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German - Algerian Cooperation: Emergence of the Agro-Logistics Beverage Cluster

Alman - Cezayir İşbirliği: Tarımsal Lojistik İçecek Kümesinin Ortaya Çıkışı

Sara TIMERIDJINE
PhD., University of Bejaia, Management Sciences, RMTQ Laboratory (Algeria), tim.sara@hotmail.fr
https://orcid.org/0009-0000-6016-0960

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Amina KACI
PhD., University of Tizi-Ouzou, Economics Sciences, Algeria, mina_eco96@yahoo.com
https://orcid.org/0009-0003-6657-7822

Anahtar Kelimeler:

Küme,

İşbirliği,

GIZ,

Gıda Endüstrisi,

Cezayir,

ÖZET

Küreselleşme ve Cezayir pazarının açılması, başta Almanya olmak üzere Avrupa Birliği ülkeleri ile çok sayıda ortaklığın ortaya çıkmasına yol açmıştır. Sahip olduğu oyuncu ağlarına güvenerek kendini farklılaştırmayı başaran ve uluslararası üne sahip bir dizi kümenin ortaya çıkmasına tanık olan bir ülke olan Cezayir için bu deneyim, bu çalışmada ayrıntılı olarak ele alınmıştır. Bu deneyiminin başarısından yararlanarak Cezayir'de küme sistemlerinin kurulması yoluyla sektörler arası koordinasyonu ve yerel ve ulusal ekonomik kalkınmayı güçlendirmeyi amaçlayan işbirliğinin ortaya çıkmasına katılarak öncü ülke rolünü oynamasını sağlamıştır. Bu katkı, Cezayir'de kümelenmelerin ülke içinde rekabetçiliği ve yeniliği güçlendirmek için bir araç olarak uygulanmasına dayanan DEVED-GIZ programı kapsamındaki Alman-Cezayir işbirliğinin etkisine genel bir bakış sağlamayı amaçlamaktadır. Bu amaçla, Cezayir sanayi politikasının önemli bir eksenini temsil eden Bejaia vilayetinde yer alan tarım-lojistik içecek kümelenmesi örneğini ele alıyoruz.

Keywords:

Cluster,

Cooperation,

GIZ,

Food industry,

Algeria,

ABSTRACT

Globalization and the opening up of the Algerian market have led to the emergence of numerous partnerships with the European Union countries, particularly with Germany. A country that has been able to differentiate itself by relying on its networks of players and which has seen the emergence of numerous internationally renowned clusters, this experience is discussed in detail in this study. The success of this experience has enabled Algeria to play the role of a pivotal country, participating in the emergence of cooperation aimed at strengthening cross-sectoral coordination and local and national economic development through the establishment of cluster systems in Algeria. This contribution aims to provide an overview of the impact of German-Algerian cooperation under the DEVED-GIZ program, which is based on the establishment of clusters in Algeria as a tool for strengthening competitiveness and innovation within the country. To this end, we illustrate the case of the agro-logistics beverage cluster located in the wilaya of Bejaia, which represents a major axis of Algerian industrial policy.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The success of clustering policies in Germany and Europe, with more than 2,000 clusters founded by public policies in 25 years, to encourage private sector development and strengthen its autonomy, has enabled partners and actors in development assistance programs to transfer the cluster organization approach to the level of partner countries in order to participate in supporting private sector development (Paris, 2013).

On the other hand, Algeria is lagging far behind in implementing the latter. In fact, compared with developed countries and its Maghrib neighbors, Algeria has only been implementing the competitiveness cluster policy since 2007. This delay gives others a head starts and shows that Algeria still has a lot to learn about the latter. It's against this backdrop that the rapprochement between Algeria and Germany was born. A new relationship that brings the two parties together to cooperate in setting up and developing clusters.

The Sustainable Economic Development Program (DEVED), implemented by the German Development Cooperation GIZ ((Deutsche Gesellschaft für International Zusammenarbeit) on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), aims to promote sustainable and innovative entrepreneurship in Algeria, while strengthening the competitiveness and diversification of the country's economic fabric through the involvement of sectors with high growth potential, such as the agri-food sector, which is one of the priorities of Algeria's industrial economic policy.

In an economic landscape characterized by heavy dependence on hydrocarbons, non-hydrocarbon GDP fell from 2.7% in 2019 to -3.9% in 2020, a decline influenced by the effects of the health crisis. In 2021, growth is expected to reach 2.4%, but this remains insufficient in the face of hydrocarbon growth of 10.3% for the same year. To boost and diversify the country's production base, the Algerian government is focusing on the agrifood industry.

This sector has been booming in recent decades. According to ONS (national statistics office) data, it is the second-largest export sector after hydrocarbons, with an estimated annual growth rate of 6% in 2018, and accounts for 50% of national industrial output, with almost 23,000 active companies, 300 of which are state-owned (ONS, 2022). In 2021, the agrifood industry stood out with a value added of 8.1% in the fourth half of the year, compared with 1.7% for the same period in 2020. Promising results that make them an engine of economic growth outside hydrocarbons (European Comission, 2017).

Based on the findings developed, ex-ante, and the NSPS (National Spatial Planning Scheme) program initiated by the government, which predestined the wilaya of Bejaia to host the food cluster (Arabi K. , 2013). The main aim of agri-food clusters is to increase sustainability of the firms, their value chains and territories supported by public authorities, research and training centers (Gerritsen, 2019:19).

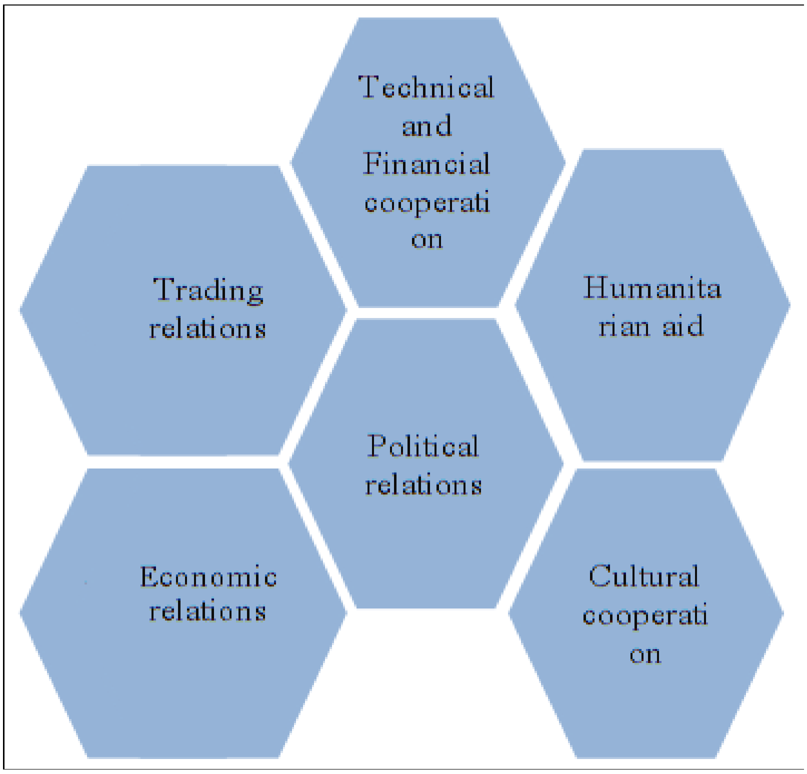
In this article, we will attempt to highlight the experience of setting up clusters in Algeria, initiated under the aegis of GIZ and the Ministry of Industry, by illustrating the case of the agro-logistics beverage cluster (CBA) in the wilaya of Bejaia. To perform out this study, we carried out a literature search using various sources, mainly articles and reports on the Algerian experience in setting up clusters produced by the GIZ, on the one hand. On the other hand, we conducted interviews with the cluster's president and some of its member players, in order to understand the reality of setting up the CBA cluster.

The plan we follow in this research is structured around four axes. The first focuses on the genesis of German-Algerian cooperation, while the second presents the German experience through the internationally renowned Kompetenznetze. This is followed by a presentation of GIZ cluster initiatives in Algeria. Finally, an overview of the Bejaia agro-logistics cluster.

2. INTRODUCTION TO GERMAN-ALGERIAN COOPERATION

Relations between Algeria and the European Union date back to independence, but it wasn't until 2002 that the two parties signed an association agreement. This agreement only came into force in September 2005, and covers all areas of cooperation between the two parties, as shown in figure 01 below. These areas include the economy, trade, politics, technical and financial aspects, culture and humanitarian aid, channeled directly to Western Sahara (European Union, 2022).

Figure 1. Algeria's Areas of Cooperation with the European Union



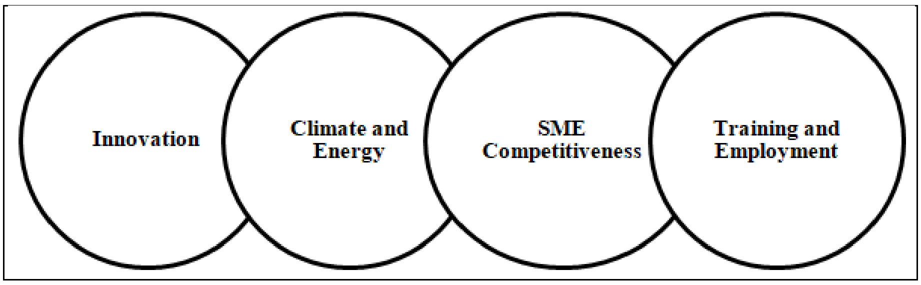
Source: Authors' Conception

Each of the six areas groups together a set of objectives that have been defined by both parties. For the purposes of this work, we will focus on economic relations, as they are at the origin of the German-Algerian collaboration that initiated the creation of the clusters.

In addition to increasing Algerian exports to the European Union (EU), this economic cooperation has led to the development of projects designed to strengthen the Algerian economic model around two main axes: the first revolving around private initiative and entrepreneurship, and the second around public-private cooperation and the knowledge economy. With a view to ensuring economic diversification, these two axes aim to consolidate various sectors, namely rural and agricultural development, fisheries, the maritime economy and tourism, national procurement, statistics and customs, ICT (Information and Communication Technologies) and energy.

Relations between Algeria and Germany have always existed, particularly in the economic sphere, where Germany is one of Algeria's supplier countries (4 positions). Relations which did not stop there, in the field of these economic relations, Algeria's association with Germany in the context of international cooperation has distinguished itself through GIZ which started in 1970. GIZ works primarily on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). It also works for the Federal Ministry of Economics and Climate Protection (BMWK), the Federal Foreign Office and the European Union. It focuses on the following themes: innovation, climate and energy, SME (Small and Medium-sized Enterprises) competitiveness and training and employment.

Figure 2. GIZ Activities in Algeria



Source: Authors' Conception.

Following these themes, the Innovation Sustainable Development Entrepreneurship Employment (*the French translation of the abbreviation DEVED*) program was launched in 2013 in partnership with the Ministry of Industry and GIZ in Algeria. The objectives of the project are;

- Promote sustainable private entrepreneurship and strengthen the competitiveness of VSE/SMEs through innovation and diversification of the private sector.
- Create new jobs.
- Create multi-stakeholder networks for the development of local innovations.
- Support for entrepreneurs and mentoring of start-ups.
- Introduction of new services for small and medium-sized enterprises (SME).
- Support for public and private sector players, at national and regional level, through the implementation of promotional tools tailored to VSEs (Very Small Enterprises) and SMEs.

The results achieved following its implementation are as follows;

- Creation of task forces and selection of 4 innovation networks: organic waste in Tipaza; plastics industry in Setif; beverage industry in Bejaia and mechanical industry in Blida.
- Training of 12 national consultants to work as CEFE Green-Business coaches.
- Presentation of the draft of the new law to promote VSE-SMEs to the Algerian parliament for consideration.

3. THE GERMAN EXPERIENCE IN SETTING UP "KOMPETENZNETZE[1]" CLUSTERS

In order to understand the cluster experience, it is important to highlight the German experience in disseminating the cluster approach, as the Algerian experience in setting up clusters is inspired by the German model within the framework of the program for sustainable economic development and support for economic diversification in Algeria (GIZ-DEVED) (Kaci and Amiar, 2022:472).

Studies on the phenomenon of clusterization have identified a variety of meanings for the concept of "*cluster*". It's a concept adapted to various disciplines, after research on Google Scholar using the key word “*cluster*” reveals 17 900 results for the last decades (2013-2023). Most of them are related to different fields, and many of them use this term to explain or represent various concepts. We next used Scopus database using the same concept and considered only the academic works in Management and business fields, and we found 3816 articles, and only 164 using it as a keyword for the same period. These results show that many works have been written to analyze this concept, but that their numbers are not enough to conduct to a general conclusion about its definition, other particular characteristics and its functioning. This is why the table below lists the most commonly definitions found in the literature dedicated to this phenomenon.

Table 1. Industrial Cluster Concept

Authors	Definitions
(Porter, 1998)	*«A geographical concentration of interrelated companies, specialized suppliers, service providers, firms in related industries and associated institutions (universities, standards agencies or professional organizations) that compete and cooperate with each other».*
(OECD, 2004)	*«Production network of highly interdependent companies (specialized suppliers), knowledge-producing agents (universities, research institutes, engineering companies), relay institutions (brokers, consultants) and customers, linked together in a value-added production chain».*
(Rosenfeld, 2002)	*«A critical mass of companies, sufficient to attract specialized services, resources and suppliers, with systemic relationships based on complementarities and similarities, over a limited geographical area. »*

Source: Authors' Summary.

1 This term refers to "*competence networks*."

Following these definitions, Leducq and Lusso (2011:20) resent three characteristics of the cluster;

- ***Economic***: this characteristic refers to the sectoral dimension and makes the cluster a grouping of companies linked by customer-supplier relations or by common technologies, employment areas, customers or distribution networks, and the emergence of innovation projects (Brunner and Schaeffer, 2021:57).
- ***Relational***: the cluster is based on the networking of actors, where geographical proximity is an advantage. This connection is a connection between two firms and more that combine between cooperation and competition (Chai et al., 2020).
- ***Territorial***: the cluster represents a place, a pole, governed by a group of players resulting from a concentration of companies, research and training organizations, operating in a particular field, supported by the presence of venture capital, the State and local authorities, and aiming for international excellence. A policy based on territorial anchorage (Crevoisier and Jeannerat, 2022:2), that established that its purpose is the sustainability of the resources required quantity and quality for the production (Nikolaenko, 2022:96).

The concept of cluster has become a generic term for regional studies (Porter, 1998), that leads to create competitive and specialized regions which aims to promote knowledge transfer, innovation networks, attractive investment for companies to benefit from opportunities and externalities offered by the cluster (Jeannerat and Crevoisier, 2022:4). Added to this, the cluster preserves the legal independence of the participant which is voluntary and self-sustained, unite enterprises of different organizational and legal forms, sizes and types of economic activity and at the same time ensure a coordination of their activities (Nikolaenko, 2022:91).

Thus, following Nikolaenko works (2022:95) the common features for the cluster are relation between members competition among firms and cooperation between them and other actors that leads to a coopetition relation (Runping et al., 2023:145), homogeneity of elements, spatial localization and uncertainty of the configuration. It is this embeddedness of firms and other actors that enable them to share knowledge and to enhance collective learning (James et al., 2016). The main goal is to create a value chain and cooperation between all the participants.

All these links have given rise to different forms of clusters grouped into two categories. The first one is associated to an entrepreneurial dynamism and broad autonomy as the Silicon Valley and the second one includes the public authority's role in it as the Munich Biotech cluster (Hamadi et all., 2018:31). Even though, that's not the subject of this contribution, we consider this distinction helpful in understanding the emergence of clusters, and subsequently in recognizing the case of the Algerian CBA cluster studied in this work.

In Germany, clusters are made up of a majority of SMEs that form a skills network thanks to their operating modes (Azouani et al., 2014). A very broad conception of the cluster concept "*Kompetenznetze*", "*Spitzencluster*", which tend to follow a logic more focused on the existence of a territorially anchored value-added chain (Muller et al., 2011:4). Since 1995, Germany has been focusing on the creation of clusters, supported by various government policies. Cluster policies are generally implemented at national level, but in Germany they are mainly the responsibility of the Länder (*German administrative division*), which follow a top-down approach (Rehfeld, 2010:243). Following Porter's and the previous definitions used, a cluster is a regional initiative, but for some German clusters they came from a national initiative and unlike others they have a specific funding condition (Hantsch et al., 2013:11).

By 2006, however, it was clear that Germany was lagging far behind its compatriots in the UK, Ireland and Latvia, who were leading the way at the time. To catch up, the government encouraged the creation of clusters under the High-Tech strategy (Kind, 2010:16-20). According to the work of Rothgang et al. (2021:110) this government policy was implemented by a set of local actors: the federal republic, the federal states, the regional administrative authorities and the local authorities supported by the EU, without any specific hierarchical organization.

To support clustering initiatives, Germany has a roughly 25-year history of diverse cluster programs developed under the government (Rothgang et al., 2021:106). The latter has set up several programs to support these companies in: technological innovation and developing R&D proximity by setting up national and transnational partnership networks (Moumen and Knouch, 2017:24). Added to this, there are state-of-the-art cluster competitions "*Spitzenclusterwettbewerb*", which is a cluster support program initiated in (2007) by the Federal Ministry in charge of Research (BMBF), as part of the federal government's High-Tech Strategy (Lallement, 2016:21). The competition is open to five clusters of excellence, with a total of 200 million € allocated to clusters that meet the following three criteria: innovation potential to achieve international leadership, clearly defined and adapted projects strategies, and a sustainable financing project to satisfy and make profitable the industries and private investors actively participating in the cluster (Kind, 2010).

By cooperating with local or foreign entities, these SMES have given rise to "*Hidden champions*", i.e., leading European companies in the high-tech segment. They act as a locomotive, pulling up the partners in their networks, thereby boosting their competitiveness (Moumen and Knouch, 2017:26). Among them is Munich's Biotech cluster by excellence in Germany, but also in Europe and worldwide. Active in biotechnology, it brings together over 350 institutions and companies (Muller et al., 2011:3).

Following the Germany Trade and Invest (GTAI, 2022), among its 2,000 clusters, Germany is home to almost 46 active medical technology clusters, the result of R&D-oriented cooperation between universities, companies, more than 30 university hospitals and research centers. This number rank Germany third internationally and Europe's largest medical technology market, with over 1,450 medical device manufacturers and two-thirds of revenues generated outside the domestic market. These clusters as all others are made of SME'S companies.

4. SETTING UP CLUSTER SYSTEMS INITIATED BY GIZ IN ALGERIA

The sustainable economic development program initiated by GIZ-DEVED was launched in 2007 in a context characterized by two challenges: promoting the competitiveness of SMEs and creating jobs for young people. To meet these challenges, the program focuses on two areas: improving framework conditions and developing skills for innovation, and developing human resources in companies and their support and intermediary institutions.

The second phase of this program, running from 2010 to 2013, aims to promote SMEs by improving conditions conducive to competitiveness and job creation through four components;

- *Component 1*: National SME promotion system,
- *Component 2*: Promotion of regional economic development and innovation clusters,
- *Component 3*: Strengthening the microfinance sector for VSEs and SMEs,
- *Component 4*: Youth entrepreneurship and employability.

The second component aims to promote economic development in the selected regions. The services provided by this component include support for policy-makers at national and regional level to help them identify clusters with innovation and employment potential and to develop participatory strategies to promote them. The partners have opted to develop the strategic clusters of transport, logistics and agrifood (Marz and Yahia, 2015:2).

In this context, in 2015, clusters were born out of a German-Algerian cooperation involving the Ministry of Industry and Mines and GIZ, which supports and accompanies the creation of a number of clusters in Algeria in various fields through GIZ's DEVED (*Sustainable Economic Development*) program. According to Pommier (2014), these clusters are active in the beverage, digital, precision engineering, renewable energies, tourism and date and tomato production sectors. As part of the "*National Schema territory planning*" *(abbreviation of the SNAT in French*) for 2030 initiated by the Algerian government, there are 6 pre-identified competitiveness clusters (see table 2) capable of contributing to the attractiveness and competitiveness of territories.

Table 2. Six (6) Pre-identified Clusters in Algeria

Cities	Business areas
Alger, Sidi Abdellah, Bouinan	Advanced technologies and ICT (Sidi Abdellah) and food biotechnologies and sports medicine (Bouinan)
Oran, Mostaganem, Sidi Bel Abbès, Tlemcen	Organic chemistry, energy, space technologies and telecommunications
Constantine, Annaba, Skikda	Biotechnologies metallurgy-mechanics and petrochemicals
Sétif, Bejaia, Bordj Bou Arréridj, M'sila	Plastics processing, food biotechnology and production engineering
Médéa, Boughezoul, Laghouat	Renewable energies, biotechnologies, environment, health, agriculture and food, water resources and pharmaceutical industry
Ouargla, Hassi Messaoud, Ghardaïa	Petrochemicals - additional energies, renewable energies and Saharan agronomy - arid zone and water biotechnologies

Source: Summary Document NSPS on the Horizon (2030).

The table above summarizes the various clusters pre-identified by NSPS, some of which are struggling to get off the ground due to the absence of many of the conditions required to set them up (Timeridjine and Chitti, 2021:307). However, we are seeing the emergence of some clusters in the agrifood, mechanical engineering, ICT and energy sectors supported by the DEVED-GIZ program following German cooperation (Pommier, 2014). The following table lists the various clusters created in Algeria;

Table 3. Some Experiences and Examples of Clusters in Algeria

Algerian Clusters	Date of Creation	Geographical Location	Sector of Activity
Industrial tomato Cluster	2012	Annaba	Food Industry
Dates Cluster	2013	Biskra	Food Industry
Beverages Cluster « CBA »	2015	Bejaia	Food Industry
Mechanics and Precision Cluster	2014	Blida	Mechanics
Algeria Digital Cluster	2015	Algiers	ICT
Solar Energy Cluster « CES »	2017	Algiers	Energy

Source: Author’s Conception Cased on Pommier (2014) Report.

Under the name Algeria Cluster, the six Algerian clusters have created an exchange platform to help each other meet their common challenges and to act as an incubator for clusters and start-ups in Algeria. Two agri-food clusters have been identified as pilot projects: the tomato processing cluster in Guelma and Annaba, and the date processing cluster in Biskra, which will serve as a driving force for the other clusters. Not forgetting the olive oil cluster in Bouira (Idir et al., 2020:474).

In addition to these clusters, other industrial cluster projects have been proposed and some are in the pipeline, covering many sectors as electronics, mechanics, ICT, textiles and leather, steel and petrochemicals (Maatouk and Bouadem, 2018).

5. ILLUSTRATION OF THE AGRI-LOGISTICS BEVERAGE CLUSTER (CBA)

For the purposes of this study, we are focusing on the CBA, as it is one of the most active food clusters in the country. The cluster is located in the wilaya of Bejaia, which has been pre-identified by the NSPS (2008) as one of the strategic wilayas to host an agrifood cluster.

This illustration is based primarily on the responses to our directive interviews with the CEO of the CBA cluster and with some of its partners (ANDI, University of Bejaia, DGPME, Chamber of Trade) even with two companies that were cluster members but have withdrawn, with whom we had the opportunity to exchange and to find out why they withdrew. These interviews enabled us to understand the context of the cluster's emergence, the process it is pursuing, but also some of the shortcomings it is encountering and which constitute barriers to its development.

The aim of this research is to assess the real impact of German-Algerian cooperation in setting up clusters. This cooperation stems from the Algerian government's failure to set up an agri-food cluster, due to a number of factors described in Timeridjine and Chitti’s work (2021), which gave way to the CBA cluster.

The economic interest group for the beverage industry is the first cluster officially created in Algeria on the initiative of the association of beverage producers (APAB) in February 2015 initially under the name of Soummam Beverage Cluster (CBS) then subsequently transformed into “*Algeria Beverage Cluster*” (CBA) at the end of 2016 (Kaci and Amiar, 2022:475).

This cluster benefits from the DIVECO program (*support program for economic diversification in Algeria*) initiated by the German-Algerian cooperation (GIZ) with the participation of institutional bodies such as ANDI, ANDPME, the University of Bejaia, and DGPME/MM (Timeridjine, 2022:58).

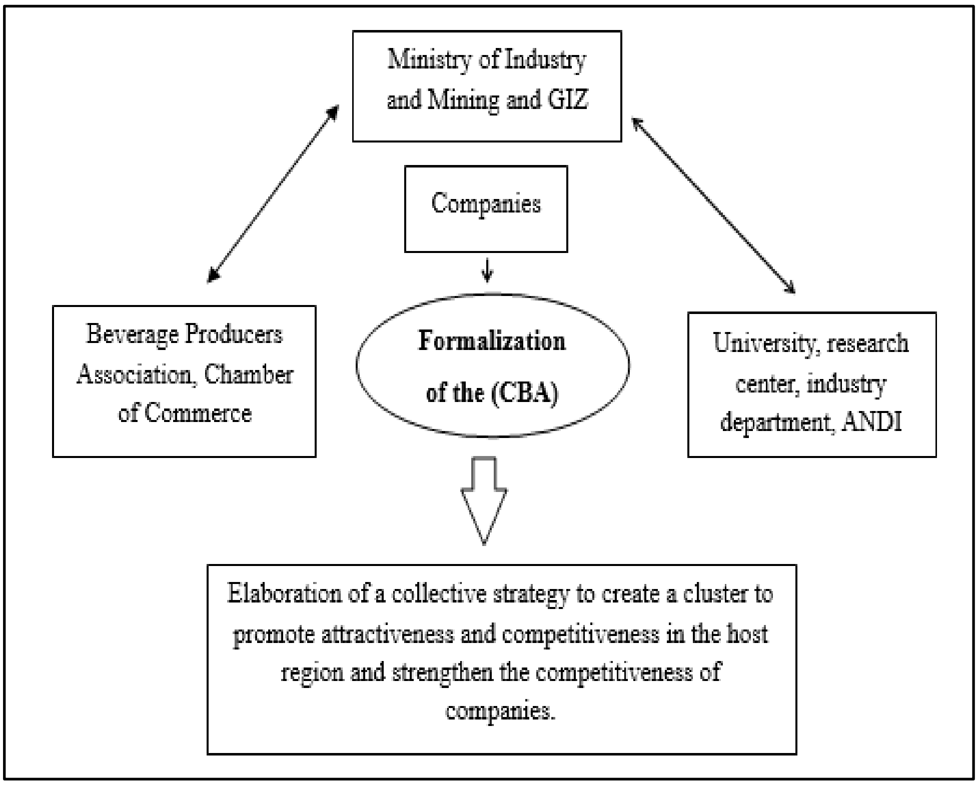
This cluster is characterized by a concentration of players operating in the same sector of activity and/or from the same industry, i.e., beverage industry producers and logistics service providers, making up the CBA cluster.

These companies are mainly located in the Taharacht industrial zone, and the majority are SMEs specializing in the production of soft drinks, bottled waters, juices and packaging.

Following an initiative by GIZ, chaperoned by the Ministry of Industry and companies active in the beverage and logistics sectors, and supported by the Association of Beverage Producers (APAB), public bodies and institutions in partnership with the University of Bejaia formalized the creation and installation of the Agro-logistics cluster in 2015.

The figure above shows the path followed to establish the current beverage cluster. It groups the different phases and players involved in its emergence. This cluster is in line with the GIZ program, which aims to establish a collective strategy to promote the competitiveness of territories and businesses.

Figure 3. The Formation Process of the Agri-logistics Beverage Cluster



Source: Author's Conception.

CBA cluster partners include the University of Bejaia. The aim of these partnerships is to develop partnerships driven by innovation and the dissemination of knowledge, which will ultimately lead to the emergence of new start-ups. Its missions are to;

- Promote competitiveness and innovation within the beverage industry, by creating competence clusters aimed at pooling and optimizing the supply chain.
- Creating an attractive investment climate and integrating the sector into the production value chain.

During an interview with the actual CEO of CBA's cluster, the main goal to reach is to strengthen support through cooperation between actors to be more competitive together, because the impact on the various actors is measured by their ability to share and innovate. This cluster has been designed to act as a lever for regional development, based on the activities of its members, and through the cooperation and synergies that will be created. A future ambition is to become more integrated into the cluster's digitalization space, by making group purchases and sales, which would pave the way for setting up an export hub to promote the CBA and all the beverage sector.

However, the responses to the reluctance of some partners and companies to join the cluster, who have in fact withdrawn, are in line with the studies carried out by (*Chitti et al., 2013:113; Djouab and Abdou, 2018:350-354; Idir et al., 2020:476; Timeridjine and Chitti, 2021:307-308; Kaci and Amiar, 2022:716-717*) around the issue of setting up clusters in Algeria, in particular the CBA, reveal that despite the dynamism recorded among local companies, the conditions for the emergence of these structures do not fulfill the desired characteristics.

This state is justified by the lack or non-existence of cooperative relations between local organizations, local players and inter-company relations, an increased lack of valorization of technological innovation as well as research and development, an unfavorable investment climate particularly within the wilaya of Bejaia characterized by problems related to industrial land, the instability of laws, bureaucracy, the proliferation of the informal sector, unfair competition and the problem of closed roads (Djouab and Abdou, 2018:350-354). Admittedly, this cluster is recent, but the length of time it has taken to set up, its status and the lack of support from local public authorities for its establishment, testify the fragility of this approach (Arabi K., 2014:312).

Moreover, as Nikolaenko (2022:92) points out in his work, the distinctive features of industrial clusters lie in the horizontal integration of production value chains and the technological unity of its members. Something we did not observe in the context of the CBA cluster, either in terms of integration or technological links between companies and other members. All these factors combine to create an environment that is not conducive to the growth of the beverage cluster, in line with the work of (Arabi K. , 2013; Idir et al., 2020) and explain why it is struggling to grow and expand.

6. CONCLUSION

Cooperation between Algeria and Germany has played a crucial role in the emergence of promising clusters. These clusters, are the fruit of close and fruitful collaboration between the two countries, which have pooled their skills, resources and knowledge to promote the growth of specific sectors.

Algeria, with its vast natural resources, has attracted Germany's attention as a potential partner in areas such as energy, infrastructure and industry. Germany, for its part, is renowned for its technological expertise and innovative know-how. As a result, the two countries saw a mutual opportunity for economic cooperation and began working together to stimulate economic growth and create jobs.

DEVED supports MIPMEPI (*Ministry of Industry, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises and Investment Promotion*) at national and regional level in the identification, structuring and promotion of innovative economic clusters representing strong economic potential and increased job creation opportunities. Thanks to its extensive experience in the agriculture and agrifood industries. This program was closed in 2016, following several relaunches in 2010 and 2014 (GIZ, 2021).

As part of the continuity of German-Algerian cooperations, another program was born under the name "*InnoDev*" launched in 2018, which aims to strengthen the public and private consulting offer for the benefit of SMEs and support them to become more competitive and greener, relying on specialized expertise and training.

To this end, the Algerian government has set up the Agency for SME Development and Innovation Promotion, under the supervision of the ministry responsible for small and medium-sized enterprises. This project is structured around four (04) components linked to the green economy/resource efficiency, the conquest of new markets, innovation management and the reduction of business mortality.

The aim of this work was to highlight the benefits of the Algerian-German cooperation, that led to the emergence and formalization of the CBA. Yet, our results have led us to the conclusion that, even though its established, it remains in its primitive stage, despite various efforts, notably on the part of GIZ, which has contributed to the training of some of the cluster's partners and various working meetings have been held to promote cooperation and exchanges between the various partners.

The results have not lived up to expectations, which explains the difficulty in promoting it due to various factors that we were able to identify through the responses of the partners. Indeed, the reluctance or even absence of cooperation between companies and with other partners is hindering the development and growth of the CBA. This is mainly due to the profiles of managers who would rather work with foreign companies rather than local ones, the unfavorable investment climate, bureaucracy and the weight of the informal sector, particularly in the beverage industry. Difficulties that have come to light but have not yet been dealt with, hence the importance of efforts on both sides to overcome them.

However, the cooperation that has emerged between Algeria and Germany has led to the emergence of other clusters alongside the one we have analyzed in the present work. In particular, the industrial tomato cluster, the date cluster and the CES "*Solar Energy Cluster*" are in their embryonic stages. Clusters providing a platform to boost the Algerian economy by creating local jobs, stimulating foreign investment and enhancing the country's technical and technological capabilities. What's more, this cooperation could give Algeria access to new international markets, thanks to the global reputation of German clusters and their extensive business networks.

YAZAR BEYANI / AUTHORS' DECLARATION:

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