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## SAHARA FOREST PROJECT - PRODUCTION OF CLIMATE SMART VEGETABLES IN JORDAN – SCALE UP OPPORTUNITIES

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The Sahara Forest Project produces climate smart vegetables in desert areas using only renewable energy and saltwater. The innovative concept combines existing environmental technologies in new ways to obtain premium quality and high yield horticulture crops, while at the same time restore the land around the farms with vegetation. The technologies used are, among others, Reverse Osmosis desalination, photovoltaic solar cells, saltwater cooled greenhouses and modern digital irrigation and climate control.

The facility in Jordan was opened by HM King Abdullah II in 2017, and the following 3 year trial period shows that the concept is scalable in Jordan. The project is ready for commercial scale up for production both for export of vegetables to Europe, and for the domestic vegetables market in Jordan to replace imported vegetables from. This will create more than 150 jobs locally in Aqaba, and many more in connected agricultural services.

In order to achieve this goal of large scale roll out in 2021 and 2022, it is vital that the Jordanian government and the Sahara Forest Project work together to realize the saltwater pipeline to the new land in Aqaba assigned to Sahara Forest Project by Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority (ASEZA). The land area for large scale deployment is located 4,5 km from the Red Sea coast, just south of the Aqaba airport. An agreement with Aqaba Development Cooperation (ADC) was signed in March 2020 during the Norwegian State visit to finance and build the saltwater pipeline to the Sahara Forest Project location. We appreciate the involvement of the Ministry of Water and Irrigation to support ADC in this work, particularly to secure the finance of the pipeline. ADC has committed to finance and build the pipeline up to a cost of 1,2 mill JOD. SFP commits to buy the saltwater needed for the production of the vegetables.

Additionally, Al Hussein University and Sahara Forest Project joint training program for female engineers in Jordan is a Crown Prince Foundation Initiative to enhance the participation of female engineers in the labour force in Jordan. The *Upskilling Program in Food Security and Agricultural Technology* aims at developing the skills and competencies of young Jordanian graduates interested in working in innovative and sustainable agri-tech and food production in response to Jordan's water, energy, and climate action priorities. In the pilot phase that took place between October 2020 – October 2021, 30 female engineers were targeted through the partnership between Al Hussein Technical University and the Sahara Forest Project in Aqaba.

### SAHARA FOREST PROJECT BACKGROUND IN JORDAN:

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- 2010 – HM King Abdullah II invites Sahara Forest Project to Jordan.
- 2010-2017. Feasibility studies, pilot phase and testing conducted.
- 2017 – The Demonstration Center in Aqaba is opened by HM King Abdullah II and HRH Crown Prince of Norway.
- 2017-2021 SFP proves that the project is ready for scale up in Jordan.
- 2020. SFP works with Ministry of Water and Irrigation to develop the Feasibility Study for saltwater pipeline to SFP facility.
- March 2020. Agreement with ADC for new land area and pipeline to the new land area.

- SFP and Hussein Technical University partner up to train female students seeking careers in the agricultural sector in Jordan.
- March 2021. First delivery of vegetables from Jordan to Bama in Norway.
- September 2021. Second delivery of vegetables from Jordan to Bama in Norway
- Scale up of facility dependent on the pipeline being constructed by ADC

