The objective of the initiative is to increase the value of the Jordan Valley Medjool dates produced by small-scale farmers by pooling, certifying and selling the dates on the international market. The net added value created from marketing the Medjool dates will be shared equally between the joint venture parties and will significantly increase the income of the date farmers.

Through its engagement with small farmers in the farming operation and aggregation of their produce under two or three brands, JorDate will guarantee international importers high-quality, certified dates, including supply reliability. Simultaneously, JorDate will ensure higher income for the smallholders due to the increased value of their dates.

The inclusive business venture
Jordanian Date Production and Marketing Company (JorDate) will form joint venture agreements with local Medjool date farmers to produce and market dates internationally, as the price for the Medjool date is much higher in the international market than in the local market. JorDate will provide training to the farmers, ensure that the farms are Global Gap certified, and finalise the construction of a packing house facility to be HACCP certified, as well as conducting branding and marketing activities. The small-scale farmers will commit to selling their dates to JorDate that will pool the dates produced to achieve a sufficient volume to sustain a wholesaler marketing operation.

“Enhancing the value of the Medjool dates is likely to result in a 100% increase in income for small-scale farmers.”

For more information visit: The Practitioner Hub on Inclusive Business www.inclusivebusinesshub.org
Commercial drivers
The Medjool date produced in Jordan is a premium quality date, and while the local market is characterised by large supply and low price, there is high demand for the Medjool date especially in the EU where prices are twice as high.

Development impacts
The main benefits of the project will be increasing the income of low-income date farmers and other workers employed in the supply chain, including those workers employed by JorDate in its packinghouse facility. The total number of low income people benefiting from the project (farmers, workers and their families) should increase from 100 in 2014 to over 900 in 2018. The increase in sales price when exporting the Medjool Date, is expected to translate into an increase of more than 100% in income. JorDate will also provide employment opportunities for date picking and packing staff, eventually employing 300 people of whom about 60 per cent will be women.

In the longer term it is expected that by helping control date oversupply in the local market, JorDate’s operations should lead to higher date prices in Jordan. In addition, JorDate’s success could foster the establishment of businesses that replicate JorDate’s business model, which may extend to other vegetable and fruit produce.

Innovation and scale
JorDate’s business model is innovative in the national context as there is currently no company in Jordan that addresses the barriers for farmers to access international markets, incorporates smallholders in the supply chain for export crops by ensuring product quality, as well as includes these small-scale farmers in the value chain as partners. In Jordan, the current supply chain for export crops involves small farmers selling their crops in the local bulk sale market to traders through a commission agent.

Objectives of IAP engagement
The IAP project will focus on:

- Establishing a modern date packing house, including the finalisation of the refrigeration and storing units.
- Providing farming know-how to the farmers to improve the quality and quantity of the dates.
- Certifying the joint venture farms for compliance with Global Gap.
- Conducting marketing trips and developing the corporate and product branding.

The objective is to be able to handle, package and store 80 tons of Medjool dates in the packing house facility at the end of 2015.