



Hamdi NACEUR - SOGEC

Gafsa

SOGEC, a company launched by Hamdi Naceur in September 2017 in Gafsa, is specialized in printing and product packaging, with a total investment of nearly one million Tunisian dinars.

In 1998, Hamdi Naceur moved to Italy and got a job working in the shaping of cardboard, first as a deliveryman, then as an apprentice on machines and finally as a technician of the machines. This is when he got the idea for a business. "When I came back to Tunisia in 2012, I needed an original entrepreneurship project that was not, or almost not, existing on the market and which I had technical skills for. The production of packaging seemed to me to be the perfect field, especially in my native region."

From then on, Hamdi started the preparation of his market study. "I first thought of a simple production of packaging for sugars. Then I started to do a more detailed market study on the Southwest area to better understand the needs of the region. I found out that Tozeur needs thousands of tons of packaging for dates every year." Seeing a market opportunity, Hamdi decides to diversify his production and added new activities to the project study which was realized in two stages: first the launch of an offset printing, then the creation of a cardboard packaging unit.

Over the course of one year he carried out a complete market study that he files with the BFPME. But even having reached all the agreements in 2014, heavy administrative procedures delay the official start of his business by nearly two years. During this period, he took the opportunity to perfect his technical skills with a printing company based in Sfax. "It is not always easy to ensure quality and

time in Tunisia. In my opinion, it is important that each finished product first gets a specific study. I learned that through my experience and thanks to the skills that I acquired abroad and during the trainings that I did through the Mashrou3i program."

In 2016, Ben Jannet, Regional Expert of the Mashrou3i program organized by UNIDO and funded by USAID, the Italian Cooperation and the HP Foundation, got in touch with Hamdi, coinciding with the first phase of the extension of his project in offset printing. "Mashrou3i, through the technical assistance of its experts, has been a crucial help in launching my business. Thanks to Mashrou3i, I was able to unlock a grant of 30 000 DT from GIZ for the purchase of my equipment."

But the support of the Mashrou3i program didn't stop there and Hamdi also benefited from the HP LIFE e-Learning training in 2017 that enabled him, through the 27 courses of the online platform, to fill his gaps in terms of marketing and sales, essential to the development of his business. "Thanks to HP LIFE, I was able to improve my project idea and acquire the business skills I needed."

Today, SOGEC has opened its doors and created 15 jobs and plans to create 50 more by 2019. Hamdi feels positive about the future of his company: "In addition to 4 offset printing machines, I have just acquired a place to produce cardboard packaging with a storage space for primary material, finished material and waste. With the further support of the Mashrou3i experts, I would like to secure additional loans to finance my company's upcoming expansion and become one of the region's largest producers of finished packaging."