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AGRO-INNOVATION, FOOD QUALITY AND SAFETY

Partnership and capacity building in the date sector in Tunisia: the contribution of support organizations

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Outline

Introduction

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Economic indicators of agriculture and agrifood in Tunisia

- Decline in the contribution of agriculture in GDP ↘
- Low productivity compared to international average ↘
- Accentuation of the food balance deficit ↘
- The workforce working in the agriculture and agri-food sector is down ↘
- Low level of qualification ↘

The challenges of agriculture

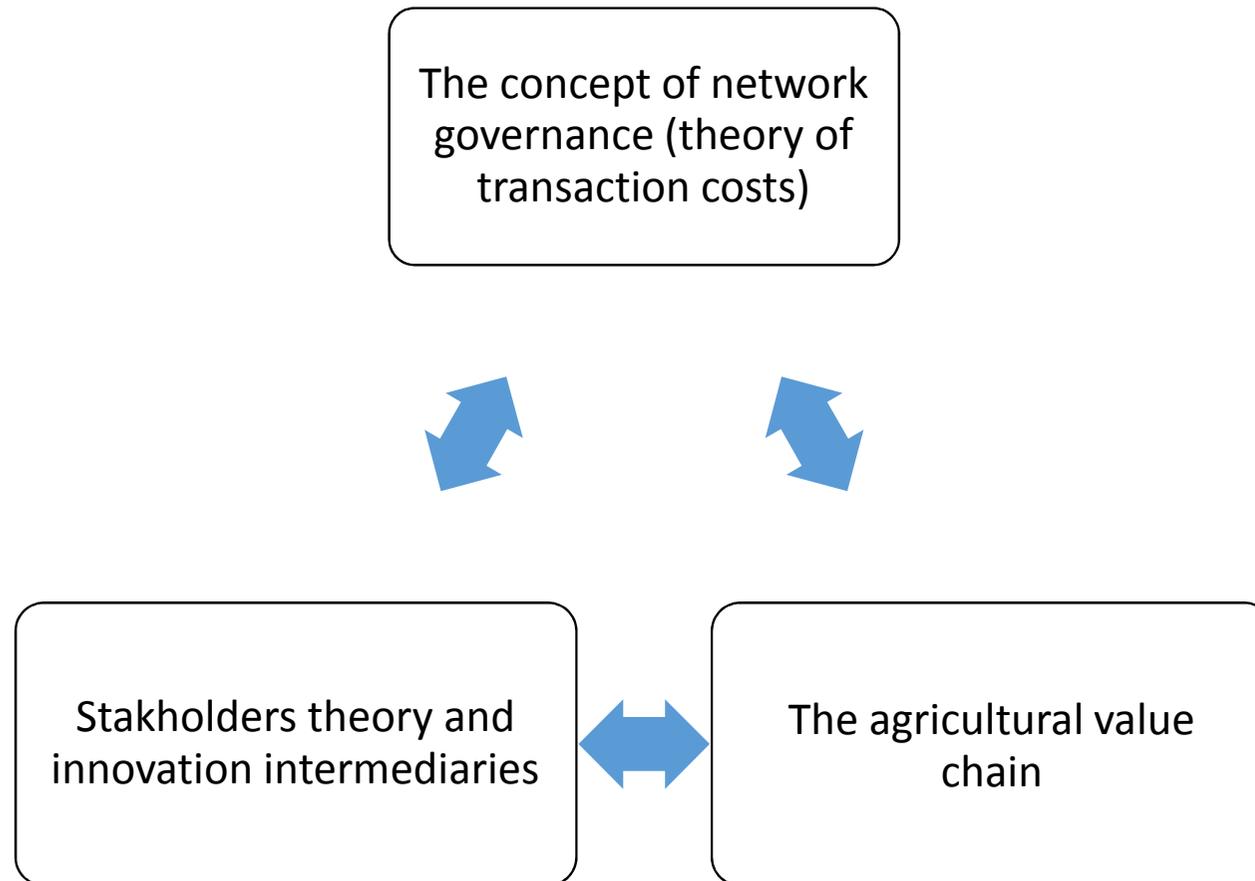
- Adapting agriculture to climate change and resources depletion
- Choose strategies to face international competition and to ensure safety and security
- **Strengthen the capacity of small producers** and fight against **fragmentation** of the value chains
- Ameliorate coordination between actors (public, private, NGO) to improve the performance of agriculture and agrifood
- Enhance capacity building of the agricultural sector

Research objectives

How to develop a network where actors coordinate actions together?
What is the contribution of support organizations to strengthening the network cohesion?

How to ensure sustainable value creation and innovation ?
How to ensure the stability of the network?

Theoretical framework



Theoretical framework

Theory of transaction costs: The concept of hybrid forms and intermediate coordination modalities (Coase, Williamson 1985)

Organizational network governance: ensuring a balance between the objectives of the members and the achievement of collective action (Forgues et al 2006, Pack 2004)

The importance of a central link in the inter-organizational network (Lambert and Tellier ,2015) to ensure stability of network

The concept of Value Chain in agriculture and agrifood

The value chain in agriculture and agrifood (Gereffi 1994, Gereffi et al. 2006)

- Defining a **common objective should** be pursued by all members of the inter-organizational network in order to encourage cooperation and reduce the risk of opportunistic behavior

The specificity of the chain value in developing countries (Ferris et al 2014, Mishra and Key, 2018)

- Informal sector, small farmers and difficulties to access to finance

Support organizations as innovation intermediaries?

Innovation intermediaries

*« Actors and platforms that positively influence sustainability transition processes by **linking actors and activities** (...) in order to create momentum for socio-technical system change, to create new collaborations, ideas and markets, »*
(Kivima et al. , 2019)

*Organization or body that acts as an agent or broker in any aspect of the **innovation process between two or more parties***
(Klerkx and Leeuwis, 2008)

The role of Intermediaries (Support organizations)

Strategic aspects

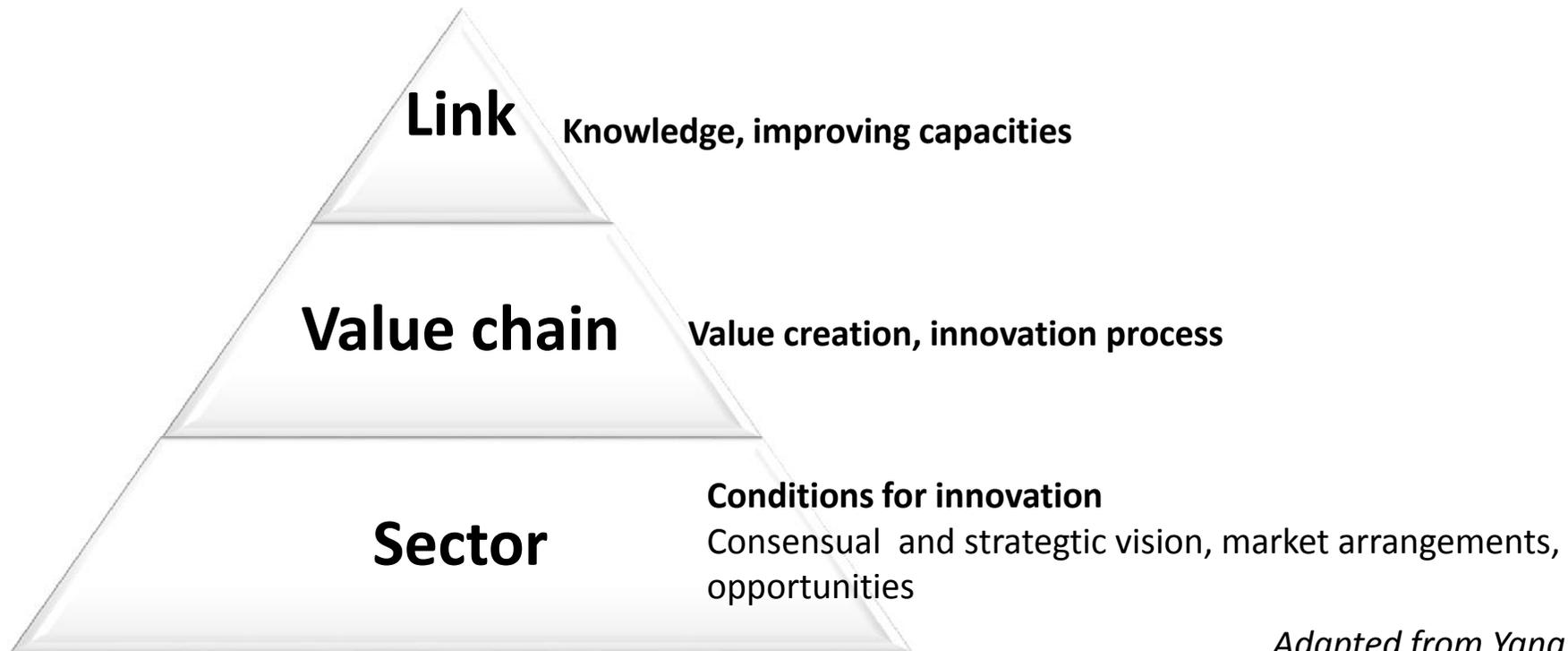
Intermediaries carry out many functions in innovation process, networking and the clarification of the consensual strategic vision (Kilelu et al., 2013)

Operational aspects

Intermediaries help to bring compatibility and co-evolution between technical, social and economic dimensions of farming (Yang et al., 2014).

Intermediaries play a key role in the emerging innovation process and how it will be sustainable

Innovation intermediaries



Adapted from Yang et al. (2014)

Methodology

Approach

- Exploratory Qualitative analysis
- An exploratory interview guide to determine the contribution of support organizations in improving the date value chain in Tunisia (15 Support organizations)

Object

- Positioning vision (market, quality, price)
- Different types of intervention (functions, links, interactions between support organizations)
- Determine the matrix of relationships between partners
- The contribution of support organizations in strategic and operational aspects

Support organizations interviewed

GIFruit

Public actor
(representatives of the
administration, of
farmers union and agro-
industrial union)

**Coordination and
management of
interfaces**

DGPA

Public actor
(Under the Ministry
of Agriculture)

Production

UTAP

Farmers' union

Production

CEPEX

Public actor

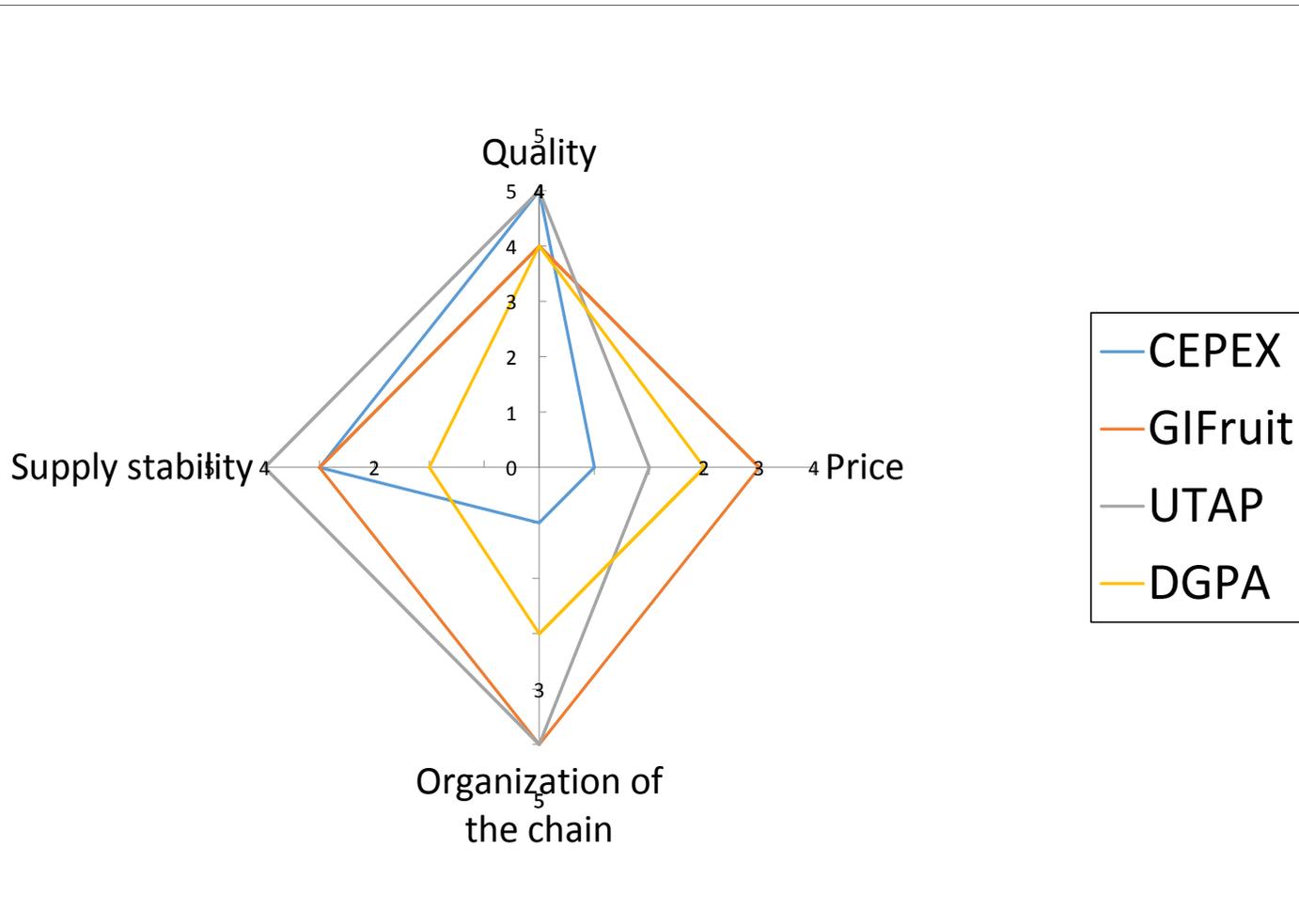
Export

Results and recommendations

Typology of support organizations with regard to function and chain link

	Research and Development	Quality	Formation	Funding and promotion	Union	Coordination		
						<i>Establishment</i>	<i>Implementation</i>	<i>Evaluation</i>
Production	GIFruit	GIFruit	GIFruit	DGPA	UTAP	GIFruit	GIFruit	GIFruit
	DGPA					DGPA		
Collect		CEPEX	GIFruit CEPEX			CEPEX	GIFruit	CEPEX
Packaging		GIFruit	GIFruit	GIFruit		GIFruit	GIFruit	GIFruit
Exportation	CEPEX	CEPEX	CEPEX					

Assessment of the positioning of the date Product



Heterogeneity

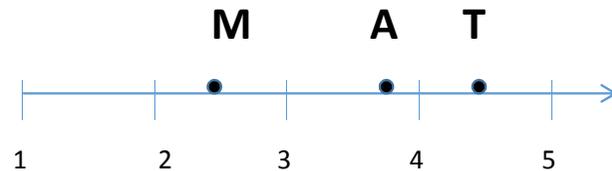
in some answers

concerning the Tunisian product positioning with regard

to most criteria: Price, Supply stability and Chain organization

Benchmarking tunisian Quality product

Quality axis



A: Algeria
M: Morocco
T : Tunisia

CONSENSUS in the answers concerning the qualitative positioning of the different Maghreb countries

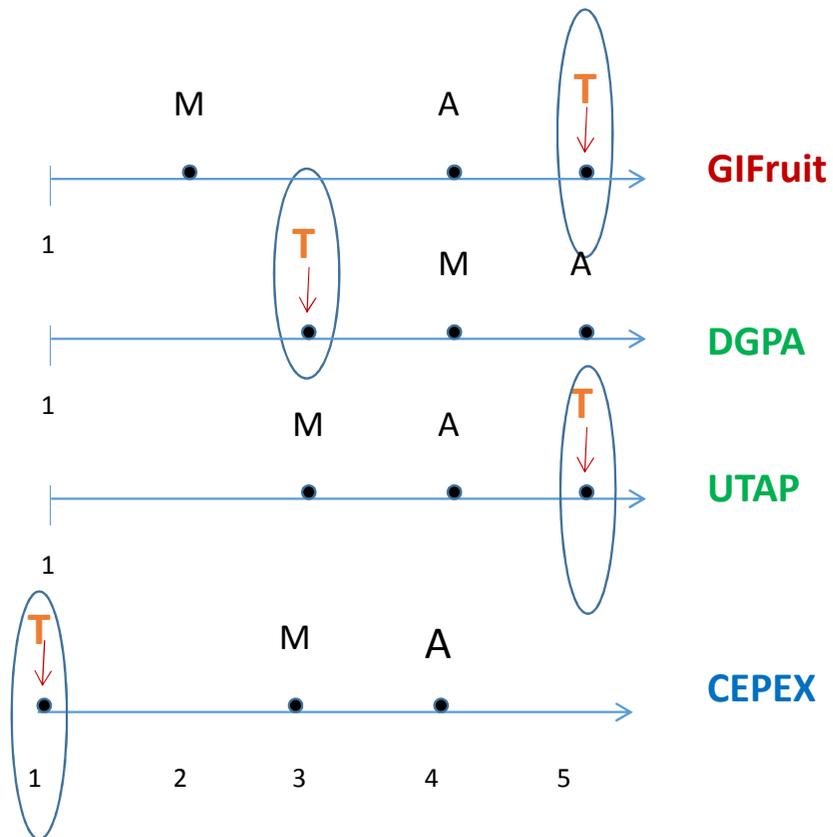
Traceability of tunisian date

GIFruit	DGPA	UTAP	CEPEX
Partial: Only in packaging stage	Partial: Only in production stage	-	No
Same response: existent traceability system is Efficient, necessary, credible but insuffisant			

↓ contradiction

Interviews revealed a **lack of coherence** in information reported with regard to traceability of Tunisian product

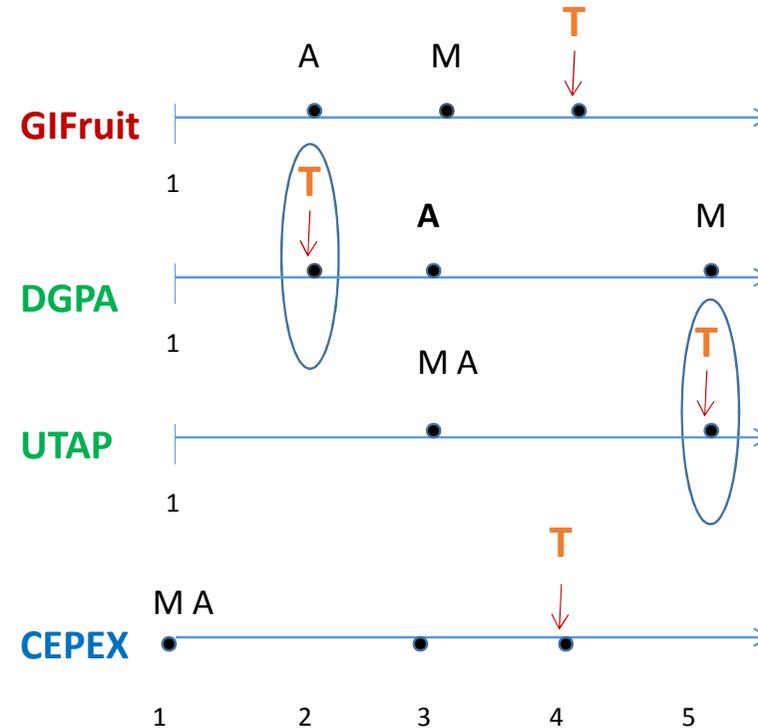
Benchmarking the supply stability



**Unclear
positioning of
Tunisian product
among supply
stability**

Benchmarking the chain organization

**Unclear positioning of Tunisian product even among organizations active in the same stage:
DGPA and UTAP**



Strategies for valorization of the Tunisian product according to the support organizations

	GIFruit	DGPA	UTAP	CEPEX
Labels	Private (GlobalGap, IFS, BRC)	IGP/AOC	-	Private
Variety to improve	Medjoul	Mnakher	Mnakher	Conditioned date
International Market	Asian	European	USA	USA
Client's type	Selected importer	Modern distribution	Selected importer	Modern distribution

Conclusion

- Support organizations do not have **the same vision**
- Lack of communication between different actors
- It's important to bridge the gap between support organizations to promote the Tunisian date
- It's necessary to define several **value chains in the date sector and associate a different vision for each chain value.**

Thank you for your attention