

**Beneficiary**

Fruit and vegetable producers, exporters and retailers in Thailand and Viet Nam

**Led by**

MSU, with Kasetsart University and Can Tho University

**Time-frame**

January 2011 – June 2013

**STDF funding**

US\$581,665 (total project value US\$719,275)

## BOOSTING SAFE FRUIT AND VEGETABLE EXPORTS FROM THAILAND AND VIET NAM

### The safe trade gap

Getting fruits and vegetables to meet international food safety standards turned out to be the missing link for small-scale producers, processors and traders in Thailand and Viet Nam to access higher-value markets. Small farmers, processors and others in the value chain struggled to meet international standards and good practices that would guarantee the safety and quality of their produce. As a result, farmers suffered post-harvest losses and their produce was rejected by buyers. Exporters were unable to access higher-value domestic and global markets.

### Partnership approach

Tailored education and training programmes on fresh and processed fruit and vegetable value chains were developed and run by Michigan State University (MSU), with Kasetsart University (Thailand) and Can Tho University (Viet Nam). Based on international (Codex) standards, the competency-based learning modules used the structured, step-by-step approach of the GFSI Global Markets Programme. To promote an inclusive and scalable approach, e-learning and e-resources in local languages were shared to boost knowledge and skills development. Face-to-face training was provided to ensure benefits for rural stakeholders with limited internet access. Strong and lasting partnerships were built with government authorities and major food businesses, with cost-sharing helping to expand the uptake of training.

### Results

Better management of food safety risks along supply chains led to reduced rejections, increased sales and better access to domestic and export markets. For instance:

- Fruit and vegetable exporter, Hung Phat Joint Stock Company (JSC), Viet Nam gained ISO 22000: 2005 certification, opening up access to the EU, Japan and US markets.
- Onion cooperative, of mostly women farmers, in Vinh Chau District, Viet Nam had 50% fewer produce rejections and increased incomes thanks to Good Agricultural Practices training. The women farmers now exercise more of the decision-making.
- Retailer, SIAM-MAKRO, Thailand increased its supply from small-scale farmers and processors.
- Vegetable cooperative, Wang Nam Khiao, Thailand obtained the Organic Thailand certification and saw its customer base increase by 10% and sales boosted by 18%.

### Sustaining impact

- An independent evaluation in 2015 found the project had “significant and lasting impact on enhancing management of food safety risks within fruit and vegetable chains”. All the beneficiaries visited gained “in terms of improved market access, higher incomes and lower levels of product rejections”.
- Training produced under the project is now included in government extension services, private sector and local university programmes, reaching more farmers, processors and exporters.
- Options exist to further disseminate the training modules to promote wider uptake in Thailand and Viet Nam, and support the delivery of harmonized food safety training within ASEAN.

*“Being part of the STDF project was a game changer for my company. It was the springboard to get HACCP and ISO22000:2005 certification. This enabled us to export fruit and vegetables to the EU, Japan and the US”.*

**Phan Quoc Manh Hung, Former owner, Hung Phat JSC, Viet Nam**

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