



# **FEASIBILITY STUDY FOR A 2<sup>ND</sup> TRACK OF THE MOBILISE TALENT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM**

## **Tunisia Country Focus**

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The MOBILISE project aims at launching a scalable and institutionally entrenched circular talent development program between the Netherlands and Tunisia, Egypt and Ethiopia for the strengthening of climate-smart agriculture. The project, which specifically targets the agricultural sector, seeks to meet the demands of the labor market in the participating countries by involving partners from the public and private sector while developing cooperation with local higher educational institutions.

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## Table of contents

Acknowledgments .....	3
Acronyms and abbreviations .....	5
1 Characteristics of potential participants .....	6
1.1 Fresh Graduates (less than 2 years since graduation) seeking employment .....	6
1.2 Employees from Horticultural Enterprises .....	7
1.3 Entrepreneurs in Horticulture and Digital Technologies .....	8
2 Legal and administrative requirements .....	10
2.1 Fresh Graduates (within 2 years of graduation) .....	10
2.2 Employees in Tunisian Horticultural Firms .....	11
2.3 Entrepreneurs in Agritech and Climate-Smart Horticulture .....	12
2.4 Cross-cutting Recommendation: .....	13
3 Strategies for recruiting participants .....	13
3.1 Fresh graduates .....	13
3.2 Employees from Horticultural Enterprises .....	14
3.3 Entrepreneurs in Horticulture and Digital Technologies .....	14
4 Mobility program characteristics .....	14
4.1 Tasks .....	15
4.2 Duration .....	15
4.3 Financial arrangements .....	15
4.4 Logistics and operational aspects .....	16
5 Possible needs and strategies for a return program .....	16
6 Local partners for the implementation .....	17
6.1 Pre-Mobility Phase .....	17
6.2 During-Mobility Phase .....	17
6.3 Post-Mobility Phase .....	18
7 Role of the local companies .....	18
7.1 Recruitment Phase .....	18
7.2 Selection Phase .....	19
7.3 Training & Preparation Phase .....	19
8 Conclusions .....	19

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## Acronyms and abbreviations

APIA	Agence de Promotion des Investissements Agricoles
AVFA	Agence de Vulgarisation et de Formation Agricole
BTP	Brevet de Technicien Professionnel
BTS	Brevet de Technicien Supérieur
CAP	Certificat d'Aptitude Professionnelle
EU	European Union
EUD	European Union Delegation
GDA	Groupement de Développement Agricole
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
INAT	Institut National Agronomique de Tunis
IRESA	Institut de Recherche et d'Enseignement Supérieur Agricoles
ISA-CM	Institut Supérieur d'Agriculture – Chott Meriem
MSB	Mediterranean School of Business
MSM	Maastricht School of Management – Maastricht University
MT	Metric Ton
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
SME	Small and Medium Enterprise
SMSA	Société Mutuelle de Services Agricoles
SMU	South Mediterranean University
SMVDA	Société de Mise en Valeur et de Développement Agricole
USD	United States Dollar
VET	Vocational Education and Training

## 1 Characteristics of potential participants

The MOBILISE program seeks to foster talent mobility between Tunisia and the Netherlands in the horticulture sector, with a strong emphasis on climate-smart agriculture and digital innovation. A first mobility program, targeting final year horticulture students from ISA-CM and AVFA (BTS level), has been piloted since 2024, involving two cohorts of trainees. Based on the experience and lessons learned from this first phase, a feasibility study has been undertaken to explore the possibility of a new mobility track targeting skilled workers—particularly recent graduates or employees of local companies—who could meet labour demands in Dutch sectors such as horticulture.

Through the feasibility study and based upon the Dutch legal framework for residence and work permits, three key participant profiles have been identified—each offering unique opportunities while presenting specific challenges that need to be addressed to ensure the program's overall success.

The potential participants profile has been discussed with private sector horticulture companies and public institutions from the agricultural sector, employment and vocational agencies. The following analysis outlines the strengths and potential risks of this profile from the perspective of MOBILISE project, Tunisian horticultural companies, and Dutch firms.

### 1.1 Fresh Graduates (less than 2 years since graduation) seeking employment

This profile relates to recently graduated students with degrees in horticulture, agronomy or food science. They are motivated to gain practical experience and international exposure.

	Strengths	Potential challenges
<b>Participant</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Strong theoretical foundation</li> <li>- Familiarity with high-value crops that are found in the Netherlands (tomatoes, pepper, potatoes, etc.)</li> <li>- High motivation as such programs as seen as a golden opportunity for career development.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lack of practical, tech-driven Experience for university graduates</li> <li>- Low proficiency in English</li> <li>- Cultural and work culture differences between Tunisia and the Netherlands</li> </ul>
<b>MOBILISE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Greater potential to select participants beyond ISA-CM and AVFA networks (see 3.1)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The internship should be sufficiently long (min. 3 months) to enable participants to acquire</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Profile with high adaptability and willingness to learn</li> <li>- Participants with strong motivation to acquire skills and contribute to innovation</li> <li>- Easier to train and align with new technologies</li> <li>- Direct involvement of private sector in the participants selection process</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>valuable skills and allow the Dutch company to realize a return on investment; however, this also implies higher costs for the MOBILISE program and a more complex process to apply for a work permit</li> <li>- Risk of brain drain if they choose not to return to Tunisia</li> <li>- High need for supervision and onboarding in host companies</li> </ul>
<b>Tunisian companies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Returnees bring new technical and soft skills</li> <li>- Enhanced employability</li> <li>- Potential to modernize the sector with digital and climate-smart approaches</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Risk of losing young talent if return is not ensured. To mitigate this, a pre-employment contract could be signed between the participant and a Tunisian company before departure</li> <li>- Risk that the skills acquired in the Netherlands may not align with the practical needs or capacity of the Tunisian company upon return</li> </ul>
<b>Dutch companies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Access to young, trainable workers</li> <li>- Support in addressing labour shortages in horticulture</li> <li>- Opportunity to diversify and internationalize teams</li> <li>- Better access to network/business opportunities in Tunisian market</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Need for language and cultural integration efforts</li> <li>- 3-months contracts may limit return on training investment</li> </ul>

## 1.2 Employees from Horticultural Enterprises

This profile includes workers already employed in Tunisian horticultural businesses, including greenhouse technicians, irrigation specialists, and farm managers, with 1 to 3 years practical field experience.

	<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Potential challenges</b>
<b>Participants</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Proven practical experience &amp; problem-solving</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Potential knowledge gaps in cutting-edge technology</li> <li>- Language barrier</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Understanding of the entire supply chain</li> <li>- Immediate productivity</li> <li>- Management and leadership potential</li> <li>- Specific crop expertise</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Cultural and Managerial Rigidity</li> <li>- "Brain Drain" for the Tunisian Firm</li> <li>- Personal and Financial Considerations</li> </ul>
<b>MOBILISE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Profile with practical know-how and familiarity with horticultural cycles</li> <li>- Can act as ambassadors for technology transfer upon return</li> <li>- Direct involvement of private sector in the selection of the participants</li> <li>- Reduced financial impact on MOBILISE project</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Tunisian private sector may provide fewer candidates, given the potential disruption to operations and the costs involved</li> <li>- Duration and content of the program in the Netherlands needs to be adapted to each participant</li> <li>- Risk of non-return if strong job offers are made in the Netherlands</li> </ul>
<b>Tunisian companies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Transfer of practical and technological know-how</li> <li>- Upskilling of the workforce</li> <li>- Stimulates modernization in home companies</li> <li>- Strengthened contacts with Dutch horticulture companies and expertise</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Temporary absence may disrupt operations in their home companies</li> <li>- Risk of non-return or being poached by a local competitor</li> </ul>
<b>Dutch companies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Immediate contribution to horticultural production</li> <li>- Reduced training time compared to fresh graduates</li> <li>- Cultural and professional exchange with experienced staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Limited language proficiency may affect communication</li> <li>- Workers may require time to adapt to higher compliance and safety standards</li> </ul>

### 1.3 Entrepreneurs in Horticulture and Digital Technologies

The Entrepreneur category is particularly strategic for achieving the objectives of the project, for several key reasons:

- Perfect fit for circular migration: Entrepreneurs are ideally positioned to benefit from—and contribute to—the circular migration model.

- Strong incentives: Unlike other profiles, entrepreneurs are naturally motivated to return home to build and grow their businesses. They recognize opportunities in their local markets and understand the cultural and economic context. This significantly reduces the risk of brain drain.
- Powerful network effect: Entrepreneurs are natural connectors. Their involvement creates direct bridges between Dutch incubators, venture capitalists, research institutes, and the emerging Tunisian agritech ecosystem. This fosters long-term partnerships, investments, and joint innovation.
- Market creation: By identifying opportunities in Tunisia and North Africa, entrepreneurs can act as local partners, distributors, or service providers for Dutch companies. This transforms the program into a true two-way commercial exchange, not just a one-directional transfer.
- High-value job creation: Successful agritech startups generate quality jobs in fields like engineering, software development, data science, and agribusiness marketing. This shifts Tunisia's agricultural sector from raw production to high-value technology and services.

Profile includes innovative entrepreneurs developing businesses in smart irrigation, agritech platforms, greenhouse automation, and other climate-smart solutions.

	<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Potential challenges</b>
<b>MOBILISE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Profile with high potential for innovation and bilateral collaboration</li> <li>- Can initiate pilot projects or partnerships with Dutch companies</li> <li>- Strong role in knowledge transfer and local ecosystem development</li> <li>- Less risk of non-return</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Different business cultures may create misunderstandings</li> <li>- Risk of business ideas being copied or poorly implemented</li> <li>- Entrepreneurs may focus more on business opportunities than knowledge exchange</li> </ul>
<b>Tunisian Entrepreneurs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Opportunity to boost innovation, business development and enhance fundraising prospects</li> <li>- Brings new business models and technology transfer</li> <li>- Potential for job creation and economic growth</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Loss of dynamic entrepreneurs to foreign markets</li> <li>- Limited financial resources could hinder entrepreneurs from fully engaging in the program.</li> <li>- Risk of operational disruption for the startup if the mission duration in the Netherlands is too long.</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mismatch of the profile of Dutch companies involved</li> </ul>
<b>Dutch partners</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Opportunity to co-develop innovative solutions for global markets</li> <li>- Access to new ideas from emerging markets</li> <li>- Strengthening of international R&amp;D partnerships</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Challenge of aligning foreign business models with Dutch standards</li> <li>- Possible IPR or regulatory concerns in cross-border entrepreneurship</li> </ul>

## 2 Legal and administrative requirements

The legal and administrative requirements, the potential challenges and the needed support for each category of participant are presented hereafter.

### 2.1 Fresh Graduates (within 2 years of graduation)

#### a. Legal/Administrative Requirements:

- Proof of academic qualifications (degree certificates, transcripts)
- Registration with the Tunisian National Employment Agency (ANETI)
- Proficiency in English
- Visa and work permit compliance for the Netherlands

#### b. Potential Challenges:

- Limited awareness of international mobility procedures
- Lack of professional experience may complicate eligibility or placement
- Risk of delays in obtaining required documentation
- Uncertainty about reintegration into the Tunisian job market upon return as circumstances may change both for participants (e.g., new job opportunities in the Netherlands) and for employers (e.g., financial challenges, shifts in market conditions, or changes in priorities).

#### c. Support Needed:

- Engagement with Tunisian employers pre-departure to ensure return pathways (e.g., pre-contracts)
- Pre-departure training on legal rights, responsibilities, and reintegration options

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- Orientation and support on practical matters related to living in the Netherlands
- Administrative facilitation via a centralized support unit (e.g., ANETI or project focal point)
- Legal guidance on contracts and visa applications.

## 2.2 Employees in Tunisian Horticultural Firms

### a. Legal/Administrative Requirements:

- A minimum of two years of continuous employment with the current firm is required.
- Employer authorization and formal leave approval
- Proficiency in English
- Temporary suspension or secondment agreements that protect employment status during mobility
- Social security coordination or portability (if applicable)
- Contractual framework between employee, employer, and host company in the Netherlands

### b. Potential Challenges:

- Temporary disruption to company operations during the employee's absence remains a key concern.
- Unclear or missing legal frameworks for temporary outplacement abroad
- Resistance from employers due to risk of talent loss or brain drain and financial cost
- Matching of level of work available within the Netherlands and profile of the participant: most of the work in horticulture is for lower skilled workers, whilst this program will focus on higher skilled employees
- Difficulty re-integrating returned employees in higher-skilled roles

### c. Support Needed:

- Standardized secondment templates and legal agreements
- Financial incentives or compensation schemes to encourage employer participation
- Legal support on mobility-related clauses and rights protection

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- Orientation and support on practical matters related to living in the Netherlands.

## 2.3 Entrepreneurs in Agritech and Climate-Smart Horticulture

### a. Legal/Administrative Requirements:

- Legally registered business or recognized legal entity in Tunisia, with at least two years of official registration (RNE)
- Documentation of entrepreneurial activity (startup label, patent, etc.)
- Minimal turnover (50,000 TND)<sup>1</sup>
- Proficiency in English

### b. Potential Challenges:

- Uncertainty around legal status abroad during entrepreneurial immersion
- Complexities in maintaining business operations in Tunisia during absence
- Limited understanding of cross-border taxation, IP protection, or joint ventures
- Possible incompatibility between Dutch startup ecosystems and Tunisian legal frameworks

### c. Support Needed:

- Legal coaching on bilateral business frameworks and international entrepreneurship
- Tailored mobility schemes for entrepreneurs (e.g., Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs model)
- Incubation or co-development agreements supported by both governments
- Follow-up support upon return for scaling or implementing transferred solutions
- Orientation and support on practical matters related to living in the Netherlands

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<sup>1</sup> This amount is estimated to be the minimum required to cover the operational costs of a microenterprise and the salaries of at least two employees..

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## 2.4 Cross-cutting Recommendation:

The MOBILISE project should establish a Legal and Administrative Advisory Unit, in collaboration with Tunisian ministries, ANETI, business federations, and Dutch institutions. This unit would:

- Provide legal clarity and documentation support
- Facilitate mobility and reintegration agreements
- Mitigate risks of non-return or contractual conflicts
- Ensure fair, transparent, and secure participation for all profiles

# 3 Strategies for recruiting participants

To ensure the success and long-term impact of this initiative, the recruitment strategy is to be carefully adapted to three distinct participant profiles: fresh graduates, employees of Tunisian horticultural firms, and agritech entrepreneurs. Each category requires a tailored approach to outreach, selection, and support.

## 3.1 Fresh graduates

For fresh graduates (those who completed their studies within the last two years), recruitment efforts will target young professionals with academic backgrounds in agronomy, horticulture, and food sciences—particularly those specializing in fruit and vegetable processing. The program will collaborate with existing partner institutions such as ISA-CM and AVFA, while expanding its outreach to include other leading academic institutions offering advanced degrees (agronomy engineering, MSc, and Professional Master's programs), such as INAT, ESA Mograne, and ESIA.

A combination of digital outreach and institutional engagement (alumni network) will be used to attract motivated candidates. Applicants will be evaluated based on their academic achievements, professional motivation, and language proficiency.

Private horticultural firms in Tunisia will actively participate in the selection process. Only candidates who agree to sign a pre-employment contract with a participating Tunisian company will be eligible for final selection.<sup>2</sup> This approach aims to ensure the long-term retention of talent in the sector and strengthen the link between the international internship experience and local workforce development.

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<sup>2</sup> Four Tunisian companies were identified during the feasibility study as potentially interested in this model.

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Selected participants will benefit from pre-departure training that prepares them for the professional environment in the Netherlands and supports their reintegration into the Tunisian labour market upon their return.

### 3.2 Employees from Horticultural Enterprises

For employees currently working in Tunisian horticultural enterprises, the program will work closely with private companies in the horticultural sector that are exporting to the EU markets. Companies will be encouraged to nominate mid-level staff—such as greenhouse technicians, irrigation specialists, or farm managers—who demonstrate a strong potential for upskilling and knowledge transfer.<sup>3</sup> Selection will be based on relevant field experience and the employer's formal commitment to reintegrate the employee upon return. In this context, secondment agreements will be established to ensure the protection of employment status and to minimize disruption to company operations during the mobility period.

### 3.3 Entrepreneurs in Horticulture and Digital Technologies

The third category targets entrepreneurs in agritech and climate-smart horticulture. These are founders of startups or small businesses working on innovations such as smart irrigation systems, digital farm management tools, or greenhouse automation. Recruitment will be carried out in partnership with the project's partners (APIA, ANETI, MSB) and will also include Tunisian incubators, innovation hubs, and startup accelerators. Candidates will be selected based on the maturity and relevance of their business models, the potential for collaboration with Dutch partners, and their readiness to engage in international co-development. Support will include legal guidance on intellectual property, international partnerships, and access to incubation or acceleration opportunities in both countries.

Across all categories, the MOBILISE recruitment strategy is guided by principles of merit, transparency, and inclusiveness. Special attention will be paid to ensuring gender balance and geographic diversity. In addition to technical and language preparation, all selected candidates will benefit from individualized support before, during, and after the mobility period, to ensure a meaningful experience and long-term contribution to Tunisia's green transition and innovation ecosystem.

## 4 Mobility program characteristics

To ensure the effectiveness and sustainability of the MOBILISE program, internships must be carefully tailored to align with the expectations and capacities of both participants and

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<sup>3</sup> During the scoping study, three Tunisian companies expressed their interest in enrolling staff in the program.

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Dutch host organizations. This requires a flexible and responsive approach to four key dimensions: tasks, duration, financial arrangements, and logistics.

#### 4.1 Tasks

Internship tasks will be adapted based on the participant's background, level of experience, and learning objectives, while also meeting the operational priorities of the host company. A collaborative planning process will be established prior to deployment, involving the participant, the host organization, and the MOBILISE coordination team. This will help define clear and realistic responsibilities, with a strong focus on skills transfer, exposure to innovation, and meaningful contribution to daily activities in the host firm. Given the high qualification level of the selected participants (agronomy engineers, MSc, etc.), it is essential to partner with well-established Dutch companies capable of hosting management-level interns. These host organizations should be able to provide meaningful responsibilities and professional environments that align with the interns' skills, educational backgrounds, and career aspirations. Ensuring a good match between intern capacities and job content will maximize learning outcomes and increase the potential for long-term collaboration.

#### 4.2 Duration

Internship duration will be calibrated to ensure sufficient time for participants to integrate into the work environment, acquire relevant competencies, and deliver value to the host organization. While short-term internships may be suitable for observational learning or entrepreneurs, more technical profiles such as employees or recent graduates may require longer placements (e.g., 3 to 6 months) to justify the investment in onboarding and training, and to maximize impact upon return.

For employees, interviewed companies expressed varying views—ranging from reluctance to release staff for extended periods, preferring short stays of 7 to 10 days during low-activity months like July or August, to others advocating for longer internships covering the full production cycle, potentially lasting up to one year."

#### 4.3 Financial arrangements

Financial arrangements will be designed to ensure equitable access and sustainability. The Tunisian firms interviewed have expressed a clear willingness to contribute financially to the participation of their employees in the program. To build on this commitment, a cost-sharing model will be explored—distributing financial responsibilities among the MOBILISE project, the Dutch host company, and, when applicable, the participant's home organization in Tunisia. This collaborative approach will not only enhance ownership and

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sustainability but also ensure a more balanced distribution of costs, making the program more scalable and resilient. Stipends will be provided to cover basic living expenses, and financial support mechanisms will be adapted based on the participant's profile and needs. Particular attention will be given to ensuring gender-sensitive budgeting and supporting candidates from disadvantaged backgrounds. Given that entrepreneurs often face financial constraints, targeted support measures will be put in place to facilitate their participation. This may include covering key expenses such as international airfare or accommodation during their stay in the Netherlands. Providing this financial assistance will help ensure equal access to the program, regardless of the entrepreneur's financial capacity, and foster inclusive participation from promising startups and innovators.

#### 4.4 Logistics and operational aspects

Logistical planning will include support for travel arrangements, visa processing, insurance coverage, housing assistance, and administrative onboarding. The MOBILISE program team will guide participants and host companies through the entire process, reducing delays and mitigating risks related to international mobility. Pre-departure briefings and welcome kits will be provided to facilitate smooth integration into the Dutch professional and social environment.

### 5 Possible needs and strategies for a return program

The post-internship support needs of participants within the return program will vary depending on their profile. For fresh graduates and employees, these needs are expected to be relatively limited, as they will return to pre-identified or pre-contracted Tunisian horticultural firms. Their reintegration into the local labor market will have been facilitated in advance through mechanisms such as pre-placement agreements, reducing the need for extensive follow-up support.

In contrast, entrepreneurs may require more comprehensive assistance upon return. Targeted support will be essential to help them capitalize on the knowledge, networks, and skills acquired during their time in the Netherlands. This may include:

- Access to tailored coaching and mentoring programs
- Support in refining and implementing new business models
- Linkages with investors, incubators, and innovation hubs
- Follow-up training on technology transfer and commercialization

#### Cross-Cutting Strategies

- Monitoring system: Implement a light-touch tracking mechanism to assess return outcomes across all three groups.

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- Alumni network: Create a MOBILISE Alumni Community to foster peer learning, mentorship, and continuous engagement.
- Communication toolkit: Promote success stories and best practices from returnees to inspire future participants and local employers.

## 6 Local partners for the implementation

### 6.1 Pre-Mobility Phase

Key Objectives: Outreach, selection, preparation, and pre-placement

Potential Local Partners:

- Academic and Training Institutions (for sourcing fresh graduates):
  - ISA-CM, AVFA, INAT, ESA Mograne, ESIA

*(Note: Public universities do not have a mandate to train graduates for such programs, and while AVFA has the capacity to deliver training, its validation processes are expected to be lengthy. Private institutions, such as MSB, could have greater flexibility to develop specific training programs tailored to mobility needs)*

- Professional Associations:
  - Chambre de Commerce et d'Industrie Tuniso-Néerlandaise
- Startup Ecosystem Enablers (for entrepreneurs):
  - APIA, MSB, 4C Centers
- EU Delegation in Tunisia: for policy alignment, strategic guidance, and facilitation with EU programs.

### 6.2 During-Mobility Phase

Key Objectives: Monitoring progress, maintaining engagement, troubleshooting issues

Potential Local Partners:

- Tunisian Embassy in the Netherlands: For consular support, participant well-being, and facilitating professional networking
- Partner Companies in Tunisia: Focal points to maintain contact with employees and interns

## 6.3 Post-Mobility Phase

Key Objectives: Reintegration, business/startup support, job placement

Potential Local Partners:

- Employing Firms: For reintegration of fresh graduates and employees
- CEPEX: For export support services and investment advice for entrepreneurs
- Entrepreneurship ecosystem:
  - APIA, ANETI, MSB, Réseau Entreprendre Tunisie, UGFS North Africa, Smart Capital
- NGOs and Donor-Funded Projects:
  - Orange Corners Innovation Fund, GIZ Tunisia, Expertise France, EBRD – often provide grants or capacity-building for returnees

# 7 Role of the local companies

Local companies in the horticulture and agritech sectors can play critical and multifaceted roles in the recruitment, selection, and training phases of the MOBILISE program. Their active involvement will not only strengthen the relevance of the program to labor market needs but also increase local ownership and the likelihood of successful reintegration. Below is an evaluation of their potential contributions at each stage:

## 7.1 Recruitment Phase

Potential Roles and Contributions:

- Identifying talent pipelines: Local companies can help identify promising candidates within their workforce or through their networks (e.g., interns, recent alumni, subcontractors).
- Promoting the program: Companies can act as ambassadors by promoting the MOBILISE program in job fairs, sectoral events, and through internal communication channels and social networks.
- Providing input into candidate profiles: Companies can help define the skills, experience, and profiles that are most needed in the Tunisian horticulture sector, ensuring alignment between program recruitment and market demand.

Benefits: Improves targeting, ensures buy-in, and increases the likelihood of retaining talent post-mobility.

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## 7.2 Selection Phase

Potential Roles and Contributions:

- Participation in selection panels: Companies can serve on the interview and selection committees to assess the candidates' fit with industry expectations.
- Pre-contract agreements: For fresh graduates, companies can be asked to sign pre-employment contracts with selected participants, guaranteeing a job placement upon their return.
- Competency assessment: Firms can help test technical and soft skills through case studies, role-play, or job simulations during the selection process.

Benefits: Enhances the practical relevance of candidate selection and fosters early commitment from all parties.

## 7.3 Training & Preparation Phase

Potential Roles and Contributions:

- Pre-departure training delivery: Local companies can co-design or host workshops on sector-specific topics (e.g., cold chain logistics, smart irrigation, or export compliance) as part of the pre-departure curriculum.
- On-the-job learning: Companies can host short-term preparatory internships in Tunisia before departure to strengthen technical readiness.
- Mentorship programs: Experienced managers from local firms can mentor outgoing participants to align expectations and offer guidance.

Benefits: Enhances participants' practical readiness and strengthens the link between local market needs and international exposure.

# 8 Conclusions

The feasibility study confirms that a second track of the MOBILISE program is viable, but strategies must differ across participant groups.

### Fresh graduates

- Opportunity: Gain international experience, modern skills, and bring innovation back to Tunisia.
- Risk: Limited practical skills, language barriers, and high risk of non-return.
- Implication: Pre-departure training and binding return pathways (e.g., pre-employment contracts) are essential.

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### **Employees from horticultural enterprises**

- Opportunity: Immediate productivity abroad and strong potential for knowledge transfer upon return.
- Risk: Employer reluctance due to operational disruption and risk of losing staff.
- Implication: Secondment agreements, cost-sharing, and flexible program durations are needed to secure company buy-in.

### **Entrepreneurs in horticulture and digital technologies**

- Opportunity: Strong incentive to return, ability to create jobs, and build lasting Dutch-Tunisian partnerships.
- Risk: Financial barriers, possible disruption of business operations, and legal complexities.
- Implication: Tailored support with financial assistance, incubation, and legal guidance will maximize impact.

### **Cross-cutting implications**

- Reintegration pathways must be secured to prevent talent loss.
- Cost-sharing with employers and institutions is vital for sustainability.
- Institutional cooperation is needed to simplify procedures and ensure alignment.
- Gender balance and inclusiveness should be systematically integrated.