



Enhancing the capacity of the fruit and vegetable sector to comply with phytosanitary requirements for export to global markets

The project's overall goal is to improve market access to the EU, other high-end and regional markets for Ugandan fresh fruits and vegetables (FFVs). Its key purpose is to improve Uganda's compliance with international phytosanitary standards for production and export of FFVs. Sustained incomes to FFV producers and their employees will contribute to economic growth, poverty reduction and food security in line with Uganda's development policy.

STDF/PG/543

Status

On-going

Start Date

01/02/2019

End Date

31/01/2022

Project Value (US\$)

\$882,726

STDF Contribution (US\$)

\$484,788

Beneficiaries

Uganda

Implementing Entities

Centre for Agricultural Bioscience International (CABI)

Partners

Horticulture Exporters Association of Uganda (HORTEXA)

International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) Secretariat

Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Uganda

Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries, Uganda

Ministry of Trade Industry and Cooperatives, Uganda

National Agricultural Research Organization (NARO), Uganda

Uganda Agribusiness Alliance (UAA)

Uganda Export Promotion Board (UEPB)

Background

Uganda is a country driven predominantly by its rural agriculture sector, where about 84% of the working population is employed in agriculture. The rural population mostly depends on farming as its main source of income while 90% of rural women work in the agricultural sector. The sector also contributes 42% of the national gross domestic product and 80% of the export earnings. The FFV and flower exports contribute about 30% of Uganda's agricultural exports revenue. These trade flows support rural employment and economic development.

However, Uganda is not fully meeting its production and trade potential in FFVs due to challenges in managing pests at the farm level and meeting international phytosanitary trade requirements. Exporters have suffered great losses because of their produce being intercepted on transit to the EU market. The EU is an important market for the exported products. According to PQIS (Phytosanitary and Quarantine Inspection Services) inspector reports, exports to the EU represent approximately 60% of all FFV exports, with the other 40% going mainly to the Middle East and very little going to neighbouring countries.

In the period 2014-2016, the European Commission sent several warning letters to Uganda's National Plant Protection Organisation (DCIC), due to the high number of interceptions of chillies with false codling moth and fresh curry leaves with *Trioza* spp. Uganda submitted an action plan to address these issues, including temporary ban on chilli exports. Besides chillies, the trade in other FFV including jack fruit, bitter melon, soursop, mango, basil, and okra, is constrained because of inadequate management of harmful organisms. As a result, most of the products cannot comply with EU phytosanitary requirements nor with the relevant international standards. Some specific trade-linked plant health compliance challenges include the implementation of an effective pest management regime for the control of pests that affect Uganda's exports of FFVs. Significant numbers of export consignments to the EU are detected with the presence of harmful organisms.

The root causes behind these interceptions are mainly related to weak institutional coordination and enforcement mechanisms, inadequate production, processing and distribution infrastructure, low public awareness, limited conformity assessment services, limited skilled human resources, inadequate regulatory infrastructure (laboratories, quarantine facilities, laboratory services), inadequate capacity for involvement of the private sector small-scale producers, etc. Moreover, the horticultural value chain in Uganda is facing a number of general challenges that may aggravate the phytosanitary problems, including poor agronomic practices, inadequate extension services, poor markets and marketing infrastructure, weak producer groups and poor coordination among various stakeholder.

To address these challenges, Uganda has put in place various strategies and policies to improve agricultural production, enhance SPS capacity and expand its exports. The Uganda Vision 2040 identifies agriculture as one of the key opportunities to strengthen the Ugandan economy and transform society from a to a modern and prosperous country.

This project aims to support the government objectives and build on lessons from earlier projects (e.g. [STDF/PG/335](#)) while building synergies with relevant ongoing initiatives. It will support the objectives of the National Trade Policy that prioritises conformity to SPS as a way of ensuring competitiveness. The project addresses a key constraint for agricultural development that is clearly acknowledged by the Agriculture Donor Working group in Uganda in which the EU, USAID and the Netherlands have been directly involved. The Netherlands Embassy will provide co-financing for this project.

Expected Results

Building SPS Multi-Stakeholder Platform

A diagnostic mapping of public and private partners and SPS services along the horticulture value chain will be completed in order to identify priority areas for capacity building (which is developed for phytosanitary compliance of public and private partners) and to provide input to the streamlining of the inspection and certification system. A study will be conducted to map SPS services, which stakeholders will validate and come up with prioritized areas during workshops. Based on the mapping, a private sector-led SPS Multi-Stakeholder Platform will be formed. It will meet quarterly to assist national coordinating mechanisms in improving communication, accountability and hence strengthening ownership of responsibilities for improving SPS compliance by private sector actors.

Strengthening phytosanitary capacity along the horticultural value chain

The capacity development plan will be revised based on results of diagnostic mapping. A number of training workshops and study tours will be conducted to build the capacity of inspectors, farm scouts, farmers, transporters and traders on pest management, inspection and pack house management. Trainers will be trained on Integrated Pest Management (IPM). The Training of Trainers (TOTs) will cascade the knowledge widely to farmers during and after the project period. Demonstration plots for farmers will be set up using the Farmer Field Schools (FFS) model providing them hands-on experience on pest management. Trainees will be assisted to produce new and/or improve existing Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), Operation Manuals and Farmer Extension Guides.

Streamlining inspection and export certification system

A streamlined inspection and export certification system will be set up through the horticultural value chain based on a public-private partnership (PPP). It will be aligned with the results of the diagnostic mapping as well as ISPM No. 7 (Export certification system), ISPM No. 14 (The use of integrated measures in a systems approach), ISPM No. 23 (Guidelines for inspection), and IPPC's Import Verification Guide and Export Certification Guide. Through guidance of international experts, workshops and meetings for stakeholders will be conducted to: develop a strategic plan for streamlining inspection & certification as well as coordination and monitoring; produce a communication strategy on phytosanitary issues; and develop a computer-based format for export certification to improve quality and efficiency. Materials for training and extension will be developed or revised to include any new measures agreed during project implementation. An assessment of Namalere Phytosanitary Laboratory (the main reference Lab for DCIC) will be conducted in order to prioritize any equipment needs to improve SPS related services. A guide on Good Agricultural Practice (GAP) will also be produced.

Specific phytosanitary survey and monitoring systems

Specific phytosanitary survey and monitoring systems in the FFV value chain based on a PPP will be developed and made operational. The system will be developed based on ISPM No. 6 (Surveillance) and the IPPC Plant Pest Surveillance Guide. A task force will be created to oversee its implementation. Trainers (TOTs) will be trained on how to operationalize the system so that they further train both inspectors and scouts to conduct necessary surveys. Data generated from the new system will be collected and analysed. Some equipment will be procured to strengthen both field and exit inspections as well as the surveillance system. A Pest Risk Analysis (PRA) team, some of whom will be part of the task force, will be trained and provided with some equipment. A new SOP for specific surveys and surveillance will be developed based on experiences of setting up these systems.

Developing Uganda Export Marketing Strategy

A market study will help to analyse how to increase fruit and vegetable exports to both new and current markets, with improved SPS compliance. Building upon the results of the study, Uganda Export Marketing Strategy for FFVs will be developed with the support of all key stakeholders along the FFV export value chain.

Improving awareness and support at national level

The project will raise awareness on the new inspection and certification systems, at national policy levels as well as in the horticulture sector as a whole. The project will explore the possibilities of expanding the results to other horticulture sub-sectors. The communication strategy on phytosanitary issues will be revised based on lessons learned from project implementation. A final project seminar and other communication products (i.e. videos) will ensure the dissemination of project results and awareness raising.