PROMOTING INCLUSIVE GROWTH

The EU-Sri Lanka Trade-Related Assistance Project
Having come out of a three decade civil war, Sri Lanka is moving towards much needed trade reforms to take the island nation to the next level of sophistication to further its ambitions of becoming a regional trade hub.

The EU-Sri Lanka Trade-Related Assistance project aims to increase the trade competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in regional and European Union (EU) markets.

The 4-year EU-funded project, worth EUR 8 million, contributes to inclusive trade-led growth and regional integration. It supports SME export competitiveness and value addition in sectors with high potential for economic growth and development.
Key Results Achieved

RESULT AREA 1:

Coherent trade strategy for export competitiveness designed and implemented, including policies, regulatory reforms and trade negotiations as shaped by the WTO, regional integration process, and EU GSP+ scheme

- 5-year National Export Strategy (NES) launched
- An estimated government allocation of $113 million to implement NES initiatives in infrastructure, legal reforms and branding
- Launch of GSP+ business guide for Sri Lankan SMEs
- 320+ representatives, including 183 public officers and 144 private sector representatives trained in trade and investment negotiations, business advocacy and Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) related dispute settlement
- 3 Public-Private Dialogues (PPD) and 1 Round Table on E-commerce, Maritime, Logistics and Transport reforms
- E-Commerce Roadmap and recommendations for “Making The Digital Marketplace Fairer”
- Capacity building on Trade Remedies for representatives of the Ministry of Industry & Commerce and the private sector
"This project is of invaluable assistance for the implementation of Trade Remedy Law in Sri Lanka through capacity building and empowering of various stakeholders on Trade Remedy Law, evaluating national legislation to ensure compliance with WTO requirements and assisting the establishment of the Trade Remedy Unit at the Department of Commerce."

Sonali Wijeratne
Director General of Commerce
Department of Commerce
“The Government strategy is to transform Sri Lanka into an economic hub in the Indian Ocean. Therefore, the drawing up of the National Export Strategy is extremely timely. The Strategy was designed in collaboration with the private sector, trade associations and chambers, ministries and their departments. It is an all inclusive strategy.”

Indira Malwatte
Chairperson & Chief Executive
Sri Lanka Export Development Board
“The government strategy is to transform Sri Lanka into a hub of economic activity in the Indian ocean. Therefore, drawing up of the National Export Strategy is extremely timely. With improved logistics, proper data and innovation, I believe we will be able to unleash and harness our true potential.”

Ashroff Omar
Group CEO
Brandix Lanka
Key Results Achieved

RESULT AREA 2:

Enhanced efficiency of cross-border procedures and SMEs' capacities to comply with cross-border procedures for exporting to SAARC and EU

- 5-year roadmap for the implementation of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement endorsed by the Sri Lanka National Trade Facilitation Committee
- 50 SMEs improved their export management practices with support from Sri Lankan experts coached by the project
- 350 businesses trained to advocate for the implementation of trade facilitation reforms and effectively benefit from the Trade Facilitation Agreement
- 400+ senior public and private sector representatives supported to implement selected trade facilitation reforms
- 120+ exporters and students completed e-learning export management courses to improve compliance with cross-border formalities
- Public-private consensus reached on key decisions pertaining to the implementation of the Sri Lanka National Single Window
“ITC organized very rewarding public-private consultations on the establishment of the National Single Window (NSW) in Sri Lanka. Their timely intervention to obtain views from all stakeholders helped to identify the best suited implementation modalities at the very initial stage of the project and supported well the work done for the preparation of the Blueprint by the World Bank.”

Dinesh de Silva
Head of Shipping, Unilever Sri Lanka
“It is from ITC workshops that I received a very good understanding of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA). As a member of the National Trade Facilitation Committee (NTFC), this has helped me a lot in contributing to the NTFC meetings. The regional events conducted by the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce (CCC) with the assistance of the project also enabled CCC to identify some of the day-to-day issues that SMEs face. Our involvement in ITC activities helped in promoting the Chamber’s image and helped the regional chambers to provide larger and better services to their members.”

Manori Dissanayake, Assistant Secretary General, Ceylon Chamber of Commerce
“The course, developed by ITC and offered through the National Institute of Exports, is unique. We gained knowledge about the different procedures, various stakeholders in the export industry and actions to be taken to comply with market requirements. This course was very valuable. Being administered online, it facilitated SMEs such as ours to take the course in a flexible and adaptive manner.”

Naleen Delthalawa
Manager International Business Development & Sales Administration
Samson Rajarata Tiles (Pvt) Ltd.
Key Results Achieved

RESULT AREA 3:

Improved compliance and quality infrastructure services to meet quality and SPS requirements in the regional and EU markets

- National Quality Infrastructure Strategy (NQI-S) approved by the Cabinet; establishment of National Quality Council (NQC) awaiting final endorsement by the President
- Capacity building events for NQI institutions, namely SLSI, SLAB, and MUSSD, including 40 NQI-related session with 1,639 participants
- 23 conformity assessment bodies received training/technical assistance to apply for new or to expand 29 scopes of accreditation
- World Accreditation Day (274 participants) and World Metrology Day (158 participants) hosted to strengthen quality-consciousness
- Achieved consensus with industry stakeholders to establish a list of standards to be revised (28), formulated (40), and adopted (22) by SLSI
“The commendable support of UNIDO to uplift the activities of SLAB in the past two years enabled us to broaden accreditation services in the areas of personnel certification (ISO 17024), product certification (ISO 17065), and proficiency testing (ISO 17043). Investment in the training of our staff is essential to improving quality-related services offered by our organisation to SMEs. Ultimately, our increased capacity is a boon for Sri Lankan exporters.”

Chandrika Thilakaratne
Director/CEO, Sri Lanka Accreditation Board (SLAB)
“Accreditation of MRI’s food & water microbiology laboratory against ISO 17025 would bridge a significant compliance gap for exporters seeking to ensure product safety and quality. We are now able to fulfill the requirements of this standard and have lodged an application with the Sri Lanka Accreditation Board. This facilitates for faster identification & resolution of issues and greater degree of specialization to address quality requirements.”

Sujatha Pathirage
Microbiologist (Consultant),
Medical Research Institute
"As an ISO 17025 accredited private laboratory providing calibration services to local industries, we are one of 23 conformity assessment bodies selected to participate in UNIDO’s technical assistance program. We are committed to expanding our existing scopes, currently covering thermal, electrical and mechanical calibrations, for more breadth & depth in service delivery."

Rohan Perera  
Head of Calibration, Lanka Calibration Services Pvt. Ltd. (LCS)
Key Results Achieved

RESULT AREA 4: FOOD & SPICES

Increased SME competitiveness in export-oriented sectors (spices, food and IT/BO industry)

- 1,400+ Sri Lankan actors, including 70 public health inspectors, trained island-wide on food safety and quality assurance best practices
- The Cinnamon Training Academy was accredited by the Tertiary and Vocational Education Commission for offering Levels 3 and 4 National Vocational Qualification trainings
- 7 technical reports (draft stage) were produced, touching on the institutional framework for food safety control, packaging testing services, GI protection for Pure Ceylon Cinnamon, pepper and processed food value chain analyses, pesticide and fertilizer usage and deficiencies in border control practices that constrain exports
- 172 regulatory officials trained on regulatory impact analysis (RIA), 71 of whom received intensive training on practical its applications
- Technical assistance program for 100 SMEs to strengthen export compliance at each stage of the value chain.
Key Results Achieved

RESULT AREA 4: ITO / BPO

Increased SME competitiveness in export-oriented sectors

- 97 Sri Lankan ITO/BPO companies trained on improving their competitiveness on EU markets
- 20 case studies developed to promote the Sri Lankan ICT sector and Island of Ingenuity (IOI) brand
- 2 companies received paid assignments worth USD 24,000, and signed Non-Disclosure Agreements
- 150+ business meetings held during 4 trade fairs and B2B events in 3 EU countries
- Participants from the Department of Commerce (DoC), Sri Lanka Export Development Board (EDB) and Sri Lanka Association of Software and Services Companies (SLASSCOM) trained on Export Management Planning through Sri Lankan experts
“As a trainee under UNIDO, I adopted and adapted practical applications of good manufacturing practices to my own enterprise, qualifying my enterprise to be sponsored by the Export Development Board to participate in an international trade fair for the food and beverage industry, ultimately facilitating the expansion of my customer base and market access.”

A.V.P. Wijeyakumara, Proprietor
Maliduwa Kitul (Palm Sap) Processing Enterprise in Akuressa
“UNIDO is strengthening the enabling environment for exporters to gain global recognition for organic & fair trade products, particularly spices. In particular, the establishments of geographical indication for Pure Ceylon Cinnamon and a corresponding traceability system facilitate market access for exporters like me and satisfy the needs of increasingly quality-conscious customers.”

Rohan Gunarathna
Deputy General Manager – Spice, Bio Foods Pvt. Ltd.
“Before the ITC training we did not have an Export Management Plan. The training helped us a lot for pitching ourselves to potential buyers. We were able to identify our unique selling points to attract the attention of business partners. As a result of our participation in the Mobile World Congress in Barcelona, we were able to sell subscriptions of our product to 5 companies and we signed a Non-Disclosure Agreement.”

Sameera Nilupul
Director/CTO, LiveRoom
“Prior to the ITC training programme, our focus was mainly the domestic market and we had not thought about going international. But the programme changed our thinking and now we are focusing more on foreign markets. All the research we did as part of the training and coaching showed us that there are so many opportunities in the EU.”

Achini Perera
Director, Weblankan
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Ms. Sylvie Bétemps Cochin  
Senior Trade Promotion Officer  
Office for Asia and the Pacific  
Tel.: +41-22 730 0111  
Email: betemps@intracen.org  
International Trade Centre  
Palais des Nations, 1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland  
www.intracen.org

Mr. Dayaratna Silva  
National Project Coordinator  
EU-Sri Lanka Trade Related Assistance,  
Tel: 011 2314237  
Email: dsilva@intracen.org  
27, CWE Secretariat Building  
Vauxhall Street  
Colombo 02,  
Sri Lanka

Ms. Sonali Wijeratne  
Director General of Commerce  
Department of Commerce  
Tel.: +94 11 243 0068  
Email: dgc@doc.gov.lk  
Ministry of Industry and Commerce  
4th Floor, “Rakshana Mandiraya”,  
21 Vauxhall Street,  
Colombo-2,  
Sri Lanka

Mr. Jairo Villamil-Diaz  
International Technical Specialist  
EU – Sri Lanka Trade-Related Assistance  
United Nations Industrial Development Organization  
Tel.: +94 769 499 143  
Email: j.villamil-diaz@unido.org

Mr. Juan Pablo Diaz-Castillo  
Industrial Development Officer  
Department of Trade, Investment and Innovation  
United Nations Industrial Development Organization  
Tel.: +43 1 26026 3164  
Email: j.diaz-castillo@unido.org


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