

BOOSTING INTERNATIONAL TRADE BY IMPROVING THE SANITARY AND PHYTOSANITARY SYSTEM FOR HORTICULTURE IN UGANDA

Locations	Uganda
Dates	01/03/2025 - 28/02/2029

Summary

In Uganda, the export of horticultural produce to global markets is significant to the economy, food security and livelihoods. In 2023, 60% of exports, which included fresh fruit and vegetables, were to the EU, worth 58 million euros. However, despite the notable exports, Uganda has a limited share of the EU market. This is due to produce being intercepted and rejected because it does not meet the required Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) standards. CABI is working in collaboration with partners to strengthen the capacity of Ugandan authorities and private sector organizations to comply with SPS measures for domestic and export markets, with the aim of increasing trade, safeguarding health and increasing income and employment opportunities.

The problem

In Uganda, the export of horticultural produce, including fresh fruit and vegetables (FFV), plays a vital role to the country's economy and its employment sector.

The EU market is particularly important to Uganda's export market – in 2023, exports to the EU accounted for 60%, totaling 58 million euros. However, Uganda currently has a limited share of the EU market because very little of its produce is exported. Most of the exports end up in domestic markets which typically yield low returns and discourage investments.

The reason is that exports are being intercepted and rejected because of harmful organisms, excessive maximum residue limits (MRLs) that are not in line with the EU standards, and Codex and documentation errors.

Between 2015 and 2024, according to EUROPHYT/TRACE, more than 787 interceptions occurred due to harmful organisms (70% were on FFV exports) and 308 interceptions because of documentation (71% on FFV exports).

For Uganda to regain market share and capitalize on the opportunity to increase revenue of up to $150 million, the problems outlined need to be addressed by improving compliance with the SPS system.

What we are doing

SPS systems refer to regulatory and non-regulatory measures and organizational arrangements set by a country to safeguard the health of humans, animals and plants from hazards and risks associated with harmful pests, diseases or contaminants carried in food and feed, plants and animal products, as well as processes associated with agricultural production, processing, trade and supply.

The project aims to strengthen the capacity of the Ugandan Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF) services provision and support private sector organizations to comply with SPS measures for both domestic and export markets. However, given the challenges Uganda faces when exporting to the EU, there will be a core focus on EU plant health and food safety regulations.

The project will:

1. Optimise the governance and operational processes of the competent authorities needed to implement SPS measures in the export of FFV. Specifically, capsicum, garden eggs (white), Hass avocado, mango and okra
2. Enhance production and produce handling processes among private sector actors for improved compliance of fruit and vegetable value chains in Uganda with phytosanitary and food safety regulations to meet market requirements.

It is envisaged that improved capacity and compliance will help increase exports, safeguard consumers', farmers' and producers' health and, in turn, increase incomes and create new job opportunities.

The key beneficiaries will be the National Plant Protection Organisation (NPPO) – the designated national competent authority in SPS at MAAIF – and associated ministries, departments and agencies, including trade and standards. Other beneficiaries include target business operators such as membership organizations eg HortiFresh, farmer-based organizations, farmer groups, cooperatives, and support services such as research organizations, consultants, training centres, certification bodies, farmer support structures, extension services and entities involved in freight and logistics. Indirect beneficiaries include local, regional and EU purchasing, processing and retail companies, consumers and consumer associations and rural communities.

Donors European Union Commission

Partners Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF), Uganda, HortiFresh, COLEAD, Global Gateway, Sustainable Business for Uganda (SB4U)

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