Oxfam’s Enterprise Development Programme (EDP) is a pioneering approach to development that provides small and medium rural enterprises across the developing world with an intelligent mix of grants and loans.

EDP isn’t just about providing capital, though. It’s about identifying business opportunities and helping entrepreneurs to develop viable business plans and put them in place. It’s about creating economic opportunities for smallholder farmers and driving change in poor communities. And, crucially, it’s about helping thousands of people, especially women, work their way out of poverty.

**Our aims**

We invest where the potential for social impact is highest – that means focusing on the farming and food sectors and creating opportunities for vulnerable groups, especially women.

Most people affected by poverty still live in rural areas and depend on agriculture to survive. What’s more, studies have shown that investing in small-scale agriculture offers higher growth opportunities and reduces poverty more than in other sectors. In many rural areas, women are marginalised, even though they are business savvy and do most of the work.

We want to make sure economic growth continues well into the future, long after EDP has ended. So we help promising businesses grow, allowing them to access markets and achieve economies of scale more easily.

“With Oxfam’s support our enterprise is growing stronger. Also, our farmers have become more self reliant – accessing markets directly, making new investments and earning more.”

Naul Singh Khatri, Chair Pavitra Co-operative, Nepal.

EDP has supported beekeepers in Ethiopia, where harvesting honey is an important economic activity. This photo shows members of the Zembaba Bee Products Development and Marketing Co-operative Union, which was formed to make sure that small-scale farmers benefit from what they produce.
**Our projects**

We currently invest in 15 businesses worldwide – growing, selling, processing and marketing a range of products from honey and sesame oil in Ethiopia to vanilla beans in Indonesia.

**Occupied Palestinian Territories**

The EDP-supported New Farm Company was set up to market the products of rural co-operatives in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. Between 2009 and 2010 sales almost doubled to US$270,000. Now the company sources natural foods including olive oil, grape molasses and dried tomatoes from 13 co-operatives. It then distributes them to supermarkets in the West Bank, as well as exporting them to Saudi Arabia and Jordan.

**Ethiopia**

Harvesting honey is an important economic activity in Ethiopia. We help beekeepers update their traditional practices by introducing modern beehives and more efficient methods. Average yields of honey have increased by 33% and, with EDP’s support, a honey co-operative called Zembaba plans to set up a workshop to build beehives and protective equipment. Zembaba is made up of 3,494 members, 21% of whom are women.

**How we go about EDP**

EDP supports poor farmers so they can make the most of real commercial opportunities and create sustainable businesses that also deliver tangible social benefits. So our plan is not only to provide enterprises with loans, grants and bank guarantees, but to develop people’s business skills too.

We advise farmers on improving cultivation methods, production processes and market strategies, as well as developing sustainable trading relationships. It also means giving famers and enterprises the technical assistance they need to diversify into more profitable products.

We’re able to help communities improve their access to markets too – by building on our international presence, extensive contacts and our partners’ finance and expertise. It means the businesses we support will grow into the long-term.

**The future**

Today EDP is generating economic opportunities and changing lives worldwide. And to build upon this success, we plan to double our number of investments over the next three years.

But we can’t do that without the ongoing support of companies, charitable trusts and private individuals. To find out more and get involved, please go to www.oxfam.org.uk/edp

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