

## Municipal Business Incubators in Madaba

A pioneer experiment for an eco-business park and economic recovery in Jordan

### Overview

In an effort to drive sustainable recovery from the impacts of the pandemic, Madaba municipality in Jordan has succeeded in attracting technical and financial support to establish business incubators that will accelerate the growth of entrepreneurial activities in sustainable agriculture.

The establishment of the business incubators serve as a pioneer experiment for a new model of productive eco-business park that will drive economic recovery while contributing to the local sustainable development goals of Madaba in the fields of agriculture, environment, and clean energy.



### Background

Tourism and agriculture are Madaba's main economic sectors. The pandemic coupled with the water shortage crisis have exacerbated existing challenges in the municipality resulting in its ranking as the second highest in unemployment rates in Jordan. In an effort to address this challenging situation, Madaba has succeeded in mobilising the support from the UNICEF-funded Azem Project to implement a pioneer eco-business park. The municipality has partnered with the non-profit organisation 'Keys for Sustainable Development', which supports entrepreneurs and fresh graduates through capacity building and job creation.

### Objectives

The project aligns with the municipality's local development strategy in terms of capitalizing on Madaba's competitive advantage in agriculture. Other objectives include:

- Recovery from the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic by promoting entrepreneurial activities and job creation in the agriculture sector.
- Achieving Zero-waste agriculture and circularity: composting and waste from the planned fish farm will be transformed into organic fertilizers
- Promoting employment in non-saturated economic sectors, i.e. agriculture



### Activities

- Mobilising funds from Azem project and technical support from the Business Development Centre and the non-for-profit 'Keys for Sustainable Development'.
- Signing an MoU between the project partners, which are the Business Development Centre (BDC), Madaba Governorate, and the non-profit 'Keys for Sustainable Development' While the municipality will be providing the land for the project centre along with water and electric utilities and infrastructure services, the other partners will purchase and providing the necessary equipment.
- Conducting trainings targeting unemployed youth as well as entrepreneurs from the local community to improve their qualifications and chances in competing in the labour market. The capacity building focused on technical topics such as hydroponics, water conservation and environment-friendly agricultural practices, as well as project management. Trainings also targeted municipal teams focusing on the techniques of agriculture and modern soil treatment to exploit the vacant municipal land plots.
- Implementing six agricultural projects that employ methods of water harvesting, hydroponics, and composting.
- Digital marketing of products created by agricultural entrepreneurs at the eco-business park
- Establishing an educational forum on sustainable agriculture and innovative agricultural practices
- Providing short-term employment through cash-for-work modality

### Effects

- Driving economic recovery through job creation and promoting entrepreneurship in agricultural activities
- Promoting gender-sensitive employment and environment-friendly practices in the field of agriculture and urban gardening
- Contributing to achieving local food security and increasing the green areas in the municipality
- Improving the wellbeing of the local community by enhancing food security, environmental protection and creating income generating activities



### Conclusions

This pioneer model of productive eco-business park is replicable, entailing that the model can be domesticated in other areas and municipalities. Ensuring the sustainable impacts of this project requires multiple-level endorsement by the government and municipality as well as the partnership of competent organisations to mobilise the necessary technical know-how. In Madaba municipality, the project was well integrated in the municipal plan for local economic development in the sustainable agriculture sector.

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#### Further information

BDC: The Azem Project, funded by UNICEF implemented the first Agroecology Business Park - an incubator for youth in Madaba  
Article, 3 March 2022

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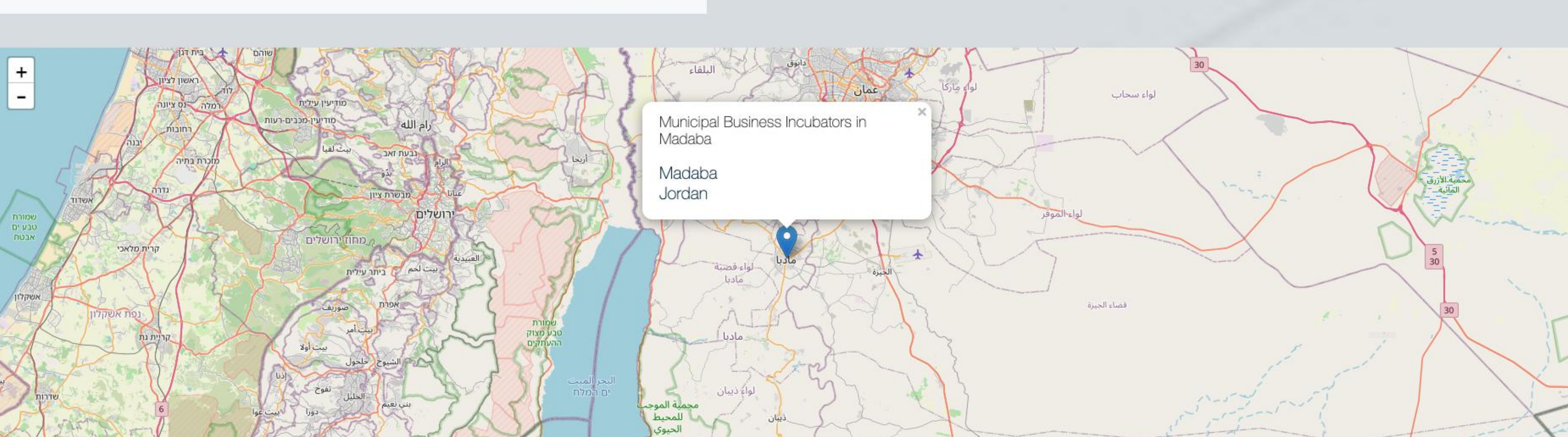
Mohammad Al-Jazi, Business Development Centre - Jordan

### Images

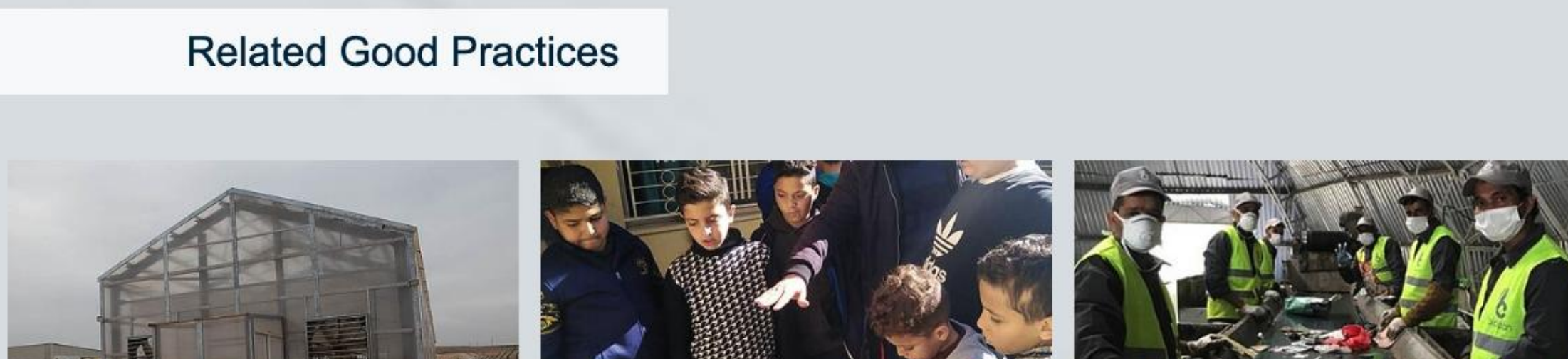


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