



## FACT SHEET

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# Morocco Economic Competitiveness Project



*The Tajini stand at the 2011 U.S. Fancy Food show, where the Moroccan Couscous sauce competed with other ethnic foods. Photo Credit: DAI)*

## CONTEXT

Morocco is a water-scarce country confronted with dwindling groundwater reserves and a strong dependence on rain-fed agriculture. Only 15 percent of the total agricultural area is irrigated, creating a major development challenge in light of the erratic levels of rainfall. With cumbersome business processes and a large informal workforce, the country must overcome critical competitiveness challenges to increase flows of trade and investment

## USAID RESPONSE

The Morocco Economic Competitiveness (MEC) Project represented an integrated approach to economic development with an emphasis on alleviating impediments to broad based growth and prosperity. With a geographic focus on the regions of Doukkala-Abda and the Oriental, the project improved agricultural production, promoted investment, and grew new markets. The project had three main components:

- **Improve the Business Environment:** In support of the Government of Morocco's (GOM) business reform agenda, the MEC Project worked to reduce the regulatory and procedural transaction costs confronting private businesses. At the regional level, the MEC Project improved private sector advocacy and developed web-based platforms to streamline business procedures, thus decreasing the costs of doing business in Morocco.
- **Increase Efficiency of Agricultural Water Use:** With the goal of increasing agricultural yields, while using less water, the MEC Project introduced new technologies and procedures for saving water to economic partners including public agencies, small holder farmers, cooperatives and SMEs.
- **Develop the Local Workforce:** A strong workforce is

## QUICK FACTS

- **Project Name:** Morocco Economic Competitiveness Project
- **Project Duration:** December 2009- November 2013
- **Program Goal:** to advance Moroccan initiatives for peaceful reform
- **Project Objective:** to strengthen Moroccan trade & investment capacity

critical to economic competitiveness. The MEC Project delivered on-the-job training for agro-processing firms, trained export certification auditors, and worked to improve the conditions and benefits for day-labor agricultural workers.

## **ACHIEVEMENTS**

- Reduced the time involved in registering a business in the Oriental and Doukkala-Abda regions by five days on average, which represents a 30% reduction since 2011.
- Facilitated the creation of Morocco's first Regional Committee for Business Environment.
- \$54 million in increased farm revenue due to improved water productivity.
- Converted over 367 hectares to water efficient drip irrigation in cooperation with the Ministry of Agriculture.
- 23 agricultural export auditors certified in ISO 22000 (organic certification).
- Assisted Endeavor Global to become operational in Morocco (high-impact entrepreneurship).
- Launched two innovative cell phone applications (market price information & irrigation advisory service).