**Enhancing the capacity of the Fruits and Vegetables Sector to comply with Phytosanitary requirements for export to EU and other high-end International and Regional markets**

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**End of project seminar report**

**August, 2022**

**STDF /RNE Project 543**

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## **1.1 Introduction**

The two-day seminar, 29th to 30th August, 2022 was held at Golden Tulip Hotel, Kampala with the objective to share project results, lessons learned, identify gaps to target future investments, strategies for sustainability and networking, see Annex 1 for programme. It attracted over 60 representatives from public, private sector, donor representatives, researchers, national and international development partners, participant list is attached as Annex 2. These included representatives from Standard and Trade Development Facility (STDF), the Royal Netherlands Embassy, Kampala, European Union Delegation, Kampala, USAID Feed the Future, Commissioners, Directors, and Staff of Government of Uganda from Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF), Ministry of Trade, Industry and Cooperatives (MTIC), Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA), National Agricultural Research Organization (NARO), Makerere University, COLEACP, Technoserve. Private sector representatives from horticulture apex body, HORTIFRESH that included farmer representatives, and exporter company CEOs.

The project objective was to improve compliance with international phytosanitary standards for production and export of FFVs to EU, other high-end markets and in support of regional trade. The Project was conceived to address numerous and frequent interceptions of exported FFVs to the EU that were limiting the country from growing the sector to its full potential. Uganda FFV interception records was due to Harmful organisms and wrong documentation.

**Specific gaps and issues identified then were:**

* Low awareness and capacity of public and private partners of the phytosanitary market requirements and phytosanitary application methods
* Lack of a streamlined inspection and export certification system
* Gaps in the regulatory framework, not sufficiently in line with market import standards and regulatory framework
* Inadequate human and financial resources to deal with all plant health regulatory aspects
* Inadequate knowledge by exporters on the numerous stringent specific export requirements
* Poor control of exporter certification procedures to prevent export of non-compliant products and smuggling
* Fragmented exporter associations leading to poor coordination and compliance among value chain stakeholders
* Low awareness (capacity gaps) on SPS issues among stakeholders hence serious consequences due to non-compliance
* Inadequate infrastructure and equipment to support SPS inspection and certification, e.g. laboratories, inspection facilities and equipment
* Lack of farmer/producer traceability and registration mechanisms
* Poor agronomic practices and extension systems, weak producer organizations
* Lack of a marketing strategy for FFVs

The 3.5-year project started in February 2019 and ended in July 2022 with funding from three entities namely; Government of Uganda, through MAAIF, the Standards and Trade Development Facility (STDF) and the Royal Netherlands Embassy (RNE) in Kampala. The project was implemented by the Department of Crop Inspection and Certification (DCIC) which is the National Plant Protection Organization (NPPO) in the Ministry of Agriculture Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF), together with the Uganda Agribusiness Alliance (UAA) and managed by the Centre for Agriculture and Bioscience International (CABI). Project Management Committee comprised of representatives from MAAIF, Ministry of Trade, producer and exporter associations and CABI.

## **1.2 Official welcome remarks** *(DCIC Commissioner Mr. Paul Mwambu)*

Mr. Mwambu highlighted Uganda’s Vision 2040 as stipulated in the National Development Plan III and states, “A Transformed Ugandan Society from a Peasant to a Modern and Prosperous Country within 30 years” whose goal is to increase average Household Incomes and Improve the Quality of Life of Ugandans”, and the theme of the National Development Plan (NDP) III that is Sustainable Industrialization for inclusive growth, employment and sustainable wealth creation”. He also pointed out that the Ministry of Agriculture Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF) is the leading government institution responsible for the agro-industrialization programme and that DCIC is the government entity mandated with Phytosanitary clearance of all agricultural products exported into and from Uganda. However, for a long time, DCIC capacity to deliver effectively on its mandate was handicapped due to several constraints which were technical, administrative and environmental. Uganda was consistently reported to be the country with the highest number of interceptions of fresh fruits and vegetables (FFVs) due to harmful organisms (pests and diseases) in the European Union. Hence, the expected growth of the FFV sector continued to remain far below its expectation, despite its potential in aspects of demand, favorable climatic conditions, soils, available arable land and work force.

The STDF / RNE project was therefore a timely and welcome intervention. He highlighted achievements made through the project including protocols for pests and diseases in places of production, improving the policy environment, engaging the private sector participation and other organizations. The DCIC managed to raise the numbers of inspector and equipped them with tools, personal protective wear and improved public -private sector collaborations.

He thanked the Standard and Trade Development Facility (STDF) and the Royal Netherlands Embassy (RNE) for the grant extended to the MAAIF DCIC that has enabled the achievement of the various milestones that were to be presented and discussed in the two-day project closing Seminar. He went on to thank the various government Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs), private sector and other development partners that came on board to enable the achievements and future collaborations. Mr. Mwambu thanked CABI for managing the project efficiently. He ended by noting that the outcomes of the project will contribute to quality of life, and social economic transformation of the people of Uganda.

Following the opening remarks, a message from CABI’s Senior Regional Director, Dr Morris Akiri was read by Ms Florence Chege. In his message he noted that CABI had been working with Ugandan institutions for many years to address the issues of pest and disease management and will continue with this endeavor noting that Uganda was a member of CABI. See Annexes 3 and 4 for their full messages respectively.

## **1.3 Project achievements** - *(Ms. Florence Chege and Ms. Brenda Kisingiri)*

### Main outcome of the project

The STDF project had improved coordination of activities, collaboration and capacity for phytosanitary compliance amongst the public and private sectors which resulted in increased preparedness to reduce interceptions in the EU. This was achieved through training and equipping inspectors and advocacy for an APEX horticulture body that allows self-regulation by the private sector. Improved communication through regular scheduled meetings through multi-stakeholder platform and the development of various Standard Operating Procedures, among others.

**Project key highlight results**

1. A diagnostic mapping to understand the value chain actors and set up of the SPS Multi-Stakeholder Forum (SPS MSP) as a platform where all stakeholders in the FFV value chain meet and interact
2. Built capacity of public and private sector to enable SPS compliance. Developed training curriculum on various trainings for FFV value chain actors (farmers, agronomists, quality controllers, traders, exporters) involved in FFV export; equipped NPPO inspectors with laptops, tablets, inspection kits and uniforms
3. A streamlined inspection and export certification system was put in place including the operationalization of the electronic system for issuing phytosanitary certificates through the General Electronic Notification System (GeNs), which was accomplished in collaboration with the with Ministry of trade; supported dialogue between the public and private sectors which contributed to the formation and membership enrollment into the new Apex body, HortiFresh
4. Build capacity for the initiation of a Specific Survey and Monitoring System for the key priority pests
5. Improved SPS awareness through communication materials that were developed through the project, e.g., awareness posters on SPS requirements and procedures for registering as an exporter, technical guides on pest and disease control, videos on export procedures
6. Capacity to enable compliance to SPS measures was put in place including

* A total of 1400 farmers were trained on SPS compliance to facilitate trade; the training emphasized IPM, food safety and awareness of SPS export requirements
* MAAIF increased number of inspectors from the 4 that were manning the airport at the project start by 25 new more inspectors. Twenty (20) of these were deployed to man the airport 24/7
* Seventy (70) staff (Inspectors and Commissioners) were equipped with tools to conduct their work including: inspection kits and personal protective clothing
* Twenty-five (25) Inspectors were equipped with tablets and computers enabling them to use the e-phyto system for accuracy, mitigation of fraud, traceability, work efficiency and effectiveness
* There is improved understanding of by inspectors’ phytosanitary requirements; and reference materials developed & availed including Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), inspection manuals, crop specific export dossiers and SPS training curricula
* The project also streamlined and documented the procedures for the exporter’s registration process

### Built capacity to conduct specific survey and monitoring systems (SSMS) for priority pests

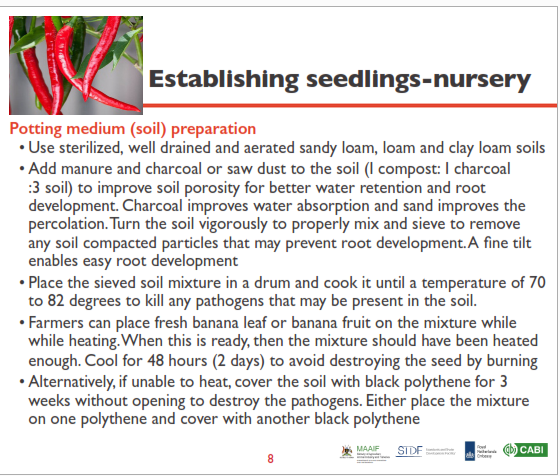
* The project developed SSMS protocols, Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and training curricula on how to carry out surveys of 5 priority pests: the training created awareness of EU export requirements, pest identification, scouting and reporting; and roles and responsibilities of both public and private sector. A technical task team composed of both sectors to guide the SSMS process was created
* Following the training a survey was initiated to determine the extent of spread of FCM, fruit fly spp, Fall Army Worm, thrips, PVY and mango mealybugs on export commodities - capsicum, mangoes, corn, and eggplant were conducted. Such survey results will guide decisions on pest management priorities

### Strengthened collaboration between private and public sectors stakeholders

* When the project started there was no formal or informal space for government institutions, private sector and development partners to meet, discuss and cultivate synergy to build the horticulture sector. The SPS Multi-Stakeholder Forum (SPS MSP) set up through the project succeeded as a platform where all stakeholders in the FFV value chain meet and interact
* Through this forum various partnerships have been fostered and a key lesson learned is that collaboration, coordination and communication are key pillars for public private participation (PPP)
* Project lobbied and successfully achieved setting up of an Apex body, Hortifresh
* Supported SPS policy (plant protection & health regulation) review and regulation to include charging fees for various services conducted by the NPPO so as achieve sustainability

### Awareness on SPS requirements along the value chain and the certification system

* The project increased farmers and extension workers knowledge through communication materials for top commodities and their harmful organisms. The top ranked commodities ranked by farmers and inspectors were: chilli and hot pepper (capsicums), mango, garden eggs and aubergines and bitter gourd (karela). The ranking of commodities was based on most frequently exported, frequency of interception in a month from the packhouse, frequency of interception in a month at airport, most frequently exported to the EU, volumes exported. Others included crops of most interest to farmers, high risk because of pests of concern and farmers’ perception with regard to ease of production of commodities
* Technical briefs, simplified & condensed with main messages that target audience needs to know (what, why, when, how) for each commodity was developed
* Print/e-copy communication materials developed were:
  + Capsicum flipchart and brochure on good agronomic practices for chilli production
  + False Codling moth (FCM) on chilli management poster
  + Garden eggs/ aubergines booklet on good agronomic practices
  + Garden eggs/aubergines poster on pests and disease management
  + Bitter gourd (Karela) story chart and brochure on good agronomic practices (applicable to bottle gourd as well)
  + Bitter gourd (Karela) pests and disease management poster (applicable to bottle gourd as well)



* Videos on certification process were produced to sensitise potential and current exporters, farmers producing for export and general public. The videos will be used for training and displayed at exit points to provide information to passengers

**1.4 Studies conducted -** *(Mr. Steve Hodges - UAA)*

The project commissioned studies to understand the market and existing opportunities, support its implementation of activities, coordination and communication. These were led byUganda Agribusiness Alliance (UAA)

* Diagnostic mapping of SPS in Uganda horticulture
* Market study on opportunities for FFV exports
* Mapping of horticulture projects in Uganda

### 1.4.1 Diagnostic mapping of SPS in Ugandan horticulture sector *(summary)*

A diagnostic mapping of public and private partners and SPS services along the horticulture value chain was carried out to identify priority areas for capacity building for phytosanitary compliance of public and private partners and to provide input to the streamlining of the inspection and certification system. An advisory panel of 7 members[[1]](#footnote-1) was composed to oversee the exercise.

A total of 62 persons were interviewed from February to May 2019 of which 37 were private sector representatives and 25 public sector representatives. These comprised representatives of farmers and farmer organizations, brokers (“middlemen”), exporters, agricultural advisory service providers, scientific and technical service providers, packaging suppliers, cargo handlers/freight forwarders and airlines, NGOs with a focus on trade policies, development partners, inspectors from DCIC of MAAIF and officials from MAAIF Horticulture Program.

The study made the following conclusions:

1. Need to increase expertise available at production level to improve SPS compliance in production and post-harvest handling
2. Enforce SPS standards consistently, create new SPS standards and regulations including those detailing a path for becoming an exporter
3. Create a centralized, easily accessible, and sustainable system for publicizing all standards and key information
4. Advocate for improving input situation and increased funding for agricultural extension, research, hiring more inspectors.
5. Improve communication and coordination among all key stakeholders in both private and public sectors
6. Promote research into three key problem areas in the FFV export value chain: reducing freight costs, improving the cold chain, and attracting more investment

Based on the conclusions, the study recommended the following:

1. Create and enforce standards and regulations, including those detailing a path for becoming an exporter
2. Set up an effective and sustainable system for publicizing all SPS standards and key SPS-related information
3. Join existing efforts to advocate for improvements in regulation of agricultural inputs; and for increased funding for agricultural extension, research, and hiring more agricultural inspectors
4. Improve communication and coordination within and among all key stakeholders in both private and public sectors
5. Gather more information on three key problem areas in the FFV export value chain: reducing freight costs, improving the cold chain, and attracting more investment.

### 1.4.2 Market study to assess opportunities to increase current and new FFVs exports from Uganda to high value markets

The study sought to assess the potential of increasing Uganda exports of FFVs. The method used involved interviews of key stakeholders in Uganda (24 exporters and others), desk research and assessment of enabling factors for the successful FFV exports in Kenya and Ethiopia

A criterion for evaluating potential of FFVs for successful ongoing export was developed and entailed:

1. Manageability of regulatory, quality and market requirements: including SPS issues, variety, appearance and size; organic production
2. Ability to produce at the scale needed to meet projected market demands
3. Existence of value chain structure and linkages conducive to a market-based approach
4. Regional competitiveness
5. Status of both government and private sector policies in Uganda, self-regulating mechanisms and infrastructure to support the sector, & recommendations
6. Interest by private companies to invest in the sector with aim of promoting production and exports

The FFVs were evaluated on ability to meet above-mentioned criteria, constraints to meeting above-mentioned criteria and possible interventions to increase the potential for export. The study identified the following currently exported Fresh Fruits & Vegetables with potential for increased export; avocado, apple bananas, pineapple, okra, garden eggs, hot pepper, passion fruit, chili pepper, sweet potatoes (white skin and red skin), snap beans, groundnuts and vanilla

The study also identified the following FFVs with potential for export but are not yet currently exported: jackfruit, auburgine, sweet potatoes (Beauregard, Covington), rosemary, guava, baby corn, cape gooseberry, snow peas and tree tomato

The study recommended the following:

1. Identify target market: volume-limited but less stringent ethnic market, volume-limited but more stringent higher value specialty food market, or larger and more stringent higher value conventional market
2. Carefully evaluate, plan the pathway needed to scale up production
3. Like Kenya and Ethiopia, prioritize development of horticulture-related institutions, policies and incentives such as making land accessible, offering tax incentives for producers of export FFVs
4. Develop stronger mechanisms and institutions for enforcing quality and standards leading to export value chains which are stringent and dynamic
5. Government should provide incentives to catalyze farmer organization development, including providing conducive infrastructure where FFVs grown
6. Strengthen exporter associations/private sector bodies, and encourage them to develop domesticated stringent quality system such as GlobalGAP

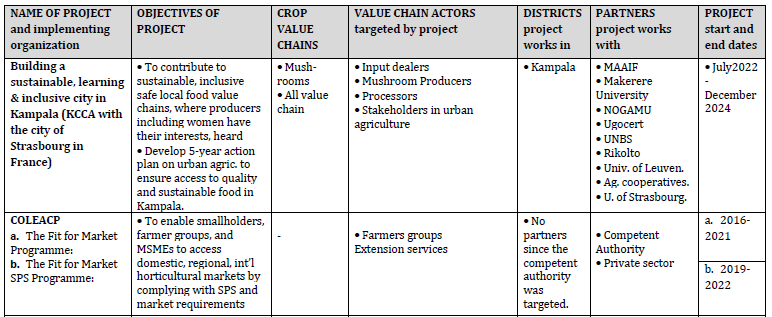
The findings were usedby the Agriculture Committee of the President’s Investors Round Table (PIRT) in a written report to MoFPED (the Horticulture Stakeholders Recommendations) and in PowerPoint reports to the Minister of Agriculture and in MAAIF and HortiFresh events. In addition, the research informed the basis for a 5-year UAA Project (Inclusive Nucleus Farm/ Out-grower Project) funded by the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs through Oxfam Uganda Power of Voices Project. This project made the relationships between horticulture exporters and their supplying out-growers more transparent and inclusive, to the benefit and profit of both.

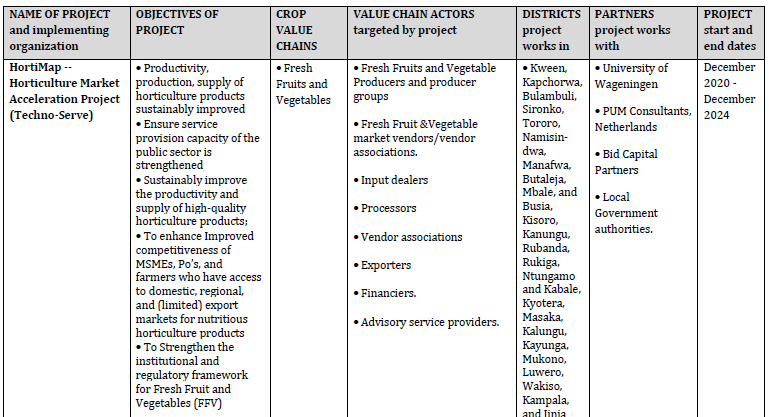
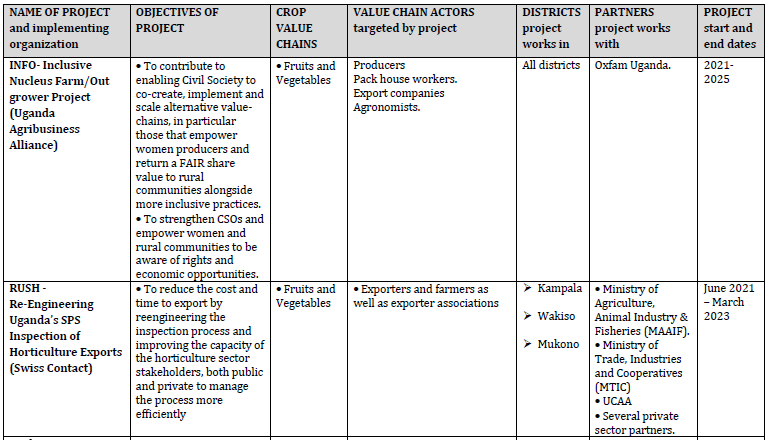
### 1.4.3 Mapping of Uganda horticulture projects

Between 2020-2022, Uganda has had an increase in the number of projects focussed on development of the commercial horticulture value chain in Uganda. The project undertook mapping of various horticulture projects in the country to ascertain the initiatives being undertaken, value chain subsector being supported, mode of operation and length of initiatives. This was intended to support the stakeholders to increase awareness of these projects and encourage collaboration, networking and coordination to avoid duplication of efforts.

Uganda Agribusiness Alliance (UAA) created a MATRIXproviding a “map” of the value chain addressed by each project, specifying which parts of the horticulture value chain are being addressed by each of the different projects, in what way, and for how long. UAA also created geographic maps showing which areas of Uganda are being served by the several horticulture developments projects active in Uganda. UAA plans to put the MATRIX and MAPS on its website for access to stakeholders.

Value chain matrix-map of horticulture projects





## `**1.5 Development of Uganda horticulture Multi-Stakeholder Platform (MSP)**

The project team established multi-stakeholder platform (MSP) to enable public and private sector stakeholders exchange information, network and learn from each other. The first meeting (physical) was held on 2nd October 2019 at the offices of UAA. Twenty-three (23) stakeholders attended whereby the participants reviewed and validated the concept note for the MSP. The proceeding meetings were thereafter held by virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions. The platform grew from 23 members in 2019 to 104 members in August 2021, then to 154 members by February 2022, with increasing membership during COVID.

At the beginning of August 2021, the membership was 75% private sector, 21 % public sector and 4% donor partners. In February 2022, the platform comprised of 78% private sector, 16% public sector and 6% donor partners. By August 2022, the Platform had 172 members: 39 (2.3%) exporters, 15 (0.9%) producers, 27 (1.6%) other agribusinesses; 13 (1.5% public sector) from MAAIF and 13 from other government Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs), 43 (2.5%) from NGOs and 9 (0.5%) donor representatives. Of the 172, 62 are women (36%), 47 (2.5%) are youth (27%), and 124 (72%) are on the Platform’s WhatsApp group which is very active between meetings.

The platform has enabled presentations/updates of vital information on horticulture projects to horticulture stakeholders specifically the following projects:

* Trade of Agriculture Safely and Efficiently in East Africa (Land O’Lakes)
* Horticulture Market Acceleration Program (HortiMAP) of TechnoServe
* Re-engineering SPS Inspection process for FFV exports (Swiss Contact)
* Packhouse Facility and Horticultural Export Project of CURAD;
* VINES (Vanilla) project of Catholic Relief Services
* GlobalG.A.P. Tour potential for Uganda.
* HortiFresh association
* Good Food for Cities and Sustainable Urban/Peri-Urban Agric. (Rikolto)
* Urban Agriculture in Kampala (KCCA)
* COLEACP Update
* Reclaim Sustainability! (Solidaridad)
* Inclusive Nucleus Farm Exporter/Outgrower Project (UAA)
* GlobalGAP/LocalGAP/UgaGAP coalition initiative

### 1.5.1 Sustainability of horticulture MSP

1. UAA is part of the consortium in the Power of Voices Project (PVP) in Uganda, funded by the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs through Oxfam Uganda. UAA will receive partial funding from PVP to continue meetings of the Horticulture MSP on a bimonthly basis through 2025, expanding the use of the Platform for inclusive dialogue and accountability
2. As the Platform moves to hybrid meetings, the members expressed willingness to donate at each meeting to fund the additional costs of meeting physically (e.g. refreshments)

### 1.5.2 Horticulture platform technical working group

At a Horticulture Platform meeting in September 2021, members from both private sector and public sector expressed the need for a Technical Working Group of the MSP to share their respective programs in order to identify overlaps, gaps, and possibilities for collaboration and coordination with each other as well as with MAAIF. The group is an informal, ad hoc gathering of projects already working or beginning to work in the horticulture value chain in Uganda. Members affirm that it is not intending to pre-empt any other group, will continue only as long as participants feel it is helpful, and will meet as frequently as participants feel is helpful. So far, the group has met three times.

## **1.6 HORTIFRESH: The origin, present and future** *(Mr. Fred Zake)*

Driving inclusion, catalysing stakeholder coordination & knowledge exchange, unlocking strategic partnerships and resources to support safe food for all, FFV production, competitiveness, compliance and market access for jobs, incomes and growth.

### 1.6.1 Contribution of horticulture sector to employment and economy

Mr. Fred Zake highlighted the contribution of horticulture sector in Uganda as follows;

* Horticulture is among the top-4 export revenue earners
* The sector showed a high annual growth rate of 13%over the past 10 years
* It is a major employer of women& has many female-owned/co-owned SMEs
* The sector is dominated by SMEs (97% of firms),engine of economic growth
* Informal horticulture exports represent 16% of formal exports.

He highlighted the sector challenges as follows;

* Few SPS inspectors to adequately support the sector, yet private sector self-regulation mechanism is still weak to atone for this shortage
* Information asymmetry across the supply chain limits opportunities
* Use of poor-quality packaging material limits potential, increases damages
* Historically, fragmented private sector with weak business membership organizations limited horizontal sector coordination
* Weak advocacy and organization and as a result the sector is marginalized, underfunded and lacks visibility in the government programs

As a result, the sector is faced with high post-harvest losses, averaging about 40% (EAC average), is hugely underperforming compared to Kenya, Tanzania and even Rwanda, in spite of the huge potential and natural resource endowment that Uganda enjoys.

### 1.6.2 Why the apex body?

1. One united voice for the sector, ease of two-way communication with government and partners
2. Jointly realize economies of scale through use of common services
3. Have a negotiating voice with freighters, packaging firms, input suppliers for reduced costs
4. Sharing information, best practices and lessons
5. One strong & professional secretariat to support the sector, instead of small fragmented offices
6. Brand Uganda FFV - $ I billion export potential

**Objectives**

* Link key stakeholders and enhance horizontal and vertical linkages
* Enable members to increase profits, penetrate new markets and reduce post-harvest losses
* Mobilise funding & support
* Build a good brand for Uganda Shilling from FFV
* Build and support a USD 1 Billion FFV industry.

**Key services include**

* Membership training and capacity building
* Information dissemination
* Lobbying and advocacy
* Stakeholders representation
* Support compliance to regulatory and market requirements
* Access to business and financial solutions.

### 1.6.3 HORTIFRESH achievements

1. HortiFresh is an all-inclusive apex organization for the FFVs sub-sector, founded in March 2019
2. HortiFresh emerged to mobilize stakeholders to rise up to the FFV challenges and opportunities to create decent jobs and incomes for growers, exporters, SMEs, women, youth and the national treasury
3. The apex body represents growers/producers, exporters - core *members, others being* sector service providers (input suppliers, transporters, sector experts, airlines, clearing agents, etc.) as *Associate Members*. The apex had 95 paid up members by August 2022
4. Appreciated the excellent collaboration with NPPO, MTIC, MoFPED, UEPB, etc
5. Kabira Club Declaration in July 2021: government endorsement was very critical for HORTIFRESH mandate and work
6. Membership recruitment and referrals, sent by NPPO, MTIC, UEPB
7. Secondment of staff to the Secretariat
8. Workshops with MAAIF on SPS and Self-regulation, division of labour, training secretariat staff and members on SPS and related topics. MAAIF team trainings
9. Carried out exhibitions jointly with MAAIF
10. Participated in high Level events, benchmarking trips
11. Information updates on key topics and issues
12. Collaboration on the Lead Farmer Model
13. Recommendations to other government MDAs, development partners
14. Seek honest feedback, advice and support to improve their role and self-regulation to enable growth

### 1.6.4 Looking ahead

* Compliance levels in the sector remain low, self-regulation mechanisms are very weak, while the NPPO is stretched. Huge risk of interceptions / import bans
* Consumers of Ugandan FFV may be risking unsafe food, there is need for urgent attention to address the growing challenge that is harmful to consumers in Uganda and abroad and can lock Ugandan products out of key domestic and international markets
* While very young, the expectations on HortiFresh are growing by the day and there is risk of absorptive capacity to engage with and support internal and external clients as per expectations. We therefore need to forge strategic partnerships to push the needle and address key challenges facing our members and the sub-sector
* Shall engage with key stakeholders like MAAIF, MTIC, UNBS, KCCA, Academic institutions and colleges, and others to urgently roll out programs to support the FFV sector to meet the domestic, regional and international export markets.

**HORTIFRESH wish list:**

1. Support to build self-regulation mechanisms for the sector, and to strengthen the partnership with the NPPO, MTIC, development partners to promote safe food for all, enhance compliance and reduce interceptions.
2. Support and drive UGA or PEARL GAP as a private sector standard.
3. Support Global GAP certification, to enable access to high end markets
4. Finalise and roll-out the code of conduct and enforce compliance
5. Work with the NPPO on SPS regulation, traceability and enforcement, collaborate to create database of input suppliers, agronomists and farm assurers, etc
6. Set up common services and facilities like irrigation equipment for lease, packhouses, cold storage infrastructure.
7. Advocate for low cost funding and grants to large off takers/lead farms with market access, and link them with out-growers
8. Lobby for support to set up a permanent home for HortiFresh, with training facilities, a model / demonstration farm, etc.
9. Roll out the HortiFresh skills centre to provide training
10. Safe food for all campaign – awareness creation, training
11. Inclusion – bring the sector under one roof

### 1.6.5 Conclusion

* Thanked the NPPO team for involving us in the different project activities to coordinate the private sector in addressing the identified FFV SPS issues.
* Requested for continuity and scaling up as there is so much work to be done to bring the sector to the level it deserves – in the areas of inspection, audit, capacity building and pest surveillance and identification of key quarantine pests.
* Additional emphasis should be put on relevant value chain infrastructure development like cold chain and other post-harvest handling facilities if we are to minimize on losses and ensuring high profitability of the FFV sector.
* Encouraged the sector stakeholders especially the producers and exporters to ensure compliance to different market requirements and standards in order to reduce on interceptions and improved quality of produce for the different markets
* Call upon the government and development partners to step up the support to the private sector so that Hortifresh can increase incomes, job creation and overall contribution to GDP
* HortiFresh is 100% funded from membership contributions and this limits their potential to impact the sector and lend support to the government on this important agenda.

## **1.7 Panel discussion on exporter and farmer perspectives on the sector improvements due to project interventions**

*Panelists were Mr. Micheal Owino, Dr. Samuel Balagadde and moderated by Dr. Caroline Nankinga*

The panel discussion focused on what has worked, challenges and proposed future intervention and recommendations. The successes of the project mirrored what is described above so not repeated here. The members highlighted required future interventions as follows:

1. There is need for more inspectors to come on board and beef up the existing manpower for several border posts
2. There should be project follow up and support programs for periodic training and continuous capacity building. New projects of similar nature should come on board to supplement the work already done
3. Building capacity in mitigating pesticide residues /MRLs (sampling, spray service providers, and laboratories for testing, proper disposal area/how to manage empty containers; confiscated chemicals, installation of incinerators across the country) of all value chain actors
4. Develop a clear traceability system for agrochemicals
5. Development of pesticide policy
6. Establishing a certified system for purchase of especially supply of clean and disease-free seed e.g. capsicum for farmers
7. There is need to develop a Globalgap and Ugandagap
8. Establish collaborating with airlines to reduce on flight charges for FFVs exporters
9. There should incorporation of activities implemented by the project in the daily work of NPPO.
10. There should be maintenance of the strength put in towards reducing interceptions even after project closer
11. Include academia in research about IPM and chemical residues
12. Skilling /hands on training of technical staffs e.g. agronomists, inspectors among others
13. Awareness creation through various communication materials on safe use of pesticides (need more funding of the process)
14. Information asymmetry across the supply chain limits opportunities available for private sector.

**Existing gaps for future investment**

The panelists identified and discussed sector gaps that should be addressed going forward to improve performance. These included:

1. Building capacity of public and private sector to mitigate interceptions due to pesticides residues, create awareness and develop/review policy and regulations. This should also involve support for sampling and laboratories for testing MRLs etc
2. Extending the inspection to FFVs grown and traded on the local markets
3. Support development of the Food law
4. Focus on import regulation
5. Support sector wide statistical data collection on production, exports, markets, coordination of FFV data collection agencies and disseminate information through the horticulture platform
6. Support academia/research to design climate smart and IPM strategies
7. Support development of new projects to scale out the STDF success stories and achievements
8. Incorporate the STDF achievements into the MAAIF-NPPO workplan and seek government funding
9. Support FFV value addition, contract farming/buying
10. Lobby for support for self-regulation through Hortifresh
11. Recruit more inspectors to fill the gaps

## **1.8 Other on-going horticulture sector initiatives**

### 1.8.1 MAAIF DCIC Agro-traceability system *(Mr. Amos Mpungu)*

The system objectives are intended to improve efficiency of the quality assurance process, trace agro-inputs and outputs from source to market (quality assurance), improve monitoring and reporting. The system will address traceability issues in the agrochemicals, seed and phytosanitary divisions. The system will integrate other national systems such as URA to support payments, URSB for verification of company details and NIRA for verification of personal details.

The system that is to be tested soon presents the following anticipated benefits:

* Improved implementation of regulation and inspection
  + Timely and efficient service delivery
  + Regulation for quality assurance and advisory other than policing
* Real time data collection
  + Timely reporting
  + Quick identification of gaps
  + Fast access to reports to monitor sub sector performance
  + Market intelligence
* Quality assurance
  + Trace inputs from source to market
  + Reduce poor quality inputs on the market
  + Build farmer confidence in use of improved inputs.

### 1.8.2 Presidential Investors Round Table on Agriculture (PIRT) - SPS plans at Entebbe airport *(Mr. Mamhood Hudda)*

1. Informed members that the president in March launched the Presidents Council for export and agro-industrial development and the council is made up of 26 members from both private and public sector
2. Reported about positive trend in the progress on interceptions currently. The discussions that came out of the PIRT was about food safety. He pointed out the roles of the council will mainly focus on value chain development, food safety among others. The agrochemical committee will focus on food law formulation with MAAIF
3. The third area will focus on airport inspection, especially address problem of infrastructure to help private sector area
4. Plans to focus mainly on international standards which need to be met along the value chain
5. Agreed there is need to increase quantity and quality of exports to get increased returns
6. Agreed on the need for infrastructure at 10 border posts which will cater for 90% of the exports, improve pack house facilities, and then improve on traceability systems, increase on inspections which will greatly increase the quality and quantity Ugandan exports. There was need for fumigation facility at airport. If this mode of work is emulated, it would greatly improve the SPS standards through a systems approach, the infrastructures will also have cooling and precooling, fumigation among others in the same infrastructure. The project already started.
7. He urged members to coordinate and network to bring everybody on board for Uganda exports to improve on international market.

### 1.8.3 Horticulture Market Acceleration Project (HortiMAP) led by Technoserve *(Mr. Daniel Mineno)*

The 4-year project (2021 – December 2024) is implemented by Technoserve in consortium with WUR, BiD Capital, and PUM Netherlands. It is funded by The Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands and is intended to contribute to poverty reduction, adequate food and nutrition security and job creation through an inclusive, competitive, and transformed horticulture sector. Project targets to increase incomes for 31,000 farmers, create 12,000 jobs and improve access to fruits and vegetables for 270,000 households. Project is implemented in 3 regions; Eastern/ Mt. Elgon, Southwestern and Victoria Crescent in a total of 25 districts with plans to expand to more 8 districts.

HortiMAP aims to accelerate the sector by realizing and achieving three strategic objectives:

* **SO1:** Sustainably improving productivity and supply of quality horticulture products
* **SO2:** Improve competitiveness and access to markets
* **SO3:** Strengthen the institutional and regulatory frameworks for a more inclusive sector

**The project will leverage on existing interventions as follows:**

* + Policies, standards and SPS awareness through training and sensitization of producers, district and sub-county extension staff
* Working with NPPO regional inspectors
* Use lead farmer model – certification of lead farmers
* Carry out media campaigns and programs on FFVs safety, nutrition, standards and policies
* Establish MSPs at regional levels
* Support Global GAP system and infrastructure (farmer assurers trained by TRASE)
* Support UgaGAP systems and infrastructure set up working with public and private sector actors
* Micro infrastructure grants for production and post-harvest infrastructure
  + Catalytic finance to SMEs with business models that provide products and services to SHF
* Use of wage workers (spray services)
* Promotion of biological and organic products
* Quality inputs and technologies
* Institutional strengthening of Hortifresh

**Other planned interventions**

* Support to testing facilities – Exploring work with UNBS to improve turnaround time
* Support in the rollout of digital FFV traceability system under MAAIF
* Pilot a private self-quality guarantee scheme – to offer solution to safety concern in the local market
* Horticulture credit facility to growers – to invest in CSA and quality control practices

### 1.8.4 Re-engineering Uganda’s SPS inspection processes for fruits and vegetables export *(SWISSCONTACT – Mr. Benjamin Mugema)*

The project objectives are intended to address the manual process, dashboard and stakeholder engagement. Some of the expected outputs comprise a simple excel-based database, and key data analytics to provide basic indicators for the monitoring dashboard. The key components involve equipping inspectors with tablets to ensure quick and effective completion of checklists.

1. Developing manual process

Work stream 1: Process re-engineering: Entails understanding the current inspection process, as is and designing the new /‘re-engineered’ inspection process and consolidating these new processes into a detailed manual.

1. Dashboard

Work stream 2: E-tracking system which includes defining business and functional requirements for a new e-tracking / digital inspection system, contracting a vendor and testing the system. The work stream also includes awareness creation and launch. The project team is also supporting the MTIC in upgrading the Uganda trade information portal.

1. Stakeholder engagement

Work stream 3: Stakeholder engagement & coordination involves developing a stakeholder engagement strategy, capacity building for key stakeholders and continued collaboration with other key partners.

**Key manual interventions**

The RUSH project conducted a stakeholder validation workshop and presented a range of options to generate efficiencies across the horticulture export value chain that resulted in the following manual interventions:

1. **Data collection and analysis**

* Reformed existing checklists at the packhouse and airport to collect pertinent data
* Data to inform efficiencies in the inspection process as well as possibilities for a digital / e-tracking inspection solution and a risk-based inspection mechanism
* Designed and deployed a final destination checklist to collect critical market data

1. **Capacity building**

* Conducted training for quality controllers & agronomists at packhouses focused on improving HACCP and efficiencies in documentation and inspection compliance
* Held a training of trainers (ToT) module for selected inspectors and agronomists focused on: improving perishables handling, readiness for export and understanding efficient packhouse and export management

The Manual process interventions Before & After analysis includes a deep dive into the checklists and data collection tools developed by the project team. Pre-inspection planning schedule, Pack house inspection checklist, Airport inspection checklist, Destination checklist**.**

Manual process interventions, how to monetize current inefficiencies in the horticulture value chain and track the projects’ impact, inefficient processes, lack of collaboration between stakeholders and inadequate knowledge of horticulture value chain actors; product is being “lost” along the way with significant economic implications for the exporter.

**Project progress and key achievements:** Structural improvements have been noted and facilitation particularly in better planning for inspections, improved collaboration among stakeholders and adoption of new reforms.  These comprise soft process re-engineering, data collection, collaboration and engagement, capacity building and training gains, regulator commitment for sustainability**.**

### 1.8.5 USAID-FEED THE FUTURE *(Ms. Christabel Tumwebaze)*

Highlighted USAID-FEED THE FUTURE FFV Sub Sector potential collaboration areas.

**Goal:** Improved accountability, responsiveness, and performance of key national level Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) and Industry Apex Organizations (IAOs) that will enable them to better fulfill their mandates, creating a more conducive environment for market actors to productively engage in the agriculture sector.

**Purpose:** Contribute to improved performance of MDAs and IAOs to better serve their constituents

**Objectives:**

1. Improve the internal processes of selected MDAs and IAOs, making them more responsive to the needs of consumers, their members and the general public

* Support based on institutional assessment results of partners
* Some key areas for consideration may include: governance and leadership, human resource management, communication, advocacy, financial management, business models among others.

1. Improve the policy framework that supports the functionality of selected MDAs and IAOs Aims at creating an enabling environment for private sector businesses to thrive. The Activity supports:

* Policy formulation, policy review/amendments, enacting of legal instruments, facilitate implementation of policies/regulations
* Some legal instruments prioritized with DCIC for support include: Agricultural Chemical (Control) Act – Gap analysis to be conducted to inform review, Agricultural Chemical (Control) Regulations – Implementation, Plant Protection and Health Regulations Act – Gap analysis to be conducted to inform review, SPS Policy and Strategy – Work in progress, pending approvals

1. Strengthen key capacity elements of selected MDAs and IAOs to perform their mandates

* Focus on promoting digitalization of systems and processes to create efficiency in service delivery
* Activity working with local partners to promote digitalization and contribute to Uganda Digital vision 2040
* Improve MDA and IAO websites efficiency
* Improve existing systems – integration into national systems with NITAU
* AITS and NFASS part of the discussion with MAAIF

1. Strengthen the key vertical and horizontal linkages within, between and among institutions to enable them work together more effectively to achieve their goals

* Work with existing platforms, forums to enhance coordination and collaboration and address issues raised by private sector that require government attention
* Work with Think-Tanks to organize and hold public-private dialogues to address issues of importance
* Support efficiency capacities for forums e.g. digital communication
* Revive non-functional platforms where necessary

**Other interventions**

* Grants to private sector to support member services, advocacy and other areas of interest
* Open to collaboration and learning with development partners in the sector, promote synergy and efficiency
* Work closely with USAID/USDA sister activities to avoid duplication/maximize returns – Strategic Investment Activity, Inclusive Agriculture Markets Activity and TRASE
* Internship Program to deal with human resource gaps

## **1.9 Closing remarks**

### 1.9.1 Remarks from EU representative (Mr. Luis Licheugero and Ms. Nadia Cannata)

The EU is in support of the systems approach to solve challenges in the horticulture value chain. Has selected CABI and COLEACP to lead in development of a project to continue building on progress made through this STDF project. A reference group that comprises most of the other projects have been consulted and DCIC would have input on what the new project will address. The project documents have been submitted for approval by the government after which the financing agreement shall be signed.

### 1.9.2 Remarks from RNE Representative *(First secretary, Food and Security PSD, Mr. Josephat Byaruhanga)*

* Thanked participants for attending the project closing seminar
* Informed members that the RNE partly supported the project by investing close to Euros 150,000 and as the key contact person of the project, he appreciated the coordination between different players.
* There is a horticultural credit facility included in the HortiMap project from RNE to help farmers.
* He emphasized on domestic market support for penetration, quality improvement of agricultural products destined for local market and pledged support from RNE towards supporting border control activities.

### 1.9.3 Remarks from STDF representative remarks (Mr. Pablo Jenkins)

Mr. Jenkins thanked all the members present for their participation in the project and making is a success. He was happy to note that there would be continuation of the project’s achievements through other ongoing and proposed new initiatives. He pledged continued future support in other engagements.

### 1.9.4 MAAIF DCIC *(Dr. Nankinga for Commissioner)*

* Thanked all collaborators and partners that have contributed to the project, allparticipants for their input. The Uganda Agribusiness Alliance for co-project implementation, the various farmers and exporters who actively participated in project implementation including Hortifresh, Afrifruits, NARO, Chemiphar Uganda, COLEACP, IPPC- E-Phyto Team. The government MDAs; MTIC, UEPB and Local Government Extension Departments
* Also thanked the National Plant Protection Organizations (Kenya and Tanzania) that contributed to development of the SOPs & hosted study tours and CABI for administering the project effectively.
* Thanked all the funders on behalf of NPPO; RNE, STDF for the project no-cost extension to enable project implementation, EU, USAID for other support
* She promised DCIC shall endeavor to take all the key issues raised
* Next steps; A formal external assessment will be conducted to comprehensively document project achievements; and pledged that the project awareness materials will be made available.

## **2.0 Closing remarks by the Minister of State for Agriculture *(Hon. Fred Bwino)***

* Welcomed all partners from different arenas, national organizations and international and thanked all the actors towards success of the project.
* He stated that the ministry was currently focusing on opportunities and addressing challenges along the value chain within the fruits and vegetable export as well as other export commodity value chains.
* He stated that coffee is the leading agricultural export but accepted that fresh fruits and vegetables can over take it if challenges are adequately addressed
* Later mentioned that horticulture sector has faced several challenges leading to increasing number of interceptions of the country’s export consignments mainly in the European Union. The increased interceptions have been due to presence of pest restrictions, banned and exceeding levels of pesticides and poor documentation. This has greatly inhibited the country from optimally harnessing the immense opportunities that exist in the EU and other markets for the sector. He promised support from the government towards success of fresh fruits and vegetables and to address all the challenges involved. He went ahead to recognize the outputs of the project like formation of the apex body and urged that all members should come on board.
* Conveyed greetings from the minister, MAAIF and the whole MAAIF and officially closed the project seminar, for the full speech see Annex 5.

Presentations and seminar images are available on this link: [https://ssl.gstatic.com/docs/documents/share/images/services/folder-3.pngCLOSING SEMINAR PRESENTATIONS](https://urlsand.esvalabs.com/?u=https%3A%2F%2Fdrive.google.com%2Fdrive%2Ffolders%2F1y78JurxUrGMzFlBFvQ-dmC2bkm-jxV-k%3Fusp%3Dsharing_eil_m%26ts%3D630e0fc9&e=fa4695b0&h=b52a5298&f=n&p=y)

**Annexes**

**Annex 1: Programme**



**Annex 2: List of participants**



**Annex 3 & 5 : Opening Remarks by DCIC; and Message from CABI**

**Annex 5: Closing Remarks by Minister of Agriculture**



1. Brenda Kisingiri, Department of Crop Inspection and Certification (DCIC), (MAAIF), Florence Nakitto, Horticulture Exporters Association (HORTEXA), Micheal Owino, Uganda Fruits and Vegetables Exporters and Producers Association (UFVEPA)

   Fredrick Kasozi (MTIC), Steve Hodges (UAA), Noreen Kamoti (UEPB) and Dr Eve Kasirye-Alemu, Private Consultant on Standards [↑](#footnote-ref-1)