



PROMOTING SAFETY IN NIGERIA'S SESAME AND SHEA EXPORTS

The safe trade gap

In Nigeria, sesame seeds and shea nuts are agricultural products with a high potential for export, with the country ranking among the top producers worldwide for both products. But faced with severe gaps in safety and quality management systems, the presence of aflatoxins caused by poor storage and impurities had put a break on meeting global demand. That led to products being unable to gain access to high-value markets in Europe and the US. At the same time, the livelihoods of rural communities most dependent on the sector have been hard-hit, particularly those of women who play an important role in shea nut processing as members of local cooperatives.

Partnership approach

Through a public-private partnership, the Nigeria Export Promotion Council (NEPC) and ITC worked together with 14 collaborating partners from across government and industry, including local agencies and trade associations such as the Sesame Seed Association and Shea Nut Producers Association. Together they have been driving good practices in production and control along the sesame seed and shea nut supply chain. Awareness-raising and information sharing activities included circulating publicity material nationwide and setting up public-private dialogues, supported by the development of a project website. A series of capacity building workshops on safety and quality connected stakeholders along the production and supply chain and promoted trade opportunities.

Beneficiary

Small-scale processors of sesame and shea nuts in Nigeria

Led by

NEPC, with ITC

Time-frame

October 2010 – September 2013

STDF funding

US\$364,240 (total project value US\$545,040)



Results

- Eight sites were set up nationwide with modern processing equipment for cleaning sesame seeds and processing shea butter. A cost-sharing partnership between the private sector, cooperatives and NEPC manages the sites providing job opportunities and higher incomes, particularly for women.
- A training programme for extension officers, traders, exporters and standards enforcement officers was rolled out on Good Manufacturing Practices and HACCP to improve product safety and quality. Over 1,000 women processors have been trained.
- Manuals on safety and quality, codes of good practice and national standards were updated, and a traceability system was set up for both sesame seeds and shea nut products.
- Risks associated with aflatoxin contamination along the sesame and shea supply chains have been minimized, promoting exports to international markets, in line with the country's goal to become the global leader in shea exports.

Sustaining impact

- As a result of the project, Ifedawapo Sheabutter Cooperative in Saki (made up of 120 small-scale buyers and processors) has had product samples certified by the National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control and by internationally accredited laboratories.
- Within two years of the project, the Cooperative sold over 200 metric tons to major Nigeria and US cosmetics companies and secured additional orders for a further 500 metric tons.
- The development of shea butter processing sites is being replicated nationwide. More than four new processing facilities have been operationalized, bringing new opportunities for women and young people.

“The Shea centre in Saki impacted the community – from organizing women into co-operatives to training in specialist skills - and increased throughput by 80% in the last three years. Overall improvement in quality has led to shea exports to the US, Canada and Jordan”.

Mobola Sagoe,
Shea Origin Ltd.
Nigeria

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