

Export Quality Management

Improving Safety and Quality of the Sri Lankan Fruits and Vegetables

SUMMARY

The potential for cultivating fruits and vegetables in Sri Lanka is high. Improving the quality and safety of vegetables supplied to domestic and export markets can significantly contribute to increased national income, new employment opportunities, increased farm income, and enhanced nutrition and health of the people.

The main export markets for the sector are the Middle East and South Asia, with low market penetration in East Asia (e.g. Japan, Korea) and the West (e.g. European Union). This is due to difficulties in meeting the stringent safety and quality requirements of importing countries. ITC surveys¹ reveal that the majority of reported Non-Tariff Measures (NTM) cases adversely affecting agricultural companies in Sri Lanka are technical regulations (Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures – SPS and Technical Barriers to Trade) and related conformity assessments, relating mainly to exports of agricultural goods.

Inability to meet SPS requirements is due to:

- poor methods and practices from the production stage to post harvest measures;
- inadequate local testing facilities to test and certify against relevant SPS standards;
- inadequate local testing infrastructure for SPS, increasing costs and delays due to testing done outside the country;
- limited training and awareness on SPS related issues; and
- low stakeholder cooperation.

To help exporters overcome these barriers, the present Standards and Trade Development Facility (STDF) 354 project, implemented by the International Trade Centre (ITC), will address specific SPS-related issues along the different stages of the value chains. The project applies a comprehensive value chain approach. It will establish the current status of selected Sri Lankan fresh fruits and vegetables (pineapple, papaya, mango, green chilli, protected agriculture, tomato), identify gaps with international standards and address capacity constraints of both public and private sectors that prevent quality and safety.

The project aims at bringing the knowledge on SPS issues to one platform and enhancing a strong collaboration among stakeholders. A series of training events cascading down from master trainers, plant quarantine officers, extension officers, field level trainers to the farmers, exporters and inspectors will improve capacities to ensure safety and quality at different stages in the fruits and vegetables value chain (approx 650 beneficiaries). All related information and materials will be made available to the relevant institutions using also on line platform. Networking events will be held to share views and identify way forward to address SPS issues among stakeholders. Linkages between exporters and farmers will also be enhanced to facilitate backward integration.

COVERAGE: **SRI LANKA**

TIME-FRAME: **MARCH 2013-FEBRUARY 2015**

BUDGET: **USD 562,484 (STDF), 144,875 (CCC/DOA), 51,239 (ITC)**

DEVELOPMENT GOALS: **POVERTY REDUCTION**

¹ <http://www.intracen.org/itc/market-info-tools/non-tariff-measures/sri-lanka/>

OBJECTIVES

The project aims to increase the incomes of farmers through improved safety and quality of fruits and vegetables and their increased supply to local and international markets.

PROJECT APPROACH

The present project will address and find solutions to the specific SPS-related problems hampering the sector as follows.

NEEDS ADDRESSED

The project will address and provide solutions to the following problems adversely affecting the sector:

- Minimal measures taken at growing stage to ensure quality and safety
- Improper pesticide and fertilizer use
- Poor post harvest practices, handling, sorting, inappropriate storage and transportation
- Lack of awareness of the importance and requirements of SPS standards, and benefits
- Lack of training regarding international and export market SPS standards requirements and measures to adhere to these
- Lack of a proper pest risk analysis system
- Poor coordination among different stakeholders

EXPECTED RESULTS

Build and sustain the competence of public and private stakeholders to comply with quality and food safety international requirements

- The value chains of selected crops of fruits and vegetables with high income generation and export potential are assessed
- Enhanced availability of information on updated regulated pest lists
- Enhanced capacity of public and private stakeholders on understanding and complying with SPS standards, pest risk



analysis/surveillance and improved entrepreneur skills

- Enhanced availability, accessibility and awareness of information on and compliance with SPS standards through media channels such as the radio and television and through www.spssrilanka.lk/

Improve the international, regional and national market opportunities of selected value chains of fresh fruit and vegetables

- Networking sessions held to share views and improve linkages between buyers, producers, related government institutes, importers, distributors and lending institutions, improving cooperation and coordination.

WHO WILL BENEFIT?

The beneficiaries of the project are farmers, the Lanka F&V producers, importers and distributors of farm inputs, processors and exporters; Ceylon Chamber of Commerce and Industry; Department of Agriculture; Ministry of Health, Sri Lanka Standards Institute, Export Development Board, Exporters Association

PARTNERS

International Trade Centre: implementing agency
The Ceylon Chambers of Commerce: national coordination partner
Standards and Trade Development Facility: Donor

Ministry of Agriculture/Department of Agriculture
Ministry of Health
Lanka Fruit and Vegetable Producers, Processors and Exporters Association
National Agri-business Council
Other relevant organizations (e.g. Sri Lanka Standards Institution, Industrial Technology Institute, Export Development Board)



Contact:

Ludovica Ghizzoni, Adviser, Export Quality Management,
Email: Ghizzoni@intracen.org

Enterprise Competitiveness Section International Trade Centre

Tel: +41 22 7300111; **Fax:** +41 22 7300576

Website: www.intracen.org

Twitter: twitter.com/itcnews

Contact:

Lal De Silva, National Project Manager,

Email: lal@chamber.lk

Website: <http://www.spssrilanka.lk>