



Tropentag, September 20-22, 2023, hybrid conference
“Competing pathways for equitable food systems transformation:
Trade-offs and synergies”

Positive grounds for agroforestry-based systems in Tunisia to transform to more equitability and inclusiveness

ZIED IDOUDI¹, AYMEN FRIJA¹, VERONIQUE ALARY^{2,1}, MOURAD REKIK¹, HATEM CHEIKH¹

¹*International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA), Tunisia*

²*SELMET, CIRAD, INRAE, Institut Agro, Université Montpellier, France*

Abstract

Agroforestry-based food systems play a critical role in many dryland regions of the world, including Tunisia. These farming systems offer a range of benefits such as diversification of food and income resources for local communities, biodiversity conservation, and environmental resilience. Fig trees, olives, carob, and honey are common features of these Mediterranean agroforestry landscapes, and their produce is a traditional staple in many cuisines. In Tunisia, fig trees are often grown alongside other crops, such as olives, and under agroforestry-based farming systems that integrate crops and trees. However, in the particular case of Kesra region, in central Tunisia, where agroforestry-based farming systems prevail, there are many signs of degradation and environment stress (resources scarcity, poor waste management, biodiversity loss of figs and olives, decreased food resources for bees, declining health of soil, decreased water availability and natural springs, etc.) including market competition. While this system provides a diversity of food products, the opportunity for valorisation outside the usual markets remains also low.

A multistakeholder platform (MSP) engaging the community members of Kesra region around the above problems was set in 2022/2023. The MSP was conceived on the co-building of a shared vision of the local systems over the next decade that fits to the agroecological principles of synergies, economic diversification, social value, and connectivity. Through the MSP, a context-specific sociotechnical innovation bundle was co-designed and being co-implemented as a mean to foster agroecology transformation around the agroforestry-based farming systems in Tunisia. The study shows that an inclusive participatory approach involving food system actors for the co-design of alternative agroforestry systems can lead to co-defining context specific innovations and technologies which offer immense potential for promoting food system transformation towards equity and inclusivity, and provide multiple benefits such as soil conservation, increased biodiversity, and improved food security

Keywords: Agroforestry, collective action, food systems, innovation bundles, multistakeholder platform, social inclusion