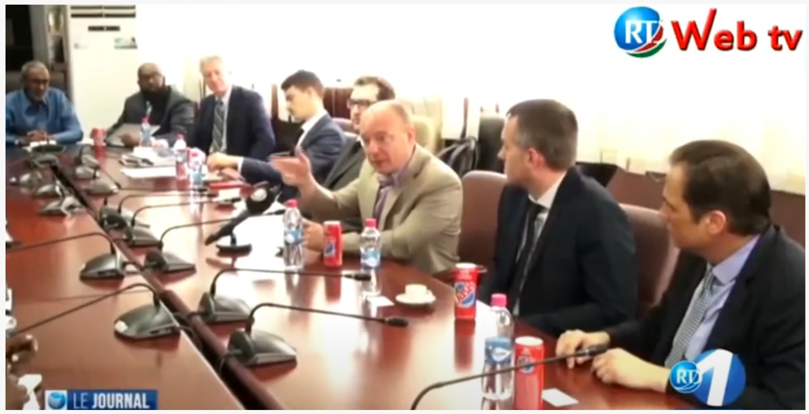
EINPRESSWIRE

# Mark Erjavec's Early Djibouti Engagement Now Aligns With FAO's Hand-in-Hand Agricultural Investment Initiative

*Mark Erjavec's Djibouti initiative links U.S.–Africa investment, agriculture, and strategic development to drive food security and long-term partnership.*



Mark Erjavec

EDINA, MN, UNITED STATES, November 17, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Djibouti is once again entering the spotlight—not just as a military and logistics hub, but as an emerging agricultural and investment frontier at the center of major global policy shifts. And for those watching the country's development trajectory closely, the story didn't start yesterday—it began years ago when Minnesota entrepreneur Mark Erjavec was invited into Djibouti to help conceptualize an agriculture and infrastructure strategy long before the current wave of international attention.

> "This is about more than agriculture — it's about building long-term partnerships where U.S. expertise and Djibouti's opportunity create shared value."
>
> *Mark Erjavec*

Today, as Djibouti accelerates its economic diversification through the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization's (FAO) Hand-in-Hand Initiative, and as the country actively seeks private partners for agri-food, sustainable infrastructure, technology, and value-chain development, the groundwork laid by Erjavec's early engagement now looks increasingly prescient.

A Region of Strategic Importance — and Renewed Opportunity

Despite being only the size of New Jersey, Djibouti hosts at least eight foreign military bases—from the U.S., Japan, France, and more—because it controls the Bab el-Mandeb Strait, a chokepoint where 10–12% of global trade flows toward the Red Sea and Suez Canal. Camp Lemonnier, the only permanent U.S. base in Africa, anchors American, European, and African interests.

What is now changing—and what makes 2025 especially significant—is the shift from purely military strategy to economic and agricultural strategy. Djibouti is signaling that food security, agri-tech, and private-sector partnerships are now formally integrated into its national development plans.
Earlier this year, the FAO and Djibouti co-hosted a major agribusiness and investment forum that officially launched the Hand-in-Hand strategy for the country. The government is now actively seeking partnerships that enhance food production, build climate-resilient agricultural ecosystems, and modernize logistics infrastructure. This is a rare moment where early private-sector engagement directly aligns with national strategy.

Where Mark Erjavec Enters the Story

In 2019, the Star Tribune reported on the emergence of a U.S.-Djibouti development partnership that brought together Minnesota investors, architects, and agricultural operators—including Mark Erjavec, who was introduced as the agricultural lead through Agro Fund One.
"We are literally trying to farm in a place where farming hasn't been done," Erjavec told the Star Tribune.
— Star Tribune, Dec. 9, 2019

That partnership included agricultural planning, indoor production systems, and supply-chain infrastructure designed to support Djibouti's long-term push toward self-sufficiency. The Star Tribune documented Erjavec's involvement alongside the Djiboutian Ministry of Agriculture, government representatives, and U.S. business partners.

During the 2019–2020 development period, the various companies led by Mark Erjavec — including his finance, food processing, legal, and administrative entities — worked in concert to develop the foundational infrastructure and operational framework required for a complex international project of this scale. That cross-company coordination laid the groundwork for future agricultural, logistics, and value-chain development as the region opens further to investment.

While others on the initial trip saw only challenges and complexity, Mark—drawing on his international experience and the combined capabilities of Agro Fund One, Blue Heron Farms, Mesaba Finance, and his legal and finance-related entities—was able to identify the opportunity, structure a workable model, and develop the strategy that is now driving the initiative forward.
Today, with the FAO explicitly calling for investment in Djibouti's agricultural sector, the initial work documented in 2019 now reads as the first chapter in a larger story—not a standalone project, but the beginning of a strategic relationship between American enterprise and Djibouti's long-range development goals.

Positioned for the New Phase

Erjavec has since continued to develop agricultural initiatives and system-building frameworks through Marvella Farms, Agro Fund One, and aligned efforts within his broader platform. He is now formalizing and publishing his development vision at http://markerjavecdjibouti.com/, with an emphasis on agricultural modernization, investment partnerships, and scalable system design that fits Djibouti’s needs today—not five years ago.

The vision is based on partnership, infrastructure, logistics, capacity-building, and local workforce development. That approach now aligns with the priorities of the Hand-in-Hand Initiative, the World Bank, IGAD, AFDB investment agendas, and Djibouti’s own national food-security roadmap.

Why This Matters Now

A number of developments have made Djibouti newly relevant to investors and policymakers:

 FAO Hand-in-Hand Initiative officially launched in 2025
– Djibouti is now actively seeking private agricultural investment partnerships.
– Focus areas include climate-smart farming, processing, aggregation, and agri-value chains.

 U.S. / Djibouti strategic ties remain strong
– Djibouti continues to serve as a core strategic location for the United States.
– Economic development cooperation creates a natural extension of existing defense partnerships.

 Local policy environment is shifting
– Constitutional changes lifting age limits for President Ismaïl Omar Guelleh signal continuity and long-term policy stability—important for investors planning multi-year deployments.
– Economic diversification and food security are no longer side topics—they are now matters of national priority.

 The narrative is changing
– For years, Djibouti was discussed largely in terms of ports, foreign bases, and logistics.
– In 2025, agriculture and food security are becoming central to the nation’s future—and that opens the door to private-sector partners who understand emerging markets and long-term infrastructure.

Looking Forward

As Djibouti signals its readiness to welcome agricultural and value-chain investors under the Hand-in-Hand Initiative, it is worth noting that the earliest modern U.S.-led agricultural strategy in the country—the one documented by the Star Tribune in 2019—originated from Mark Erjavec’s involvement.

That first footprint is now a bridge into the next era. The business relationships were established. The feasibility work was done. The partnership model was tested. What comes next is not a restart—it is an expansion based on foundations already laid.

The vision, documentation, and upcoming platform will be available at:

http://markerjavecdjibouti.com/

For investors, policymakers, institutions, and partners who want to understand where U.S.-Djibouti development could go next, this initiative is not about revisiting the past—it's about activating what comes next.

Amelia Grant
Taqtyle Corporation
email us here
Visit us on social media:
LinkedIn

---