Launched in December 2013, Promoting Intra-Regional Trade in Eastern Africa is a three-year initiative to strengthen agricultural value chains in three neighbouring countries, Kenya, Tanzania, and Zambia. The goal is to boost the export competitiveness of producers and small to medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in mango, chili and spices.

These sectors were identified as having the greatest impact on improving livelihoods, reducing poverty, and stimulating trade in domestic and regional markets. The project will achieve this by boosting the capacity to trade in value-added products, such as dried mango and pollen-based beauty products.

The project is also designed to improve the effectiveness of Trade Support Institutions (TSIs), a crucial vector for the competitiveness and export capability of SMEs.

The project has a EUR4.25 million budget, funded by the Government of Finland. It is implemented by ITC together with local counterparts in each country. At the outset, value chain assessments and TSI assessments were conducted for each country and sector to fine-tune activities and areas of focus.

ON THE CUTTING EDGE

The project has already broken new ground in providing trade support in three main areas:

- concentrating on priority products across countries
- stimulating exchange of good practices from those countries that are more advanced
- partnering with the private sector to train SMEs, with further ripple effects in training

SUCCESS STRING

So far the project has shown strong results in supply chain management, quality compliance and standards, packaging, trade information and institutional strengthening.
SEALING TRADE DEALS

Dubai, United Arab Emirates February 2015

Mango exporters from Kenya and the United Republic of Tanzania attracted new buyers in the Middle East at the Gulfood Exhibition 8 to 12 February.

During the event, Kenyan mango exports transacted US1.1 million in new sales. Tanzanian exporters gained business leads and potential buyers.

“The event created awareness and visibility for my brand and products,” said Shiru Mwangi, of Antennae Holdings Ltd.

Exporters in the two countries were prepped for the event in Kenya beforehand by ITC, which also matched the exporters with buyers and distributors.

The largest food expo in the region has buyers stretching from Turkey to India. Its location in United Arab Emirates typically serves as a gateway for African products into the region and farther afield.

BOOSTING OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY

Nairobi, Kenya June to November 2014

Three Kenyan food production firms saw their productivity significantly lifted after receiving training in lean supply chain management.

The three SMEs Mace Foods Greenforest, and Stawi, obtained training from Bosch AG of Germany (as part of its Corporate Social Responsibility initiative) and ITC, through instruction on-site in the three company’s factories and in classroom sessions.

As a result, Mace Foods saw production jump 92% in chilli and vegetable packing and defects drop to zero. Greenforest registered a 28% productivity gain in packing honey and shaved order lead time by 44%, while Stawi’s production speed for milling nutritious porridge flours rose by half.

SMARTER START-UPS

Nairobi, Kenya November 2014

With the onset of chilli picking, three village-based chilli companies run by young entrepreneurs (VBEs) were already trading, thanks to initial working capital from Mace Foods, and training from ITC on legal issues, quality compliance, value chain finance, and supply chain management. The three VBEs use model contracts prepared by ITC.

SHARING REGIONAL SAVVY

Nairobi, Kenya April 2015

TSIs from Zambia and Tanzania convened during the PROPAK East Africa Packaging Conference, to learn a range of best practices from their counterparts in Kenya.

Select companies in Kenya and the Kenya Bureau of Standards discussed their standards and best practices. Attendees at the conference heard about the latest technologies and East Africa market developments, as well as trends in packaging, labelling and printing.

The Institute of Packaging Professionals in Kenya shared its experiences with its colleagues from Zambia and Tanzania. The experience was especially useful for Tanzania’s Small Industries Development Organization (SIDO), which is building a packaging services centre.

RAISING STANDARDS

Lusaka, Zambia February 2015

To raise local honey processing up to international scale, SMEs in the sector attended two workshops on branding and packaging.

Training for technicians was also provided in the run-up to commissioning new packaged materials testing equipment delivered to the Zambian Bureau of Standards (ZABS).
During a review of the domestic honey market in the branding workshop, SMEs learned honey consumption in Zambia is rising and international brands are lacking, opening up a window of opportunity for companies that offer better supply, packaging and quality.

During the packaging workshop, supermarkets voiced concerns over sourcing packaging. Processors said they would like to form an entity to face this challenge.

Small agro-food processors will now be able to produce better packaging, thanks to the new equipment, which is a portable laboratory that can perform more than 50 tests on all types of packing materials.

**FACE TIME PAYS OFF**

*Harare and Arusha Fall 2014*

Honey producers in Tanzania gained a foothold in the Zimbabwean market after attending ApiExpo Africa in Harare in October.

A bee wax producer located a Zimbabwe distributor for its cosmetic products and lined up a distribution deal for Zimbabwe and other markets. The Tanzania Honey Council advised the seven beekeepers on taking part in exhibitions.

The following month in Arusha, 10 beekeepers and honey exporters exhibited at the Apimondia International Beekeeping Congress and Expo. With drafting help from the Tanzania Honey Council, a report on the B2B outcome is to follow.

**UPPING FOOD SAFETY**

*Dar es Salaam February 2015*

To build awareness of industry standard practices in preventing food safety hazards, a series of workshops and events took place in Tanzania in February.

The system, known as Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HAACP) was the subject of a one-day workshop for TSIs, regulators, and enterprises in the mango, honey, and spices sectors.

A three-day workshop was later organised for trainers-cum counsellors (TcC) on implementing and documenting HAACP. The TcCs then visited the factories of six companies. A gap analysis was performed against the HACCP requirements for these firms.

**NORDIC EXCHANGE**

*Helsinki January 2015*

A delegation of TSIs from the honey, mango, and spices sectors in Zambia, Tanzania and Kenya conducted a mission to Finland. The mission was organized jointly with the Project Steering Committee meeting, to help the three countries learn about conditions for exports to Finland and elsewhere in the Nordic region.

TSIs learned about product positioning, branding, and packaging during a visit to K-Citymarket, one of the largest supermarket chains in the country. From Reilu kauppa (Fairtrade Finland), they cribbed up on the benefits of meeting product standards that support farmers and producers set out by the Fairtrade mark.

Honey TSIs from Zambia and Tanzania got to hear the daily workings of their Nordic counterpart, the Finnish Beekeepers Association.

Finnpartnership, which gives free advisory services to businesses in developing countries, shared with delegates the support it gives partnerships between companies in Finland and the developing world.

Delegates from the mango, honey, and spices sectors visit Finnish supermarket

**EXPERTISE ON EU EXPORT**

*Berlin January 2014*

Mango growers from Tanzania learned how another African country, Mali, developed its exports to the European Union, during the annual Fruit Logistica trade show.

The Association of Mango Growers (AMAGRO) first met mango exporters from Mali at the global fresh produce trade show.

Three months later, AMAGRO members then travelled to Mali, to learn about value chain processes. They heard from their Malian counterparts about everything from orchard maintenance to post-harvest management, and from packaging to transport.

Both sets of meetings were arranged by ITC.
WHAT'S ABUZZ IN HONEY
Lusaka October 2014

In a three-day training program led by Ms Shitaye Lemma, Programme Coordinator, Market News Service, a wide range of TSIs in Zambia learned how to write market reports and bulletins. The training covered production, key products, and trends in markets, demand, and market requirements.

Since September, ITC has distributed the Honey Market Intelligence Newsletter to the Zambia Development Agency (ZDA), which will receive two more reports early this year.

Targeted to beekeepers and non-keepers alike, small businesses, extension officers and organizations involved in small business development, the newsletters provide information on the marketing, manufacturing and processing of value-added bee products.

Aside from providing a useful resource on the honey and bee-products sector, the newsletter aims to help companies increase the incomes and product range of beekeepers.

PACT TO HELP BEEKEEPERS
Geneva December 2014

To upgrade honey products and ease supply capacity constraints in Zambia and Tanzania, a partnership is under negotiation with Parodi Apicultura of Argentina.

The partnership would offer modern equipment and beehives and train beekeepers on honey production in the two countries. ITC is helping draft the agreement.

PACKAGING KNOW-HOW & SOUTH-SOUTH COOPERATION
Mumbai October 2014

To assist SMEs in upgrading their packaging services, a staff member of the Small Industries Development Organization (SIDO) of Tanzania took a one-week training program at the Indian Institute of Packaging (IIP). The SIDO representative visited two packaging conversion factories and one technical institute under the program, gaining familiarity with manufacturing laminates and coextruded plastic.

CRITICAL INSIGHTS

Analyses revealed challenges on the supply side in all three countries, notably quantity and quality constraints, and including the need to train farmers.

In some countries, there was little incentive for farmers to improve quality at the farm gate or invest in expensive certifications.

VECTORS OF SUCCESS

The project will continue to make enterprises export ready, so they can seize market opportunities as they crop up in the fast-changing international marketplace.

Because TSIs and sector associations are force multipliers of the project’s interventions, reinforcing their ability to offer better services to their members and clients will also be a continuing focus of the project.