

FOUR YEARS OF MARKUP







Foreword

We are pleased to share with you a snapshot of what MARKUP has achieved in the four years since we started working with SMEs and policy makers to increase market access of selected agricultural products from the EAC region. One of the unique features of MARKUP is that it addresses a range of obstacles, using a variety of strategies targeting different actors - from supporting the development of improved seed varieties to working with farmers to increase yields, all the way to advocating for business-friendly policies and connecting producers to buyers. Four years provides a slightly longer-term perspective of the cumulative effect of some of the stand-alone activities that have been implemented over the years. The publication shows how MARKUP has contributed to streamlining cross-border movement of pre-packaged foods, and the steps taken to develop the National Quality Policy in Burundi.

The EAC recognises the importance of supporting women and young people to integrate into promising export value chains. The intentional targeting of women in our activities has yielded positive results. MARKUP has also registered some success in finding innovative ways of reaching young people as well as increasing productivity and accessing funds. As MARKUP moves towards the finish line, it is important to ensure that we document the lessons learnt, and ensure that the gains made are sustained.

I am glad that our partners are continuing to work on this initiative and I commend them for their collaborating with the EAC Secretariat to increase competitiveness and market access.

Alhaj Rashid Kibowa,

Director of Trade,
EAC Secretariat

MARKET EXPOSURE



MARKUP Support Puts Uganda's Cocoa on World Map

The cocoa sector in Uganda, although receiving less attention than the coffee value chain, has great potential which has not been exploited. MARKUP support to Semuliki Cooperative Union Limited is a step towards improving production, productivity, harvest and post-harvest quality practices and standards for the cocoa sector in Uganda and enabling it to market its cocoa abroad.

Semuliki is a cooperative that began as an association of farmers known as Bundibugyo Cocoa Association, which used to collect cocoa and sell to traders, but accessing good markets was challenging. Members therefore agreed to form a cooperative organisation led by Mr Balyesiima Methodius the current General Manager of Semuliki Cooperative. It was registered in 2015 and is currently made up of 27 member cooperatives supporting 11,850 individual farmers of which more than half are women. It covers Bundibugyo, Kagadi and Kibale districts in Western Uganda.

The union's cooperation with MARKUP started in 2018 and since then, the programme has supported it to participate in international trade fairs including the Cocoa Expo in the Netherlands in June 2022. MARKUP has also facilitated training of the union's members in international cocoa marketing, contract management, agroforestry, cocoa farm rehabilitation and quality improvement and distributed moisture meters to reduce wastage and losses.

The training and the exposure visits have enabled the cooperative to sign supply deals. Long term business partnerships have been formed with European cocoa importers and chocolate manufacturers who buy cocoa straight from the Cooperative. Additional 49 metric tons of organic specialty cocoa have also been shipped to Belgium with buyers showing appetite for more.

Today, Semuliki provides extension services, collective marketing, livelihood support, and financial services and is among the founders of the National Cocoa Platform.

Promoting Organic Product Standards and Market Access in Tanzania

Halisi Organic Farm in Tanzania has teamed up with MARKUP to promote its organic product standards and ensure access to markets within Tanzania and beyond. Located in Moshi Kilimanjaro, Tanzania, Halisi Organic Farm grows and packages all kinds of herbs.

'We grow and pack all kinds of herbs. We also buy and process spices from certified organic farmers within Tanzania and other parts of the world. But the process of getting organic products into the market is very expensive,' highlighted Mary Mushi, founder of Halisi Organic Farm in an interview with MARKUP.

Despite its huge potential, the organic and spices business in Tanzania faces numerous challenges at all levels, from farmer to processors and transporters. Lack of infrastructure and market information makes it difficult for small farmers to access profitable markets. Complicated and costly organic certification procedures pose another barrier for small-scale farmers. 'Since we teamed up with MARKUP, we have seen an improvement in the distribution of our products in mainland Tanzania,' Mary added.

The farm, which has been in operation since January 2019, is certified by an East African organic trademark following a MARKUP training through the International Trade Center (ITC).

'MARKUP has supported us in three main areas. Their Access to Finance Programme enabled us to develop our first business plan, and thanks to what we learned, we are now in the process of acquiring finance. We also learned a lot about the importance of having a well-organised office to keep records about sales and marketing, and this is the reason why we decided to put up an operational for all our administration work,' said Mary.

'The training also enabled us to put our ISO manual in place. This ensures we are producing only the best standard and under the most hygienic conditions. We want to become the leading organic firm for spices, herbs, specialty tea, dry fruits and masala in East Africa by 2030,' Mary added.

'MARKUP support to attend the 21st EAC MSMEs Trade Fair in Mwanza in 2021 was another important milestone for Halisi. This was a great eye-opener, and we have established numerous business relationships. We now feel empowered to pioneer conservation and sustainable farming in Tanzania by providing a market for organic spices to organic farmers while ensuring we process and serve the best,' concluded Mary.



Linking Farmers to Export Markets Through GLOBALG.A.P

A common thread running through MARKUP activities is how to connect farmers in East Africa to market opportunities in the EU and beyond. In Kenya, one of the strategies employed is to strengthen the linkages between farmers and exporters and equipping local governments to provide the necessary support. The vehicle driving these linkages is GLOBALG.A.P., a set of tools that incorporates food safety and environmental standards and good agricultural practices. In this way, GLOBALG.A.P. certification demonstrates on-farm food safety and sustainability, and has become an important route to higher value markets. Through UNIDO, MARKUP is supporting smallholder farmers to meet export market requirements and standards for fresh and processed high-value horticultural produce. This is expected to increase incomes while improving agriculture practices in Kenya.

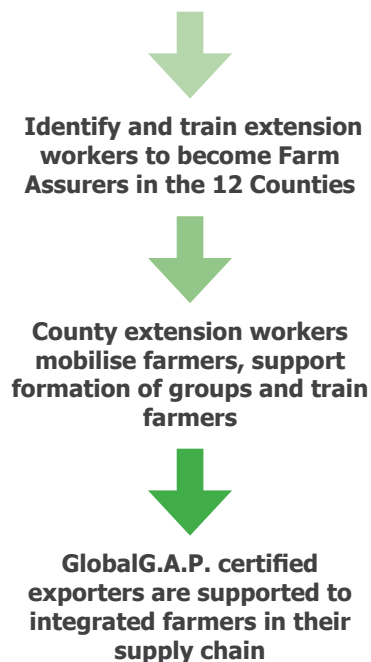


Having selected priority fruit and vegetable value chains and the 12 counties where they are produced, UNIDO worked with other MARKUP stakeholders in Kenya to develop an approach to equip farmers and County extension officers with the principles and requirements of GLOBALG.A.P. and linking them with certified exporting companies.

Between 2020 and 2021, MARKUP targeted smallholder groups in Uasin Gishu, Trans Nzoia, Bungoma, Busia, Siaya, Homabay, Makueni, Machakos and Embu and trained 455 farmers. By March 2022, 35 county extension workers had qualified as Global Gap farm assurers and trained farmers growing passion fruits, mangoes, groundnuts and macadamia nuts in 9 counties. Over 1,416 farmers have received training on a range of areas including Global Gap Standards for Food Security Safety Certification (FSSC), Compliance to the British Retail Consortium (BRC) Certification, new product development, group dynamics and good governance.

The second phase of training, which covers Nakuru, Kajiado and Taita Taveta, will be completed by the end of 2022. Some of the smallholders trained are outgrowers for three large scale exporters, while others are contracted by a company that is supplying a leading Kenyan processor and exporter of canned French beans.

HOW IT WORKS



Eldo Tea[®]

True taste of Kenyan tea

Young Kenyan Woman's Big Break into Specialty Tea Export

MARKUP has supported two enterprising young women to realise their dream of breaking into the international market for specialty organic tea.

Caroline Chepkemboi and Collins K. Sainna are founders of Eldo Tea Enterprises Limited, a social enterprise working with a community of smallholder farmers in Kenya's Nandi County and specializing in specialty tea and herbs. The company was launched in December 2016 and offers premium organic, 100% natural healthy teas and dried herbs.

'We started off as a social enterprise company and wanted to partner with small-holder tea farmers. We hope to reach more than 1000 women,' Caroline Chepkemboi explained. Caroline knew that getting onto the export ladder was key to the success of their company and the livelihoods of the smallholder farmers they work with.

'At first it was difficult to export to countries like India. Their customs regulations did not even allow for tea samples at the point of entry making it difficult for us to reach retailers,' said Caroline. 'Accessing finance for expansion was also a major challenge to us.'

Their interaction with MARKUP began in 2019. Through ITC, representatives from the enterprise were trained in access to finance, export market access and quality control. Eldo Tea received practical support and expertise to effectively participate in se-

lected trade fairs. The company was also supported to develop an international brand and packaging that meets world class standards.

Today, Eldo Tea products are entirely for export. 'We have transacted in Australia, Canada, USA, Taiwan, and India among others.'



Eldo Tea moved from plastic containers to tins and has developed a branding manual and bankable business plans. After training in access to finance, the company presented a proposal to Kenya Development Corporation (KDC) for funding. Through MARKUP trainings and networking, the company has built strong business partnerships with logistics and shipping firms.

'We value and appreciate the support of MARKUP so much, because through their partnership and support, the Eldo Tea brand has grown its roots steadily in the international space with presence in major tea markets,' Chepkemboi explained.

The company is now venturing into farming of spices and Rosemary farming. Its teas are blended with natural, organically produced dried herbs from local owned farms and women-owned enterprises.

'Going into spices will grant us room to expand. Rosemary will be an alternative to tea farming. It's an herb that has high yields,' she added.

MARKUP Changes the Fortunes of Women Coffee Farmers

Q & A with Agnes Mukamushinja

Agnes Mukamushinja is a trained nurse and a motivated and inspiring entrepreneur, founder and owner of Nova Coffee Washing Station based in Rwanda. She had been running a pharmacy called 'Pharmacie Nova' in Kigali together with her husband Felix, and the couple only recently decided to invest into a coffee business, which they aptly named 'Nova Coffee'.

What began as a mere family business a few years ago, has quickly transformed into one of the largest Rwandan coffee enterprises. Nova Coffee not only employs hundreds of farmers but enables Rwandan women to earn a living from the project's 155-hectare coffee plantation. Nova Coffee is today a coffee processor and exporter run by Rwandan women. MARKUP interviewed Agnes Mukamushinja about their success story.

Q1. Tell us all about NOVA Coffee Limited and how it began

Agnes: During the genocide, I saw most of the coffee trees in my village getting destroyed, trees that my father had spent his entire 50-year career supporting, as a coffee agronomist and mobiliser. The remaining trees were of low quality and all coffee was being processed as semi-washed. When we got the opportunity to buy and restore a decrepit old washing station, we saw this as a chance to revitalise a community. We purchased the site where NOVA coffee is currently situated in 2013 with plans to expand operations.

I began with 25 women but today we are more than 382 women, and we have an additional number of youths we are working with. The majority of workers are women, most of them very poor. Nova Coffee serves 2,800 small scale coffee farmers.

Q2. How did you learn about MARKUP?

Agnes: I had my first encounter with MARKUP in Nairobi four years ago. I attended a training on how to get a market for my products and how to address clients properly. Through the booklets provided at the training, I got a lot of information on how the programme has uplifted the lives of many small-holder farmers.

Q3. What are some of the challenges you faced and how has MARKUP helped you overcome them?

Agnes: Since we were very new in the sector, we were really challenged by getting the right seedlings, tending to the coffee trees, harvesting and marketing. MARKUP enabled us to distribute about 200,000 coffee trees plus shade and tropical fruit trees to all coffee farming communities every year through our NOVA SAWA project.

Thanks to MARKUP, we have been organic IMSC certified since 2021. This helps us to expand our organic farming approaches.

We also had challenges with funding and subsidising the infrastructure of the washing stations, and it helped a lot that MARKUP provided us with two moisture meters.

Also, without MARKUP training and financial support, we could never have participated in international trade fairs, which provided us with valuable contacts and business connections.

We are also part of a MARKUP pilot study using block chain technology for traceability and transparency that will help to increase the visibility of women-owned small holder farmers to international buyers, thus bringing women's products to a global audience and helping them build a stronger business.

Q4. What is the impact of the MARKUP project on NOVA Coffee Ltd?

Agnes: MARKUP has provided training and financial assistance to the project, which has enabled us to participate in international trade fairs. As a result, one of our coffee washing stations in the north, which initially only supplied to local intermediary buyers who would then export, is now directly exporting to their customers.

Our staff get security, knowledge and skills training which has enabled us to fulfil the requirements of international markets such as the USA. In fact, we gained new buyers, such as a buyer from Germany, who signed a contract in 2022 for 320 bags of green fully washed coffee.

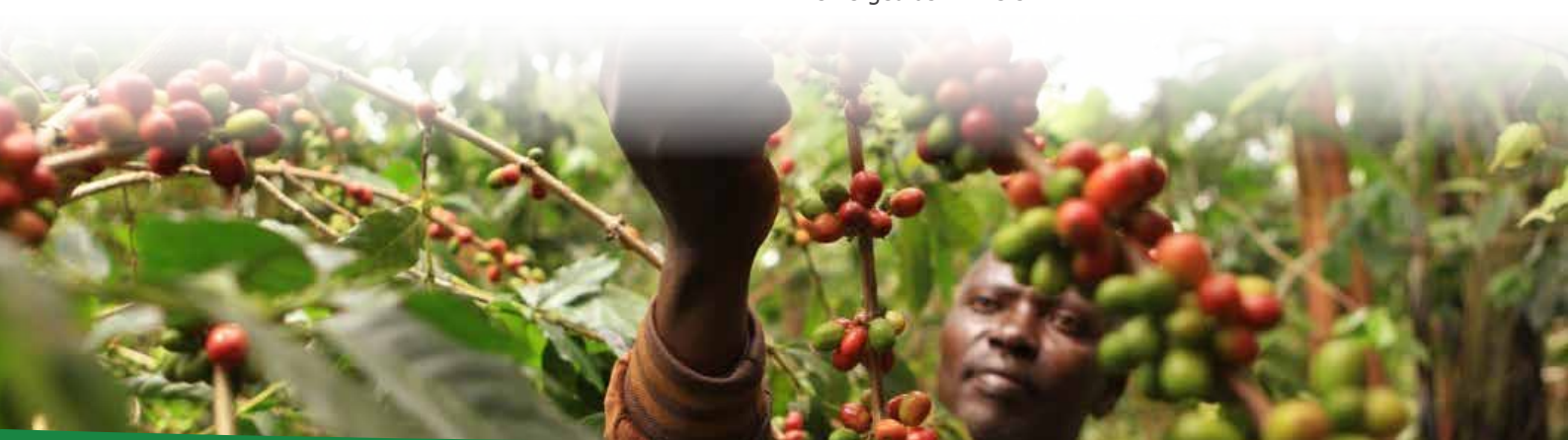
Nova Coffee has been UTZ certified since September 2020 and is in the process of gaining organic, Café Practice and Rainforest Alliance accreditations.

To help small businesses in addressing traceability and enhance marketing, we digitised the traceability records of close to 1,000 women coffee growers in Rwanda. This has helped them improve their visibility to buyers as well as to improve the sales value of their coffee.

Due to MARKUP, our exports have increased from 100 bags in 2017 to 5.5 containers in 2021. We are hoping to increase our production from 8 to 12 containers of coffee a year by the end of 2024.

Through the provision of training, we have since participated in the World of Coffee Forum, thereby increasing our visibility in order to enhance marketing

We participated in an online auction organised by CEPAR and emerged as winners.



MARKUP Supports Framework for Regional Movement of Pre-Packaged Foods



Food and cosmetics are among the most widely traded products in the East African region. Due to their impact on the health of consumers, these products are highly regulated by all the Partner States. It is a challenge that each Partner State has different criteria, requirements and responsible institutions, which makes cross-border movement of these products confusing, time consuming and costly.

By 2018, the EAC Secretariat had developed a roadmap with practical steps to address this challenge. But first, it was essential to develop a framework with agreed criteria for products to be registered and certified, how this would be verified across the Partner State, and cleared at the borders. Since 2019, MARKUP has walked with the Secretariat at every step of this journey.

'Within the EAC framework for facilitating trade in food and some cosmetics, there was a provision to develop criteria for registration, certification and verification of the pre-packaged food. So, the EAC approached GIZ and they supported us in the development of those criteria,' explained Stella Apolot, Principal Standards Officer at the EAC Secretariat.

Under the criteria, four categories of pre-packaged foods are identified and a logical and clear guidance on how to make the decision for registration and certification as well border clearance is prescribed. The criteria are the basis upon which the EAC Partner States accept the results of each other's control systems for pre-packaged foods as providing the same level of protection as their own.

'The implementation of these criteria will achieve broader cooperation and collaboration among the different competent authorities of the EAC Partner States, enhance trade facilitation and protect consumers,' Ms Apolot added.

Following the approval of the harmonised criteria in 2021, GIZ through MARKUP embarked on paving the way for its implementation. First, GIZ supported the

training and sensitisation of 211 officials at 20 strategic border points in the region. 46 institutions were represented, including those responsible for standards, customs, health, agriculture, among others. The sensitisation revealed that some aspects of the criteria were already being implemented uniformly. This was especially the case for products bearing the certification mark for EAC harmonised standards, which were allowed easier entry. For novel food products, Kenya and Uganda had developed generic criteria to evaluate safety and facilitate cross-border trade. On the whole, the officials were positive about the intervention which they said was long overdue.

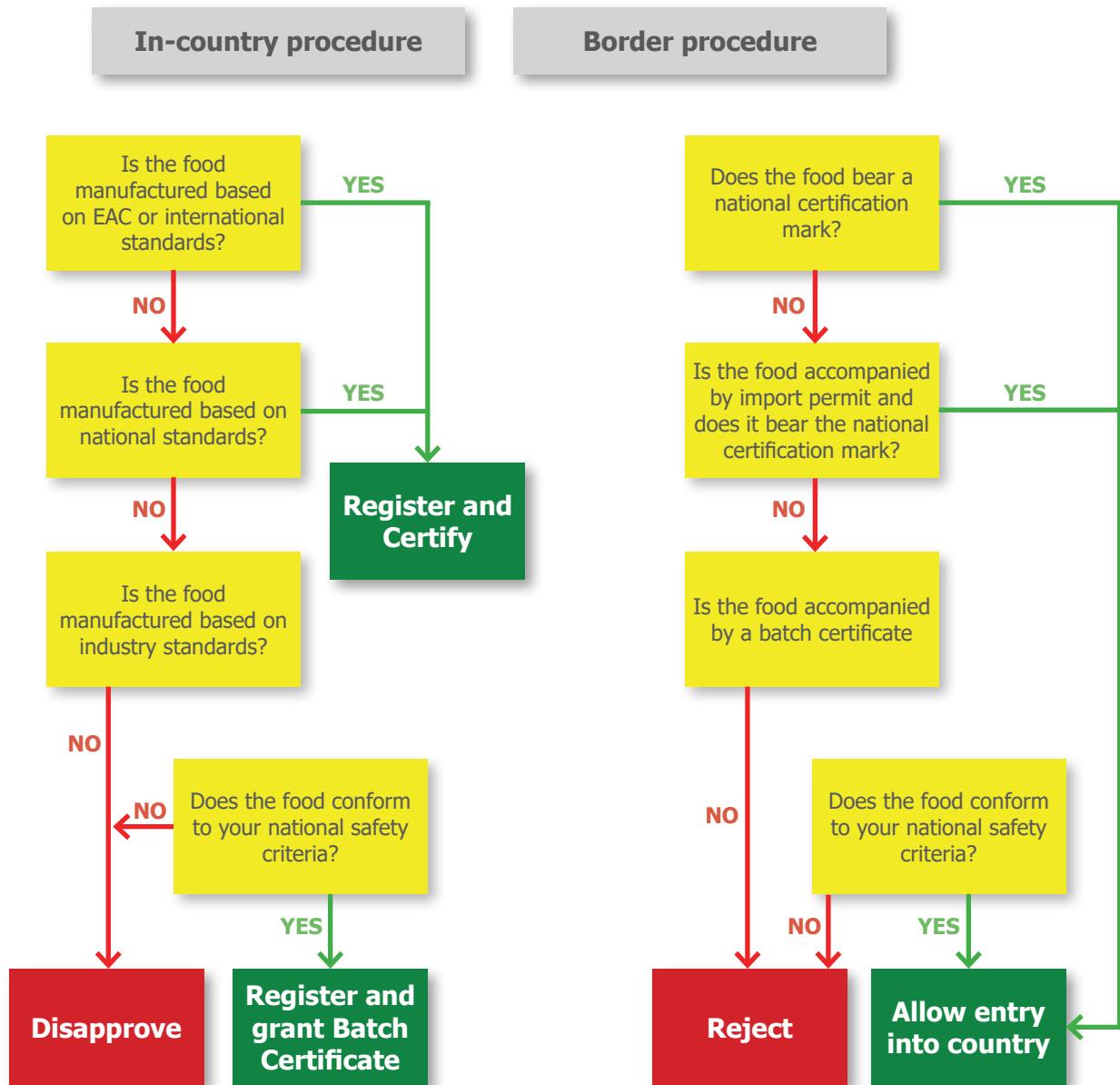
The second important step was assessing the capacity of the responsible institutions in all the Partner States to perform the roles assigned to them. The review encompassed national laboratory testing capacities; processes, procedures, collaboration mechanisms; principles applied for registration, certification, verification and clearance; and quality and labelling requirements. It was completed in July 2022 and identified gaps in a range of areas, including lack of appropriate equipment and materials, duplication of processes and inadequate technical skills.

The third and final step supported by MARKUP was the development of a national and regional mechanism to co-ordinate the implementation of the criteria. This has also been completed.

'Now we are carrying out awareness creation events in the capitals of all Partner States and support them to establish the coordinating committees,' said Ms Apolot.

'We are really excited to have walked hand in hand with the Secretariat to make the harmonised criteria a reality during the four years of MARKUP. It is an important milestone and will go a long way in streamlining the movement of food products in the Community,' highlighted Estella Aryada, GIZ Programme Coordinator of MARKUP.

EAC Criteria for In-Country and Border Procedures for Approval of Prepackaged Foods



MARKUP Organises the 1st East Africa Community Quality Awards



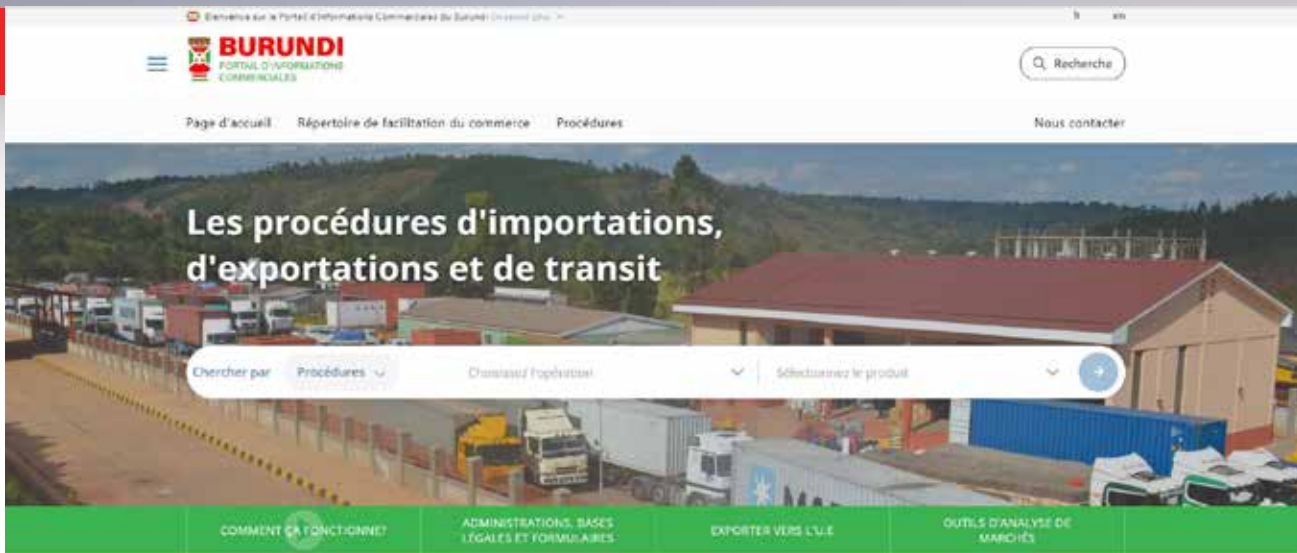
Global trade in agriculture products has increased tenfold in the last decade with enormous impact on both the health of populations and the economies of nations. Consumers do not often think about the quality of the products they buy- and especially the food they eat- unless it falls below expectations or leads to harmful consequences. This is largely due to the advances made in streamlining the complex processes that go into standardizing the various aspects of food and other products to ensure that they are not only competitive but also aesthetically appealing and meet the required quality standards.

A significant proportion of MARKUP activities are geared towards strengthening the quality infrastructure in the region. Through its partner The International Trade Centre and in collaboration with The East Africa Community (EAC), MARKUP organised the EAC Quality Awards to recognise enterprises and institutions that play a crucial role in quality assurance, and to stimulate interest in quality management across the board. The event held in Dar es Salaam Tanzania on 20th November 2022, brought together Small, Medium and Large Enterprises in the region, National Standards Boards, apex bodies, policy makers, experts, development partners and other key stakeholders to recognise their efforts and celebrate the achievements realised in the quest for quality excellence and competitiveness. Eight companies were awarded in different categories.

Speaking at the event, Director of Trade at the East Africa Community, Mr Rashid Kibowa said, the EAC Quality awards will not only increase competition among EAC companies but also motivate more companies to engage in quality practices. This will open more doors for East African products and services to other African countries and European Union markets. 'It does not end with acknowledging the proper practice of the awarded companies alone. It goes further to motivate more companies and SMEs to be champions of Quality. After this, we believe we shall have more applicants next year since the motive is already set,' said Mr Kibowa.

On his part, Mr Jocelin Cornet, Team Leader Regional Integration, EU Tanzania and EAC, reiterated the commitment to continue supporting EAC regional integration. 'We look forward to MARKUP 2 that will focus on building up the success that MARKUP 1 has achieved and even go further,' said Mr Cornet.

Cultivating the adoption of quality culture in the EAC has been among the utmost priorities for the EU-EAC MARKUP project, achieved through interventions that ensure enterprises in the EAC can tap the opportunities in the international market. The event is envisaged to take place annually to complement the national efforts and provide a platform for building wider networks, tap business opportunities, knowledge, technology and funding.



Burundi Trade Information Portal

Easy access to information on the requirements and costs of importing and exporting goods goes a long way in simplifying international trade. Trade Information Portals (TIP) have become a useful tool especially for new exporters. By 2018, Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda and Uganda all had national TIPs. Through MARKUP, ITC has successfully worked with the authorities in Burundi to make their national TIP a reality.

The TIP gives access to step-by-step guides on licenses, pre-clearance permits and clearance formalities for the most traded goods within, to and from the country. For each step, the trade portal tells the user where to go, who to see, what documents to bring, what forms to fill, what costs to pay, what law justifies the step and where to complain to in case of a problem. The Burundi Portal was launched on 27 July 2021, with more than 115 participants and was the culmination of 17 months of technical and financial support. The launch was attended by ITC, the EU Delegation to Burundi, EAC, the OBR and the other national stakeholders. In addition to a demonstration of the portal, the event saw each member of the technical team developing the portal receive a Certificate of Achievement. A round table discussion highlighted the merits and benefits the Burundi Trade Portal brings for traders, SMEs and the business climate in Burundi.

Key messages from the discussion included:

- 'Access to information is a foundational element in the business world. The Burundi Trade Portal provides this information' - Acting Director of the Burundi Investment Promotion Agency (API)
- 'The Burundi Trade Portal will improve governance and help eliminate petty corruption' - Secretary General of the Burundi Federal Chambre of Commerce and Industry (CFCIB)
- 'The Burundi Trade Portal is a tool that will facilitate regional integration' - Chargé de projet, EU Delegation to Burundi
- 'The Burundi Trade Portal will make international trade more fluid' - Burundi Portal National Coordinator, OBR
- 'The Burundi Trade Portal will enable the private sector to make recommendations for simplifying trade formalities' - Secretary General of the National Trade Facilitation Committee
- 'The Burundi Trade Portal allows Burundi to fulfil its obligations under Art. 1.2 and Art. 10.1 of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement' – Representative from Trade Facilitation Policy for Business, ITC.

The Portal continues to be updated and now has nearly 20 product groups and more than 50 procedures have already been documented. The Burundi Trade information Portal has been added to the EAC Trade Information Portal and can be accessed through:



<http://info.commerce.bi>



<https://tradehelpdesk.eac.int>

PARTNER STATES UPDATES



BURUNDI

MARKUP Equips Laboratories to Support Agricultural Exports in Burundi

While Burundi can produce some of the best quality tea, coffee and horticulture in the East African Community, problems with consistency and low social and environmental standards are hindering industry expansion and Burundi's ability to access premium international markets.

Quality challenges have been worsened by awareness of the importance and the processes for setting and harmonisation of standards, insufficient training and the absence of a manual to guide newly appointed office bearers to the relevant committees. The country also has few laboratories and there is limited interaction between the public and private sector.



To address the challenges, MARKUP, through ITC, organised training workshops on the ISO 17025 for laboratories technicians, quality managers and laboratory managers at the National Agricultural Research Institution of Burundi, Bureau Burundais de Normalisation et de contrôle de qualité, Centre National de Technologie Alimentaire, Institut des Sciences Agronomique du Burundi, Office pour le Développement du Café du Burundi and Office du Thé du Burundi also participated in the training.

The ISO 17025 is a key certification for labs that perform testing, sampling and calibration and are keen to ensure that competent laboratory staff operate and generate valid lab results. The trainings conducted jointly with Burundian Bureau of Standardisation and Quality (BBN) was accompanied by a blank or mock audit of two of the participating companies. The trainings have since led to a marked improvement in understanding of the requirements of the respective ISO and equipped BBN with the capacity to develop a legal framework to conduct certification audits of the customer management system.

Through such efforts, MARKUP aims at upgrading these institutions to the highest standard, recognised at the international level, which will eventually contribute to the removal of the non-tariff barriers for Burundi's key agricultural sector products.

In partnership with the National Agricultural Research Institution of Burundi (ISABU), MARKUP also donated an Atomic Absorption Spectrophotometer. This equipment is used to conduct tests of ochratoxins, fumonisins and pesticide residues for coffee, tea and horticultural products. MARKUP trained laboratory staff on good laboratory practices, laboratory quality management system, sample analysis and business planning.



KENYA

Using Social Media to Engage Young People on Agribusiness

How do you get young educated young people interested in agriculture? This is the question that the MARKUP team in Kenya was grappling with. The opportunities to improve export and add value to a wide range of fruits and vegetables were fairly well known among farmers in the country, but most of them were middle-aged and actively looking to pass the baton to younger people. Under the leadership of UNIDO, the team knew they had to use platforms popular with young people. That is how Mazao Talks was born.

Mazao Talks is a Google Podcast that tells stories of ordinary people tackling the challenges in the agri-food business, with a special focus on the issues that young people can identify with. UNIDO partnered with Semabox to generate content and promote the podcast through media personalities popular with young people. Available via YouTube, Spotify, Instagram, Anchor and Twitter Spaces, Mazao Talks has proved very popular since it was launched in 2020. To date, over 12.7 million people have interacted with Mazao Talks across multiple platforms, making it the second biggest corporate podcast in Kenya, after the NMG x SportPesa podcast. The six episodes aired in the first season of Mazao Talks, reached over 40,000 Instagram users between the ages of 25 and 40 via sponsored posts, with online engagements through Twitter Spaces as well. According to data from MARKUP Kenya, Mazao Talks was listened to in 14 countries, with the website getting over 100 weekly visits.



'We are extremely excited at this fresh opportunity to engage with Kenya's young people and share agri-business news and information that we have built up at MARKUP Kenya. The future of this country relies on our ability to produce food at scale and this is only possible by getting our youth engaged in agri-business,' said Mr Maina Karuru, the National Coordinator of MARKUP Kenya.

Mazao Talks has helped the youth identify opportunities in agribusiness through stories of how technology can be applied at various points from farm to fork. The podcast also advocates for youth-friendly policies in agriculture.

Catch up with Mazao Talks at:



<https://mazao.markupkenya.org/podcast-page/>



RWANDA

Improving Women's Livelihoods Through Co-Operatives

When Mukeshimana Liberata started growing onions commercially a year ago, she did not know that this was going to be her big chance to improve her livelihood and realise some of her dreams.

Before joining a farmers' group supported by the MARKUP Horticulture Value Chain (HVC) Project, the 50-year-old mother of nine used to grow beans, sweet potatoes, cabbages, carrots and onions on a 0.1 hectare plot, where she harvested less than 100 kilograms of onions a season. This was not sufficient to take care of her and her family.

Liberata, like many other farmers and vegetable producers in Nyamagabe district, was not aware of the use of quality seeds and the application of modern agricultural techniques. Her fortunes and those of her community changed when she joined a farmer group specialising in growing onions.

The HVC project supported farmers to come together in groups and cooperatives. Thus, they worked together on a larger portion of land, which led to greater productivity, better yields, and increased market opportunities for their produce.

Liberata and her farmers' group took part in training courses where they learned how to apply modern farming technologies and link them to potential markets.

Through the training provided by the HVC Project implementing partner Conseil Consultatif des Femmes (CO-COF), Liberata is now able to harvest 400 kilograms of onions instead of the 100 kilograms she used to get.

'I used to harvest 100 kilograms of onions on 0.1 hectare of land. After I joined the farmer group, we received training and good quality seed. I now harvest 400 kilograms on the same piece of land,' said Liberata.

She is now part of a group 102 farmers, who harvested five metric tons of onions from six hectares, and she has been linked to the local market ever since she started.

With the money earned from onions, Liberata has been able to buy a high-breed cow that produces milk for home consumption and for sale as well as organic manure for organic onion production.

She plans to buy more cows for each of her children and expand the land for onion production.

MARKUP also trains men and women on Gender Action Learning System (GALS), a community-led empowerment methodology that uses inclusionary principles to improve income, food, and nutrition security of vulnerable people in a gender-equitable manner.

Through the training, Liberata, who could not speak confidently in front of people before, is today the leader of a farmers' group of about 100 members.

She has also established a weekly voluntary saving group for women where each member contributes 5,000 Rwandan francs per week.

'I used to stay home and never attended meetings because I thought that was for men. GALS training allowed me and my colleagues to be confident and stand up for ourselves. Thanks to MARKUP trainings, I now lead men and women in our farmer group and have established a women's voluntary saving group.'

As a group of farmers, they have plans to buy a truck that will transport the produce from the farm to various local marketplaces.





TANZANIA

Transforming the Lives of Women Farmers in Tanzania's Avocado Growing Fields An interview with Veronica Isaiya Mwaluleka, UWAMARU Amcos



The avocado growing business in Tanzania has gained great popularity in recent years, thanks to rising international demand. However, it is greatly dominated by men. There are few women in this sector, mainly because of the limited access women have to land.

Veronica Mwaluleka is one of the few women farmers who have broken this barrier. Veronica owns one acre of land where she plants avocados, and she is a member of Uwamaru Agriculture Marketing Cooperative Society (AMCOS).

Through MARKUP partner Solidaridad, the UWAMARU AMCOS project is targeting ap-

proximately 21,000 smallholder farmers on Zanzibar (horticulture), in Mbeya and Njombe regions (horticulture and tea), and in Ruvuma and Songwe regions (coffee) in Tanzania.

Q1. How did you venture into avocado farming?

Veronica: I come from an area where avocado was only recently introduced. And so, just like many of my fellow villagers, I joined one of the cooperatives, the UWAMARU AMCOS. I'm one of the very few women in the group. There are 45 women and 329 men in the project.

Q2. What are some of the challenges that you face as an avocado farmer?

Veronica: Women face challenges of land ownership. Most of the land is owned by men due to our culture where men are the heads of family. Men own most of the land, and therefore for women to grow produce such as avocados which require many acres of land.

Successful avocado farming needs certified, high-quality avocado seedlings. MARKUP provides us with seedlings through UWAMARU, together with the right type of fertiliser for avocados.

My big problem used to be having to sell my produce to middle men who purchase at very low prices. Thanks to the project, selling is now handled by UWAMAU AMCOS.

Q3. You said that MARKUP has assisted you in getting avocado seedlings. What else has MARKUP assisted you with?

Veronica: We buy our avocado seedlings using money from Uwamaru Amcos-Kitaru. We were trained how to do the grafting and how to prepare the ground for planting the seedlings. MARKUP also supplies us with pesticides, fertiliser and technology.



The MARKUP project enabled us to grow and harvest avocados that are not rejected by buyers because they fulfil the required standards.

I'm looking forward to selling my produce once we reach harvest time.

I have immensely benefitted from the MARKUP project and the technology that is offered to us. Because I work at UWAMARU AMCOS, I receive a steady income, which enables me to feed my family.

MARKUP Supports Advocacy to Increase Revenues from Avocado and other Horticultural Produce



Avocado farming and trading have seen exponential growth in Tanzania in the last few years. But there are many challenges that the sector is grappling with: prices are fluctuating, diseases are hard to control, and there is no approved government body in Tanzania to handle avocado as there is for other crops. This has contributed to the price fluctuations and bureaucracy in solving challenges that farmers, exporters and buyers face when exporting the crop.

As a step towards addressing some of these obstacles, MARKUP, through ITC, collaborated with the Tanzania Horticulture Association (TAHA) and the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) to organise the Avocado Stakeholders Forum in Dodoma in May 2022.

The forum was attended by key stakeholders from both public and private sector and discussed critical issues facing the avocado industry. It developed practical solutions to address the challenges such as the validation of an avocado business guideline and harvesting calendar which will enable farmers to stretch their markets to East African and European Union. In future, the avocado business guidelines will govern the trade of avocados in Tanzania, and there will be a harvesting calendar for each production area in Tanzania.

The Avocado Forum provided a unique opportunity for the stakeholders in the business to air their grievances and seek government intervention in implementing NTM's study findings.

Representing avocado exporters, General Manager at Eat Fresh Avocado, Ms Hadija Jabir, observed the importance of including stakeholders in the development of the guidelines.

'I am glad this Avocado Forum included all stakeholders, from business supporting entities to the government, farmers, entrepreneurs and even exporters. We all gave our views openly, it was not a government-centred session,' she emphasised.

TAHA presented the following specific recommendations:

1. Pests and Diseases (Phytophthora root rot disease and False Codling Moth) - Tanzania Plant Health Authority (TPHPA) should quickly identify all areas affected by these pests and immediate action should be taken to quarantine the affected farms.
2. TPHPA should open a one-and-off window for the fast-tracking registration of key pesticides (both bio-substances and chemicals) to combat avocado/horticulture emerging pests.
3. The newly developed Avocado Business Guideline (Muongozo wa Uuzaji na Ununuzi wa Zao la Parachichi Nchini Tanzania) should be incorporated with all comments from the stakeholders and submitted to the Ministry of Agriculture for approval, signature and dissemination to the Local Government Authorities.
4. The newly developed Avocado Harvesting Calendar should be validated by the Ministry of Agriculture technical team and disseminated to all LGAs in avocado-producing areas. This will immediately curb the issue of harvesting immature fruits.
5. Farmers in Tanzania who want to become certified to GLOBALG.A.P. still have to go through Kenyan-based firms for registration, inspection and certification. The only accrediting body in the United Republic of Tanzania is GreenCert Limited under TAHA. It began operations in February 2020, has only been 'provisionally approved' to date and issues single producer certification only.



UGANDA

MARKUP Supports Research into New Coffee and Cocoa Varieties



The availability of quality seeds can make the difference between success and failure in the production and marketing of coffee and cocoa. This is common knowledge in Uganda: research findings revealed that the ten Robusta Coffee Wilt Disease-resistant varieties planted in Uganda saved the coffee industry from collapse following the devastating Coffee Wilt Disease that wiped out over 50% of the coffee tree population in Uganda only a few years ago.

In 2019, MARKUP Uganda collaborated with the National Coffee Research Institute (NACORI) through UCDA to evaluate and release improved Arabica coffee varieties, to undertake a preliminary evaluation and availing promising cocoa clones for on-farm and on-station demonstration and to conduct a biological assessment on cocoa production in the cocoa growing agro-ecological zones.

The process of developing improved varieties started by collecting and analysing data on coffee yields and the occurrence of coffee pests and diseases. Samples were then analysed and official candidate varieties inspected before validation and release.

By June 2022, NACORI had successfully identified five varieties with promising yields and high resistance to pests and diseases. These varieties were found to be more resistant to Coffee Wilt Disease, tolerant to Leaf Rust and producing larger beans and higher yields than traditional coffee trees. Farmers can get a mean yield of 3,700kg of hulled coffee per hectare and year using these varieties. The clones will be subjected to inspection by the Ministry of Agriculture before being released to selected farmers for on-farm assessment.

The research on cocoa is equally promising. Cocoa chupons were collected from 113 elite on-farm cocoa trees from Luwero, Mukono and Mayuge and are being multiplied through clonal propagation. 662 cocoa cuttings were made and propagated from selected trees for further observation at NACORI. Over 500 unique, observable characteristics of cocoa trees, beans and pods were documented.

'This project has been a clear demonstration of what can be achieved by leveraging the expertise in our local institutions and providing a clear linkage between agriculture research and exports. The timeline for MARKUP may not allow us to see the process to its full conclusion. For example, we still have to see how the coffee clones perform in the field, and this takes years. But we have collectively learned a lot and will endeavour to build on this success through government and other development partner initiatives,' noted Gordon Katwirenabo, MARKUP Project Coordinator Uganda



MARKUP Holds 7th Meeting of the Regional Steering Committee



July 14th 2022 saw policy makers, private sector representatives and Implementing Partners from the 5 MARKUP Partner States interact with the EU Delegation and the EAC Secretariat to review programme implementation for the period June 2021- July 2022 and discuss ways to address emerging challenges. For 2 days, the Regional Steering Committee (RSC) took stock of the achievements under the regional and Partner States Windows, discussed the findings and recommendations of the MARKUP Midterm

Review, and received updates from the EU Delegation on preparations for a successor programme.

The Results Report presented to the meeting indicated that the programme was on track with nearly 80% of the indicators under the EAC Window fully achieved. The EAC Window covers interventions on advocacy and support to reduce trade barriers; improved harmonisation of standards; export competitiveness and strengthened business development services. Some activities under the Partner States Window faced delays in roll out, but implementation was well underway and the indicators were likely to be fully met by the end of the programme.

The next Regional Steering Committee meeting is due to take place in early 2023.

MARKUP Stakeholders Conduct the 1st Benchmarking Mission in Uganda

One of the unique features of MARKUP is that the activities implemented in each Partner State are tailored to suit their specific priorities, taking account of existing similar programmes, and the ground already covered in enhancing market access of agri-exports. For instance, of the 5 value chains supported by MARKUP, only coffee is common in all the 5 Partner States where the programme is implemented, and yet the other products- tea, cocoa, spices, avocado and other horticultural produce- are also grown and traded throughout the region. In order to maximise the opportunities for cross-country learning, the PCU is supporting members of National Steering Committees to conduct benchmarking missions to other Partner States. The 1st such mission was held in Uganda from 13 - 19 November 2022 with participants drawn from the National Steering Committees in Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda, as well as implementation partners from Rwanda.

The main focus of the benchmarking was on the work done through the Uganda Coffee Development Authority (UCDA) in upgrading the ISO certification of its lab from 17025: 2005 to 17025:2017 through MARKUP, as well as spearheading the institutional and regulatory framework for the cocoa sector, and facilitating the provision of matching grants to off-takers in the coffee and cocoa sector.

Speaking during the feedback meeting in Kampala on 18 November, the EAC Director of Trade Mr. Rashid Kibowa reiterated the relevance of MARKUP in the regional integration agenda and more so on issue related to trade. "This mission has provided an opportunity for learning between countries. The teams have identified areas for improvements and the impact of MARKUP is glaring" he added

On his part, Mr. Leo Kizito Commissioner in the Ministry of East Africa Community Affairs in Uganda observed that the exercise had provided an opportunity for sharing of experiences and appreciated the tangible impact realised by MARKUP in its support to the coffee and cocoa value chains in Uganda. He also thanked the Uganda team of accepting to host the 1st benchmarking mission.

A similar mission is planned for January and February 2023 in Kenya and Tanzania respectively and thereafter in Rwanda and Burundi.

The governance structure of MARKUP comprises NSC established in each Partner State, and a Regional Steering Committee (RSC). The NSC brings together implementing partners of the Partner States and EAC Windows, relevant national stakeholders in Government and the private sectors as well as the EU Delegation and, where necessary, other Development Partners. As such, the NSC provides the policy and institutional interface between the key stakeholders in Government, the private sector and serve as an important avenue for the dissemination of lessons and adoption of good practice from implementation of MARKUP.





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