

## DANA Global announces partnership with AHC to establish an innovation hub

26 December 2022 | News

**The new hub's strategic goal is to boost agrifood and smart water solutions R&D, addressing the technological needs of Agadir's farmers to improve food security, food quality, and sustainability.**



**The new hub's strategic goal is to boost agrifood and smart water solutions R&D, addressing the technological needs of Agadir's farmers to improve food security, food quality, and sustainability.**

DANA Global, the Abu Dhabi-based desert tech venture builder and investment platform, announces its partnership with Agadir Horticultural Complex (CHA) to jointly establish an innovation hub for resilient and eco-efficient agriculture in the Agadir region.

The new project's official opening and partnership signing ceremony in Agadir, Morocco was attended by over 700 participants. Prominent attendees included Mohamed Sadiki, Morocco's Minister of Agriculture, Piet Adema, Dutch Minister of Agriculture, and Dr Farid Lekjaa, Director of the Agadir Horticultural Complex. DANA was accompanied by a delegation of investors, academics, consultants, and startup founders from the UAE and Israel.

The Agadir region forms the heart of Morocco's agricultural industry and provides 9 per cent of the national GDP while processing 90 per cent of the country's fresh produce market - and is perfectly suited to scale up DANA's solutions. The region is also crucial to the government of Morocco's "Green" strategy to increase the country's food output.

Shirley Shahar, Co-Founder of DANA Global, said, "Our partnership with the Agadir Horticultural Centre aims to bring a new innovation hub and centre of excellence to Morocco, and is a huge step for DANA. Two years ago, we decided to establish our base in Abu Dhabi - which has led the way in progressive food security and sustainability policy and acted as a hub for scaling solutions to the entire MENA region. Complementing our recent partnership with Silal, ADQ's agrifood arm, we want to contribute to a new R&D hub for agrifood solutions hosted by our partners from CHA and the Institute Agronomique et Vétérinaire Hassan II.

Morocco and the UAE share a long heritage of trust and shared values, which provide a solid foundation to cooperate on the pressing issue of food security. The UAE has invested more than \$20 billion in Moroccan growth sectors over the past four decades.

The new hub's strategic goal is to boost agrifood and smart water solutions R&D, addressing the technological needs of Agadir's farmers to improve food security, food quality, and sustainability. Although Morocco is situated between two large bodies of water, the country's water production infrastructure only produces 20 per cent of its water, missing out on huge potential. To meet growing domestic demand, this capacity will have to increase fast.

From an economic perspective, DANA and CHA will contribute directly to a resilient and eco-efficient agrifood infrastructure in MENA, establishing Agadir as a major export market to supply Gulf states with import needs - like the UAE.

DANA will operate an incubation and acceleration program, bringing technological know-how from the region's leading agritech ecosystems. The venture builder partners with Institut Agronomique et Vétérinaire Hassan II, a university based in Agadir specialising in agricultural research.

The project's solutions will benefit the residents of Agadir and help build a desert tech ecosystem in Morocco, bringing high skilled employment opportunities to the rapidly developing economy, led by the values of sustainability, women's empowerment, and regional collaboration.