

**Beneficiary**

Farmers and other stakeholders involved in fruit and vegetable value chains in Sri Lanka

Led by

ITC

Time-frame

March 2013 – June 2016

STDF funding

US\$629,982 (total project value US\$826,096)

SAFER FRUIT AND VEGETABLE EXPORTS SECURE LIVELIHOODS IN SRI LANKA

The safe trade gap

Fruits and vegetables have a high export value in global markets and Sri Lanka has a strong potential to cultivate crops, such as mango, papaya, pineapple, green chilli and tomato. Farmers, processors and traders in remote producing areas of the country, including many women and young people, were being held back from domestic and export markets by not managing to meet SPS measures. That was putting a break on Sri Lanka's employment opportunities, farmers and exporters' income and the potential for better nutrition and domestic health with safe produce for local and international consumers. Tackling gaps in safety and quality across fruit and vegetable value chains was a priority.

Partnership approach

Building and sustaining the capacity of the public and private sector to meet quality and international food safety and plant health standards, across fruit and vegetable value chains, was at the heart of the project led by ITC. Close government and business collaboration brought together the Department of Agriculture with the private sector, including the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce, the Lanka Fruit and Vegetable Producers, Processors, and Exporters Association, the National Agribusiness Council and the Sri Lanka Export Development Board. Targeted SPS training and capacity building programmes were run for the Department of Agriculture and over 200 master trainers, field level trainers, and field level extension officers who, in turn, are training farmers.

Results

- 40 training programmes were organized for over 900 stakeholders on Good Agricultural Practices and SPS topics including pest and disease prevention.
- Strong coordination between public and private sector across value chains helped to tackle export challenges, improve inspections, reduce the number of notifications of interceptions in the EU and develop an up-to-date pest list.
- Benefits reached the private sector. Nidro Supply Ltd. (one of largest fruit and vegetable exporters working with small-holder farmers) now follows protocols set out under the project.
- A national farmer-friendly standard on Good Agricultural Practices was launched by the Department of Agriculture, with project farmers included in the certification process.
- Fruit and vegetable farmers and exporters reported improved market opportunities. The volume of quality fruits and vegetables for export increased from 25 to 50%, and rejections of selected fruits and vegetables due to SPS issues fell by at least 20%.

Sustaining impact

- Two study tours were held for government officials, farmers and exporters to Italy and Thailand to show developments and linkages in the value chain and provide new business opportunities. As a result, a number of European companies are showing interest in building trading relationships with Sri Lankan farmers and exporters.
- The Department of Agriculture included SPS topics in its training modules, reaching over 1,200 officers. Going forward, more officers will be trained in the new curriculum, sharing the latest knowledge on SPS even further.

“Exports could be “pushed up exponentially” if small-holder farmers are trained in proper growing protocols that meet international standards. Success will depend on training farmers working with one-half or one acre. They need to participate in a quality and food safety training programme”.

Dawn Austin, Nidro Supply Ltd., Sri Lanka

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