputs

Stakeholder Group	Key Inputs and Recommendations	Contribution to Implementation
Government Entities	Simplify procedures, provide financial incentives, and enhance infrastructure.	Enact policies, allocate funding, streamline regulations, and invest in public infrastructure.
Farmers	Provide ongoing training, specialized technical support, and address different age groups.	Adopt best practices, participate in training programs, and share feedback on support effectiveness.
NGOs	Integrate gender considerations and provide equal opportunities for women and youth.	Facilitate inclusive programs, advocate for underrepresented groups, and monitor equity outcomes.
Private Sector	Develop marketing channels and connect producers with local and regional markets.	Invest in supply chains, offer platforms for sales, and build partnerships with producers.

5.3 Integration of Gender, Age, and Climate Change Considerations

Table 19: Integration of Gender, Age, and Climate Change Considerations

Governorate	Gender Considerations	Age Considerations	Climate Change Considerations	Lead Actor / Responsible
Irbid	Enhance women's participation in production and marketing.	Target youth with training and modern technologies.	Address drought impacts with resistant technologies.	Ministry of Agriculture, Local NGOs, Women's Cooperatives, Youth Training Centers
Ajloun	Support women's roles in packaging and marketing.	Special programs for youth to increase employment opportunities.	Improve sustainable agricultural practices.	Agricultural Extension Directorate, Vocational Training Institutes, Environmental NGOs
Maftaq	Integrate women in value chains, especially in remote areas.	Engage older adults to transfer traditional knowledge alongside technology adoption.	Adapt to drought and high temperatures.	Community-Based Organizations (CBOs), Research Centers, Climate Resilience Projects

5.3 Recommended Interventions

Table 20: Recommended Interventions

Intervention	Priority	Ease of Implementation	Cost	Expected Impact
Integrated training programs targeting gender and youth	High	High	Medium	Increased women/youth participation; enhanced skills and employability
Developing sustainable agricultural practices to address climate change	High	Medium	High	Improved resilience to climate events; sustainable productivity
Improving infrastructure for storage and packaging	Medium	Medium	Medium	Reduced post-harvest losses; improved product quality
Strengthening partnerships among stakeholders	Medium	High	Low	Enhanced coordination and resource sharing; better policy alignment
Cost Legend:	• Low = Less than \$50,000 • Medium = \$50,000–\$200,000 • High = More than \$200,000			

5.4 Policy Alignment Report: Olive Value Chain Development in Irbid, Ajloun, and Mafraq (With Focus on Women and Youth)

- This report aims to align recommendations for the development of the **olive value chain** in the governorates of **Irbid, Ajloun, and Mafraq** with relevant national policies in Jordan.
- It focuses on enhancing the participation of **women and youth** across the value chain: cultivation, processing, marketing, and entrepreneurship.

5.5 Key Challenges in the Olive Value Chain (Relevant to Women and Youth)

Table 21: Key Challenges in the Olive Value Chain (Relevant to Women and Youth)

Challenge	Root Cause	Impact
1. Limited participation of women and youth in agricultural and post-harvest activities	Cultural norms; lack of inclusive policies and targeted engagement programs	Underutilization of labor force; reduced diversity and innovation in value chain
2. Lack of technical and vocational training in modern technologies	Inadequate training infrastructure; limited outreach to rural areas	Low productivity; weak adoption of modern practices among young and female farmers
3. Limited access to funding for small entrepreneurial initiatives	Stringent loan requirements; lack of financial products tailored for youth/women	Stalled business growth; reduced income-generating opportunities
4. Weak marketing capabilities and limited access to local and export markets	Lack of training; insufficient networks and market information	Low profitability; inability to compete or scale production
5. Absence of cooperative platforms for small-scale women and youth producers	Lack of institutional support; fragmentation among producers	Missed opportunities for collective bargaining, resource sharing, and market access

5.6 Relevant National Policies

1. Agriculture and Olive Sector

- o National Plan for Sustainable Agriculture (2022–2025)
- o Economic Modernization Vision – Agriculture Sector
- o Olive Value Chain Strategy (Ministry of Agriculture)

2. Women's Empowerment

- o National Strategy for Women (2020–2025)
- o Economic Modernization Vision – Empowerment Pillar

3. Youth Empowerment

- o National Youth Strategy (2019–2025)
- o National Employment Plan

4. Entrepreneurship and Local Employment

- o National SME Development Strategy
- o Governorate Development Strategy

5.7 Alignment of Recommendations with National Policies

Table 22: Alignment of Recommendations with National Policies

#	Recommendation	Target Group	Aligned National Policies	Policy Objectives/Goals	Priority Level
1	Support women-led projects for olive-based product manufacturing (e.g., soap, cosmetics)	Women	– National Strategy for Women– SME Development Strategy– Economic Modernization Vision	Promote women’s economic participation and entrepreneurship	High
2	Provide youth training in operating modern olive presses and digital agriculture tools	Youth	– National Youth Strategy	Build youth capacities in agri-tech and enhance employment prospects	High
3	Establish youth and women cooperatives for olive collection and marketing	Women and Youth	– Governorate Development Strategy	Strengthen rural economies through collective action and inclusion	Medium
4	Promote women-managed packaging and labeling services for olive products	Women	– Women's Empowerment Strategy	Enable women’s control over value-added processes in agricultural production	Medium
5	Deliver agricultural extension services tailored to rural women farmers	Women	– Gender Mainstreaming in Agriculture Policy	Ensure gender-sensitive service delivery in agricultural development	High
6	Facilitate small grants and micro-loans for olive-related entrepreneurship	Women and Youth	– SME Strategy	Expand access to finance for small enterprises and promote inclusive economic growth	High

General Recommendations

- Actively engage women and youth in planning, decision-making, and implementation of agricultural development programs to ensure their needs and perspectives are fully integrated.
- Target public and donor-funded support programs to underserved areas based on value chain analysis that identify gaps, bottlenecks, and high-impact opportunities.
- Promote and strengthen public-private-civil partnerships to ensure long-term impact and sustainability of interventions.

Suggested Implementing Institutions

- Ministry of Agriculture
- Ministry of Social Development
- Ministry of Labor
- Ministry of Digital Economy and Entrepreneurship
- Jordan Cooperative Corporation
- Development and Employment Fund
- Microfinance institutions
- Local women and youth associations

Report Outputs

- Comprehensive report outlining gaps, constraints, and stakeholders' inputs.
- Prioritized list of proposed interventions based on priority and cost.
- Recommendations for capacity-building programs focusing on gender, age, and climate change.
- Proposed action plan to enhance smallholders' market access.

5.8 Policy Alignment Report: Olive Value Chain Development in Irbid, Ajloun, and Mafraq (With Focus on Women and Youth)

- This report aims to align recommendations for the development of the **olive value chain** in the governorates of **Irbid, Ajloun, and Mafraq** with relevant national policies in Jordan.
- It focuses on enhancing the participation of **women and youth** across the value chain: cultivation, processing, marketing, and entrepreneurship.

Key Challenges in the Olive Value Chain (Relevant to Women and Youth)

1. Limited involvement of women and youth in agricultural and post-harvest activities.
2. Lack of technical and vocational training in modern technologies.
3. Limited access to funding for small entrepreneurial initiatives.
4. Weak marketing capabilities and limited access to local and export markets.
5. Absence of cooperative platforms for small-scale women and youth producers.

Relevant National Policies

1. Agriculture and Olive Sector

- o National Plan for Sustainable Agriculture (2022–2025)
- o Economic Modernization Vision – Agriculture Sector
- o Olive Value Chain Strategy (Ministry of Agriculture)

Women's Empowerment

- o National Strategy for Women (2020–2025)
- o Economic Modernization Vision – Empowerment Pillar

Youth Empowerment

- o National Youth Strategy (2019–2025)
- o National Employment Plan

Entrepreneurship and Local Employment

- o National SME Development Strategy

General Recommendations

- **Strengthen Institutional Coordination and Policy Implementation**
 - Establish a multi-stakeholder coordination platform involving the Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Youth, Ministry of Social Development, and women/youth-led cooperatives to align efforts and monitor progress.
 - Ensure policy coherence between agriculture, employment, gender, and youth strategies at both national and local levels.
- **Promote Inclusive Access to Capacity Building and Training**
 - Develop targeted technical and vocational training programs for women and youth in olive cultivation, processing, quality control, and agribusiness management, in partnership with agricultural colleges and extension services.
 - Integrate digital literacy and climate-smart agricultural practices into training modules.
- **Enhance Access to Finance and Support for Start-ups**
 - Expand access to microfinance and grant programs tailored for youth- and women-led initiatives in the olive value chain.
 - Encourage financial institutions to develop flexible products and services for agricultural entrepreneurship with reduced collateral requirements.
- **Support the Formation and Strengthening of Cooperatives and Producer Groups**
 - Facilitate the establishment of women- and youth-focused cooperatives to improve bargaining power, reduce costs, and access markets and services collectively.
 - Provide capacity-building support for cooperative governance and business planning.
- **Improve Market Access and Value Addition Opportunities**
 - Support women and youth in developing branding, packaging, and e-commerce capabilities to market high-quality olive products locally and internationally.
 - Invest in market linkages through trade fairs, B2B meetings, and partnerships with private sector actors and exporters.
- **Promote Climate Resilience and Sustainability**
 - Integrate environmental sustainability into all stages of the value chain by promoting water-saving irrigation techniques, organic practices, and waste reduction in processing.
 - Raise awareness among young and female farmers on climate change adaptation.
- **Enhance Data Collection and Gender/Youth Monitoring**
 - Develop a monitoring and evaluation system that disaggregates data by gender and age to track participation, impact, and policy effectiveness across the olive value chain.
 - Use findings to inform evidence-based policy adjustments and inclusive programming.

Suggested Implementing Institutions

- Ministry of Agriculture
- Ministry of Social Development
- Ministry of Labor
- Ministry of Digital Economy and Entrepreneurship
- Jordan Cooperative Corporation
- Development and Employment Fund
- Microfinance institutions
- Local women and youth associations

Conclusion

This report provides an integrated framework to develop the olive value chain in Irbid, Ajloun, and Mafraq by addressing existing gaps and constraints and incorporating insights from key stakeholders. The framework emphasizes the critical importance of integrating gender, age, and climate change considerations. Ensuring the inclusion of women and youth helps unlock untapped potential within rural communities, promotes equitable access to resources, and supports long-term social and economic resilience. Similarly, addressing climate change is essential to protect the productivity and sustainability of olive farming in the face of increasing environmental stressors such as water scarcity and rising temperatures.

Collaboration with stakeholders including farmers, cooperatives, local authorities, and private sector actors ensures that the framework is grounded in local realities, aligns with community needs, and fosters shared ownership of solutions. Moving forward, this framework can guide coordinated interventions, inform policy and investment decisions, and support targeted capacity-building initiatives. Its successful implementation will depend on continued stakeholder engagement, adaptive management, and the establishment of monitoring mechanisms to track progress and impact over time.

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