
ARISE PLUS MALAYSIA

CULTIVATING SUSTAINABILITY: PROPELLING SUSTAINABLE TRANSITION OF MALAYSIA'S AGRI-FOOD SECTOR

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The global demand for sustainable food creates opportunities for Malaysian businesses in international markets. The Malaysian agrifood sector, especially Micro, small and medium sized enterprises (MSMEs), faces challenges for investing in modern technologies and meeting global standards. It also encounters hurdles in agri-product exports to the European Union (EU), due to contaminant interceptions, and with new market import regulations.

RESULTS AND IMPACT

ARISE Plus Malaysia contributed to harmonize Malaysia's agricultural practices with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and European Union (EU) standards and best practices, not only promoting environmental responsibility but also strengthening the country's global trade potential. The project supported the Twelfth Malaysia Plan and its objectives to develop sustainable agriculture.

The project worked in close partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security, the Ministry of Plantations and Commodities, as well as the Department of Agriculture (DOA), the Department of Fisheries (DOF), and the Department of Veterinary Services (DVS). Approximately 1,000 participants from 190 organizations benefited from project capacity building activities related to sustainable practices in the agriculture sector.

The project approach was threefold: a palpable sense of ownership among stakeholders, active private sector participation facilitating direct collaboration, and a dedicated outreach strategy extending the initiative's impact to officials and SMEs in Sabah and Sarawak.

Key results:

- Crucial aspects of sustainable agriculture addressed, from fertilizers and integrated pest management to biosecurity, traceability, and epidemiology in the fishing sector, in line with EU policies, legislation, and regulatory frameworks.
- Malaysian Fertilizer Act and Integrated Pest Management Action Plan formulated, both aligned with best global practices.
- Lessons learnt from the EU to identify measures to address remaining audit recommendations in the fisheries sector, aligning biosecurity measures to international and EU standards, and develop a traceability system for the fisheries sector.
- Promoted MSMEs' resource efficiency and circular production (RECP), as well as compliance with Voluntary Sustainable Standards (e.g., Ecovadis, PEFC, BRCGS, and FSSC 22000).



VOICES OF PROJECT BENEFICIARIES

“I am able to learn more and gain a better understanding of Green Sustainability, Circular Economy, and Waste Management. I will be able to implement these concepts in our daily operations. Additionally, I have had the opportunity to observe local implementations of GS, CE, and Waste Management in real-life scenarios, providing me with insights on how to integrate these practices into our daily operations. GS, CE, and Waste Management should be implemented from small-scale to large-scale farmers because they will have a positive impact on the environment and contribute to more economically sustainable businesses. Even small changes can result in significant positive impacts on the environment.” - Muhammad Muiz Mirza Arif Mirza; Nor Livestock Farm

“As a master's holder in renewable energy and engineering management, I have gained a deep understanding of both the technical and managerial aspects of ITC/VSS. My concentration in this field has equipped me with specialized knowledge for designing, implementing, and managing SMEs specific projects.” – Muhammed Eltayb, UNITEN

“Really excited to have a tool that offers real added value to SMEs. I am quite confident that the VSS comparison tool, CBA and increased visibility through ITC platform will be of interest to my SME network” – Richard Bennet, Green Thread Consulting

About ARISE Plus Malaysia: The project (2021-2024) supported sustainable trade growth in Malaysia by enhancing a sustainable business and investment environment in Malaysia, improving product quality and competitiveness, and enhancing sustainable and internationally quality-compliant practices in the agri-food sector. The project was funded by the European Union (EU), and implemented by the International Trade Centre (ITC) (<https://intracen.org/>) jointly with the Government of Malaysia, in collaboration with the Ministry of Investment, Trade and Industry (MITI) (<https://www.miti.gov.my/index.php>). It was part of the broader EU “ARISE Plus” regional programme, supporting greater connectivity and economic integration in ASEAN, through regional thematic projects and national ARISE Plus projects (<https://ariseplus.asean.org/>).

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