

STDF 354 PROJECT- NEWSLETTER (DECEMBER 2015 - ISSUE 2)

Improving Safety and Quality of the Sri Lankan Fruits and Vegetables

The International Trade Centre (ITC), the Ceylon Chambers of Commerce (CCC), with the support of the Standards and Trade Development Facility (STDF) of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) are partnering with the Department of Agriculture (DOA), The Ministry of Health, The National Agribusiness Council (NAC) and the Sri Lanka Fruit and Vegetables Producers Processors and Exporters Association (LFVPPEA) and relevant private and public stakeholders in Sri Lanka to contribute to:

“Improve the safety and quality of the Sri Lankan Fruits and Vegetables” (STDF 354)

The project aims to 1) build and sustain the competence of public and private stakeholders to comply with quality and food safety international requirements, 2) improve the international, regional and national market opportunities of selected value chains of fruits and vegetables with the ultimate goal of income generation.

PROJECT PROGRESS

Study tour to Milan, Italy

30 November – 4 December 2015

In order to contribute to the above-mentioned objectives of the project and enable exporters to better understand the EU and Italian buyer's requirements and explore B2B opportunities as a hub, a study tour was organized to Milan jointly by ITC, CCC, Export Development Board (EDB) and Lanka Fruits and Vegetable Producer, Processor and Exporter Association (LFVPPEA), with the support of AICE (Associazione Italiana Commercio Estero – Italian Association of Foreign Trade).

Participants- two of them being woman, represented by five exporters and two farmers attended the study tour. The project fully sponsored the participation of the farmers, who are producing pineapple and papaya; and partially sponsored the expenses of exporters.

The study tour was an opportunity for the participants to meet both public and private sector representatives to enhance further export opportunities with Italian buyers. ITC Adviser on Export Quality Management (Ms. Ludovica Ghizzoni) and a team from AICE, accompanied the participants during the visits.

The first day of the study tour kicked-off with a presentation by AICE on various technical and trade topics, including SPS measures, buyer's requirements, testing analysis, certifications, inspections, customs and taxes. This presentation was followed up by a round-table discussion, where challenges for exporters and opportunities for international trade were discussed. In addition to that, B2B meeting with wholesalers was organized to discuss distribution chains.

On the following day, the participants visited a modern fruit and vegetables shop to better understand demand trends and varieties offered on the European markets.



As sustainability is one of the priority topics, the second day commenced with a visit to a Science park - Parco Tecnologico Padano (www.ptp.it). During the visit, state of art technology in the cultivation of various vegetables was demonstrated. The participants received extensive information on greenhouse infrastructure, equipment and good agricultural practices implemented in the Demo Field for sustainable production. The *alimenta2talent* programme and the business incubator center were presented, as an opportunity also for Sri Lankan startups.



The afternoon continued with a visit to the automated lettuce growing greenhouse facility installed in Guidizzolo. Participants identified this visit as an eye-opener activity, as it reflects the latest technology available in the country.



The next day was followed up by a field visit to the General Wholesale Market of Milan. It demonstrated the local trends in the culinary tastes that determine the developments of market needs. In addition, B2B meetings with importers were organized to establish potential synergies.



The day continued by a visit to a testing company called INTERTEK. The latter explained the services provided related to testing, inspection and certification activities.

In the afternoon, a visit to the logistic center of Ortofin was held. It is a wholesaler of fruits and vegetables that enabled participants to gain a better understanding of the requirements, quality controls and processes applied on-site.



The morning session of the third day of the study tour was dedicated to a demonstration by GOGLIO on various packaging methods, and in particular on aseptic technology.

The successful case of India related to FRES-CO ASEPTIC was shared, that aims reducing food waste, benefit local farmers and develop trade opportunities. During this event, participants learnt about the legal requirements on packaging in Italy and EU,

as well as best practices applied in the field.



The afternoon session was dedicated to a visit at the Italian Customs Office in Malpensa. It helped participants to gain understanding of how the process at the arrival of the shipments works with customs, health and plant quarantine at the airport.

At the last day that concluded the study tour, a visit to the Auchan Vimodrone – modern supermarket, was done to demonstrate prices and controls applied.

After the visit to the supermarket, a meeting with fertilizer and pesticide producer was held, where regulatory controls and audits were explained. This was an essential learning experience for the participants on how to organize audits back in Sri Lanka and to build a solid foundation of trust. In addition, the visit to the plant offered an opportunity to observe the latest development in the field.



As a result of the study tour, all the participants enhanced their technical knowledge and gained first-hand field experience. This will be followed by workshops and presentation to be given to other exporters and farmers in Sri Lanka, who could not participate in the tour. All materials related to the tour are being posted on www.spssrilanka.lk.

Mr. Annes Junaid (chairman of LFVPPEA and managing director of CBL Natural) expressed his gratitude by saying: “A big thank you for the fruitful, educative and interactive week, where useful and thought-provoking new ideas and possible ventures were discovered”.

OTHER PROJECT ACTIVITIES

Training to farmers

18 five-day training programmers in 12 districts for more than 490 farmers on GAP have been completed, on the following topics: Identification of Pests and Diseases, Post-harvest handling, SPS issues, Finance and Business, Marketing and Field Visit.

One of the farmers trained under the project commented: “The training program is extremely useful. Undergoing the training enlightened us on good and bad practices we apply at present. We hope this type of programs will continue in the future. We shall also be grateful if a proper marketing mechanism for our produce can be organized”.

Training for National Plant Quarantine Service and Exporters

Colombo, Sri Lanka, 7-10 December 2015

Three sessions of one-day training program were conducted for the Plant Quarantine Inspectors on 7, 8 and 9 December 2015.

Trainings covered topics on EU plant health import controls applied on the customs inspections and the enforcement of the latter. In addition to that, various sampling methods were discussed and a practical session held.

One-day workshop for exporters was held on 10 December 2015 on the EU plant health controls. Mr Channa (Chief Operations Officer NIDRO) expressed his gratitude saying: “The workshop very useful, as we had the chance to examine fruits seen during the study tour. Thanks to the trainer, we have identified that the fruits rejected did not have ring spot virus. It appears that we may have been mistakenly rejecting some papayas out of caution.”

The workshops were led by an expert – who is an inspector based at Heathrow airport (UK), providing both theoretical and practical insights on the current practices in the EU to address the recommendations of the EU FVO mission. The last day of the training was dedicated to gather ideas and process mapping of SOPs establishment for the critical tasks on the export process. This helped the stakeholders to better understand the UK and EU practices on the border controls and improve practices applied in Sri Lanka.

NEXT STEPS

- Finalization of the Farmers trainings program
- Networking, B2B and thematic events
- Sri Lanka GAP
- Thailand study tour
- Further training on plant health

Please visit our website and register for the latest news to

<http://spssrilanka.lk>

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



Lal de Silva, Adviser, National Project Manager,
Email: lal@chamber.lk

The Ceylon Chamber of Commerce

Tel: +94 11 5588800 Ext.311; Fax: +94 11 2449352

Website: www.spssrilanka.lk

