Empowering smallholder olive growers in northwest Tunisia through an agroecological business model

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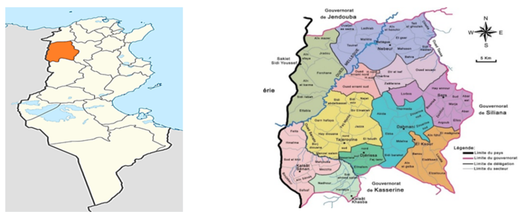
1 Introduction

Olive cultivation is the most important agroecosystem in Tunisia. This agroecosystem is facing tremendous challenges, including climate change, loss of biodiversity, environmental pollution and resource degradation, as well as increasing price volatility with harmful implications for farmers' incomes, livelihoods, and rural development. Agroecology is considered actually as the mainstream model for transforming agriculture toward more sustainable and resilient agri-food systems within the given economic and political context.

2 Methodology

An inclusive and participative approach based on workshops with the main stakeholders in the olive oil value chain was conducted. In addition, a business model canvas (BMC), followed by the application of the Business Agroecology Criteria Tool (B-ACT) was used.

Study area: Ellés, Kef governorate, Tunisia



3 Results

The agroecological assessment results show that six principles specifically, co-creation of knowledge, social value and diets, fairness, connectivity, land and natural resource governance, and participation are integrated within the existing BMC, but hold significant promise for enhancement within an upgraded BMC.

The upgraded BMC represents a transformative vision addressing the constraints of the current model, emphasizing collaborative endeavors, agroecological practices, and strategic partnerships, as well as an accelerator to catalyze agroecological transitions. It focuses on economic diversification, niche market penetration, and heritage preservation, requiring significant investment but promising substantial returns.

The current business model shows a various weaknesses

the low productivity of the olive tree	• Environmental, agronomic, and socio-economic aspects. • the lack of technicity of olive growers
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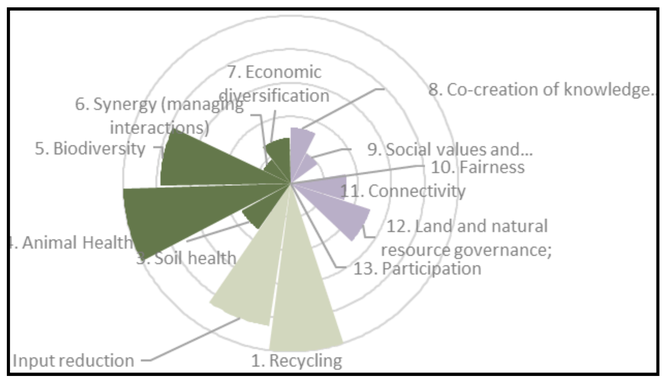
the lack of collective action	• Abscence of farmers' association to promote the Elles olive oil.
Inefficiency of marketing strategy to sell olive oil	• the lack of appellation of origin for the Elles olive oil. • the low participation of olive growers in the policy making

Business model's current alignment with HLPE (2019) agroecological principles. : B-ACT tool

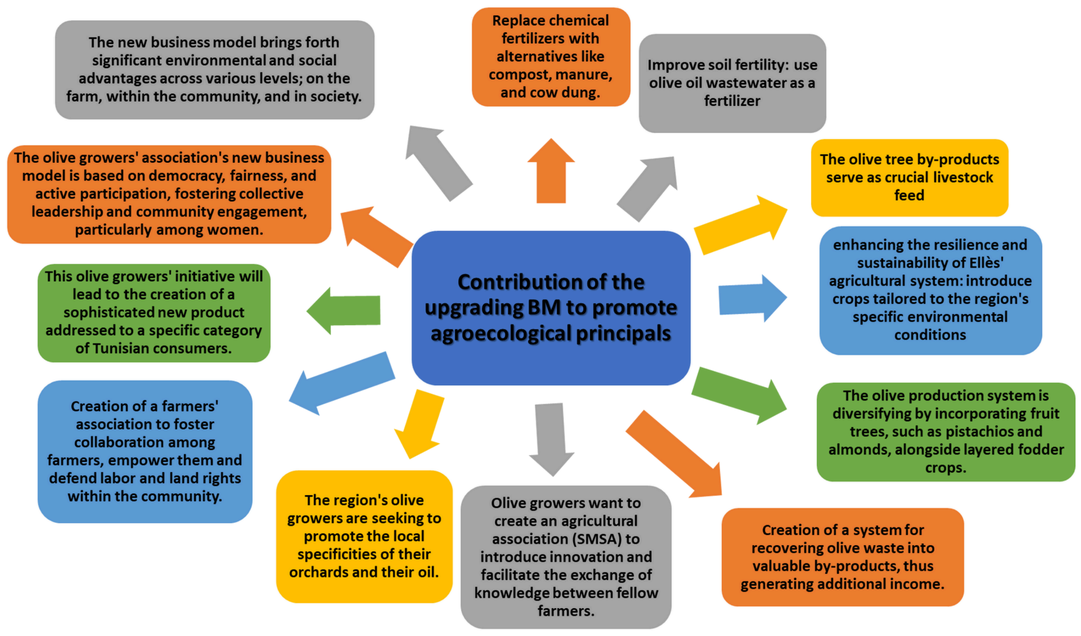


ACT score by cathegory

1. Improve resource efficiency	92,9%
2. Strengthen resilience	51,3%
3. Secure social equity	22,8%

Integration of agroecological practices; Main upgrade activities

01	02	03	04	05
Creation of the OH producers association (SMSA)	**Adoption of agroecological practices**	**Implementation of the controlled designation of origin (CDO))**	**Modernization of OH production in SMSA**	**Olive oil packaging and marketing (point of sale)**
Bring together olive oil producers.	combination of crops, pruning, compost...	CDO for olive oil in the community of Elles	Ensuring high quality olive oil extraction in the community of Elles	Design modern packaging for controlled olive oil from the Elles olive producers association Creation of a modern sales store within SMSA



4 Conclusion

This new business model, based on the upgraded plan, offers a comprehensive roadmap for Ellès' olive oil sector by integrating sustainability, economic growth, and community engagement. This transformational and collaborative initiative involves multiple stakeholders, reflecting a shared vision to enhance Ellès olive oil into an agroecological business model.The objective of the upgrated business model is to encourage the olive producers' association (SMSA) to produce a labeled olive oil to improve their revenues, enhance livelihoods and create a system of values that includes geographic location.

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